

ONE HAS TO BE ABLE TO TAKE IT!

Excerpts from an interview with Martin Kippenberger by Jutta Koether,
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■ What do you have to say about this year's *Capital* chart with respect to the integration of women?

✎ The most important woman doesn't even show up: Louise Lawler. This is where one can once again observe the inadequacy of the standard *Capital* applies in setting up the charts. This is even better illustrated by Günther Förg's ranking at sixty-eight, where, on the other hand, Walter Dahn² shows up at number thirty. It should be exactly the other way 'round! At least. There's never been anybody that age that's had Günther Förg's success. He's already exhibited at all the big institutions and museums in the world. Name it and Förg's already been there: Leipzig, Tübingen, Ghent, Kassel, Lucerne, San Francisco, Los Angeles. We'll get back to the women's art question again soon.

■ Okay. In fact I wanted to talk with you about the manner in which your art has been produced in the last two years, since your stay in Spain (1988-89). It seems to me that a lot has changed since then. You've produced a great deal, but nearly everything outside Germany, and it seems to me as if I'd lost sight of Kippenberger somewhat during this decentralization move.

✎ Me too. Well, I'll sum it up. I went to Madrid and said, for whatever reason, that I wanted to have a baby. With my liberal kind of attitude, took along the woman.³ The woman began to eat chocolate in order to throw up, and it was obvious that it had begun. Then it got complicated. First, pregnancy, then, birth. All this lasted a year. Meanwhile, the human being of the type "woman" had unbelievably changed. So much that I could no longer cope with it; no longer knew where front and back were. So I, more or less, worked in a trance. Result: I worked much more than usual. Appreciably more!

■ And, in order to accomplish this extra work, you increasingly worked with assistants, and assistants of

assistants - unlike in former times when you worked with your friends in the original Hetzler group - assistants who are potential artists.

✎ Yeah. For example, Merlin Carpenter and Ulrich Strothjohann joined in. I did the exhibition for the Hetzler gallery in Cologne, for Metro Pictures in New York, and for Luhring Augustine Hetzler in Los Angeles, everywhere the same theme, but always in a different design depending on the circumstances of the place and gallery.

■ I must interrupt you at this point. This was the first time you did this kind of triple exhibition, a thing which is more frequently practiced nowadays - for example, by Jeff Koons to present his work. What made you try this kind of presentation?

✎ Life was so beautiful, hence, something beautiful was required. In this case, it meant quite a lot of quite perfect and very professional work. Additionally, these "fake tours" of an exhibition are an American invention, in contrast to a touring exhibition and I wanted to test whether or not America and American methods were really so bad. As a consequence, this meant doing exhibitions and living there, but not living in New York because this town gives me the feeling of a small town. After some time you are stuck in Soho, and apart from that, one is no longer so young as to rove through all the stores, to enjoy this kind of urban life. The lust for such things was somehow also neutralized by the pregnancy that caused my own "pregnancy." The days were determined by the course of woman and kid, and this means that you are tired in the evening. So, like it or not, you grow a bit more adult as a result. Then, I did my "Refuge in Attack" tour, through Sweden, at Tornberg, and Nordenstad Skarstedt, in Milano at Marconi, at Lorenz in Paris, Bleich-Rossi in Graz, in Nice at Villa Arson, then, back to L.A., where I said goodbye to my family - in whatever circumstances - my Declaration of Father Daughter Independence!

Or: "father insisted on more freedom!" I was too occupied by the new circumstances.

■ Back to the double and triple exhibitions. What influence did they have on your work?

✎ Well, it was the first tour that fit my new lifestyle. Do an exhibition every third day; always move somewhere else. It certainly is quite exhausting, and it requires very accurate preparation. It took a year to prepare the triple exhibition - just as the production of a record takes a year. I wanted to get so much involved in a thing that one can no longer keep from being influenced from outside - which always happens in a growing project including assistants, various responsible agents, etc. There is so much action which the poor brain wants to grasp and, in such a state, you start applying totally new means of filtering. The heat determines this - the head as an appendage of a drugged body.

■ But what exactly did America "do to you?" You stayed in L.A. for six months (1989-90). With what results?

✎ Knowledge acquisition with a difference! Well, the one and only core of the Americans' identity was film and music, respectively - which, meanwhile, have been lost, been sold to Japan. The USA once again lost everything because they've always done everything wrong. First, they got themselves the Bubus, then, destroyed the red Indians, lost a war here and there, fought against each other, lost again, hostage liberation: crashed into each other's helicopters, and so on. Now they are hanging around in the Gulf in order to distract whoever. The only things which were left clean were football and the entertainment industries, only that these things are lame by now and Michael Jackson belongs to Japan. So they sold their whole identity. And in order to divert themselves, maybe to come up with some "new" identity too, they just bought Jaguar, a British company.

which indeed has no business in America. The mere design is so very inappropriate for the USA. These are all interplays that don't have anything to do with any tradition. There they are, celebrating independence from England, and, on exactly that day, they buy Jaguar. It's all rubbish, really, what they do. This is another reason why I had to go to L.A.: to check all this out and even more. You can't believe how flat everything comes off. It's really unbelievable. And then I resorted to Dokoupil's assistant,⁴ who, as you know, is black, and had him show me around for a while so that I really would be able to check every corner and watch what was going on. But at last I found just one thing: that it's all a variation on the cliché one has of L.A., or that there is one fundamental observation that counts: one owns a garage, but the other one has two. This is what makes the differences. Nothing more happens. Of course everybody's got to tell stories and says, "I once sat in the barber shop where Marlon Brando had his hair cut," but nobody is Marlon Brando, I mean, really. A luminary, everyone only knows one. Talks about him.

■ And how did you go through this? Did you say, "Me, the luminary!" - present yourself like that? What did you show of yourself?

✎ Oh, if you just roam about long enough and "show yourself," then you'll get filmed once, and so you'll be a luminary. See, the whole beach-boy spectacle at the beach of Venice happens in an area no more than 500 meters long. Not more. There are no beach umbrellas, one cannot arrive with a chair, sit down, or even eat something. Put differently, it's an absolute horror everything is falsehood and deceit. But they all believe that Venice has something to do with Europe. They believe in it. Those who don't are the ones who can afford to travel to Europe, but they take the real Venice as they take Disneyland, pant through it: the still, really existing, five-days-in-Europe trip. They are so sure they know everything. It's unbelievable that they still have this confidence. They don't have the faintest idea of history. They think: the future counts, and that's what it does. In

fact, that's not wrong, but only that? They look at an artist from Europe ... For them I was unique from the beginning. I could do whatever I liked, improve the language, learn the phrases - one stays outside. And then these flat rituals of "being well versed!" For example, you almost can't find proper spaghetti there. They don't exist. "Spaghettini" they are called by those who are "well-versed," and swallow one hamburger after the other. But, on the other hand, there are no spaghetti Bolognese. Because one has got to live healthy, one doesn't eat minced meat! They are all real "experts" there!

■ But how did "experts," who probably also dominate the "art scene," react to your exhibition? For example, the sculpture with the BMW and the social-pasta chip on top?

✎ I guess any kind of exhibition gets overestimated. That L.A. experience confirmed that. The exhibition itself is in fact totally unimportant, because nobody saw it anyway. They chased an elderly lady from the museum through. There was the opening and I had to go to the restaurant, swallow these vegetarian noodles. That was it. Message: You can't cause anything by art! I already knew that when I was a kid. You can change the world for yourself, but exhibitions are in fact totally superfluous. If one just had no need to feed his family! Because art isn't film. It's not really a big business, but a one-man business.

■ Even the way the trade is structured? Are you sure about that? Despite all the mass production and big events?

✎ Yes, yes. Absolutely sure. Art business for the artist means, in the first place, screwing your dick to the wall! In the course of time you really do get interested in art - after you've visited thirty thousand ridiculous exhibitions, and intensely thought about them; after you've developed some love for art and sensitivity - then you will finally profit from it. But take other things, *Kramer vs. Kramer*, for example, the whole thing takes one-hundred-ten minutes to

give you the total intensity! Without ever making the grade. Because it doesn't mean anything but: "in the end there is the end." Leading you there, that's the only thing art can really do!

■ Is this some new insight which you just clearly stated, taking stock after more than fifteen years of producing and formulating art, or was it already there?

✎ This is not new! First, you have to state what has already been valid: exhibitions are a "running gag" for art and the artist, respectively. Nothing more to it. But also a "running gag" taken literally! It's a good excuse to move. So, I always move with the intention of getting stuck. For example, when I arrive in a new town, I intend to get stuck there. I've never managed it, but the intention still exists.

■ Undiminished? After all these years?

✎ Yes, sure. I always furnish complete apartments too. With everything inside. And, then, you have to justify this. So it's not just spending money, but also earning some. So exhibitions have to be done. The new situation has to be explored.

■ And, then, the production of meaning and production of art form a cycle: leaving and destroying both, and beginning again?

✎ Yes. This is how you finally get some "deeper" sense sifted together in art [laughs]. And, additionally, there is no center in L.A., and you have to concentrate on one sector. Being European, I chose Venice, the most obvious part, and finally I even bought shares in an Italian restaurant so as to have the opportunity to leave traces and smudges at least. This was a must. Three days before my departure! It had been haunting my mind: you can't leave this place that way. So, now, there is an Italian restaurant in Venice where you can eat spaghetti Bolognese in peace! There is always a table reserved for me in the backyard, where they don't lie any more. See, it's said that everything I criticize has to be improved.

so I gave it a try. In all, art people in L.A. are either curators or sponsors. But only celebrating AIDS parties gets too boring for them, so they found museums where the name of the sponsor is written, like the names of soldiers in Vietnam, on their tiny epitaphs. That's their real "identity," the only relation these people have to art. Those who are concerned with it, and buy it, respectively, want to have their name written somewhere. This is what it comes down to. And one really has the opportunity to meet true stars in L.A. Now I can tell this story too. And I assure you that everything really is as simple as one ever believed. How Rambo Stallone behaved at the next table: In fact, that was quite good, when he warmed up after the third salad, verbally illustrated his stories with "tuntumtum, tatatatata," and gestured as if he were holding a machine gun. Couldn't be tamed, that guy! He just let it go. And everything in front of his lawyers, potential producers, etc. I said to Ulrich, my assistant, "Please, you are a witness. Bear witness to this or else no one at home will believe it!" All the others, the lawyers, etc., were sitting there quietly. The balance of insights of my stay in America: L.A. is a flattened down hole.

Since then, you have taken a teaching post at the Städelschule in Frankfurt, though for only a year - the first time you've worked as a professor. What plans do you have? Do you like teaching, or do you prefer to delegate? You gave your inaugural lecture with Michael Krebber,³ who read a very long interview he had given Diedrich Diederichsen⁴ - impressive for some, frightening for others!

In fact, I stumbled into it. See, at the very moment you enter an art academy, the most stupid of all educational institutions, you already think to yourself, what would change if you were a teacher there? Sometime, when it is really offered to you - to me, for example, by Dr. Richter⁷ in Düsseldorf, to work as some kind of replacement - then you start thinking seriously about how this could work - to be a teacher. And then, suddenly, you receive a letter, "We are grateful to have received your application," though I never applied for anything. This happened repeatedly. The teaching prologue went on for several years in my case. First, Düsseldorf, then Berlin - The usual procedure got to be: today a professor,

tomorrow not - back and forth. And then, it was real - with Frankfurt. A treaty was signed! And this was a lucky coincidence. I've already lived in all of the important towns of Germany, except Frankfurt. I would never have dreamed of moving there - plus, the good excuse: "occupational commitment!" But now, I realize that I'm here, and, concerning the academy, I don't feel any different from the time I went there as a student. People don't have information, don't know the first thing about it, don't even want to, simply are not artists. They simply don't know. And the old allegation, made by Albert Oehlen and me, gets confirmed: either you are born an artist, or you'll never be one. Exactly. I claim that nothing can be done there. There are always some. There are four boys - oddly enough, all of them are guest students. I can at least work with them. They are all ten times more intelligent than me, but their intelligence prevents them from making good art. So they deliver shit. They freely admit that, and they aren't that ashamed. At least there is some potential, so that in the worst case they can get new jobs out of their education. The rest is just trash, people who stick to the canvas, and who don't want to depart one inch from their illusions. Exactly what postman Sparbier⁸ thinks of as art, that's what they paint! And they even behave that way. There is nothing, no way in sight, nothing that could be opened up. And this must be said by me, who takes himself to be a shepherd.

Shepherd?

