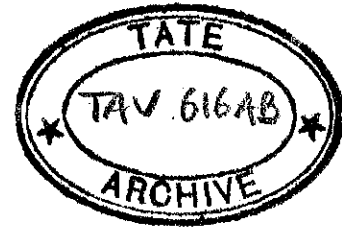


JOSEPH BEUYS



TAV 616AB (Tape 2 of 2) : TRANSCRIPTION

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Abbreviations:

JB = Joseph Beuys

A = Member of audience

T = Translator

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Transcription of audio clip begins below

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JB Yes, I think about morality and perhaps I cannot answer this question. What's morality? I think there are very different levels, yes? For instance, the egoistic in the human being is a very good experience, because you cannot do without the egoistic power. By now you have only to ask, is this egoistic on a very low level or can you develop your egoistic to a more altruistic power? And that's no/an? easy question! I think immorality in a human being is fully free, because he has to decide if he wants to be a murderer, or if he wants to be an angel, but they are only extremes. I think, therefore, the human being is free because he can do this and he can do this, he has free decisions.

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immediately working type, I think. I don't not too much like to write big books. As short as possible, therefore from time to time there is a lot published by...(German publishing company?)... It is not compound in a book or perhaps...

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A Indistinct

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JB A collection, yes, you can collect it, but it is very difficult to collect it!

A I think you've dealt with it this morning, but I would like you to talk again about the political side, the referendum, the people direct.

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JB Yes, sure, now you want to speak about the referendum, yes. I will now say once more, the situation is that all existing appearance democratic systems who are not real democratic systems have structure that insist that laws are established from the minority, and they never ask the people to rule society, what is to do with these basic laws. Therefore, it is not right, then it works always dictatorial, perhaps, like an authority who makes laws for all people. You can understand that this way is not right, that a minority make laws for the majority.

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JB I will stop now, because this idea perhaps is not so easy to understand.

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A Indistinct

JB Sure, I agree. For me, perhaps, I go too quickly further. But now we have started the question. A minority makes laws for the majority...

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A They must refer to the majority before they make these laws.

JB No, never. They did not ask the majority. I didn't know that for instance in Germany they did ask the people if the people wishes to have a law for armation, or for the army, or all other questions. After this war, all winners of the war, the big three nations... (indistinct)...the future of the German people armed, you know, who have weapons. And it was right, because it was very new thing, never more to have the weapons, and all of a sudden, through any interested people, mostly from the United States interest, all of a sudden overnight ...establish a minority in the Parliament and the people has to go to the army. I think this is not a democratic process. Sure, there are lots of people....and therefore I mean that is to do now, we have now to say, we are never, we are not asked about these basic laws, army or no army, and therefore we will make a referendum about this question.

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- A Are you happy with this situation in this room, at this moment? 1
- JB That is the question finished? Happy? No, I am free...I...when it is possible, I try to let out all these speculations, if I sympathise with this mood in the room or if antipathy. I am only to propose my idea and to concentrate me, and it is not so easy because my English is very bad and new established, and I have to concentrate me on these ideas, not to ask if I am content or if I sympathise, if I find it sympathetically or antipathically; it doesn't work, all those things, as more you can do out your own feelings as sympathy pressures and the antipathy pressures, as clearly you can see the problem, and therefore 5 10
- I mean this is a revolutionary technique too, to go away from all this only hanging on sympathy or antipathy, is only to see this thing very clear, without illusion and outcoming from the underconsciousness demons. Demonology, for me it is demonology, the question what do you feel about mood in this room. 15
- A What about the political situation in this room?
- JB What? 20
- A What about the political situation in this room?
- JB I let free. I let free the political situation. 25

A Do you feel that the ....

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JB I do not press any soul and any mind to have a special idea. I will only say, how is the technical way to go to become a democratic, a real democratic structure in society. I don't know what you mean when you say, how do you feel with the political mood, or, what, what do you mean? I see the people here.....this idea is done to work in very free situation, to let the people hear free, there is no ... (indistinct)...they are all free, they can decide by themselves. They have only to see that this is only an attempt to make all people more accurate in this question.

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A Do you know that people can hear your answers, but they can't usually hear the questions?

JB Sure, do that, now you can ....

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A Is that a choice, a decision?

JB (Indistinct - questioner has taken microphone to make himself heard, with the result that Beuys' replies can't be heard properly)

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A I'm saying that people usually can't hear the questions, but they can hear your voice.

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JB (Indistinct)

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A People standing out here, or anywhere in the room, can hear your voice, but they don't usually hear the voice of the person who is talking to you.

