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**Generation X and Beyond**

**Moderator:** Roberto Bedoya  
*National Association of Artists' Organizations*

**Panelists:** Michelle Coffey  
*New York Foundation for the Arts*  
Michael Hoyt  
*Kulture Klub Collaborative*  
Esther Robinson  
*Creative Capital*  
Mario Ontiveros  
*National Association of Artists' Organizations*  
*board member.*

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**Sato:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce Bao Phi, who was born in Vietnam and grew up here in Minneapolis. He is the two-time Minnesota Grand Poetry Slam champion and was a finalist at the Nationals this year in Providence.

**Phi:** The first poem I'm going to read is about me imagining if I was an Asian American shock-jock on the radio. I don't know how much you know about what happened in Minnesota a few years ago when a really racist shock-jock on one of our primary morning shows said very racist stuff about Hmong people.

So I imagined if I was a shock-jock what I would say. You have all seen the movie, *Good Morning, Vietnam*, right? You know about the Vietnamese Buddhist who set himself on fire back during Vietnam to protest the corrupt Diem's regime?

Good morning America! Welcome to the perilous yellow-power hour: loud, live, and clear here at WWOK. I'm your host, Victor Charlie Chan – the man – bringing boom bangin' jams slammin' through the red, white, and blue to you. Side-steppin' the narrow cast by broadcasting in Hmong, Punjabi, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Canton, and Taiwanese, Thai, Tagalog. But – hey now! – you're in America so let me hear you say Nikomas, Minihaha, and Hiawatha.

We're keeping it Wu-Tang like Michael Chang, on the down-low like Margaret Jo, and bonging ceremonial gongs going on like Michelle Kwan and B. D. Wong. Are you turning Japanese? Do you really think so? Be my seventh caller and I'll send you on a trip, all expenses paid, for one night in Bangkok! So all you tough guys tumble for that phone. If you're home alone but not buggin' like Macaulay Culkin, turn on the box while you wash your socks and help me keep the Sonic tea party hot with Pizzicato Five, Jocelyn Enriquez, the Mountain Brothers, Bruce Lee Band, Sean Lennon, Corner Shop, and – yes, ladies and gentlemen – Smashing Pumpkins. 'Cause even though that guitarist James Iha says he doesn't want to be considered Asian, we will anyway.

So come on Asian America, let's dance little China girls and boys! Hey, Asian guys! Can you dance? Now the racial stereotypes say that black men can dance and white guys can't, so how do you fit in? Can you rumba? Can you cha-cha? Can you do the Chinaman Slide or the Bombay Bomb? Come on Asian America, it's time for Asian perspiration, sweat condensation 'til the whole world shakes without condemnation. Can you dance like a cocky Confucian? Can you get on down like a Taoist? Can you boogie like a Buddhist? No, not the Courtney Love, Beastie Boy type of Buddhist but can you boogie like a Buddhist who'd set himself on fire? Can you boogie like a Buddhist who'd set himself on fire? Can you boogie like a Buddhist who would set himself on fire? Can you boogie like a Buddhist who doesn't fear droppin' dead to the dance floor 'cause he knows that his soul just keeps going round and round and round?

Are you gonna dance with another Asian? Hey, next person to call with a confirmed sighting of a cute, young, Asian American couple wins a Nobel Prize for Science and Chemistry 'cause you know seeing us together is like spotting Bigfoot. Are you tuned in or tone deaf? Are you broadcast or miscast? If you are in the house – or if I should say grass-hut – let me see you strut! This is Vincent Charlie Chan – the man – representin' live, loud, and proud on the perilous yellow-power hour. Are we Calgon, as in crystal clear? Can you hear me? Are you there? 'Cause I am here.

This is a poem about me growing up in my neighborhood, Phillips, in South Minneapolis which is Minnesota's largest, most ethnically diverse, and poorest neighborhood. I imagined if I was fourteen and saw my college-educated ass right now, what would the poem I would write to myself be?

It was tough for all of us, those times, it seemed. Our arms braced between the American dream and not being seen raised on the street called 26th and Bloomington, slipping through the seams in this country's multi-culti-quilt. We called it the same old

shit. They called us gook, chink, blanket-ass, spic, nigger, coon; and what was really sad is we called each other that too. We went to school and they called us new names like Native American, Asian American, Latino, Latina, African American, and mixed, while treating us the same damn way. And they called that progress. We called each other Bolio, Ses, Mustafa, Nguyen. We talked about hip-hop and minimum wage jobs and the girls who broke our hearts in languages that they would call ebonics, pigeon, reservation accented, or improper. We called it talking shit or I was just fuckin' with you.

We ran in the confused streets of Phillips from the police, from the crazies, from our own mothers. We ran until our chests burned and our hearts hungered for any place to call home. We ran but we didn't call it running, no! We called it hangin'. We called it doin' something. We called it survivin'.

So remember those times like when we were sitting around a table over at Arnold's and we heard over the radio about that one kid – yeah, how could you forget? – that one kid who once chased you with a knife. Yeah, how could you forget that one kid who once chased you down 26th with a steel bar? Yeah, how could you forget that one kid who once snuck up on you in that empty candy store parking lot and stuck a loaded gun up in your stomach? Remember that day when we heard over the radio about how he got shot dead in the street, and we didn't know how to feel about it, and we called that life?

Remember those times like when the streetlights ran low looking like wingless angels with hazy, lazy haloes, we sat in damp basements playing Nintendo, listening to Yo-yo and De La Sol, eating Ho-Ho's, drinking ice cold Cokes. We called it those days. And sometimes we turned our stereos up so loud that they would blow stories down from the trees and we'd dance in those basements, in those lunchrooms, or in that building. Remember that building where Guillermo painted a mural on the outside wall about respect?

We danced a modern day ghost dance, we break danced, we salsa'd, we cha-cha'd because we danced because we wanted to impersonate the electricity running beneath the city that no one is supposed to dig for! We danced because we had air in our lungs that we didn't know what to do with! We danced because no one could STOP US! And we called that living.

So when you get out of your fancy college, learning about postmodernist deconstructionists while still not knowing how to fix your own goddamn car, when you are sitting in uptown in some cut-throat coffee shop with a Phil Levine poetry book and a borrowed Powerbook acting like you're no joke, when you can no longer tell if you're liberating yourself through expression or selling your oppression, when they pretend to listen to you but still wish you would go quietly – remember there were those of us living here who called you friend.