Yeah, like pastor! It was passed along to me and will always appear in my character. In fact, each day I believe in people again, and this is quite exhausting. Therefore the disappointment is even harder. They simply don't understand, for example, this: art is no longer being produced, but only watched! E.g., American women are experts in that. From Holzer on, to Kruger, Lawler, Fraser.⁹ They study art, and do work about it, and this is today's art. There is no crocheting any more like Rosemary Trockel¹⁰ did it, as a concluding action to female production, and there is no more flat painting - male production - but explaining, research, representation. This is what an artist must be able to do! Those artists who sum up all of that are in fact the scene's centers

of gravity, and no longer the Lüpertz and accomplices, post-post-expressionism, or post-post-neo-geo! Not Imi Knoebel. All that has become irrelevant at the moment. Why then continue it? They invent thousands of excuses a day to decorate walls, but one can't feel intensity any longer. Babbling! The special mark of the artist is this: not old be he, not new be he, be he good! If you visit an exhibition and you can find good and bad paintings by the artist, that's good! To be able to cause controversy. But please don't keep everything evenly good. Lüpertz and Knoebel are equally perfect. That's the pain. If everything's good, it doesn't count. Once, in the beginning, the Lord really intended it differently: there should be good and bad! But in art there are no more dialectic tries. Ergo, a whole crowd of artists can already be struck off.

Do you see yourself among the party of "new female art" that you once described, or among other artists who make art especially about the study, distribution and communication of art? Are you a model and/or representative of your own guidelines? What is your position?

Yeah, I'm a woman, too. [laughs] This is true! I only want the best for humanity. Women very often hold themselves back in order to promote others. And I too have this tendency. I'm no "real" painter, no "real" sculptor. I just watch it from outside and sometimes interfere, try to have my good-hearted say. I don't try to be provocative, I try to be calming.

I realize some differences, though. After all, you repeatedly bring yourself into play, as a person, like a totally "egocentric-artist." If we maintain the comparison with women, then I am bound to note, for example, Andrea Fraser doesn't do that at all, and if she brings herself into play as a person, then she does so in a clearly defined role.

After all, I exist as a whole, and undoubtedly always as a living vehicle. Maybe this is styled better by others, maybe more accurately applied to the project. Role games wouldn't work with me because I don't have style. There is none. You can even find evidence for this in my childhood. My father always told me that it was important to have style, and I

was terribly afraid of never being able to make a Chagall or a Dubuffet, which were hanging in our apartment, until I realized that my style was exactly where my personality was, and that this gets mediated by action, separate things and actions, decisions - and that some history develops from that. Art is, in fact, always viewed after the fact, from outside, seldom at the moment it's created - I'd say twenty years after. After that, one finally determines what effect the work and the artist had. How people then will talk about me or won't talk about me, that's what will count. Whether or not I spread a good humor and I'm working on it - so that people will be able to say, "Kippenberger was good amusement! Plus, he looked up some minor details of various subjects and worked on them." It's not that easy to operate this way. You can't simply be provocative, but you can't only be lovely either. My own rules to reach this goal are the following: I shall not be of interest to dentists, and, it should not happen that I could be taken as one whose paintings are hung over the living-room sofa - though I admit that I make small paintings in order to be able to pay for the kitchen, some of which look perfectly like "hang them over the living-room sofa." But they should be exceptional. Two percent of my production is that way. I simply permit myself to do that. It's my luxury, which I hope will result in an increasing possibility of public misunderstanding of certain paintings. I always must work for the present moment because of this short interval of time you have as an individual. I use all means to build something that can stand on its own, that speaks for itself, because, before I am otherwise appreciated, say, for "hanging in a museum," I'd rather see the directors of the museum hang. And that won't happen.

■ So, put differently, museums fear, or don't like to buy Kippenberger paintings or objects, and you, Kippenberger, make a virtue of necessity. You develop self-aid programs which are in turn an integrated part of your production logic?

✎ It just won't do for me to wait. It would take too long. After all, you do your work in your own time. Everybody does it, even the artist. I like for it to reach the public. Because it can't be seen in a museum, making it accessible to more than a handful of people after the exhibition, after the coming-into-the-world, I make my work public by other means: by books, publications of any kind, posters, action, now, even by teaching, delegating. Museums equal antiquity rubbish. Although, by now, everybody knows that I'm the one who covered the eighties. It's the same as with Polke. Everybody knew that he was the man of the seventies. But there was unbelievable shillyshallying. It was a very long time before something finally was bought. A bit too much truth is simply intolerable in such institutions! Now Polke makes slush, and he's right in doing so, to line his pockets that way at least. An artist like him can afford such a small sarcasm. He says to himself, "Now I even accept money for these foolish things." One is frustrated as an artist. And you look around and wonder if there was some departure somewhere. There must be people somewhere who do it better than you do. But nothing! And I've combed lots of countries, and did it not just like scouts would do it, for one week, but really for a long time each time. Of course, there is the consequence that you always fall in love with other people who've been on the road, too, who've done long examination tours. One is susceptible to that.

■ And what about the people you promote, whose work you buy - Mike Kelley,¹¹ Merlin Carpenter, Michael Krebber? Don't they give "new hope"?

✎ You just get dependent. Where there is little, such people stand out. You can tell by the way they walk, that shine! And, if they are artists - and in most cases such people turn out to be artists - I wonder if they could express something better than I? If they have their special subject, then I won't have to do the work and they have something great of their own to present. In such cases I like to help with the development! When I buy works I can check everything, including myself, once again. The professionals I

like are: Albert Oehlen as a painter; Mike Kelley as an American joker, whose funny colored theoretical views have been made expensive by the ladies in New York, etc. In fact, my collecting can be seen as part of my work! Meanwhile, I really don't care if the artist whose work I buy will have a great "future." All this sentimental balderdash doesn't count. If I have some idea what to do with a work, and it can be related to other stuff, then it's ok. There is another consequence. In order to be able to afford this part of my work, the collection, I have to sell more of my own paintings than would be necessary otherwise. After all, everything has to be paid for.

■ Once again a link in the self-maintaining cycle of which Kippenberger, the person, is the motor.

✎ Hubert Kiecol, Meuser, Förg,¹² they all belong to my collection. So, you don't get the idea to do all that on your own! Earlier, I used to take things of others and build them into my own sculptures, objects, books, etc., if I thought they were good. Today, as I said, the collection itself is part of my work. Unconsciously anyway, I surely quote others today, but, normally, I begin my productions "frank, pious, cheerful, free" - or it's determined in part by what my assistants add to "my production." They work on "my view," controlled, but with their own means and talents. I realize that it is more and more important to be clear about the context of my work, and living. It's a crucial task of the artist to develop networks for that, and not only to establish the relation, but make it visual, manifest it, inextinguishably. To establish the relation for posterity, where posterity may already be tomorrow. I want to have influence on how this time is discussed. This is just logical. After all, one can't avoid being involved in the question of time. One hardly has the power to maintain the declaration that one was so extraordinary that one was superior, and at the same time be a good artist. So one has to work on it that one has a say, that one creates some basis. Broodthaers also did that collection exhibition, the Museum of the Eagle exhibition. Life is illustrated. If I decide exclusively to write

from now on, then the reaction of the environment will clearly reflect this decision. The paintings of the others would then illustrate my work.

■ What method do you prefer at the moment?

✎ Well, as usual, there are more of them, combined. In Frankfurt I show bronzes, which are derived from the lamp-sculpture, but without lamps. And there is a catalogue, which, from outside, looks like a very expensive wine list. The work goes, via the remembrance of the lamps, back to classical sculpture. That's the idea. The exhibition is a comment on this development. Well, I'm not Giacometti, or, if I were, then, please, for only three months, or Marino Marini! Or Martini! One after the other. Then photography will follow. Then the paintings that got too good. These are the paintings which were done by Merlin, the assistant, after instructions. Simply too good, too well done, and therefore slush, that kind of painting, those comments. So I decided to make double-slush of them. They were photographed - very flat and colorful and shiny - and then exhibited as photos. And the acrylic paintings were chopped up and put into garbage cans that had been produced especially for that purpose. So, sculpture. The two containers should stand in the street with the chopped paintings inside and a plexiglass cover on the top. Because, Immendorf's old idea, "stop painting," may be expressed again once in a while because it's never been obeyed. But it must be understood differently today. It's not fundamental questioning anymore, and it's not even luxury. It should be understood rather as a partial statement of a science. One can't any longer organize art around guys wearing berets. Art, taken as a science, has the same sluggish beauty as a joke without a point, but it's full of details. It must be told well - be reported very, very well! This is what an artist like Krebber knows best how to demonstrate. Sound makes the music. That's what it depends on. And that's why Krebber will be the hero of the nineties, whether he likes it or not, because the course is set, and he's ready. A comparison: the art fair in Cologne was so flat, so irrelevant. It's impossible simply to hang up something somewhere unless it follows a strict logic. Almost all the stuff lacked this logic. If anything, the art of the forthcoming years has to show logic, hence it has to

be science. It seemed to me like kids' toy shit. Really good toys are all the things a kid grasps, everything available. The rest - shit - can be found in the store, where it says, "children's toys." There you can buy a sack full of colored shit. This year's art fair looked exactly like such a store. And with a kid it's this way: there is a teddy, and, apart from it, wilderness, ashtrays, vases, pins. It's the same in art. Everything else, the "who with who," and the questions about art, and good and bad entertainment, everything counts as well as the wilderness toys. Simply to hang a painting on the wall and say that it's art is dreadful. The whole network is important! Even dear "dining," from mozzarella and tomato on to spaghetti. And, in addition, there are strict rules in fashion, like: Tiramisu instead of mousse au chocolat. Somebody ought to keep the soups boiling, after all. And the one who cooks it is often enough the one who has to drink it too. Only "eating with eyes," as the Japanese put it, only looking at the paintings: that is very uninteresting! When you say art, then everything possible belongs to it. In a gallery that is also the floor, the architecture, the color of the walls. Everything is as important as the painting on the wall. Take that Ungers' floor in Hetzler's gallery, the dark one, that is in fact impossible. How can I cope with that room as an artist? That floor weighs you down so much that totally new questions arise! Or, an observation similar to that, in the SO 36 in Berlin. ... What was the crucial point in that store? The challenge of black space. People didn't want to hear good music in the first place, or to see an interesting event. Actually, the most important thing for everybody was to cross the black space, they only wanted to get through that, through the tunnel to the point where they could see the light, no matter what was on stage! The theory of eating-yourself-through-the-pudding! The theory now stands. The theory is not difficult.

■ Very good, you already answered the question I was going to ask: what visual event, if any, is still valid for you? So, it is the pudding image. It seems that you want also to mediate a certain kind of attitude in teaching in the academy. I've been told that you just walk into galleries with the students and explain the structures of the business to them - that you put more emphasis on this than on the study of paintings.

✎ Sure, a bit of everything, but always intensely. They have to do homework. They don't know what will happen next. They should feel that they have learned something when the year is over. The result must be to realize that the perfect technique must be impracticable. They must paint what they eat, and you probably can imagine how difficult that is! So, really, type: "toughest." That is, torture ... and homework. They should leave being sure that they have been at school. Apart from that I'll show them how to make a catalogue of their work, and exhibition at Grässlin Ehrhardt, run through the whole system from first to last. You can do that in a year. You don't need sixteen semesters for it, like I did!

■ And this will be supported by "experts" - people and colleagues you hire to go through the details?

✎ Yes. Büttner with "guts for poetry"; Wolfgang Bauer¹⁴ will show how to read a text properly; people who know something about layout and organization are invited; meetings with collectors are scheduled, starting with a visit to the factory, in order to answer the question, how does this guy make his money?, then the collection, what did he once collect, what does he collect now, etc., and, afterwards, go to a restaurant; visits to galleries; studying the rules; awkwardnesses such as approaching a gallery owner with one's file don't happen to my students. I offer all of that. But afterwards, they must not act naïve anymore - even if naiveté sometimes is the simplest thing for an artist to do, at least to look naïve. Good artists who look nice and paint nice things are very simple persons. Again there is the glamorous example of Lüpertz. And Baselitz. He acquired all available information about furniture, painting techniques, engraving, collecting, and living in a manor house, and the woman wearing Chanel all day. One can acquire everything. One can learn any technique, but everything else must result from your own life. And the idea that you can "express yourself via the paintings" isn't really appropriate. It's impossible because there is always something behind or beside it - though there are still people who are said to believe that it is possible to work like Brancusi worked. No. No. One has to move through this noodle-soufflé of science if one wants to have it more

than "lukewarm." Then again: one must not get too clever either!

■ What is your view of other painters, like A.R. Penck or Jörg Immendorff, where this is concerned?

✎ That's history, the classical period. Gone. Nothing in motion any longer. Although it's concealed by high prices. The painting's meaningless otherwise. They recycle their own history. Of course they continue painting, because they are already occupied by it and they no longer have the power to start something, or to oppose their own paintings. But an artist who opposes himself still has the best chances to reach some result.

■ Is this possible at all, over a certain age, to have that power? Wouldn't arriving at a comfortable position eliminate this attitude?