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JB For sure, you!

A Well, at the moment they do, because I have picked up the microphone

JB (Indistinct) suggesting questioner tell people about his own ideas?

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A No, I could't do that, because I did come here to find out, or see something of your ideas.

JB But you have other problems to propose or to declare. It would be very good.

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A I'd like to ask you if you feel that you've got yourself into a bit of a corner here, with your electronic equipment.

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JB No, the corner is because the boards, the blackboards, are on display. And I am not inclined to write on there straight every time to this blackboard I think. I think that it is practical and simple that I am standing here. Is a bad situation here...?

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A Outside there, it is. Yes. Very bad situation. Are you happy with the decision you've made today, to talk rather than to do an action or a process? 1

JB You have only to ask if I am happy. I say, no, I am very...I would be happier when I could stay in London with my family, perhaps. I will not defend my interest and say I'm not interested to make this kind of art. Therefore I spoke before about ego, and I cannot say that in my nature is no ego, and that perhaps I cannot feel in this moment, you know, a good feeling of my ego, no. But, I, on the other side I can say I feel it at the same time as a duty to work with my possibility I have. That's for me a duty, and, on the one side a duty and on the other side the work of art, and it has surely to do with my ego to show the production. Sure. That's a very leisure ? and I think it is not only leisure activities necessary that every people lays on the place his production. 5 10 15

A In your other works, like the one you did at Edinburgh, and, were you interested in the relationships that are set up between the people, the people who come into the room to see you at work? 20

JB Sure.

A Are you interested in that same aspect of this situation here? 25

JB Yes, sure. The Edinburgh attitude was a whole other. I didn't spoke  
any words, I did only act. And I acted like...for I say...I say now,  
for uninformed people, theatre-like, like a theatre piece, and people  
could look at this shape, or this feature, of my idea of art, and  
implicated in this action were ideas of sculpture - for instance, idea  
of ? , and ideas of sound and all these different things.

And the people could see this production, and they could feel this  
production, and I think it was same situation, very like when you go  
to the Turner Room and look at the Turners. You look at the Turners,  
then you look at the Turners and you can see, "What has this object to  
say me, or nothing?". The people was very...they are very free in  
their decisions, and they are always free in their own behaviour in  
culture. They have to be very free. They have only to look for, "Is  
there a point I need for?", "Is there a point I'm interested for?",  
"Is there a point I can more...have more energy from?" - more mental  
adventure from - and all these questions, there's only a free proposal  
this year.

A I am not sure of what I am saying, and I'm not saying this in a  
hostile way at all, but I am trying to get through what I felt when I  
was standing out there, looking at this ring of people, not really  
able to see exactly what was going on, and not very well able to hear  
what was going on because of the technical difficulties and I felt  
that all my attention was directed towards something which was very



A unsatisfactory, unliberating, whereas - unliberating - that my freedom to act, or to experience, was being lessened, was being made smaller by what was happening here. 1

JB Now I can perhaps understand and this feeling was, why? Perhaps why I know I am standing, as a single person in the middle of this, like this, like Stonehenge, all why. You mean, perhaps, the feature of the situation is more a mythical situation, or more the old fashioned situation because it is so, it looks like such a authority structure. You mean, perhaps, like this. Yah. But on the other hand, you have it now only to do with the small space of time during any hours, and you see the people is always changing. Always, every five minutes another people comes in and the situation is changing. 5 10

But I ask me, how could I propose this idea, who is to show, to see? The people has to see, and the people has exactly as possible to see, and the people has exactly as possible to hear what I say, otherwise possible than in this situation. Perhaps it would be more better when I was standing on the desk, but then you would oppose more; you would say, "Oh, he is a bit higher in the room", and therefore I feel mispressed because there is a authorical structure, and you can see you can amplify all this fear in you, yes? I think you can do the fears away if you understand the ideas. You see there is, all work here is...working against these authoritcal structures. And first destination of every man stands in the middle of the discussion. How 15 20

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can every people make their destination? How?

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And therefore my normal day is, my normal labour day is to work with 400 students I have in my class. I am teacher for sculpture in the Academy in Dusseldorf and I have in my class, now, 400 students. You can imagine, there is a lot to do, and outside the institution I have established this political information office and there is a lot to do too, and therefore the feature of my production now is this, exactly this, and not outside my normal activity.