I have two more. This one is really short, it's called "Skyscraper Love." I am in a play where I am the spoken word component of the play and I have to give words to inanimate objects. One of the scenes is somebody imagining these skyscrapers falling in love with each other and what it would be like. "Skyscraper Love."

When the colors painted by the sun slink into neon, windows upon windows, my multitude of eyes shine with reflections of you. Your spine is my ladder to the sky and my route to the ground. Your hair, the clouds, changes daily, I see shapes there, dreams, and rain. When the lights go out, we are stars and darkness. We wear everything, inside of us, distantly, movement and noise. I dance next to you through it all, my tall testament to the stars, we are the architecture of up, the end result of numbers and straight edges and tangles of white lines on blue paper; we have learned to love by design. You are the blue wave I dream about made manifest; you are the signature of the street preserved in glass. My steel girders shiver when the sun strikes you and you light up the city like a fractured candle whose bright fingers mimic the horizon.

Okay, I have one left. It's a work in progress. This last one I would like to dedicate to two of my friends, Emily Chang, who is in a Pan-Asian spoken word group out in Chicago, and Golda Sargento, who is in an all-Filipino Asian American spoken word group out in the Bay Area. I wrote this for them. "From Two Tongues and Eighth Wonders: Emily and Golda." I just saw them perform in Chicago. They do this great poem called "Not Your Fetish," about how they refuse to be the fetish of guys who have a thing for Asian women. It's a great piece, it's wonderful. The day after I saw them perform, they went out to have ice cream together – I had gone by then. This guy came up and tried to pick up both of them with this line: You know, if you guys came home with me we would be like sushi on rye. So what year is this?

So this is for them and I use two of their lines. Emily's line is: "Resist is a beautiful word." She wrote that, I use this in that poem. And Golda's line which I use is: "Earthquake, airborne, heart pulse transformed the verbal declarations of rhythmic life forms." So this is for them.

BHG is Bloodhound Gang; we protested against them for their racist, sexist song "Yellow Fever," about the same subject. Wen Ho Lee you guys should know. If you don't, go read something.

Seeing the both of you attack a mike like it was an old lover who owed you something. Seeing both of you grab a mike and light it up to illuminate and lead us into this thing called Asian America. To hear your voices sing and yell and whisper and pull and shape. To roar, to manifest beauty, and tug me out of my seat, my heart abandoned me for both of you. You who fight for the love between all of us doing the "You people are so good at math" of two tongues and eighth wonders to see if we could add up to a structure of yellow, brown skin and black haired architectures. A new city, an urban rap-city of Asian American riff-raff, hip-hop harmony to disarm their army of charlatans selling white wash, brain wash, lobotomies. I'd gladly let my heart go. To lend a beat, marching to match your warrior words, a breathing pump to match my fists, rising and falling to the flow of your poetics.

There is no room here for wanna-be, sly, pseudo-players lines, other men suggesting sushi on rye. This is about yellow and brown skin, black hair, beyond the glare of what they made. Trying to blind us with their false translation of beauty, trying to bind us with their glossy new version of duty. This is about sugar cane songs and stoop labor and hours of work writing our own stories 'cause the real Miss America is named Miss Education. Malignant ignorance, Miss Saigon as Miss Appropriation. And to slip from that skin requires the beauty of brawn that manifests as poetics from your brains, broadcasted from your heart, inflated in your lungs, and yelling from mouths that they wish would just stay shut.

This is about self love, inhalation, in the face of their assimilation and down low discrimination and their hard work fracturing our Asian American nation. But we see them. Deciphered and saw the semen in their artificial dissemination. This is about pronouncing pride in a country whose collective tongue still stumbles across our names. This is about surviving the translation with two tongues apiece to create that eighth wonder called loving one another 'til it sounds like music strung from zithers strung with our veins and flutes that distill shrill whistles of winds swirling in our lungs. And, no, this not to simply invoke – because they provoked – this is because resist is a beautiful word. This is because sometimes earthquake, airborne, heart pulse transformed of verbal declarations results in rhythmic life forms. This is because the truest and strongest love is the love that sees. And we, as the yellow, brown, Asian Am family, fight for it back-to-back from the rice paddies to the streets of D.C. to the protests of BHG to the cell of Dr. Wen Ho Lee. This is because we are Blasians, scorching our name with burning mikes across this stolen nation.

Thank you. I have one thing left to say: Enjoy your conference, shake hands and all of that. I have a CD for sale. I have to go back to my job now, but if you are interested, leave me your email address somewhere around here and

maybe it will get back to me. So, have fun everybody. Thanks for your time.

**Sato:** Thank you very much, Bao Phi. Just tell them we will write you a note if you are late. You shouldn't be late to get back to work.

I want to welcome you to this session on Gen X and Beyond, and I have to say, at this point, I am feeling really older than I want to feel. But we are very pleased to have you here.

It gives me a lot of pleasure, now, to introduce you to the moderator of this panel. Roberto Bedoya has been a friend for years. It says here that he is an author, a writer, a curator, an arts administrator, and I would add scholar, activist, a lot of other awards that have made him a noted figure for years in the arena of artists that are speaking up and speaking out. His bio is in the program so I don't have to go over it. If you can have a distinguished career in being counter-culture, Roberto has had that. So, I turn the panel over to Roberto Bedoya.

**Bedoya:** Thank you. The whole concept of counter-culture was put on the table and pretty much chewed up in this process called the "co-generate process." What we are going to talk today is about this convening that NAAO initiated through the bulk of 1999 where we had a series of nine think-tank sessions across the country where younger artists were asked to come and dialogue with each other and take stock about their place in the arts world and their ambitions. Also to do an assessment of the world in which they see themselves as they are trying to realize their goals and aspirations.

I will read a something for you that is from this publication called *The Field Guide*, which documents the convenings. Then each of these four individuals will make a small presentation. Then I will do a little Q&A with these guys and then open it up to you.

Before I launch into this prepared text, I need to voice thank yous. I think one of them is Joan Shigekawa, right here in the very front row, who has been a great supporter of this project.

Let me contextualize it a little bit. In 1996 I just started working at NAAO – National Association of Artists' Organizations. One of

the first things I did was convenings across the country and an activity called "The Dozen Dialogues" which went to twelve cities and some of them were trying to figure out what my members were talking about. There was a whole litany of concerns.

One of the issues that came forward and was the most pressing issue was about the question of the next generation. I was doing a debriefing with Joan about that convening and giving her updates on what the field was thinking and she said, "Well, why don't you bring some of those people into the office? Into the foundation?" So I said, "Okay."