✎ Well, people think I am forty-three, actually I am thirty-seven, only one year older than Krebber, and he didn't start properly until now. No, in fact it's all about arriving at the right place. It's right that one doesn't change any longer past a certain age, but it's nobody but you who determines what you'll represent then. The age itself doesn't matter then. Beuys began at the age of forty. Or you may already have been painting at the age of thirty, been putting on your socks for thirty years, and come out then. Adenauer's¹⁵ principle: "Who cares about yesterday's gossip?" You can be very good at a very late time. However, I'm nearly unable to live an ordinary life any longer. If I wanted to do that I'd have to stop making art. I would not put out this sincere and sentimental balderdash under my name. You must commit yourself to everything you release. And, actually, I just release works where there is almost nothing private any longer. And there are people like Krebber who do exactly that - exclusively - release nothing but art. Absolutely. He already has a history. He's an artwork by himself, without doing anything, without creating objects. In all, no more than twenty objects exist. He has trained himself long enough to

reach exactly that precision and expressive power. This guy can place things, thoughts in a rush, and they hit it. He doesn't produce headlines, but he creates a basis at the level at which people talk about Palermo, the gray suits he wore, and then the dust on them. Observations are the basis for being noticed, things about an artist that can make people cry. And that's the point: to once achieve this! Install criteria. Then, somewhere, one sees a gray suit in the street and remembers the story. Install parameters of observation. Krebber can do that. Meuser too. To see the things one sees in the street another way. And! Very important! It can't be didactic. That's the special trick about it: it must not try to mediate anything "yo-ho." To achieve this you must make your own life the basis! And you have to get yourself there for once. There is no relation to the art market in that any longer.

■ What is your opinion of the big, fashionable exhibitions, like *Metropolis* (May 1991) in Berlin?

✎ They are a must. Very important! Joachimides,¹⁶ he's allowed to be exhibition agent for a lifetime after his success with *Zeitgeist*. And *Metropolis* will probably be the counterpoint to *Documenta* in Kassel, which won't be what it once was. So it'll become a real folk-art exhibition - the highlights of today's good taste in art! It's appropriate to visit such an exhibition together with one's kids, like the zoo. But I would never tell my kid that that was art! Today's zoo, different animals! This is how I'd explain it to my daughter. I have memories! My parents always dragged us five kids to the museums - mostly the Folkwang in Essen - and then my father would stage a contest. We kids, we should find the most important painting in the museum. The winner would get 1 DM. Of course, we always chose exactly the one we thought our father would like the best, not the most important painting for us. We derived it from what was hanging in our living room and so we easily arrived at Franz Marc's horses. Everybody got a mark anyway. That didn't make us think independently. The father, of course, only wanted confirma-

tion, and would even pay for it, and we gave it to him. But I promptly got the procedure. And this is how the general understanding of art still works. It doesn't encourage openings. Enter a museum and think independently? Nonsense. The paintings would not achieve that. Of course I'm not responsible for some jerks out there, but I've got to learn for myself. Until one year ago I didn't know that the earth belonged to the Milky Way. Suddenly I see everything relativized, and from outside. After all, one is nothing but a tourist on this planet, and I consider the earth just what it is, and it doesn't hurt that much any longer. After all, everything's only a small dot - proportionally. You just have to do your job well as a mediator. Such thoughts occur to you when you participate in bringing a baby into the world. It's really amazing what happens to you. Inside and out, beginning with being attacked from all sides, as if you hadn't read *Brigitte*¹⁷ properly, confronted with evil thoughts, with worthy things, with life's dirt. And I try to arrange it as neutrally as possible! It's not easy. After all, you aren't too skillful, and suddenly, such a thing is born - so perfect, so efficient and right that you simply can't believe that you yourself had been involved in it. Where does this come from! I never thought about that before. And I racked my brain over it for a long time. I wasn't the same person any longer. And each time I had to say to myself, this is my kid! The total bio-flash. Individual details. Flesh, constitution of skin - the depth of life. You just feel it. You can't get away from it. It controls you without mercy. And, suddenly, you find yourself in the Primitives Legion. But this is probably a state you have to go through.

■ Apart from all tourism, your home gallery is Max Hetzler in Cologne. How does cooperation look at the moment?

✎ Overall, it's true that the artists of the gallery and the gallery itself changed in the course of time. Once, living together, constantly taking care of each other, etc.; today, rather, single subjects. Max Hetzler managed the change - which we appreciate very much

- towards being a dealer and no longer being one of the clowns; no longer being identified with one "orientation," but as a leader of a big gallery, a firm, something mixed up in economy. One part of this is the new, big room. He didn't wait until his artists received offers to exhibit in museums, but took part in opening the L.A. thing, a place that comes near looking like a museum, and he opened the new, very big space in Cologne in order to be independent, for his artists to have the opportunity to do big exhibitions. It's about independence. In the same way that I must think and work independently, his task is to stay independent of any institution. And this is good. It's an attitude that goes beyond gallery exhibitions, which will probably, soon, eliminate that standing around at openings. So, for example, the Peter exhibition would no longer be possible, neither for him, nor for me. The things I'm doing now are done in such a way that they can be shown in public spaces, and this presupposes totally different methods of working.

■ Is this an achievement? This new kind of development and relations between gallery owner and artist, the whole communication? How did that happen in such a comparatively short time? Is it a matter of just growing up together in public?

✎ Yes, it grew. But not without a goal. We did have our thoughts, especially the original German group. But Jeff Koons also thinks a lot about new forms of presentation and all that. But I still consider it a thing that has grown by cooperation from the very bottom. Really grown well. Everyone of the group is still thinking honestly. Max Hetzler still has some great thinkers. At least nobody rests on their success, and all doubt themselves - like Mucha who returns to art as "the neutral figure." But even he does his business in a radical way, and that's what counts. It must be tough. It doesn't need to be my taste, but I appreciate that the man has power, even if he produces kitsch. He has the power - German accuracy personified, and in gray. He really is to art what Adenauer was to politics - always nothing but accuracy! German too! And he doesn't refer to history that flatly, to the working up of Germany history of the type, "Kiefer, Anselm." He shows the feeling for colors of a particular history of the Federal Republic,

of his time, growing up in the fifties and sixties, and that's gray. Albert Oehlen, on the contrary, is the one at Hetzler's who can paint the best hippie paintings, and constantly pees into his pants because of himself and the time. One might be able to think well, but doesn't get it onto the canvas. But Albert, he can do both! Through and through. And that's why he's good. Markus is Picasso, à clef. Actually he only thinks about music; doesn't want to give statements, but does his business really well. Günther Förg is, of course, a dangerous act. His new stuff? Oh dear. His new things, they don't, at first glance, open anything. And, then, let Dr. Speck write about him, oh dear! One single sliming. Dr. Speck. Of all people. Förg once called him "Dr. Dreck" [Dr. Dirt]. Now things seem to have changed. Dr. Speck writes something like, "I, Dr. Speck, the great urologist and collector, consider it an honor to - sitting in my library between Proust and Flaubert - wonder what could be written about works about which it is actually impossible to write ... etc." No-no. Wallpainting, super. The bronzes for the wall, to put the finger in, good too. But these masks! At this point Rosemarie Trockel comes to mind. She's also occupied by making everything full, and herself disappear as an artist. Place something everywhere. This is just impossible. She has already lost. And one can't make this up either. The knitting pictures, fantastic. The Wool mark, super! She could have maintained that for twenty years, in all variations. But now it's just art market toys. Or the ladies' and men's outerwear department. Nothing else. There is no bang! No pressure. No necessity. One has to be able to cope with one's inventions. With me, one at least knows, when he does his rubber pictures, then he probably did rubber pictures. He simply tried to save the spectator from the other paintings of his! The fat uncle! Georg Herold? He's a number out of the land of sorrow. Type: I won't let anything I have go. I don't know if this is enough as an attitude. In addition there are paranoia and hypochondria. This one moves on an island of his own. The eastern syndrome. Penck has it too. Herold must treat himself badly in order to be able to put on his socks in the morning, following the motto: how can I cash in the last Deutschmark before the reunion! Apropos! All that is nothing compared to the biggest rape of art that has ever been perpetrated in the new Germany, namely that they pulled down

the Wall. They really could have left it untouched, as a monument, together with all the bad graffiti on it. So even the last chance to document graffiti culture has passed away. I consider this a mistake similar to the one Paul Maenz¹⁸ made in having Keith Haring come over and paint funny figures onto naked bodies and electric plug boxes instead of getting an entire painted subway car from the Bronx and placing it in the gallery. There was no power. This man just came for sales promotion.

■ I would just like, because it follows the L.A. story, for you to sum up your plan briefly - what you intended with your stay in L.A. in 1990?

✎ No matter what you do, you need an excuse. That's it. And the excuse was that there is Hollywood, in Los Angeles, some proper excuse to devote myself to film. And finally, escape - the childhood fantasy. This means, carry through things, where the dreams had been supplied in fact. So the dreams have been supplied, by the parents, the relatives, or, I don't know, by somebody.

■ By all of them.

✎ By all of them. Sure. So: you must achieve certain things, must be such and such, and must do this and that. So being successful is something to be carried through. But, actually, existing is always combined with film, radio, TV, police call-boxes. And this is driven away, mostly by film - stop: the movies. But you can't only listen and you can watch. Such as Jeff Koons made the mother¹⁹ his own, and declared that he would marry her, and this got him on the front page, that he comes along with, this porno woman, who is recognized everywhere, but he's in tow, though he's famous, but not his face. Well, he's no ideal beauty, Jeff Koons. However, she ain't either. But she's a porno star, and she probably didn't succeed as a porno star either, but turned to politics, and constantly tears off her blouse. What do we see? We can see two breasts. And you, inevitably, are fed by a bosom in your first year, or in the second year of your life. Hence, somehow, you have to do something with it. And, bang! ... And there he has her in tow and even declares he'd marry her.

I True, but once you had some sympathy for her as well.

M Hm? I wanted to marry her?

I No, not that!

M Never said that. But one naturally decorates himself with women. But I guess women decorate themselves with men too.

I Yeah, sure.

M Or with their fathers. Let's put it this way, I think you come on and decorate yourself with the father, or with a man who looks like the father could look. Well, where did we stop?

I Well, with the childhood fantasies, or what has been supplied as fantasies, that one has to carry them through.

M Hm. Actually, it's natural being on TV, or in a film, or so, what there is for one. After all, childhood doesn't end. This is rubbish, these declarations. One would say, well, childhood is from then to then, and then, puberty follows, and, then, everything's finished. This isn't true anyhow. It only reaches its climax at about twenty-four. One becomes mature. And, after that, it goes off - back again. And, then, you'll die in the state you'd been in, when you were born as a baby, behave funnily, and somebody must push the catheter somewhere.

I Why at twenty-four? Because, after all, one does things, like being successful. One actually does that later.

M Well then, from thirty on! You have to have made it at the age of thirty. I've done that too. Then let it be thirty. So, probably, I'll reach the age of sixty.

I Ok.

M So, I have already passed the zenith. And so I'm developing into super childhood.

I Super childhood!?

M Yes. I have seen it, the summit of super childhood. When my father died of cancer, he was just like my baby. And I'll die of cancer likewise. I don't know if cancer is more pleasant than getting under a street-car. I don't know now how it feels inside. I don't insist on having it long and dirty, but my father also thought he'd survive. It took him six years, with all these heart attacks, and whatever else goes with it - cerebral apoplexy, and beat it! And, of course, you are present all the time. And, all of a sudden, he can dress himself, at Christmas, by way of exception. Just produce evidence. Proofs count. The same with me. In that I'm quite similar to my father. So, we stopped with Hollywood.

I You've already proved a lot, but the movies, or Hollywood was left.

M After all, you are nothing but a mirror of your environment, and film belongs to it. This means that they make it intellectual. But Hollywood has a better way, that everybody can understand. Film. That's it. And therefore I would have liked to play in a film as someone who opens the door, and then cleans up, and this and that - what certain stars get fixed in treaties, that they have close-ups of their face for so many minutes or seconds! But these extras! So, what I wanted to do was to play in a series produced at the moment, together with all the superstars, which is really super. What one thinks of, saying "super" today, you could as well take diesel. Some people prefer diesel to super. But then I realized that you have to have an agent who promotes you. This is an existential story. And each artist, each film artist, should accordingly be aware of it. He should likewise pay off his money to certain agents. See, this is a profession of its own. One believes in it. Just as one nourishes the other in Los Angeles, one wonders how this town can survive? Just because Charlie

Chaplin said that the weather's always fine there? That's why one can shoot films cheaply there. So, throughout the year the weather's fine, doesn't get that expensive. And, all of a sudden, it is a metropolis, and one nourishes the other. So, nourishing program. Though, food is really sensational there. Supermarket? The best supermarkets on earth.

I Well, something else about L.A. Something else about this idea to do a film - it didn't work.

M What does that mean, "didn't work"?

I Well, it failed for lack of an agent.

M Because of the system!

I Because of the system, right!

M Maybe this is the general system, that you always need somebody. So, somebody to introduce you. That's what it's called. So if a woman, say, she's standing alone at a party, she can't introduce herself. She needs a man who says, "May I introduce you to Mrs. Madame?" But the woman cannot hang about and say, "I'm Mrs. Madame." I guess that doesn't work, does it? I mean one somehow has the right to take the part of woman.

I In other words, you were like a woman who didn't get introduced?