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A What do you think...what's in a situation like this, where you have a large number of people who are interested to hear you, or see you do something, that you could use this opportunity more effectively perhaps by doing something with the space and the people in this room which would in itself be more of an image of the freedom and the creativity that you propose, rather than a political discussion which is centred on one person.

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JB Yes, sure, I can understand now, once more, these fears, but I think about how could it have another feature? Perhaps I am standing more on this here, like this, is better? Looks better. Yah? But then you have come perhaps a bit more here inside, and the people is to make a crowd, is possible? We can exercise this. Yes, crowd.

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A Let's get rid of this.

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JB Sure, yes.

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A Throw this away. Get rid of all the shitty technology and be a crowd of people sitting...

JB See the people, the production of art. No, he was against the microphone. Richard. You.

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A Well, we don't need a microphone.

JB You need, no,...(muffled)

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A .....if we're all in a circle, you don't need a microphone. Speak to our bodies, don't speak to our heads, speak to our whole beings.

JB Yes. But is there difference if you speak directly on the bodies or speak on the bodies with this microphone? It is only an amplifier.

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A It's not only...that thing goes through...you know that thing goes through a whole.....

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JB Illusions

A That's what you're talking about, is that thing comes from a factory that comes from people that comes from this. You know, you're using

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that and you're using it....

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JB But I have an equal love for this instrument.. Everybody can....ignore the privileged situation that I am the only owner of this instrument, and therefore I think that....

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A Well, that you use it more than the other people

JB Yes, sure, but when I ask everybody...

A What I'm talking about is what you're doing in the Tate Gallery, but you're only going there, you're not going there, you know.

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A1 (Different voice here) This is a recording device, it is not merely an amplifying device. It's solely to get something on tape, as a record. It is like taking a photograph. Why do you complain? (to above)

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A Well, because it isolates the person who is talking from the people he is talking to. So why do you need it? I mean, if we were in the position where we could listen to each other, then we wouldn't need it.

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A1 This a work of art. It's a work of art. This isn't a work of art. (Confused voices here).

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A He is talking about people, he's talking about....

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(More confused argument, with Beuys trying to interject)

A1 No, well, I think you've confused Beuys too.

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JB Yes, but I'm not being against, that you are in this moment confused,  
perhaps you are tomorrow....

A .....Everybody agrees with me, they're all confused

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JB Yes, you are very.....

A I mean, these people are quiet, aren't they?

JB ...make clear the situation.

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A What situation?

JB But can't you think now.

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A All I'm saying is, we can set up the Tate Gallery and talk about the  
world, not talk about art...(indistinct)

(Conversation continues muffled. From sounds on the tape, microphone

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has been taken by the following speaker)

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A1 Joseph, can we take a referendum, make a democratic decision. Do we want the microphone?

JB Yes, that's good. Yes, we can now make an example, and we can make a democratic decision and ask the people. Who is, who makes the decision that we need no...that we use no more now the microphone, at first. And then the second decision, who is for this, for that...that we need the microphone? Now, the first question. Who decides that we need no more this microphone? Then he can take hands, perhaps. Can you count? (to A?)

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JB Who is counting? One, two.

Pause

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JB I think about thirty persons. Do you? (To the argumentative person)  
Your counting was, how many?

A I'll let you count them.

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JB No! How many do you count. Thirty? Or twenty-eight? Thirty.  
Thirty. And now the next democratic decision. How many persons are in favour of using the microphone.

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A Yes, but we don't need the microphone in the first place. 1

JB Yes, now, I think it looks like the majority: But we can tell. No, once more, I bet you, hands...that only to exercise the democratic. Ein, zwei, drei, (continues counting in German). I think about forty to fifty. That was the majority, yes? Yah. Yes, therefore for this we need next decision. What person is, how many persons are to favour to need only the microphone without amplifier, without effect now to hear my voice louder, only with the effect that we can have the recording, and how many people are in favour that we vote for this, that we need the microphone for information, better information, at first. 5 10

A1 We should explain that more people can hear what is being said if the loudspeaker is on because there are people standing in other corners. Let's, just before we take the vote. 15

JB Now, once more, how many people are against using microphone. Against. Only using for the recording, without affecting in sound. How many persons. Fifty. I count about fifty. 20

And now, how many vote for this information medium? How many? Amplification? It is once more the majority.