That led to this first activity called, "The Gathering of Artists and Arts Professionals Thirty Years of Age and Younger." There were ten participants selected, for their accomplishments, that were invited to the Rockefeller Foundation to discuss their understanding of, and interactions with, and expectations for the artistic institution and worlds in which they operate. This meeting functioned as a crucial and important component of the planning process for NAAO's leadership development initiative – the Co-Generate Project. Michelle Coffey and Mario Ontiveros were at that meeting. Subsequently, they acted as the facilitators for this project throughout the country.

Shortly after that event, I realized that this project had to go on the road and I was able to get support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Rockefeller Foundation. We launched the project in January of 1999.

The Co-Generate Project is designed to develop, nurture, and support the next generation of cultural participants. We define this generation as approximately ages 20 to 32. Now, if one recalls that I started this inquiry in '96, that is four years down the pipe. So I am feeling like that dilemma of a TV series that is into its fourth season and is based about some young kid and he is growing up? So I got some 28 year olds who are now 32. They are still part of my crew and, yet, there are other issues coming up.

That also speaks to one of the wonderful challenges of this project that has been very successful for NAAO. That is to continue to be in dialogue with our community and continue

to raise the questions. I am really happy that we are able to be here to be part of that continuing project.

The goals of the project were identified as: we wanted to identify the next generation of leaders in the field; foster a dialogue between emerging and current leaders; ensure that their voices were clearly heard; identify clear and achievable goals towards mentoring the next generation.

As I said earlier, we conducted nine think-tank sessions across the country. Let me name the cities that we went to: Tucson, New Orleans, Seattle, San Francisco, Houston, Pittsburgh, Washington, D.C., Minneapolis, and New York. An odd assortment of cities. In each of those cities there were regional people from the area that came to the meetings.

We received additional support for these meetings from the Tucson Pima Arts Council, the Jerome Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation, and the Nathan Cummings Foundation who all assisted in this convenings activity.

Topics that we discussed included: leadership development, notions of aesthetics, and alternative art models that have been engendered. We have listened to, explored, and supported the beliefs of these individuals as they move forward in their careers. *The Field Guide Reports* speak to the concerns and practices that this generation brings to the art world.

When I started talking to my peers and other arts service organizations, I felt the challenge was how to speak about this project and not steal the vitality out of it. One needs to underscore that when one identifies a community or constituency that has not been acknowledged by others, the challenge becomes how to facilitate the expression of this new voice without falling into the role of spokesperson for this community.

People would come up to you and say, "Bedoya, you know about those young kids, tell me!" This has been a concern for NAAO and The Co-Generate Project because we discovered quickly that the art community had not paid much attention to, or created many opportunities for, this generational community

to inform the arts infrastructure to which they belonged. The Co-Generate Project is not about a template for organizations on how to develop a youth audience or how to revitalize an organization by appropriating the ideas and spirits of this generation. Rather the goal of both has been the empowerment of these individuals who are the rising generation of arts leaders.

Two more things, then, before I introduce the panel. I am not responsible for the name of this panel. The first thing that happened at every one of these convenings was that they tore up the name. They shredded that Gen X characterization. Most of these guys just hate that name, the way they have been named, by the marketplace.

The other thing is that I know there are people in this audience who are under thirty and in their 30s. So obviously, when we have Q&A, it is important that you participate.

Our first speaker is Mario Ontiveros who is a doctoral candidate in art history at the University of California, Los Angeles. His dissertation is entitled "Re-theorizing Activism: the Aesthetics of Social Responsibility." He has worked professionally in cultural arts centers, non-profit, and for profit spaces, most recently at the Getty Research Institute. He just completed a residency program at APPEX – Artists Pacific Performance Exchange – where he lived and collaborated with thirty artists from the Pacific regions of Asia and the West Coast for six weeks. He recently was elected to be a board member of NAAO. Mario?

**Ontiveros:** Thank you, Roberto. Before I begin, I wanted to thank the Grantmakers in the Arts for bringing us here and for allowing this discussion to take place. I think that *The Source* is a very important title, and it's important for me to acknowledge people who have been a source to me, aside from everyone sitting up here. One would be Josephine Ramirez from the Getty Grants Program who has been a mentor of mine for the last several years and has put me into numerous situations that have exponentially extended my creative and critical processes.

I would also like to acknowledge Tomas Benitez of Self Help Graphics; some of you heard him

speak earlier today. I have been lucky enough to never work formally with him but I am always impressed by his ability to talk about their organization.

The third person is Tomás Ybarro-Frausto from the Rockefeller Foundation. I have only met him once, but I know him as a writer, as a Chicano historian, and his work has inspired me tremendously. Since it is called *The Source*, those are some of my sources. Of course, all of my shortcomings are my fault, not theirs.

As Roberto mentioned, Co-Gen was a byproduct of conversations that took place called "The Dozen Dialogues." One of the things that occurred throughout "The Dozen Dialogues" was: Where are the young people? Roberto turned that question around in a very proactive way and said, "What have we done, as arts administrators, to nourish and nurture the next generation?"

Over the next few minutes what I will do is talk briefly about how NAAO approached the idea of leadership development for emerging artists and arts professionals in this Co-Generate Project.

My primary role in the project, along with Michelle Coffey, was to be a co-facilitator, which was to help frame questions and facilitate the discussion. As co-facilitators, we occupied a rather precarious position because we were at once outside of the institutions but we were also part of the institutions as being representatives of NAAO. What we realized after the first meeting was that our dilemma or precarious position was actually that being generationally part of an "us" as well as a part of a "them" was very much a part of what these emerging artists and arts professionals were experiencing.

During these multi-day discussions, the participants responded to a series of questions and they were as follows: What compelled you to work in the arts? What are the most important issues in forming your work? How do you maintain your sense of ethics when working within a community or public? In what ways have those in the arts field – broadly defined as executive directors, visionaries, arts administrators, activists, grants organizations, board

members, etc. – actively cultivated and nurtured emerging practitioners? And how can NAAO and other arts organizations in the field assist you in your artistic and administrative roles?

These questions encouraged a debate about the possible alternatives to earlier and existing models of cultural production, circulation, and reception. We discussed the notion of complicity, resistance, and affirmation, as well as how to work collaboratively to live culturally and think critically.