M Well, but I always thought I'd be the agent of my own affairs somehow. I somehow did it that way. And then I had some commission agents, be they Gisela, or Max, or someone like that. In fact I do my business myself. But, because it is like it is, you use it, and it's the most practical way. And one grows up with it. But, there, in L.A. I didn't have the guys who promptly understood me. So, I didn't want into the museums. I wanted to go to the film studios - Studio A, Studio B, Studio 17. So. From one studio to the other. I said "I'll come in my own car, with my own driver, wearing my own clothes. I don't want to have

money, I just want to participate." And, probably, this is too abstract, and, therefore, far too professional.

— Yeah, highly suspicious.

✎ No. Not even suspicious. Nobody at all can understand this. It seems that it must still be existential, even for an artist. He must live in the attic with his mother, by candlelight, with dry bread. He should work hard. He's to be badly off. And his mother should - or his girlfriend, or his fiancée should - slide down the banisters naked. And he returns from the labor exchange because it didn't go well at the gallery. So, he returns from the labor exchange and says "Baby, don't do that to me. I didn't treat you that tough." And then she says, "I'm just warming up dinner."

— But this isn't Hollywood!

✎ Of course it is Hollywood! If Hollywood is reality, and, to a great extent it is reality, then it's that. And what it is all about is just film, and it is limited. In fact, you can't say, "I can't gobble up ever so much garlic, and write it in one-oh-four." A film lasts one-hundred-twenty minutes. *Kramer vs. Kramer*? Ninety, is it? One hour and a half. But our life is longer than that! And then, one is exhausted. Then one has the right to go to Heaven - if one is destined to. Or one goes to Hell. And I want to go to Heaven because Hitler's in Hell. He surely is in Hell. And then, as him, ask Adi, or what's his name? Yeah, Adi. "Would you like to go to Hell?" No, not really." And then they have the other room, and another meanness - with head off. Let's say head off. That's not so good either. In any case, it must be endless. It's endless above, and likewise, it's endless below. And below there should be pain. And above ... this seems to be a rocking chair of clouds or the like. One is to believe in it. So, in any case, down in Hell - Adi's in Hell - and you enter the room, and then they're all standing in shit up to the knee - "Merde," as the Frenchman says - serious, steaming. Why serious? Well, soft, maggoty shit, and well, they're all standing in it. All these priests. Well, I don't know. Somehow the people who get to Hell, well. And they're standing in there. And then, maybe this: "Well, this doesn't look that bad, does it? Okay. Better than fire under your ass all

the time." "Okay, break over! Everybody headstand again!" Can I symbolize anything by that?

— One can never cross it off!

✎ And all of this is L.A. It's the beginning and the end, uh, rhythm, of life too! Everything a film! Where've I gotten to now? To the middle of the film, and I realize that I'm just not made for this chief part.

— And that's why you wanted to ...

✎ ... and must take another chief part in another film. Explain this to anybody in a legal sense! [laughs]

— And what film is that?

✎ Hm?

— The film in which you take the chief part?

✎ Well, uh, heart and blood, and ... however, I'm an artist, but an artist may also be an actor, may also be a writer, so, trade with culture, produce culture. And I paint, and do this and that, and let paint, and realize that it's only one person that's being pictured, or what she has to say; or even from the third link and this surrounding. Well, visual, that's what you are, only for the people who meet you in the bar, and not in the painting. Except you make self-portraits - and I don't know how many self-portraits I've made, and have made - no, it's not yet enough for the whole world.

— What does this mean? Do you have to quit your world plan?

✎ What?

— This means, one has to quit one's world plan in order to be visual and well-known everywhere?

✎ World plan?

— The world ... no, that is, one can't do it anyway. You realize at once one can't do it, even if one produced a million self-portraits - be present everywhere.

✎ No, this is not what's it about. But somehow one is sincere. One really wants to tell just heart and blood, and about the gastric acid. One just tries to do justice to everything. One wants to reach the people. In fact, one is a small priest, isn't one? So, somehow, parson - parson? Pastor - I'm a pastor. And pastor means translated ...

— Shepherd.

✎ Shepherd?

— Shepherd.

✎ Shepherd. Yeah. And somehow I have something like it, haven't I? I'm the holy Saint Martin. There is the half - half - half, isn't it? Everybody should have it nice and warm in his corner. Yeah. In the calm corner [blows into the microphone]. We're all searching for it, and if you know where it is, then you may rent it - at first [laughs]. That's exciting. That's dynamic. And that's what I've already been when I was a kid, no matter whether it was with alcoholism or with drugs or something else. I've always been like that. I've always been soooo ... fast; always watched the sky too. So. Looked out of the window at school, so I wasn't quite concentrated - though, of course, very concentrated in other matters - watching! It's such a metaphorical language, something that can be perceived. And, also the word is, metaphorical language - if I may write this down as my success [laughs]. The inventor of literal metaphorical language!

— Are you?

✎ Am I not? Would you please ask me something else! For example, how an artist should be a woman. Every man needs a woman and every woman needs a man and that nonsense.

— No.

✎ And if a man gets a man who looks like a woman it will be as well, won't it?

— No, but you said you'd turn to that shepherd business. What is meant by that?

☒ Yeah. I don't know. I was educated that way! I was educated religiously.

☒ But that means that you've always been fit, and always, you said recently, that everything is emitted, that you'd constantly been wasting power in your life, to others as well?

☒ What do you mean by wasting?

☒ Yeah, you said that!

☒ I'm still alive. I can't have been wasting that much, being here still.

☒ No, but you said that you ... that one couldn't continue that forever.

☒ Surely one can't. So let's say, I try, from thirty-seven to thirty-eight - this is just a matter of three days by now - so, what people confront me with. Of course you're always confronted with that, and one must appreciate it, and one must like it, and keep quiet, or be level-headed. So the whole world is somehow built on a system. What good friends advise you to do, to be level-headed. You don't want to kick the bucket as well, do you? Pretend to be the "desert mouse" and some time you are found there, in the desert, and get sold for cheap money, get sold to a famous movie star.

☒ Yeah. ...

☒ One who fucks hamsters. It just lasts, I don't know, five minutes. You get it stuffed into your backside, and then your life's over. Someone who's happily married and has two children. This shouldn't be my life. You just happen to meet people, and then, [laughs] then you're already ...

☒ Then it happens...

☒ ... dead. Terrible, short life! Aha, well, maybe because it's lucky too. At the time. In it's way... Hollywood. Hamster. Desert hamster! [laughs]

☒ No, but you said that you did not want to waste your power to infinity; in fact, didn't want to make any more exhibitions.

☒ Yeah, but I'm also a *Schnulzenfutzi*, always inventing new stuff! And it is waste of power indeed, what I'm doing now. I'm not going to waste less, probably! But it should be concentrated. Be concentrated on a new *Schnulzenfutzi* - a new kitsch. See, life is kitsch, but something different - like Greek columns. Sometime you'll be a Greek column as well because ... life afterwards, when I'm dead, when one looks at the world here from outside, the past is always past. So, that'll be classical! Then they'll say, "Kippenberger simply presented such classical theater too!" This is where we meet poor Markus Lüpertz again - the poor pig who actually insists on being the Post-Picasso. "P.P." or, not Markus: "M.L." Markus Lüpertz, but "P.P." Post-Picasso, And sits there on a TV program and gets confronted with the Post, the real postman. So, Mr. Sparbier, what's his name?

☒ Schult.

☒ Schult.

☒ H.A. Schult.²⁰

☒ H.A. Schult, who saves the world as well. So, Mr. Dahn's predecessor, the modern predecessor of Mr. Dahn, who's one of those environmentalists too, and produces shit in order to show that there should be no more shit. I don't know. And then, he must act again - good, poor Markus. So one, in short, Markus, enclosed. Well, good Markus is a great guy inside closed walls, but I'm simply no woman. Maybe I'll have to test drive a Chevrolet with the colleague - in a closed car, but ... He just wants love, and, in fact, this is justified. You must find the good and bad aspects, and the contrasts of a person. You can't always be good. This just doesn't work. And if you always painted good pictures - well, not really good paintings, and no bad paintings - and you don't find anything in between.

☒ And that's why he must be on TV, out of his despair.

☒ Hm. Oh, he once determined that he must appear there because ... he's really goofy. Always these openings in these galleries, and there you show. And then he got himself these beautiful things tailored, and shoes, and he wants to show them, and must show them in public too, and must be recognized, and, of course, from the paintings, you can't! Who is interested in paintings? And, once, I believed that too: that now I have to be on TV, and that people must recognize me, and that I have this little sense of achievement. So then "stardom." I don't need it - no more. I need it, but I must find another way. It's impossible in that way. I cannot, simply because I've been on TV and have some recognition ... in principle I could as well play Detective Tappert.²¹ Then I'd have to, I don't know, shoot three hundred films, solve cases. I'm not able to do that. I haven't the power for it, or, of course, it's all about solving cases, but three hundred! And one each week. Well, this ain't in the cards. Not with me, and not with Markus Lüpertz either. This exceeds his power too. You must pull the ass over the ears yourself! My great friend Immendorff, one of my enviers - though I don't represent anything ...

☒ Why envier? He envies you? Or what does that mean?

☒ Oh, yeah. Yeah, and always states the contrary: that he does not envy me, except for that I'm an asshole [laughs]. In addition, I consider Michael Werner²² to be a wonderful person. Can you imagine a more handsome man? Wherever you may turn. And who can reformulate, life, too; has the right books on his shelf. So, his private library ... there'll probably be seven books, the rest, catalogues. But the seven books he has, they'll be alright. One can count on that. And he simply is a good person, and one wants to have dealings with good people. And Immendorff is just a simple man. But one can also love simple people, but they don't want to be loved as simple people. They want something else. Immendorff would rather be a pimp than being

the big artist. And, because he suffers from that, he always simply paints the people who are sitting in the bar, the daubster. And Mr. Joachimides too, that one he also likes to do. He's not afraid to French kiss anybody in his environment. That's him - Uncle Immendorff. But naturally that's all purely political with him. I'm not political. I'm social president. I'm the good, fat uncle. I'm Saint Martin, yeah. I insist on this. I've learned to live with it. It's okay. And I also believe that I had a good relationship with my mother because we both had cheerful natures. The older my mother got, the more beautiful she became. Lost her abdomen and her breasts, but always became more and more beautiful, and still more. Free. Open. More open. And while getting older, knowing that she suffered from cancer. But suddenly - bang! - everything was open and she was like, "Come on, kids, let's go to Paris, to here and there, to Greece," and, in between, to the surgical theater; but then, out once again, and, don't quarrel about the inheritance.

— What, and you'd like to reach that state of mind right now?

✎ Hm. No, but I'm so impressed, so impressed by the understandable situation. When I can't understand where something comes from, then I get uneasy. And that's how the kid was born, there, in the bathtub, near Cologne.

— In the water?

✎ I was quite shocked. So, I thought. If I have a baby ... you know, I'm an alky ... then you'll be drinking for two days. But three days of drinking, to that, and still being unable to express it, where it came from. And it's not been from me. Not my invention either. Nor, do I think, Gabi's idea, that she would have invented such a thing. I don't think so. It was so indescribable. Since then I'm thinking: my father died at the same time Helena was born.

— Yes, after a short interval.

✎ And two hospitals there.

— And two times. The one thing actually could be explained. The other was inexplicable. Or both.

✎ Both are explicable. But I don't know why it's called a house for the sick - "Krankenhaus". So one already starts thinking, why is it called a house for the sick? You could as well call it a house of life, couldn't you? Not really a house of lust, or brothel, and you needn't write about it, but it needn't be called a house for the sick! But that's really the way it is: as he died, she was born. I saw him in bed in that way - like a baby. So, that rhythm, it's enough to make you wonder.

— And you didn't before?

✎ No.

— Never?

✎ Oh, I had a "package" in my ass, or something - I don't know - had a burning candle, or burning sausages in my ass. Didn't even notice them. Didn't even notice that I was alive. Now I know that I am. That's such an abstract situation, probably because it's explicable. The same as: there is no inventor of humor. There's also, apart from Jesus, and dear God, and I don't know who, Adam and Eve - they actually exist too - and they can't explain it to you. Uncle with the long beard you can only properly represent by letting your beard grow. That way you do a bit so that the little kids in the street think that you are a good God. Or the kid: it doesn't like there being an uncle with a kid, not even a daddy, rather you are just "good God," [laughs] get everything pushed into your ass, but that ain't good either, shouldn't be done. Then I must train myself again to. I made the kid, sincerely, because my father was approaching the end. I wanted life to be continued. So ... that's the proto-ape method.

— Proto-ape method? Or, not method, instinct, or whatever you want to call it.

✎ Hm. In any case it was good to have experienced it.

— But without having made that clear to yourself?

✎ I just didn't know it. I didn't know it. And a woman by the name of Gabi has to have a baby. I know so many Gabis. And, well, there's the man, there's the woman, there's the kid. One can't spell it out that far, can only do it. It's all so indescribable, what happens there. And the thing speaks for itself.

— Yeah, and then, sometime, you'll be confronted with the need to explain it to your daughter.

✎ Oh, I guess she'll leave the house before that. Will reach the beauty and intelligence of her mother and the rest of me. So: run out the door sometime too. But as long she has the mother and the father after her ass - as impulse blockers. And they usually last a long time. Until you suddenly start thinking, when the kid's knocked up by a cop, Turkish cop. Then, indeed, you start to think about it. But, apart from that, it's her business. The same burden. Just let the cop be a ... whatever. That's naturally something like a game, and, being a kid, you obviously have sex. Sure, I did too.