A1 I would like to ask a question, Joseph. How important in this 25

- particular form, the structure of this particular art work that you  
are creating, is it that you should engage in a feat of endurance? 1  
You started at ten o'clock this morning, without a break, and you are  
going on until 6 o'clock. Is the difficulty of the accomplishment of  
this feat part of the artwork? 5
- JB I understand your idea in this way, that you mean, if these  
difficulties and troubles are a part of my artwork.
- A1 Are they important to the work of art? 10
- JB Important to the work of art. Yes, I think they are important in the  
special kinds of work of art. See the difficulties. You have every  
time difficulties. You cannot expect, when you speak with people  
about this. 15
- A1 I mean the personal difficulty, the endurance.
- JB What is endurance?
- A1 The length of time that you are speaking. 20
- JB Yes.
- A1 When you worked in Edinburgh 25



JB Yes

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A ...you performed by taking material from the walls and door and you put them onto a plate, which became increasingly heavy, and I think on this occasion when you speak from ten o'clock in the morning to six o'clock at night, you are also engaged in a feat of exhausting exercise, and that this is part of the achievement...

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JB Yes, sure

A ...and that is part of the achievement of the work of art, the accomplishment.

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JB Yes, in my understanding of this special kind of art it is integrated, this character is integrated, yes? because I can imagine these difficulties and questions. From the audience, things are at first only questions.

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A Can you speak a little about the structure of this kind of work of art and this particular work of art which you are creating, in particular. Just as structure, and form.

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JB Aha. That is very heavy for me because I have to do, I come perhaps now in abstraction, more in abstraction..... You are sure this structure is open, at first for me it is very open structure. It can

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be changed, through the audience, and you saw the shape, the feature  
is changing, it can change, through the activity of the audience, but  
this change in the feature of this kind of work of art cannot stop me  
in producing more of this kind of art. I think I can only see it very  
real and not...I cannot make category of this kind of art. I think it  
is impossible in the moment to categorise this kind of art. I see not  
at the moment necessity to definite, to make a definition or a  
determination of this kind of art. I only see what is running, what  
is going on with this feature of this kind of art.

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(To questioner) Now, but you are not content. I see it. You want  
to...

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A I think that you, at some time or other, have made decisions, of an  
aesthetic nature, about what you are going to do today. Not decisions  
of a political nature, or an idea about communication, but ideas which  
are something internal to you at the level of aesthetics.

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JB .....because the decision...decision forces, are only a part of this  
kind of work art. There are other things have perhaps the higher  
quality, for instance the democratic activity that the people have to  
demand and - democratical demand - and perhaps I have to sat back my  
last offer to make, now, decisions. To make decisions in this shape  
are only a part of this rule things. Because I am informing on a kind  
of art where can participate all people for the decision, otherwise I

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would eliminate my whole feature of this kind of art, when I would  
make decisions only by my own. Sure. My decisions are part of the  
decision of all other people, therefore I find it very nice that we  
exercise only this changing shape, for instance, that's not too much?  
But is now changing, sure. I can understand that you feel it is not  
so much relevant, but I think perhaps a training to work with  
democratic ideas is important, perhaps. Only now, once more, in this  
kind of art, I have to inform and not so much make decision.  
....(Indistinct)....Can you understand what I am....

A I see this as a very....I am not suggesting that this isn't a work of  
art because it has no form. My interest in it is that it is a very  
perfect and pure kind of work of art because it has no form, but on  
the other hand you can anticipate whatever form there is and you can  
decide beforehand whether these forms, that are going to end up, are  
the kinds of form that you want. You have made a decision.

JB Yes, I made before decision, in another kind of art, but now I think  
for me it is very important to do no decisions before. To begin, to  
begin....to begin, not with decisions but perhaps we can have a  
result, at last we can have a result, perhaps we can at last have a  
substance free of...we have made the production, perhaps. I am now  
interested to have a production, not only from my decisions, but from  
the decisions of all people here standing in the room, too. I am  
interested in this, but I think I am not exactly enough...

A I feel that, when we look at the tapes afterwards, that there will be  
a great deal of structure evidence, because, I've been here all day  
like a lot of people have, and what you get is, you get a period of  
tenseness and anxiety, followed by some relaxation. Then you get a  
period....(indistinct remark from another)....well I think it will  
become more evident on the tapes when you look at them that you get a  
structure which is made up of a period of anxiety followed by a period  
of relaxation, followed perhaps by a period of anger, and tenseness,  
followed by humour, and so on, and I think that this is the structure  
that is coming out of it, you know. You'll see it quite clearly  
afterwards and I think this is the kind of structure that Richard was  
looking at.....

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(Indistinct muffled voices)

A That is the structure that I think is coming out of this, do you  
agree?