It is important to contextualize our participants. They arrived too late to take active part in the '60s and '70s empowerment movements. As many practitioners were born years after 1968, the events of that year remain something that they experienced as a document of history but not a lived experience. In other words, they grew up during a time when there was little movement in any movement. Because of their age, they encountered the debates of social, political inequities with phrases uttered by many of their older peers – that they were not on the front lines and could not possibly understand the beginning of these struggles, therefore, you should follow. Yet social issues, political platforms, and cultural debates have altered.

This generation has been working with other methods of engagement and activism. This generation has also been critiqued for having nothing to rally against and for not organizing, although I think that its notion of political and/or even tactics of intervention are not recognized. We will talk a little bit more about that later.

Most importantly, they have come into the arts field with a backlash against identity politics, and a sense of not wanting to talk about race and identity at the same time. That is part of the aftermath of multiculturalism.

In terms of the arts field, they have never had the benefit, vexed as it might have been, of full support from the NEA. Further, they missed the flourish of alternative spaces which, by the time they arrived, despite the rhetoric of some mission statements, were actually not that different from mainstream institutions as both relied upon the same operational procedures

and hierarchical logic. For many of the participants, the outside looked all too familiar to the inside. As this generation entered the mainstream art world, it was asked – perhaps because it was a project of affirmative action and multiculturalism – to accept, talk across, and manage difference. They are supposed “to get” diversity and, you know, well maybe they do, but I think in ambivalent ways.

On one level, multiculturalism opened many of the doors but it didn’t guarantee a seamless access to the inside. It meant that once you entered you became both a diversity statistic and a native informant. While many of them actively avoided serving as the institution’s diversity poster child, they did not resist the productive and enabling aspects of youth and educational programming. For many, working within the system makes possible a way of transforming it even if only slightly and momentarily. Working within and understanding these conditions and contradictions informs their capacity for leadership.

NAAO initiated the building of the next generation of leaders along several different registers. First, by calling upon arts administrators, it pushed them to look closely at their staff and other associates as potential leaders, while encouraging them also to think about the necessary leadership qualities needed to run an organization after those founders left.

Second, this project made clear to the participants that they had also been identified as leaders in the field. Many of them felt a sense of empowerment knowing that they had been nominated to participate, which is particularly salient as most of them are as old as the organizations that they work in.

This dynamic fostered an inter-generational dialogue of leadership development that NAAO had hoped for. Many of the Co-Generate participants formatted their own notion of leadership development and tried to rethink existing, perhaps inflexible, models. Certainly, they were wary of adhering too tightly to any model. As Bill Redding, in his discussions of the limitations of political models, has said, “Modeling, for all its glamour, is always exploitive.”

Many were also working in seemingly new ways, often in temporal arts spaces, sites designed with a vibe of limited expectations and short shelf lives, a type of hit-and-run tactic. More fixed spaces served, often simultaneously, as exhibition and performance, bookstores, educational activist centers, coffee bars, and taco stands. They have learned the burden of place, the limitations of setting up shop. They have also learned the new sites of place, such as cyberspace. No longer can these artists walk into a neighborhood, like was done in the early ’80s, without realizing that they are, more than likely, part of the first aesthetic wave of gentrification. What they share with their older peers is that they must work on multiple platforms to produce their work. They balance day or night jobs, perhaps as a baker or as an arts administrator, to support their collaborative efforts. Many of us, I think, realize that the ideas put forth at the table at the Co-Generate discussions are still forming and flexible.

Finally, an implicit goal of the project was to propose a notion of leadership development that was not predicated upon developing leaders that were simply a replication of existing models. We were trying to avoid creating another Junior League where you simply follow, observe, and follow some more.

The Co-Generate Project provided a flexible template for participants. On their own accord, various regents have staged several of their own ad-hoc, do-it-yourself convenings. There have been regional exchanges such as art shows between various areas. Participants from each region actively assess the project by contributing to the NAAO *Field Guide*. NAAO and a few of its participants presented the project to the National Council of the Arts in 1999. Also, NAAO has asked several of its participants from the Co-Generate Project to be on its board. Finally, all of us gained from the project a greater sense of responsibility, and this is, I believe, the cornerstone of leadership development.

Thank you.

**Bedoya:** Thank you, Mario.

We will have time for Q&A afterwards, but let’s just continue down.



Our next speaker is Michelle Coffey. As I mentioned earlier, she was part of the initial convening that happened numerous years ago at the Rockefeller Foundation. Currently, she has just started a brand new job as a program officer at the New York Foundation for the Arts. Prior to that, while she was working with NAAO as the co-facilitator of the Co-Gen Project she also was working for the national campaign for Freedom of Expression where she was the acting director before she took the job at the New York Foundation for the Arts. She has a history here in Minneapolis where she worked at the Walker Arts Center and where she created and implemented a program targeted to teenage audiences. Michelle?

**Coffey:** Thanks. And Mario, you are amazing!

Thank you so very much to Grantmakers in the Arts and a big thank you to Roberto for keeping us moving forward. Before I start, I also want to recognize the sources that have inspired me and continue to do so. It is almost like a full circle for me to be able to come back to Minneapolis after a few years and see many, many friends and mentors that continue to inspire and shape my life. Folks like Seitu Jones, with the Jerome Foundation; Tom Borrup; members from Walker Arts Center; Neal Cuthbert and the McKnight Foundation initiated the program that I did at Walker Arts Center. So, in some ways, I feel that they are the inspiration and the starting point from which I started my career in arts administration. Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis is very dear to my heart and will always be home.

Mario laid out, gracefully, the framework from which we were operating. I am going to be doing more of a marketing, quick component of the issues that we discovered. Due to the panel's desire to directly engage with your questions and ideas, my comments are going to be brief and we will be able to work on those a little bit further during the Q&A session.

First, I want to provide some context and background of this generation. As my generation entered our adulthood, we were tagged as Gen X slackers with characteristics of being unmotivated, not focused, no initiative, etc. You guys know the *Slacker* film and Douglas

Coupland's book, and so that's the framework in which we entered our adulthood.

A decade later, as we enter our thirties, Gen X slacker has been replaced by Gen X entrepreneur multi-millionaire. We are now the successful dot-com-ers. So those boundaries of Gen X slacker and the Gen X multi-millionaire have really, really allowed us flexibility in terms of how we identify success.

Some of us have made an active choice to work in the arts and the nonprofit space, maneuver through this commodity-driven economy. Therefore, our modes of operation have changed. I wanted to speak a little bit further on those modes.