— As a kid? As a young ...

✎ Well, I don't have sex any longer. Only Lorient.²³ Or Karl Valentin.²⁴ Or mixed. Yeah, mixed-doubles, with Karl Valentin and Lorient. [laughs]

— Why? But that's unhealthy?

✎ What?

— But that's unhealthy.

✎ What - unhealthy! There is no inventor of humor. I can only make use of my existence. And that probably is comical. My grandfather always ... there is a film, a Double 8. I guess I was one year old then, or one and a half. He would play Karl Valentin and make grimaces, and then, I would imitate him. So. And then, there is a Super 8 film, with the other grandfather, how he pushed me, through the fifties paintings, at the *Documenta*, so it was only abstract: give him Wols and that. It gives everything. I've probably seen that. Maybe all got into my head. And there it is. And this gets further intensified by Krebber and colleagues, that these are triggers. You can't actually resist the history you have. It's inside.

It's flesh and blood. How other people want to attack you and the like, because you are an image of the enemy, because you somehow formulate this a bit more frankly, because you take the liberty, so you really are "Woodstock Numero Uno," isn't it? The one who leaves this thing undetermined and can promptly change his mind. So I'm not in a blue funk because of that, am I, that I did anything wrong? Then this may be total shit, no? So: tomorrow ...

— Tomorrow think of something new, or what?

✎ Yesterday, shit, today, hushed, but for only a quarter of an hour, and then from the beginning once more. So: go! You should not piss at other people's legs. I'm not other people's tool.

— I haven't said that.

✎ No, but I must tell it to myself. I must tell it to myself. I'm not other people's tool, that I can control myself, and that there is that opportunity for me, to give an interview, which I never intended to. And now, I'm doing it. So new life is created there? That you can sit on the john, trousers down, nobody watches you. And you are holding a book of mine in your hands. And is there anything to be laughed at! True, Warhol did it after his death: published his tapes, his diary.

— Yeah, just imagine if he would have released his tapes daily, or every two months! That would have been an appropriate comment on the time!

✎ Well, ok. Nobody deserves it. You don't owe anything to anybody. Nobody really deserves you thinking about him. But, as a cracker, because you are in a good, generous mood, then you put forward such a book. Yeah! And then they may read it in the john. But it's no longer necessary - but you're already formulated it. I mean, he did it after he'd died. What a pity! Because he could have meant even more. He could have meant yet more - still, still, still more. The whole society piss, the warm, or lukewarm, or,

hm ... piss is warm most of the time ... natural fizz? ... Natural fizz party, the very moment it happens, there's the comment, that they are artists, these people. It's how I view it too. If it's a colleague that's drained off here ... And for the ... for most people who take part in that it's not even exhausting! Being an artist.

— Is it exhausting for you?

✎ Yeah. Actually, you make a tremendous effort. It's very exhausting. The life. To be on the road and completely lacking a private life. Golly, they are happily married. Two kids. I don't know what's more exhausting. Or they're gay. And you are always outside the door and in fact lie ... how do you put this? True, I'm not Hannelore Kohl!²⁵ That's for sure. But I was invited, yesterday. I was invited to make an introduction for Kasper König,²⁶ in Hannelore Kohl's group. Well, that's such a ... Wolffi Bauer calls it, "mixed salad." You have to converse with somebody on a tray. The leadership of Germany is somehow confused and divided, though the walls have been opened. The wife - she is a translator - Hannelore.

— Of what?

✎ Language translator, what do you call it?

— Yes.

✎ See ... And the man can't speak English. So, what relationship do they have! So. Just imagine, if this goes on, if you really need support sometime, then nothing will work. Because, if she can't even control the simplest things for her husband - I'm not talking about fucking, but - where she's qualified, she could have left a bit for him. I share everything I have. And in his case he gets nothing, that man! Opening of the wall. So this really is a disgrace for Germany. Germans want to be mafiosi, though they are not Italian, not even familiar, but ... Germans are so thick, uh, by birth ... Well, jostling's what they like. That's the one thing you can fix them with, the Germans.

Like foreigners once said in a survey, they always jostle. On entering. But you can't fix them elsewhere. You can fix the Austrians. But the Germans can't be fixed, can they? Except: they are good at destroying history. Destroying monuments: the Berlin Wall. One of the most important sculptures ever, ever in history, in European history. Pulled down all the concentration camps, blew up the Führerbunker, and - come on! - and, yeah, no, above all they would have liked to get the Brandenberger Gate - but couldn't reach it, because exactly five meters in front of it, there was the border. But now, when the time has come, pull down the Wall! Just imagine that!

— Yeah!

✎ They shoot films there, and they've got to have it reconstructed of hardboard - with graffiti.

— Are the German artists jostlers too? Aren't there exceptions to jostling?

✎ I think that it's somehow justified to say what I said, on the surface, where we actually are. Otherwise you would probably not be able to generalize. You can't concentrate on the details that much - which doesn't mean that you should - but, in the business of appreciation - slap, slap - the drug-gist ranks high up. Somewhere on the very bottom, placed twenty-third, you meet the taxi driver, and then the artist coming after that. And, viewed from that perspective - that it's so mad that the artist is so badly respected ... watch an artist, then say: in fact what you just said to the taxi driver - what trash you just spouted again. The things an artist says are crap. Nothing great. So this profession is nothing great. Miserable mite. Artist! The artists always say, "I know that and that and that artist!" Or, "In art history I see that and that and that and that artist." They are probably right, but it makes no Picasso of them! Lüpertz won't be Picasso either! I'm lucky to be Kippenberger. Kippenberger is Kippenberger. Only, not just "Kippy," but Martin Kippenberger. Kippenberger. That's different.

I What, "Kippy"?

K Yes. My father always signed his paintings and photos with "Kipp." That's why I had an idea at the age of seven: "Kippy." I can't be the kid for life in public. Then a gallery owner would approach me and then she would say, "Kippilein." That's too much. I can't make myself yet smaller, smaller, smaller.

K Uh, Mr. Waiter! A glass of water, please. The, uh, fat uncle has a headache. Well then, merry Easter ... God's wrath. Thanks.

Waiter: You're welcome.

K And now, Jutta, I'm asking you, where do we come from?

I Well, where do you come from?

K Don't say, "well, well, well," now, or "um-hum," etc. Where do we come from? What do you think?

I Out of the earth.

K Out of the earth?

I Yeah.

K To me they always said that I came out of my mother.

I Yeah, that's what I mean ... out of a biological interrelation. Out of the history of evolution. Maybe we are somehow ... an error, but, in any case, we come ...

K ... out of the earth!

I Yeah!

K There are too many people in Africa and they can't all have come out of the sand!

I Not out of the sand!

K Hahaha.

I Hahaha. Hey, do you know how long the earth has existed?

K No idea!

I That's just it! Uh, how many types of life there have been already, and, uh, we are just one of them.

K And where do we come from? Out of the earth!

I And, additionally, out of the history of the earth.

K But this is a lame story, isn't it?

I In any case, very intricate.

K Are you descended from the ape? Are you the ape-daughter, Jane?

I No.

K Because I don't believe in it. I mean, the apes developed further too, and they still look just the same. I mean, we don't look so good, in part, but ...

I Yeah, well, some earthworms underwent further development too, and still look so dull.

K No. You can even chop them, and they still keep on going! The earthworms are superior to us. Not bigger than we are, hahaha, but superior.

I Yeah, of course we are a ... somehow we are an invention.

K Yeah, and by who? Good God?

I Call it the "good God" if you like, if you believe in it.

K But there's at least one advantage, one good deed, to the allegedly good God, to have created such an image of the enemy, so we have something to pick on during the day. Chopping, or smashing the head or the like.

I What? All the other beasts?

K And for fire stealing.

I All the other ... here we go again, at social affairs.

K [laughs] Yeah, the others, absolutely, yeah! At least He found some equivalent. Otherwise it wouldn't really mean anything, or else one really would have to be angry at the man with the long beard, that He doesn't even leave some pleasure for you, these sixty years you'll probably be living, or seventy. Yeah, others, the others. The others who are different too. They are so important. And then you'd also request something from the others: Love! Love. Love. You just put it slightly more cautiously. Not love, tenderness, goodwill but "harmony!" Hm?

I Wish for harmony - can that be a goal?

K No, no you can't want it. Can only spread it, can only - magnetize. Hm? So, if you are in a good mood, then you'll get something good. Hahahahaha. Beautifully said, wasn't it?

K I guess I've been standing at the counter two times in my life. You should not stand in a line! That's not proper. You aren't born to stand in a line. I don't want to get involved in that war. But I don't want to be the man behind the counter either. You just go ahead, some way ahead. Just go by tram instead of the federal railways. Around the corner, and then ... never fart in a museum because ...

I Because what?

K Yeah. They found out that the farts destroy the paintings. When they're coming in from the cold into the warm, and then they fart, those must be the most terrible gases possible. They destroy the paintings. More than light or anything. Or heat. The farts of the visitors, that's the most dangerous thing.

...

K Point one: envy and greed. This is my business, number one, uh, you may behave like an asshole, but you must never be one. Number two, and number three: this comes from inside. As for two, calm down, this may rub off.

— What?

✎ This is private language, I mean when you talk to yourself.

— Yeah, sure.

✎ Calm down.

— Aha, quite so, this is required too.

✎ Maybe this rubs off, doesn't it? Second: mimic yourself, you asshole. [laughs] These are something like guiding principles, aren't they?

— Yeah. Or some kind of motto, no?

✎ Yeah. Silly-joke quotation: "Today, you're still on the verge of the abyss. Tomorrow you're one step further." That's too goofy, isn't it?

— Yeah, uh. ...

✎ Too third-rate, no? Well, no. Another guiding principle is - this one still holds: I want to become the best among the second rate, or, rather, "be" the best. In this case I could already say be!

— [laughs] Which project is the most interesting for you at the moment. Your teaching, the exhibition in San Francisco, the project in Vienna ...?

✎ They are so different, aren't they? "Now take four tablespoons of ..." Well, presupposing readiness to risk! The projects are all very different. Actually, you know this better afterwards than at the moment it happens. The professorship has changed so much. They all require an attitude of expectation and readiness to risk, and that it be new! There were certain exhibitions that I let myself in for that I cancelled because they were just routine. You mustn't get trapped by yourself. And there is San Francisco. It's a museum. Not only that, it's West Coast, and what, in

fact, every artist should desire, to have an exhibition in a museum abroad! "Now - beat well!" Europeans are that different from Americans! Well, to have an exhibition in America, I guess you have reached some sort of goal in that! And you'll never achieve that again, the feeling, the first real, individual exhibition in a major gallery, or in a foreign town.

— You mean, do something for the first time, do a thing nobody has ever done before?

✎ Yeah, and that scares you stiff, and you ought not be taken in by the same tricks as others have been. You automatically think totally differently. San Francisco is something great. I mean, Polke has exhibited and installed there. I didn't see the installation, but people told me. In this case, of course, the risk is double that you look like shit. The tunnel in Vienna will follow. It shouldn't get too blunt, because: a museum is a museum, a gallery is a gallery, etc., and then, all of a sudden, to do an exhibition in a tunnel, that's like - sounds like straining for effect. Could look like that, no? That's why I will take all the silly jokes available on that topic and make a tunnel of horrors. This saves me. But even then: not harmless, that business; regardless of whether you manage the job or not. Not only the dimension. I've just never had that. See, 250 meters long, and I don't know how many square meters. As for the academy, nothing comes to my mind, what this should be. If it is funny, if I really belong there, because I've always rejected school in some way. It is of no use apart from what you can learn there, such as printing techniques, but conviction botching too, and mutual calming down, and colleagues, friends. School is not natural to me. I have pupils who feel insecure and look for a real orientation, and then one does something wrong, and I have the responsibility to some extent. And I've already realized how often I talk shit, so ... That's exhausting, you hardly have time for anything else if you are seriously engaged in that. And you get the feeling, at school, that you have to start from the beginning

too. It rubs off so much! One of my most remarkable characteristics is that I show off. And when you call me professor, then - being professor, this is showing-off raised to the third, and it catches on extremely well. It buys you quite a lot of flattery from the taxi driver, or I don't know where. And everything comes off a bit better and everyone believes in it. I mean, it's a lie, but, one would insist on it. I don't know how long this will last, having fun with it.

— Hm. ...

✎ [reads, murmuring] Good art - bad art - definition: this principle has been mentioned: not old be it, not new be it, be it good! Finally, I've changed my mind. It's boring whether art is good or not good. The only thing that really matters is what I do with art, how I manage to integrate it into my life, that I think about it, and how I then represent it as my own work. To integrate: ok. Formerly, I took originals from artists ...

— Yeah true, the Richter painting, for example, that you used as a table top ...