Also just a sidebar, Andy Warhol's fifteen minutes of fame has sped up for our generation. We now are on fifteen seconds between the time an artist's idea is presented and the mass marketing of that idea ends up on a billboard. Therefore, we now have to strategically plan when we decide to, quote, "go public."

Some of the issues that I want to touch briefly on are: DIY – as Mario had mentioned – the Do-It-Yourself mantra; marked and unmarked; working below the radar. I will deconstruct this further. Then I want to speak about our notions of success.

We came of age during the AIDS epidemic, the Reagan administration, multiculturalism education, and only knowing the NEA underneath attack. We know that Social Security, as we know it today, will not exist in our senior years. Based on that groundwork, the strategy of DIY – or Do It Yourself, or some of you may know it as Out of Your Pocket – is a strong characteristic of this generation. Hit-and-run store fronts, motels, one-night living room exhibitions, is one answer to the outcome of the funding and resource limits for many of us.

One of the things I also wanted to do was provide some of the models that this generation is doing. In the Mountain Plains region of the Co-Gen Project there were issues of isolation and not being able to connect with other peers and artists, not only within the country, but within their own region. Folks from the Ink

People, which is a space in Denver, Colorado; Plan B, which is an alternative space in Santa Fe; and the Museum of Contemporary Arts, which was started by one of our Co-Gen participants in Tucson, decided to begin to circulate their shows and work that way.

Mario and I were wonderfully surprised at how often, intensely, and passionately the topics of race and class impacted the majority of our regional conversations – specifically, in Seattle, Washington and Houston, Texas. These discussions of race and class led to the concept of being marked and unmarked. How are we classified? How are we identified before we state our position? This discussion of multiculturalism and its failings, going beyond the four F's of cultural understanding – those four F's being: festivals, fashion, food, and famous people.

An example of how our generation is dealing with this is there is an organization in New York – I don't even want to call it an organization, a collective – called Apogee. It is a grouping of writers, curators, and administrators who come together and explore the African Diaspora in connection to contemporary visual arts. Apogee facilitates exchanges between public organizations with an educational arts program and curatorial projects.

We are now just seeing that the discussion of post-modernist identity is not at the level that sometimes some of us want. What happens is that we pull together to push that discussion in the public realm when organizations aren't necessarily willing to go there with us.

This concept of marked and unmarked also illuminated methodologies and aesthetics that became clear as regional conversations traveled coast to coast and in between. As I mentioned earlier, our commodity-driven economy is forcing us to be able to operate under the radar. You are not able to really identify what this generation is doing. When we do presentations and talk to folks, a lot of folks were wondering, well, what *is* this generation doing? Give me the clues, I want to see your artwork that's produced. This generation slips below the radar both at operational strategies and aesthetics, so that we are not tagged and that

we are not marketed by the marketplace. The work is both artistically and administratively not easy to read.

One model that I want to present, in terms of working artistically, is with the artist Dario Rebleto from San Antonio, Texas, and also a Co-Gen participant. Dario explores DJ culture and spinning, sampling and interdisciplinary techniques that color both his aesthetic practices and productions. His work is a sampling of both historical lineages and different types of elements and mixing it up and presenting it in different formats that folks may not be aware of.

So given the cultural climate that exists while we are emerging as both artists and art administrators, we have to redefine what is success for us. As Mario spoke to earlier, some of us are E.D.s of art spaces that are the same age as us. Is that success or does that speak to leadership burnout?

Some continue to define success by art form. Another definition of success is being able to be a working artist in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Alabama, and not having to move to the coast or the arts centers. That is successful if they are able to stay in the arena that they wish to be in. Or as one of our Co-Gen participants from L.A. who is an artist and educator, Pato Hebert, said, success for him is continuing to allow room for passion, honesty, love, and hope.

And Esther is going to take it from this point and talk about that for us.

**Bedoya:** Before I introduce Esther, Michelle was talking about Apogee, which is an African American artists group in New York. The artist who was a participant in the Co-Gen convening was a woman named Jenny Jones. She works at Creative Capital Foundation, as well as does Esther. But one of the nice things, and I will just digress here a little bit about this project, is this wonderful little sticky factor that we have got going on. The word is out on the Co-Gens and people always say, oh, yeah, you went to that? What was that like? That is how Esther came to me. She wasn't a participant in the Co-Gen proceedings but she is sort of like a kissing cousin now.

It also speaks to some of the vitality that this project has initiated and has been keeping us ongoing and engaged.

She is the director of Media and Performing Arts for the newly-formed Creative Capital Foundation. In addition, she is co-founder of Wave Length Releasing, a company formed specifically to address new forms of production, distribution, and exhibition. Wave Length is responsible for the first fully digital film release which was executed via satellite to five cities in October 1998. It was also responsible for the highly successful multi-platform release of *The Last Broadcast*, the first ever desktop feature; a \$900 movie that has gone on to gross over a million dollars internationally.

Previous to this, Esther was a series producer for two seasons at *Alive TV*. She has also produced the feature documentary, *Homepage*. Esther?

**Robinson:** Thank you. I am actually from Minneapolis, I grew up here; I graduated from Southwest High School. We were joking around that there is a strong Midwestern like, "Yeah, arts!" vein going through us all. In the spirit of thanking our sources, some of my very essential, formative years were spent here. I went away to New York for film school and I came back in the early '90s and was very lucky to work for a man named Neil Sieling producing a national PBS series that was formerly called *Alive From Off Center* and then became *Alive TV*. I was very lucky in that he allowed me to become a serious producer by 23. I got to run that series for two seasons.

I also will say I had a very difficult time at the local Public Television station. I need to also say that much of my spiritual guidance while here, came from a fabulous woman named Robin Hickman who I could not thank enough for saving me during some of the most difficult moments of diversity clashing I have ever experienced, which I experienced locally.

Finally, and most importantly – and I will get to this in a second – I am most privileged to work for Ruby Lerner, the president of the Creative Capital Foundation.

That segues exactly into what I wanted to talk about. I get really nervous when we have these panels about Generation X or Generation This or Generation That because I think that what it allows for is a distancing. It allows people to say, oh, those kids are out there doing all this crazy stuff! How nice. One of the things that I have noticed is that a lot of the values and strategies that are employed by our generation are non-generation-specific. Really they are the embodiment of strategies and values of our moment, and anyone can take those strategies on and use them and employ them in a way that is really specific and really amazing in the current time.