✎ ... and modified, or painted them over, or made a table. And now I let them be as they are, the way they arrive, but in their context. And always everything in it's context, that's it, isn't it? As long as one isn't called Léger, where one can always recognize the painting again, what you must do is: tell stories. We just don't go sit in the desert, mute, but we are on this planet earth. I'm no reborn earthworm, but I will probably be facing one some time, so one has to communicate. This is given to us, so perfectly designed, sound, and teeth, and tongue, and upper lip and lower lip, no, one should ... [laughs]

— One should use it too!

✎ One should use it too. There is an example. I always hit upon Lüpertz because he represents himself as an artist, in such a manner, just even more

lively. He paints pictures, and really perfectly, and really well-painted, but well-painted means, you don't find a really good painting and you don't find a really bad one. There is such evenness - a homogeneity - that's in there. High-quality, but, not too exciting. So I'd rather hang two bad paintings in an exhibition, and they build up the other works. And you can recognize something, you can find something by yourself. This happened to Meuser in Zurich, they just picked out the best pieces, and Meuser has always lived on the fact that some of his things were completely out and that afterwards he decided they were rubbish and threw them away or he revised and wove them into something else. But that makes the whole thing an adventure! And that's what art should be! Well, this stuff about good and bad, they are mere terms. If I talk to a woman and she says that's really no good, or that's good and this is no good, that's no argument, is it? And, this is most probably true for art too. And one never exactly knows the impact of art. If you work on your own as an artist, you think of what you are doing right now, and how it looks hanging on the wall right now, or will in a year in such and such an exhibition. And it belongs to just such and such age group, doesn't it? In ten years, art will just look totally different! Will be viewed totally differently. I hope I'll be able to follow then, or just pretend to be the "old artist" and say what I am interested in - my juvenile illness. Well, it's just as impossible for somebody to drop in and say: this was a silly woman you had twelve years ago! Or, uh, the woman was somewhat nervy, or ... one simply cannot accuse me of such a thing. Everything is just a matter of development, isn't it? Hm, maybe I'm a development aid volunteer! Mother Theresa II. [laughing] Do you see the possibility to ... just another theory: that one doesn't live a second life when one has died, but that one lives twice at the same time! [laughs] See, live once, but doubly... That I'm Mother Theresa and at the same time I'm me! You need not wait for my reincarnation, I'm living inside her. [laughs] Is this possible? It must be, theoretically, because, if this stuff about abstraction in human beings possibly exists, then this should actually be in the cards too! Because we really think very very simply, but only up to a certain horizon. Maybe I can expect an intelligence quotient of one-hundred-ten, but six-hundred-eighty could be pos-

sible, maybe, that you carry around with yourself. So you just cannot think that abstractly! I mean Helmut Schmidt²⁷ once demanded, when that plane had been hijacked, that they should go home and entertain ... and perform abstract thinking on how to solve the affair. Well, independently, hahaha, thinking, nobody has been able to manage that. They just came up with gassing, or bumping off, or that sort of thing. One just doesn't use it, abstract thinking.

— And, seen that way, you are inside other persons too - you can start from that, can't you?

— Well, I'm not that much inside other persons.

— Maybe one doesn't want to know that either.

— And then, they look into it seriously. You just don't know how you are misinterpreted, you consist exclusively of misunderstandings. So I'm not that. Personally, I'm no misunderstanding, am I? I am what I am, no matter if I'm something great or nothing great, but it is exactly this that is original. And nobody influences this, directly. From my genes, I am me.

— No, but what you show, or how it is perceived, people usually participate in this, and this changes you too, doesn't it?

— Ah, that! Yes, sure!

— So, exactly as you say, you are Mother Theresa or part of her, this is how other people might talk about you later: yeah, I am part of Kippenberger. And this is how it'll go on forever.

— No, I wouldn't recommend this to anybody ... I mean, I would like to trade places with anybody. No!

— But you influence people, regardless of whether you want to or not.

— But were I to see this guy Kippenberger, I'd be vomity-sick, I would even drop out of the party, at least try to commit suicide. So it's very exhausting ... I just got used to it, physically, how to treat myself.

And be it hard as it might be, I can somehow handle it. Nobody else could do that. I could not demand this from anybody else. It would need enormous effort simply to stay alive, apart from additionally having fun thinking and working.

— This is fine because it also answers question number six.

— [reads, murmuring] The proportion of detriment to profit, art for your life. Yeah, something like that. Does the bill of costs and profit balance? ... This is very goofy, because it's exactly like that: somebody writes in a newspaper: this person survived in his work.

— Yes? So what?

— Nobody ever survives. We aren't clever enough to survive. Everybody dies. Surviving is not even in the cards. You might see to it that the woman behind the counter doesn't take you for a ride and make silly jokes about you, just because you don't have money at the moment. That's why I avoid entering banks and give my signature to other people for them to go in for me. For me, this is too substantial, the way this goes. Apart from that I have no relation to money, or I don't do things for money. And I've always felt excellent, and I've always had money. When I was a student I had a job, I even worked two shifts. At one I called in sick, and then took another job, and earned twice. And I always somehow got my money and always wanted a lot of it. That's it, isn't it? But what to me ... What would probably be a very, very great deal of money to other people, to me is not very much money. And, in fact, I am not allowed to have money. Not because I would not be able to work with it, but this is some kind of motor, never getting enough. If you suddenly have money, at least for me, I get lazy. And when I'm lazy, I don't work, then I rapidly get drunk ... Ok. But, if I work then this will translate. I needn't wear my head cock-eyed in order for some laws ... juice [laughs] to sustain the brain. What is it called, that water in your head? Extremely important? Hey, there surely is this brain-pan liquid.

— I'd love to look up the term again.

➤ What?

— What it's called officially?

➤ *Crevice-basin liquid or something. So, the optimal use of your talents ... One should be conditioned for that first thing in the morning! But one should also allow oneself something, so, you say: don't make such a fuss. If you are conscience-stricken, then you'll simply make an effort. Don't exhaust yourself! Don't have a bad conscience now, do this and that, do nonsense! That absolutely doesn't matter. Afterwards you feel remarkably better. But if you only fool around you may as well just open the skull and take stuff out, no? ... So that you are no longer bothered. Sit in a corner, hollow-headed, and sing, just silently sing to yourself. There's one guy, in the bar on the opposite side of the street, in the cider bar. He's been going there for forty years. He just silently sings to himself, but he can still hear, ninety years old, can still hear, therefore, intelligible. And if somebody asked: what do you think, then he'd gesture somehow, perform some nonchalant movement of his hand and be pleased ... see: delighted expression. I mean, I'd maybe like to reach this state right now ... sometimes. ... Sooner or later that'll come. But I'll never be ninety years old. See, my chip ... I know it to some extent. Good God gave me a chip, but it's so construed, the whole thing ... He could have inserted a chip with everything on it, but some years ago nobody could operate such chips. And that's why He made it out of flesh and blood. My chip is programmed for seventy-two years. This is the age I'll reach. And there are certain periods of time, thirty, but this would rather apply to the father: by thirty you are to have made it. This was put in by the father, by the other father.*

— By the other one?

➤ By the other father. Or: God's left hand, or what that should be [laughs]. God's penis.

— Are you talking about your earthly father?

➤ My father. [both laughing] Most likely he'd be His right hand ... [laughs] And, being twenty-four, you can say you are settled, the main development; but we've already had that.

— Yeah, we've had that.

➤ Yeah, and now, of course, I'm on a major crisis-handling committee, but I still realize it as a crisis-handling committee. That's why a lot of development is involved in that, where it doesn't matter any more what you do, but what you don't do anymore. I care rather more about what I don't do than about what I do do, or what I have to do.

— Yeah, and this was different in the old days?

[pause]

➤ You don't become more intelligent. You are born with a certain amount of intelligence, but only the benefits of it might show up a bit better.

— What you do with your intelligence?

➤ Yeah. So you get a bit more clever, or you are not anyway, but you can treat yourself better. The one thing that annoys me is that I must eat. The same story in every restaurant, and you always go to restaurants, at noon, and in the evening. I'd prefer not to eat any longer, because I'm bored. The menus all look the same. I know the taste, there is nothing new in it for me! So, I mean, in Japan it's been new, so: good! But apart from that it's boring. And, moreover, looks like an excuse: let's go eat something! This simply means you want to sit in a bar and talk to people. Because they wouldn't follow you if you said: come, go to a place where many people are hanging around, or where it looks such and such and ... See, once, being a kid, one has had many friends, because they've just been interested in the apartment too. They wanted to see other apartments,

they wanted to be at some other place. Maybe I don't mean women, do I?

— They just wanted to see how it looks?

➤ Yeah, and that's how it is: nowadays I don't like sitting there in my apartment! No.

— Yeah, but there's nothing bad about it, one could as well eat nothing at a restaurant. If you don't want to eat, you simply drink something. [laughs]

➤ No. At the moment I'm taking this medicinal-herb cure! Try it sometime; something new for me. And one for the heart, another one for the kidney, another one for the liver, another one for the spleen, another one for the brain ...

— And they're sloshing around in there? These herbal liquids?

➤ Yeah, quite so. Built up an entire bar now. ... I guess it's healthier to admit one is sick than the other way 'round; that one knows one is sick and has to be cured.

— Hm. And how do you plan to cure yourself?

➤ You've got to love yourself. One can't jump around the whole day long screaming like crazy that one is sick in his head. But you say ... you need to allow yourself something for a change!

— But I thought this was not your problem, was it?

➤ I'm just racking my brain all day long.

— Yeah, but you love to allow yourself something repeatedly, don't you?

➤ Yeah, but if I looked over my shoulder, or someone else critically approached me, he'd say: this one behaves like ... treats himself like shit. That's it! But

they don't have to put up with what I do. And I won't go down to pain-street or come over all tearful. An example: although I always drink, nearly every day of the year, I only get drunk twice a year. And this is independent of the amount of alcohol. Could be two, maybe three bottles of wine - I usually can take a lot, can't I? Done! Drunk, speak thickly ...

I And what then is the reason for this?

K Ask uncle doctor, not me, one who knows everything. The doctor doesn't know either. Doctors are a disease of their own, they have got to live on other people's complaints. Just look, this is the funny thing about my new doctor ...

I The one with the medicinal herbs!

K ... with the medicinal herbs, who, first, is no doctor, and second, uhm, during the day she sells prescription drugs. And, afterwards, she does her own treatment.

I Then she does "healing"?

K With people, uh, with medicinal herbs, of course. So she probably lives two lives. And her husband probably does this too [laughs].

I Is it like doing an ordinary job and then letting the "true identity" come out in the afternoon?

K See, she's a bit clairvoyant too, and told me she had known she would meet me! And this is why she went into that store.

I [laughs] That's heavy!

K What?

I This is heavy stuff!

K No, in fact it isn't.

I No? I think it is.

K If you understand and you can handle it, it's ok. Additionally, she always had this vision: the man

without a face. She didn't know how I looked, she only knew that she would meet me, and at the right time and place. And it's exactly like analyzing Bleich-Rossi's kidney. She says: everything fresh and healthy. But the same goes for me. I refresh myself every day too. In fact I don't have a face at all, just always come up with new stuff. That's why I can't have a face in her imagination. ... Is this theory ok?

I It sounds really obscure!

K Obscure? Not if you can handle it ... I have many visions ...

I Healing and clairvoyant stuff, visions - where in the hell will this lead us?

K I've had many visions too. I've always had my series. Being nine years old, on a "high," they call it, I was illuminated. I was foretold everything, so that I could do it. That's it. Some have it, others don't. I can foretell things too. Maybe this is why I've so little concentration. The film always breaks off. Or dreaming in the morning, see, I dream for two, three hours, and I know that I'm dreaming. And I say: Martin, would you mind guiding the dream in that direction. And desires: of course it doesn't work. You wake up, but then you fall asleep again and dream of exactly the same thing. And then you always believe it's reality. I'm so exhausted in the morning because I've dreamed so much. It's like already having gotten through a whole workday in the early morning! Or predicting ... See, I did things - without bragging - like wear a crinkle-effect leather coat and these hats I bought in the East - these "good morning" hats. I did all that, and presented it. And then, suddenly, it was fashionable, without them ever knowing of my having done it. Nobody had looked. Something others claim for themselves. I don't claim it for me. But suddenly it existed, and, in fact, "large-scale"! Such things, cracking these jokes, about slouch-trousers, jeans-patchwork trousers with platform boots, and ...

I Clogs!

K ... crashing down the stairs on the way to the john: small performance. All of a sudden, this gets pop-

ular and they shoot feature films, ten, fifteen years after that. So this is a prediction too, about certain things; my way of making predictions.

I Well, I don't know, I wouldn't want to call that predicting!

K But I'd known it before, and made it public, see. I didn't dress that way at home!

I No, but this isn't ... it's rather a, a ... a sort of sensitivity for ...

K "Wanting to shine by ugliness"?

I Yes, probably.

K So, deform oneself. And make a style out of this, and then, suddenly, these trousers become fashionable - now everybody wears these trousers with the slashes. And then they cost twice as much. It's ridiculous. Yeah, I mean, of course one has to pay for somebody to come up with such things. Once [laughs].

K Ah well!

K Yeah, in destroying things one really earns a very great deal of money. There, I'm talking of war now. ...

I Do you mean war in art or the other one. ...

K ... Because it goes on nonstop; no pause.

I Yeah?

K See, the only real war is telling jokes, this is the ultimate form of war.

I [laughs] What? Force people to listen?

K Oh, it's not only that. I can tell them well, so well! The jokes!

I Yeah.

K See, people actually laugh. And then, there is one silly one among these, say, thirty jokes I tell. And

none is due to me. It's just the way you present it, such a joke-telling party. It's how you tell them.

— And what is war in that? In that procedure?

✂ If somebody doesn't know you ... this really is war!

— Yeah. Right. [laughs] That's right.

✂ Or, for example, racist jokes or what shows up there, in this joke department, it's so complex. There are ... the totally nice and lovely ones, the jokes about women, male jokes, about virility ... so just life! And life worded in a few sentences with hand-slime. Krebber is doubly smart, in the meantime. He's found out, because he can't concentrate so well ... he's realized how successful he can be by omitting the point at the end. At the point he says, "I'm afraid I forgot the end." But, by then, he has already been talking for five minutes, and there has been so much laughter - what do I need the end for! There is a picture in the Fred the Frog book where I copied Joking Peter (Witze-Peter).²⁸ Such a comic: "I hate you - I hate you." Two people standing face to face with these knob noses, and: "I hate you - I hate you - I hate you!" Totally fragmental ... as I omitted the last picture, the point, which is the content of the joke. That's the only thing ... well, hm [laughs] that's the joke after all, which lasts longer then. The one with the open end.

— Yeah, though, if one practiced that systematically, then it gets goofy again.

✂ One ought to be a deliberate offender.

— Yeah.

✂ Systematically? That much doesn't come to mind.

— No! You just mentioned Krebber. I know in advance that, if he tells a joke, then somewhere he'll say, "Ah,

I'm afraid I lost the point," or "I'm afraid I haven't been thinking this topic over long enough," and then I always think: this is utterly boring.

✂ Sure, but he can present it so well. ...

— True, I see, entertainment counts too.

✂ And, uh, he makes that artfish ... artfizz ... artfuzzy.

— He artzifuzzies. ...

✂ The whole thing.

— Yeah!

✂ But he also lets it be a simple joke, not that serious, but it's part of his work, part of his presentation!

— Yeah. That's right.

✂ And this also depends on how this man is dressed. Now the one who always used to pay attention to his clothing, to the right track, to the right cord width, or, with a checked shirt, to how big the squares can be, now he enters a store wearing short leather trousers - so: gag! And it's consequent. There is one line. And: we are experts in what concerns Krebber, aren't we?

— Yeah, sure!

✂ Hence we are experts in art! Just imagine someone coming along right now, one who isn't yet that involved. I don't think of the postman Sparbier now, but, let's say, some consultant or other. He'd stand there before him and have no idea of what's happening. That's the story: the book is not yet finished. And that's what I'd like to work in, to write the happy end - Kafka. That's my life's task, I believe.

— To write the happy ending for Kafka?

✂ Yeah. For Amerika.

— Yeah, sure. Come on. You mean this seriously?

✂ ... a large task, of course.

— A very large task!

✂ Because all people are going to ... going to cry at my burial, the casket is to swim in their tears, but everybody's tears! And they'll all love me for what I'll have done at last. Everything else was nice, sure, but one forgets it, one is concerned with one's own affairs too ... being human.

— You believe in the "final great deed?"

✂ But the last one must be thick. As I child I always thought, you must now paint picture pictures, but Mr. Immendorff has been succeeding in that eight-hundred-fourteen times by now with *Café Deutschland*. It shall not look like that. So something very touching. But this came along at the end, the most beautiful one came on at the end. That's how it should be! In fact there are many people who climax when dying, don't they? It must be the most wonderful, warm feeling, handing over ... Yeah. Gabi told me this, when the car she was driving began to aquaplane. And: into the wall at top speed. There were some stakes, and then the wall, and, suddenly, nothing but a wonderful feeling. She saw Helena for a moment, and then there was only warmth. At first she wouldn't dare tell that to anybody, that she felt that fine. No one-way road ...

— But, twilight zone.

✂ Yeah, and then you go ahead properly. Then you don't have to suffer from the whole trouble with these minor silly urges, to keep yourself alive. Then the "free program" will start. They'll somehow make one-hundred-sixty-seven earthworms out of your body, whereas your mind - high above in the clouds. Unbeatably on the cloud, because everything's fine.

[laughs] Is this possible? But one doesn't need to provoke it. [laughs] And again: "Now beat - well!" If you turn yourself off existentially, the whole "must," and "want," and "would like," or "do somebody a favor," or "don't disappoint people," or "but if you only just work on your own," will end. It's perfectly clear, then you won't be able to live any longer. You won't manage to get that ordered.

— You mean, you simply go crazy?

✕ Me? I surely won't go to an asylum.

— Yeah, yeah. Then you take off right here, at the tape recorder.

✕ You take off and people don't understand you any longer.

— Yeah.

✕ So then you can't talk to them any longer, and this is why they throw you into the booby hatch, or, you've done the big thing, and you know it, then it's over just the same.

— As an artist, should one have role models?

✕ In fact, answering is the mistake of the question, isn't it?

— [laughs] Why?

✕ You are always addressed as an artist. True, one can't say, uh, human, it's so hackneyed, one can't use this any longer, but artist - then you are that, an artist must be such and such, and represent such and such things. And then you can ask about his subject. But maybe I'm not a witch doctor. I'm not some kind of easel kisser.

— No, sure, but I mean, you earn your money in art, and this defines you, this is your job.

✕ This is not completely true.

— See, I tell you your profession is artist. This is what one must start from!

✕ But I feel more like ...

— Who cares how you feel! The reality speaks for itself.

✕ How I feel inside - I would sometimes ... No. I'm a sales representative. I feel more like a sales representative. So, as a consequence, sell something, including ideas. Then you can tell the people something, you are a psychiatrist or something else. After all, I mean much more to people than just that I paint pictures. There are many who don't even know my paintings or things: Baah!...

— No, I didn't mean that!

✕ There are artists, sitting in Hetzler's office and going through my vita, what I did ten years ago, and they ask: who did these paintings? They've never seen paintings by me. That's it. And this is how I really enjoy it.

— Oh yes?

✕ Well, I'm more like a sales representative for this and that, and, after all, some things may change, but being an artist is such a terrible pitfall. You get too vain, or want to cover yourself. Being an artist, like every profession, is existentially conditioned. Everywhere they can fire you, can't they? The wall gets pulled down, and then all of a sudden you are out of work. But, up to then, for forty years they were telling you you'd always have a job. Although one cannot reduce everything to existence, a lot derives from it, but not always. So, moving independently ... there used to be this wonderful term "freelance artist."

— [laughs] Right, this is a good point! This term has totally disappeared.

✕ Yeah, because it's worn out. That's like - if somebody wrote: "Friday 17th, 7 p.m., opening. The artist will be present." Even before we'd finished reading, the card's already in the waste basket because this is

worn out. Although there might be something beautiful, or exciting, it just no longer exists. Because it's worn out ... slumped.

— Does the notion of pop mean anything to you? Did it ever have a significance?

✕ What relation did I have to pop? What in fact is popular or the like? What is popular: nonstop nostalgia. Either you bone up on Goethe, or the seventies have come again - the clothing, a ponytail, some air balloons, and install these subdued pastel lamps; but it always involves speed. Today this gets conveyed, pop, with videos. You can no longer imagine music without videos, strictly speaking.

— Without pictures, yeah, but, concerning you, things are really different, aren't they?

✕ You can no longer go to the theater, because it's not that fast. In a pop-video you get it, in three minutes, what they drag out to tears. The more progressive the director, the longer the performance, you're there twelve hours.

— Marathon.

✕ Only Fassbinder²⁹ could imagine that topic, in, for example, "Berlin, Alexanderplatz," and it was intense! Everything else is nothing but childish falsehood and deceit.

— If one talks about pop as being popular, then that was just the right mixture.

✕ Yeah, popular - popular - no-no-no-no - one can also define it this way: everything is popular just in case somebody is an expert on his profession, which means: only actors watch actors, a director visits his own production, and they all live in a world of their own, so only the votes from inside this world count.

— Yeah, sure, this is what I mean: With Fassbinder it was different.

✕ Fassbinder is exceptional.

— Sure, this is what I'm saying.

✂ Beuys was exceptional, Warhol was exceptional, few were. I'll be exceptional some time. We've already gone quite far, scientifically. We know that there is the speed of light. Just nobody wants to imagine the end, black space, it's difficult to handle. But, in fact, this is the most exquisite topic - space - infinity, space, depth, height, time, these are terms ... where you no longer have to eat yoghurt. This you could consume incessantly. You don't get bored because it's open.

■ But somehow it seems everything that's going on in so-called art always lags behind. So that this domain is particularly susceptible to these nostalgia trips.

■ Hm, no. At a rough guess, of course, ninety-nine percent look like that, but then there are exceptions, the one percent. For instance, I claim that Léger, who made art of his own in painting, is hardly comparable. But there are these people who are very simple. I learned, at school, that the people who are somehow good are the more intelligent ones, stand in their own way. Naivete brings it to light, what elements there are. It's like mixing paint. You've got to add this and that, these are simple elements. You cannot say, "now I'm going to do this," and invent some new device. They made oil out of plants, oil-paint, the first colors. This will never change. They can't change it that quickly, can they? But naïveté, to handle it, simply, deal with the whole topic simply, do it totally simple, naive people are just better in that. And thereafter they know the efficiency of their story, then they naturally go on with it, then they won't stop. Because it's often that youth has been very exhausting, and then one no longer wants to be bothered. I mean, I too want to become Botero, only paint fat women, three a year ... or Chagall, some kind of fiddler in the sky, do such things. Why should I be interested in this "art?"

■ Yeah, but that doesn't work either!

✂ It's not that I wanted compensation for anything. I simply don't worry about this kind of living, and

being a kid, which I still am. But this will calm down, maybe, this desire to teach people, to change them, to advise people strongly. This doesn't work for long.

■ What do you mean by, "this doesn't work?" Does it have to be given up?

✂ Lost. Lost. Turn away.

■ You like doing this!

✂ Nah, rather falling and allowing to fall, and incessantly giggling, so this is ... I want to please myself too. I want to treat myself well. But in a way that it's no longer necessary, to speak badly of other people; but by smiling. This is aiming high. But this is all very exhausting!

■ What? To reach that state of mind?

✂ I can talk a lot, but I can't generalize, because it only affects me and the poor guys who meet me, or the lucky ones. No more about it. I cannot hang a painting, my vita in a museum and hang it in people's heads. It's a painting that's hanging on a wall, it'll never have efficiency, except as a reminder, as a postage stamp or something of a life. Palermo achieved it, to have great vita, have exhibitions that still survive inside the people - plus some very good works. But ... Palermo ... how people pronounce his name makes everything clear. This warmth, how cordial.

■ So you mean that Palermo paintings themselves are not postage stamps. Or are they? I didn't quite understand this.

✂ No, just postage stamps. Even art is a stamp. Oversized stamps, but exactly the right proportions. And this guy had very good proportions. That made up the difference.

■ Hm. Yeah, right.

✂ That's why I'd never say stamp, but it just has some memory value. For instance, I always visit the "Broken Kilometer" in New York. I only need a short look into the room and then I feel fine, and go out again.

...

✂ "What is the artist required to smell of?" Of course he ought to smell of an artist! And the art dealer is standing there already, smells of art too! In fact, exclamation mark, his outfit, his appearance, his choice of the restaurant, the people he meets, how long he must talk to whom, how long he has to think things over, all that is timing, again I'd say, eighty-nine to eleven percent. The rest are exceptions. Others are human beings too, even with a big nose right in the face, and who like to joke now and then, like Tarika, the art dealer who promoted two young artists - big joke - Yves Klein and Fautrier, and says: Picasso was only good until 1919! And wherever you enter the gallery there are just books, the secretary, and the salesman. So the art dealer in the background hears that you don't speak French and comes parading, knowing eight languages, and says: "I'm a Jew, I speak German. And, in the window, to the left, there's a Fautrier corner. If you were interested in details you could go down to the cellar, push the paintings aside with your feet and have a glance in there, but actually it's not that important!"

■ Is there any piece of art that you would like to see - or see again - in reality?

✂ The painting lives in its surrounding, what's hanging beside it, how that is designed. Painting on its own doesn't exist, it just isn't possible. By comparison, I'm grateful for an Elvira Bach hanging next to me, or a Fetting on the right.

■ Now I want your comments on other artists and their work. Let's start with Joseph Beuys.