Why that is important is because we are struggling right now with the legacy. We have talked about this a lot – the post-counter-culture legacy. We are in a different moment. The majority of the institutions that surround the arts were formed in a different moment. They employed vocabularies and strategies that maybe, possibly, don't meet up with the moment that we are in currently. A lot of the difficulty of the people of my generation in meeting up with those institutions, both "alternative institutions" – and I have put that in quotes – and mainstream institutions is that they are not speaking a similar language. But that language is not generational-specific. I know people in their 50s and 60s who have a hard time in the same institutions because they are willing to use and employ the strategies of the moment. I throw that out there as a challenge to people who are running organizations to maybe think about: Who are you if you are not defined by the counter-culture? Who are you funding if it is not defined by the counter-culture? And what is the moment that we are in?

Now, one of our difficulties – like Michelle and Mario were saying – is that we do tend to go below the radar because we do not want to be marketed to. One of the strategies for survival is to go below the radar. I released a movie by satellite to five cities in 1998. This year, the Sundance Channel is launching a satellite-driven mechanism to twelve cities, five of which are the exact cities that I did this program in. They are capitalized, they are bigger, they are faster. So, every time you show up

publicly, you are immediately subsumed back in.

Then the question becomes, what are the things that have been percolating? What are things that you need in your survival kit? What are you trying to attain? I say this in that I feel quite strongly that part of my ability to see this has really been because I have been able to work with Ruby, somebody who has lived an activist life, who has developed a strong craft in the moment of her professional career and has kept growing to such an extent that she can speak to me – exactly to me – in the present and yet I can benefit tremendously from her craft. Some of the disadvantages of our generation are that we can't link up to the people who have the craft and the skills to do the really big thinking. If you, as a person in your thirties decided, okay, I'm going to have this career, your greatest challenge is to find someone who can help you get the skills or to find the environment in which you can get the things for your survival kit.

What I have written down are the things that I feel have been articulated by the group and other people. I would also like to thank Roberto because one of the most important values is maintaining a networked infrastructure, finding people who think like you, and getting their information, and sustaining yourself through the process of a very difficult moment in time to make work or be hopeful or tread fearlessly. Like Roberto said, I was not actually at Co-Gen. We have been able to identify some of the elements of our moment and that is vital to me. I wanted to thank Roberto in the beginning and I got all excited and didn't.

The things I wrote down were: access to and accumulation of relevant and reliable information. Adaptability and flexibility. Healthfulness. Informed risk-taking. Maintaining a strategic, networked infrastructure – your ability to find like-minded people, or maybe even different people, but to form partnership and strategies and alliances to survive. Dynamic communication – your ability to name who you are and what you are fast enough so that you are in front of the marketing mechanisms and are constantly capable of being able to surprise and

transform your listener into a hearing person, as opposed to a passive recipient of information. Finally, the most important thing, and I think one of the things that we struggle with as a group, as a generation, is rigor and craft.

One of the things that has made me so thankful to find Ruby is that I have had a difficult time working within arts infrastructures. Really difficult. How am I supposed to become a leader in my field if I can't watch somebody lead in a dynamic way and in a way that makes sense?

Part of the problem right now is that we are faced with some really hard looking. It is really painful to look at our arts infrastructure right now, it is really painful! To a certain extent, it is only painful in some ways. In other ways there are all these really dynamic partnerships happening and, if we look at them through the oppositional lens of the counter-culture, and it has to exist separate and solely for this and in this rarified way, we miss a lot of the opportunities for creating sustainable infrastructure.

That leads me to a couple of things that I wanted to throw out that are less formal, but things I have been thinking about.

One is the flexibility of our generation. For instance, both of my parents have each had one job in the last thirty years. I have had about thirty jobs in the last five. What that means is that when I go into an institution, I am really picky. I am not going to work for no money, with a person who has "founder's syndrome" and will not let me do anything fun, and is really burnt out and has no where to go. I'm not! We have to be aware of that. So, where am I going to go? Am I going to start my own competitive institution? What does that mean for the arts infrastructure? Why aren't we dialoguing? Where are those people going to go? What does that mean? It is hard to be a boss of people of our generation; it is not easy. You know, I have a lot of demands. Poor Ruby!

I started a company that could be valued at millions and millions of dollars and I left to come back to mission-driven work because I am committed to making this happen. I am committed to making it happen in a big way and in a dynamic way. I was lucky that Ruby found

me because she is willing to just throw it all up. She is willing to make it dynamic, she is willing to say, take risks, to really say: What are we doing? And how do we make it better? That fearlessness, though, is not permeated in our arts culture right now. The question is, how do we create that in other organizations? How is that duplicate-able?

Then, one of the other things – obviously, I keep talking about this – is mentorship. I would be not in the arts still if it weren't for Ruby Lerner; I would be in high tech. I would be in high tech because the way that I am flexible, the way that I am curious, and the way that I am demanding are all rewarded within that sector. The way that I want to take risks, the way that I like play, and the fact that they will give you healthcare. If I was not given a package where some of those elements were there... I have a certain level of autonomy, I am listened to, we are able to make changes based on what we see. We have healthcare. And also I work part-time! I work part-time for the Creative Capital Foundation and I am still producing. I know what the artists are facing because I face it too in the other half of my 700-hour week. That, I think, was great. I am willing to trade certain things for what I get from that, the values I get from that. The return I get from making an investment in Creative Capital is much bigger and better than I ever could get from a technology company. But, that is not always available in the arts world, and it is important to recognize that.

The final thing that I wanted to touch on and that I have concerns about, on a larger level, and I think we need to come up with some really exciting ways to deal with this, is founder's syndrome and fatigue. It is really important that our generation recognizes the incredible challenges that a lot of the arts administrators have faced. I understand how difficult it has been to make and maintain these organizations. At the same time, it is really painful to watch people going through a personal midlife crisis and taking their organization through it with them.

We have to ask ourselves: Is there something we can do? Can we swap out a young person and give someone a sabbatical? There are ways to approach this that are not punitive, that are

not like, okay, we both fail now. What are we going to do if there is such a high level of fatigue and the only way to keep some of this infrastructure going is with younger people?

The other question I was thinking is: What if it is a young person's game? What if at a certain level an alternative arts space is for the person who is getting the skills and the opportunity and not the cash, and not the healthcare. Maybe those are the only people who can really afford to do it as we have thought of it now. What does that mean? What are the implications of that?

**Bedoya:** Thank you, Esther.

The final speaker, and then we will have a little conversation and we will get to the questions, is Michael Hoyt, who is a visual artist here in Minneapolis. He has a long exhibition history of painting and installation works in the Twin Cities. He received his BFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. He currently serves as Director of the Kulture Klub Collaborative, an arts and social service program which develops and guides interactions between artists, the arts, and cultural practices with teenage youth who are at risk and homeless, in an attempt to bridge survival with inspiration. Michael?

**Hoyt:** Thanks, Roberto.

Well, to follow suit, I would like to just give my shout-outs and my thank yous to a few people that have been generous sources for me as mentors and as leaders, and just people to talk with. I owe a lot of debt to my previous mentor, Dorit Cypus, the founder of Kulture Klub eight long years ago. Christie Atkinson at the Walker Teen Programs, who is a co-collaborator and a generous thinker. And the Reverend Neal Cuthbert at the McKnight Foundation who is a supporter and a good friend. I thank you all, Roberto, Michelle, and all of you for coming.

I would like to start by saying that I was part of the Co-Generate Project as a participant to represent the Midwest, and it was an incredible experience to meet young people, of my age or younger, from this region. What I was hearing from most of the panelists was that we share many similar concerns and issues around

culture and around creating and practice and making things and wanting to be shown and wanting to be heard. But there are very different things, there are very different reasons why we can't do that locally. The issues that face artists in the Twin Cities are so completely different from what the artists face in Iowa or Chicago. And so the mechanisms that we use to create and to express art here are completely different.

It is also somewhat troubling for me to talk about my generation because I think that we are still developing and forming what our vision is, what our place is in this large scheme of things. As we all know, in the past 10 or 20 years, the art world has gone through some significant changes that affect how young artists are engaging, producing, presenting, supporting, and ultimately succeeding in the art world. Many of us are fortunate enough to find, create or – in my case – adopt a meaningful role in the arts culture. And when I say adopt, I mean that my mentor Dorit was very generous in passing off her organization to me. I find that very rare. When we talk about “founder's syndrome” and we talk about people that are willing to move on and to hand off an organization, I don't think that is a very common practice.

The so called Gen X demographic is moving out of its 20s and into its early 30s. It is important to contextualize that because, as artists and as administrators, this is a critical time in an artist's career where they really have to make that decision. Am I going to stick it out? Am I going to hang it up? Do I really have the time? Are there really the resources out there for me to do this? Many of my peers, and myself included, are faced with those questions every day and hopefully will continue to push through the boundaries.

Is this a natural process of elimination? Is this something that happens to artists, and is just a weeding out process? Or is this due to the fact that maybe my generation was led to believe that all you had to do to become successful was to be brilliant and to create things and the market would reward you? Or the nonprofit or the foundation would reward you?

How does the new undergraduate, or even the graduate, fit into the nonprofit driven arts world? How are they trained to fit into these mechanisms that exist today or were even created ten or fifteen years ago?

As Mario stated earlier, our generation has moved beyond the studio to form a cultural outreach, and that is what I do. Although I love this and this is my passion, as a perpetually emerging artist and young arts administrator, I am challenged to both bridge and to manage artistic practice, yet, at the same time, provide an arts service.

Our generation has somehow taken this idea of providing arts service and created a new form of artistic practice. It is something that is still a challenge, it is something that we still have to struggle with, because I think that it is not a traditional way of practicing art. It is not being in your studio and being engaged with a singular process. It is about being with other people and being in a community, and sharing resources and networking, and creating new organizations.

Finally, Esther spoke of health and the relationship to the workplace. For me, health has always been carving out a meaningful and rewarding work. As a director, I am happy to wear all of the different hats that we need to wear administratively in small organizations here. You are a director, you are an administrator, you are developing grants. But I would never dare let anyone take away the time that I spend with the youth and the contact time. That is really important in setting up a structure for an organization, to set up time to be a visionary, time to sit and think, and think forwardly. But also time to reflect, time to process with the people that you work with and the people that you provide services for. Also to focus locally and on the ground level, and that echoes “below the radar” work.

So, I guess I would like to close and open it up to Roberto. I thank you all.

**Bedoya:** Let us thank all of them for their presentations. I want to share one thing and then I will throw it up to the panel themselves for some conversation. All of these comments

were also very reflective of what were two days of intense conversations with ten to twelve individuals coming from very different positions. Some of the Co-Gen participants were into artists, some were working in large cultural institutions, some were working at starting up their own spaces. All kinds of disciplines were a part of the conversation. It was always incredibly animated, incredibly intense, and incredibly enriching, as you have heard from these four individuals.

Does anybody have any immediate response they want to voice in regard to what you have heard already from your peers? Or I have a little question I can throw out. Well, if it doesn't fly, we can just go to the audience.

Mario made a comment, talking about the legacy of artist-centered organizations, alternative art practices and whether in the last 25-30 years, the development of community-based groups, alternative art space, specific organizations, all sort of link to an ideology of the '60s/'70s alternative counter-culture. You made this comment, "there is little movement in any movement" today.

Then Esther, as a layering on top of that, commented about "founder's syndrome" and fatigue. Does anybody want to talk about those two things? If one wants to accept for the moment "there is little movement in any movement" and then you also have this fatigue that may be linked to people who are trying to keep a movement alive.

**Coffey:** Could I throw on one more layer?

**Bedoya:** Sure!

**Coffey:** The generation behind us. I will throw that on top. They are right there, they are amazing in being able to work with young people. They are prepped and they have had great engagement with Michael and are versed with the language and also are ready to make that commitment.

**Bedoya:** Let us focus on the comment of "little movement in any movement." Does anybody want to run with that?

**Robinson:** There is this interesting thing about the generation that has preceded us, which is the self-identity of being a youth movement, a counter-culture movement. If you think about the things that I was saying about adaptability and flexibility, healthfulness, informed risk taking, a lot of these things are children of that previous moment.

But there are certain handicaps to recognizing that a moment has passed. Within that, recognizing that the only hope of survival is the excitement of reinvention. Probably the only thing that is going to get you up in the morning, is going to get you excited about what you do, is your ability to engage. Part of reinvention is connection with the world. What does that mean if you have been formed counter? If your whole identity is about being counter-something, or separate, what does it mean to be connected?

I have a lot of painfulness about this. So much great work has happened. I know my parents thought that transforming society was going to be enough. Then they transformed society and society morphed into this really nice marketing tool and didn't really give them the payback that they thought they were going to get and they are tired and they are looking for a payback that maybe they won't get. That is a curious thing. What is your payback? What is your legacy? For the people who are finding it – I think Ruby is a good example – I think she gets tremendous payoff with using the skills that she has made for making something new and something different, but that is a continuous line from those original values. Also, being able to work with those of us who are very engaged in the moment. But how do we do that across the boards? I don't know.