M Joseph Beuys is one of the quite well-known notabilities. They hold that even the most uninteresting artist, or medium, or misrepresentation of an artist, would come up with one good sentence in his life. Warhol's sentence is: everybody's a star for a certain amount of seconds in his life, so even an unimportant artist can be good within these seconds. Beuys said a lot of good things. One of them was: seen from the purely aesthetic point of view, the Wall in Berlin is eight centimeters too short. One sentence. Now the mistake: he put out a record as a late work, "Die Sonne statt Regen" [the sun against the rain]. So instead of "Reagan" which is meant. ... I saw him myself afterwards. He was so addicted already, I suppose because he had to work that much, if he hadn't had something to work on he would have had nothing but pain, in his head. He saw himself with the rose and the hat, in the first row of the parliament, there he would heal everybody forever! But that was simply too much! That record. And in fact, as an artist, even theoretically, eighty-five to fifteen, if it got high, don't let anybody know what you're doing, they'll use you. And allow you to be used, risking that he turns out a flop - and is a flop.

I What about Vito Acconci?

M Vito Acconci. May I call him Vito? Uhm. Not undiscovered, but not hyper-famous. Maybe he has regulated that for himself and wants it that way. A certain amount of power may be invested, modestly turned towards himself, that's possible. Always had a watch too, on the walls and so, and played with it, and naked women and the like. So very much like me, just that he hasn't such a strong urge to present himself! [loud laughter] Who's next?

I Mike Kelley.

M Mike Kelley is a new example of colorful Californian art. In California they like it to be colorful, in the paintings and elsewhere. And a very honest hippie, but in contrast to the other Americans, not that super-expensive, sensationalist principle of production, which is very expensive and high polish, and it doesn't make things bigger than they are, which Americans like to do very much. He makes simple jokes which are nice and lovely, and, so, I suppose, they're identical to his personality, but he's

not closed against his environment either. That's probably why he can only make small things, relatively seen, a lot of information actually. Dirt colors. That is everything - correct.

I Good, next, Oswald Wiener.

M Oswald Wiener - we'd better wait on what the result will be in the end. Let's say the following for now: I would not like to have as much skill, where skill equals knowledge, as he has. I like it better to grumble about content, artists, and do anything, but I'm not alone with my thoughts. I don't have only to rely on that. I can divert myself.

I Good. Klaus Kinski.

M Klaus Kinski?

I Yeah. I just wondered if you knew the new book *I need love*. In fact I wanted to give it to you, but then I forgot to take it with me.

M I'd like that. I must have it on my shelf!

I Yeah.

M But Klaus Kinski - "Ich habe niemals bitte gesagt," that was the series in *Bild*.³⁰ He never said please. And he's one of the great survivors, together with Helmut Berger.³¹ So I would promptly remember eighteen good things of him. Just the claim that he slept with his daughter - even if he hadn't said that, not to deny it's already ... very good! And he has a well-shaped body, so he makes you jealous. And if, again in percentages, ninety-nine percent were lies, he'd still be on the fucking track. But it is rare. The Americans don't have eroticism, to give an example, to put it very, very roughly. But they all reproduce, and I wonder: how is it done? And my latest theory is the following: they experience. ... Yeah, it's aggressions they are working off, in bed. Absolutely - in fact, they just defend themselves, so the opposite of creation: they're defending themselves!

I Uh-huh.

M And this happens in bed, and the result is a baby.

I And that's why there are so many of them!

M Yeah, of that kind - Penck!

I Yeah.

M [pause] However, the self-presentation that guy achieves - I consider it wonderful that he doesn't wash himself, he's never washed himself. Any kind of social criticism or politics, or whatever he does, it's in no way awful.

I Anything else, or is that everything?

M Hm. See, there are so many beautiful things but he's also content being a millionaire or to set examples, so postage stamps again, mannequin. And what about art: paint mannequins. That's how people should. That's what one used to say. And he paints mannequins and is successful with it. You can see such quality differences in all that mannequin painting still. And they don't get boring; in no way. And what I like about him: also the speed, that productivity.

I Always, always doodling.

M Which could be fatal for other people. He aims at another direction, hence very positive. And he can live with you, he is a horde man, like me, but caravan expedition. He always has his people around him, and caravans, or music, or this and that ...

I Yeah.

M He ... traipses ... all around the world. And therefore he sleeps in a tent, just like nomads do. So in fact: primitive life. Penck - a lot of things would come to my mind concerning him. And, uuh, I wouldn't say he was a genius, but what others say of themselves at that gallery. He's the first who's never knocked on the table and said ...

I "Look here: Me - Genius!"

M He seems to me to be the most authentic of all these people. So in his subject and that kind of painting or painting symbols, that's correct.

Now to Salvador Dali and Gala.

"Salvador Dali/Gala" no matter what that man painted, absolutely, his diary is the greatest.

Will survive forever?

Will survive forever, will always meet the demand. So that's the proof. You may paint fivehundred paintings, but maybe they're all totally unimportant. If only you could formulate the sentences that go with them. Which can be applied to Warhol as well, just that Warhol didn't do it while he was alive, to speak that way. Just after his death it was released. It would have been even greater. The diary.

Yeah.

So define society as art. Of all awkwardnesses of the world that's the one we like best. That's where we have pleasure, that's really art. These really free assumptions, ... that actually was one.

Good. Jeff Koons.

Yeah, Jeff Koons, very strange, nothing comes to mind.

We already had him. You already commented on him. And Peter Pakesch³² may also be skipped. I don't know why I ...

No, he can't be skipped! I once discovered him for myself, but just because he had a silly corner with really ridiculous stuff there, but precious ridiculousnesses - a bike with an apple on it and the like - and also wasn't continuously present at the art fair, but afterwards disappeared. But that wasn't a principle of his, he simply didn't even want to represent that, he really didn't want to. I said: "Max, what kind of bird is that, there, diagonally across, with such chubby cheeks?" Then we did a show together. We made faucets out of swords. And, no matter what we did, everything was allowed, in the beautiful exchange, Austria-Germany. And, above all, his

behavior is really gentle and he doesn't take everything that seriously just to be successful. He can overlook an artist smoking too much hashish, and talking funny, and crying, and so on, then he would calm him down, though he is attacked by the artists. So, Petzi, he's nice.

And he's the one who managed to make Franz West³³ the Austrian ...

... national artist?

Yeah.

That's not his only merit.

No, not only, but even then, ...

Yeah, he never stopped working with him, that's his merit.

Good. Serge Gainsbourg³⁴

Well, he can do that: I love you - I don't love you too. That's exactly the sentence, that man, that connection. And becoming famous by smoking, I mean...

Smoking?

... constantly smoking. It wasn't even drinking!

Yeah.

Features of the face were normal, but smoking, constantly smoking, there's only him, and Menotti, the former Argentine trainer of the national team. Menotti looked good, was dressed suitably. Famous, by just smoking. You could have a smoky voice which you get automatically in that case, but nothing about smoking - that's an achievement, sporty.

Barnett Newman?

"Who's a friend of red, blue, and yellow," that fellow?

Yeah.

Nothing comes to my mind.

Okay. Asger Jorn.

I can only say: if I offered theories now, Albert would be angry at me, because he claims that for him! It's said that not everything he tried, he began, would always ... That's why we can skip that.

Ascan Crone.³⁵

Ascan Crone was occupied for years with bringing up people in his office where there were empty drawers and account books, of course the kitschy Hamburg hanging in the corridor, and he would show them the secretary at the moment they didn't want to tell their pseudonym, or played the question game, or didn't know what a spirit level was, or thought they would be used for straightening the asphalt on the street around the corner. That's one of the miracles, and the others are: funny New Year's Eve on Sylt, Marcel Oldenbach, Donald Baechler and he - I don't want to say more about that ...

[laughs] Well! And now two political artists? Hans Haacke and Peter Fend.³⁶

Hans Haacke.

Yeah.

See, he's a quite sociable man, isn't he? So very informed, and doesn't get into party politics, but makes politics in galleries and writes about it, he's a storyteller. And he can make it big, he can control that. I don't know how he commercializes that, I have no idea. The one thing I would have done, had I been Hans Haacke, to fob the things off - absolutely - on Ludwig,³⁷ actually, not fob them off, but sell them, seriously!

I: Hm.

K: And the timing too, he should have done that. You must not be kid-gloved in that. But otherwise: positive appearance, and the typical sentence: I wouldn't like to miss that artist. He is important in the environment. I don't know enough yet about Peter Fend, but I suppose he's paranoid. I use him for my own work. I'm not related to him in any way. So that's what I think of Peter Fend.

I: What does that mean, you use him?

K: I guess they pretend, they want to become successful hysterically, by paranoia with all the trimmings that are thumping.

I: Who, Fend and his ...

K: He is penetrating, even in his appearance, and he's a restless kid, an eternally crying kid. As long as I've known him, and that's been just one year up to now, he's been pestering me.

I: Are there artists you feel related to? Do family ties still exist?

K: Family ties? There surely are no more.

I: Yeah, we've already had that in another part.

K: There are many blood-suckers. I don't know if that's called blood-sucking ...

I: Creaming the profits.

K: Creaming the profits - no, parasite.

I: Parasites, yeah.

K: Not really bloodsuckers, because that would be an honor, somehow ...

I: Are you a "man of culture"?

K: The confusion results automatically. Maybe it's still exciting to teach, to advise somebody or the like. When I'm alone, when I put the red somewhere different or in a place it doesn't belong on the canvas, then I want to be different from the others automatically. That's advising again. Or I paint the picture, because the painting goes to a museum, or a collection, and that's: teaching program. Why? Because the latest *Documenta*, the worst of all, was the most successful one. Because: most pupils visited it.

I: Then we have Picasso.

K: Once in a while I see a painting of Picasso, and consider it really good. That's my fun in it. But when it's said he's the greatest artist ever, I wouldn't have thought of that. But his representation, how everything works - there I absolutely appreciate that he should be the greatest artist ever. Because he'd made it, he's the very biggest, maybe independent of his works! I don't know how often we may use the word kitsch any more, maybe we'll stop for this year.

I: What do you mean by "normal artists"? That you do more than others?

K: They aren't that complex, that is, they aren't open. Albert, it's astonishing that some like Albert can still exist nowadays. See, who can paint real paintings, and that it's interesting, that it's important. So artistic representation by painting, with oil on the canvas, that you can use it at least. That there's something contained. That painting is not yet finished. Actually you think: we've had that, painting, and this was here, and that was there, and everything was there. And then Albert is an example for the fact that it's not yet over.

NOTES

- ¹ *Capital* is a leading German economics monthly that publishes a yearly chart of the top one hundred artists. The charts are drawn up according to a system developed by the late Willi Bongard.
- ² Walter Dahn is an artist, lives in Cologne.
- ³ "Gabr" (Gabriele) Hirsch is M.K.'s girlfriend and the mother of Helena Augusta Eleonore Hirsch, born to them on 24.8.90.
- ⁴ Rainer Opoku is the assistant of G.J. Dobayil.
- ⁵ Michael Krehber is an artist, lives in Cologne. In 1987 he was M.K.'s assistant.
- ⁶ Dierckx Diederksen is a journalist and editor of the music magazine *Spezi* in Cologne.
- ⁷ Dr. Richter is a reference to Gerhard Richter.
- ⁸ Postman Sparber is a character from a German TV game show who delivers prize money to contestants.
- ⁹ Andrea Fraser is a conceptual artist, lives in N.Y.
- ¹⁰ Rosemarie Trockel is an artist, lives in Cologne.
- ¹¹ Mike Kelley is an artist, lives in L.A.
- ¹² Hubert Kiesel, Meise and Günther Fritz are, like M.K., artists of the Max Hertzler Gallery, Cologne.
- ¹³ Oswald Mathias Ungers is the architect of the Hertzler building.
- ¹⁴ Wolfgang Rauter is an Austrian poet and playwright.
- ¹⁵ Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967) was the father and first chancellor of the German Federal Republic.
- ¹⁶ Christos M. Joachimidis is an exhibition organizer, lives in Berlin.
- ¹⁷ *Brigitte* is a typical German women's magazine.
- ¹⁸ Paul Maar is a former gallery owner in Cologne.
- ¹⁹ Ilona Staller is a Hungarian/Italian pornstar and former representative, now married to Jeff Koons.
- ²⁰ H.A. Schab is a (populist) actor.
- ²¹ Detective Tappeler is a German series.
- ²² Michael Werner is owner in Cologne.
- ²³ Loret is a leading film and TV comedian.
- ²⁴ Karl Valentin (1879-1949) was a leading Bavarian comedian, acting artist.
- ²⁵ Hannalore Kahl, Helmut Kohl, the Democratic Party, present chance (Germany).
- ²⁶ Kasper König is organizer and the *Städtische Kunst* (Fine Arts) in Frankfurt.
- ²⁷ Helmut Schmitz Social-Democratic (1924-1983) of the Federal Republic.
- ²⁸ From a cartoon regularly in *Ti*.
- ²⁹ R.W. Fasshünd was a German alter director.
- ³⁰ *Blid* is a health unlied.
- ³¹ Helmut Berger Kinski are two most famous.
- ³² Peter Palech is a gallery owner.
- ³³ Franz West is artist, lives in Vienna.
- ³⁴ Serge Gainsbourg (1928-1992) was a French composer and singer.
- ³⁵ Acan Cretu owner in Hanover.
- ³⁶ Peter Fend is artist, lives in Berlin.
- ³⁷ Prof. Peter L. late man and philanthropist, architect, Gert