**Ontiveros:** What I meant by that "there was little movement in any movement" wasn't to say there were no movements. It just means that the idea of being invested in coalition building became harder and harder to maintain. I am always amazed when I look at manifestos and artist statements from the late '60s – and for me, particularly, looking at artists as the cultural workers within the Chicano movement – and there is this amazing, provocative, power. Empowering is so much the right word that

when I read that, it's like to have that, just for a day, would be wonderful! To be able to have that sense that art practices in a network of unions, visual and textual circulation of those kinds of things – to have that as a possibility would be amazing.

We grew up where that was very much bankrupt, where it was very hard to imagine coalition building. It is easy to imagine community building. When we talk about community building it is always about consensus, it is never about dis-sensus, which is what this writer I just read yesterday talks about – dis-sensus. It is really hard to address that in a proposal, in discussions. How do you manage that? How do you address it? And how do you work with it? How does collaboration really work?

Many of the folks that we talked about experienced that same thing. They did very much what a late '60s, early '70s model would be, which was, we are queer, Asian artists, and we're going to focus on theatre. After three months it was, hey, listen! This is all male-driven, gay stuff. This is not about lesbian, Asian American artists. And so, let's break off. It was almost impossible to hold that together for a very long time without competing vectors and agendas crisscrossing each other.

Sometimes the break was amicable and other times it wasn't. But what seemed to happen was that there were break-offs and there were moments when the right environment was there, where they would collaborate, then they would go into other separate areas without a sense of loss. It wasn't about numbers.

The other thing that is difficult about growing up within little movements regards the older generation of artists. There was a period of time when the market really did become a factor for them, when some artists who were working in very advanced forms of art-making succeeded in the marketplace. Others believed that they were true to a community but didn't succeed. Those that made it were sometimes seen as sell-outs. It's very hard growing up and trying to figure out, well, what does radical mean? If someone was radical in '68 but now she is living in Bel Air? That was a sense of failure.

I think this generation has worked with the realization that it is impossible to avoid the marketplace. I was actually enlightened when I heard somebody say, oh, if a vodka company wants to sponsor me then that is fine. I know what they are bringing and they know what I am bringing.

**Question:** Isn't that floating above the radar? If the Absolut Company comes in and says, I want you to do something. Isn't that your head popped up above the radar and then Absolut is going to send out its missile and blow you up?

**Ontiveros:** Oh, sure!

**Question:** What are you afraid of losing? I am very curious about that, this idea of below the radar. What do you lose if you do something for Absolut? What do you lose if you are a craftsman sewing buttons at the Guthrie Theatre and Disney comes along and offers to pay you five times what you are getting now, plus health insurance, plus everything else, and you are working in the Disney Corporation? What is lost there?

**Robinson:** I think there is a lot.

**Ontiveros:** I think you lose the right to fail.

**Robinson:** No, not even necessarily. I think it is so complex. I have done a lot of projects with really, really big corporations. Well, on one hand, you lose the right to fail. And there is a craft-building process that you want to be separate from the marketplace.

**Question:** You are not going to learn those crafts at Disney? I am being a little facetious here, but I really am curious.

**Robinson:** What you lose is the context of what you are doing. I think that is essential. If you are doing it from an art context, people are seeing it and hearing it in a very different way than if you are doing it from a marketplace context. And then our value is solely, solely, in the transformative sense. It only works as a transformative moment! The minute somebody hears Disney, boom, the transformation is gone.



They do not have the same visceral response to what you are doing.

Now, can you still partner with them? Yes, to a certain extent. But you have to be very, very careful about how the context of your work shifts when you partner with corporations.

**Question:** When you are talking about survival strategy, you are really talking about the survival of the spirit.

**Audience:** Subjectivity. It is the difference between being a subject, an acting subject, and being the object of someone else's scheme. It sounds to me like that is what you are saying.

**Robinson:** Right.

**Coffey:** We are really interested in audience, too. In what context is our work being received? And what control do we have over that? The ideal of developing a language to speak with that audience is very, very important in terms of the process of developing a work. When Disney or Alt..., I am not going to say Altoid, but when Disney...

**Robinson:** But it shifts, though, because Altoid could do one bad thing and then, suddenly, they are off the list. I mean, it is complex!

**Ontiveros:** I would actually go a little bit different and say that I don't think anything is lost by having Absolut or a vodka company sponsor you. Because the people that we met – and certainly it is a limited group of people that we talked with – but what I found very engaging was that the artists knew right from the start, this is a limited engagement, this is one event, we need to raise funds for that. The group had this little hook that actually kind of destabilized the whole commodity aspect of it. It was amazing. It was working with limited expectations. It wasn't a marriage, it wasn't a partnership that was going to be for six or eight months or for a year where your mission statement was going to have to be examined and you were going to have to go to a board. It was much more: look, this is a two-day event and we need someone to fund this. So, that is where I think that it is gained and not necessarily lost.

**Question:** First of all, I just wanted to thank you because after Bill T. Jones today, this has been a very provocative day.

You were talking about the pain of watching the current infrastructure and the aging founders and all of that. I have to tell you that I am feeling a little pain watching all of you. It comes when you start talking about your "survival kit" and how that is what you need to get up in the morning and that is what you need to go do your work. I am thinking, where is your dream? Because it seems to me that there is this shift. I taught at an art institute for four years in the mid '90s and I could feel the shift in my class. I am not pointing a finger and blaming, I am being observational here, because I used to feel this way after my class.

A friend called me the other day and left a message on the machine right before I left town to come here. She was reading out of a book that said, in a post-civil rights era, we have substituted empathy for activism. We were laughing about how we can all sit around and light our aromatherapy candles and feel very empathetic and feel very good about ourselves.

I hear you talk about survival and at what point do you say, survival is not where it stops. Survival is not where the process stops, but activism is the next thing.

I am wondering if the youth movement that I started to read about, which involves globalization, which involves commodity culture, is, essentially, out of control because we can't even see where the lines are anymore. It comes down to everybody has to beat each other up over whether or not you are going to take some money from a vodka company or not. That becomes these huge battlegrounds. It seems to me that there is a battleground where we should be fighting. People should not be fighting each other or for control of these organizations.

*[end of tape]*

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