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JB Yes, sure. I am very interested in this kind of structure, is to see  
all the expressions of the people and the individuals. At first,  
sure, you see only the expressions in the faces, because not all  
people are inclined to formulate questions or to give special answers,  
or to participate in formulating in common. But I think, sure, for me  
that's a very real result of this kind of work of art, kind of art,  
yes? Sure.

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A If I ask you if you thought of one particular form as being more beautiful than another...you see I find this action very beautiful, very exquisite and very perfect and very pure, and I think of this as an aesthetic. So I wonder, did you think of this in a primary situation as being one for beauty, a different kind of beauty than another kind of beauty and therefore a beauty to be preferred by you and chosen by you.

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(Indistinct discussion follows)

A ...when we talk about a scientific idea, we can say this is a beautiful theory, an elegant solution, and I think the notion of beauty is very basic to art. Since this is an aesthetic experience, I'd like you to say something about the idea of beauty and beauty of this form.

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JB I think that we cannot (indistinct following - in German?)

A Since we aren't well conversant with this kind of activity, we therefore are not in a position to judge it's beauty or it's relative beauty. On the other hand, if, for example, we were to wish we were to view a film of this particular event, we would then be in a better position to judge as to aesthetic or aspects of its relative beauty. I think that...

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JB Yes, sure...(inaudible remarks, in German?)

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T It's rather difficult to translate, because it is really quite a complex situation. He is saying that, in the audience, presumably any audience, there is a variety of faces, there are some particularly beautiful faces, there are others that may be affected by some kind of illness, or...(indistinct)... Now towards the beginning he said..... (inaudible, plus further comments in German)... Yes, this is very interesting, he said for instance looking at the blackboard, he makes the scheme of...the scheme on the blackboard goes through the tables of feeling, and, you know, that somehow gets integrated and interchanged with the audience, and so you get this, this reality running through the audience, and vice versa, and this creates a totality which in itself can be very profound and beautiful and is desperately important. Now he says that the audience, in detail.... (indistinct)....could add up to something beautiful and extraordinary, and so on.

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A When you switch off your tape, tonight, at six o'clock, do you come to any, sort of, conclusion? I mean, we could continue like this for another two years, couldn't you, and still get the same sort of aesthetic structure that you have, you are formulating. I mean, what happens when you do switch off at six o'clock, and you've got all your tapes and your film, what sort of conclusion do you come up with, or do you necessarily come up with a conclusion.

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JB You mean, when I make like yesterday, before yesterday..

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(Question reput to Beuys in German)

JB Sure, I have, after all this activity, after six o'clock, I have a special experience and I can make a conclusion, sure.

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Indistinct piece

A Actually, it's not a question. I'd like to use this opportunity, if I may, to extend an invitation to you and these many artists here - you'll be very aware of the unemployment problem in this country, with over a million unemployed, and there are three huge marches of unemployed workers coming from Scotland, Wales and the South Coast. They're converging at the Empire Pool, Wembley, on March 12th, and if any artist here could use this situation, and I realise it's a very blunt and crude situation, say, in relation to the one here, then you'll be extremely welcome to do so.

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Indistinct, followed by pause

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JB Now, perhaps, we come to an end, but I will once more declare what is written on the blackboard. Perhaps it is possible to make once more declaration. I am sure that..(indistinct)...once more, that a referendum....all people may experience, no more votes, no more voting

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for political parties, they (?) directly basic laws. Sure, that's a long way to go, but we can use directly the... (indistinct)..we can go the little way, in the beginning, we have the...in Germany we have the, what's the name? I can't think, I cannot translate this. No, I cannot translate this, it is special, but we begin with this information about establishing of basic laws in a very new way.

On a ? is the diagram concerning the reality, the discussion about reality not only belonging to the material environment, belonging too to the physical environment. ...(Indistinct)... We discussed about the means of production in ? and I pointed how I found out that the types, the last types or the most ? type of creativity is the development of thinking ideas, and I found out that the ideas process begins on a bubble/bubble? between reality who lies directly between the reality of material or physical, physical reality and another reality, characterised physically with the environment from the earth, our environment, materialic environment, or physically environment, where we are only able to transform the ideas thought in one type environment, in the spiritual environment, when we use material like matrix or matrix like material.

Simple to say we need to express our messages to other people beneath the material, at first as the human corpse by self likes larynx, likes the air in the lungs and ? a thing like this, all we need the air and the receiver, this characterises the transmitter. On this side we see



the receiver, as the other neighbour I speak with, he has only to  
? from the material this message and it has publicated perhaps  
now. Only as to characterise one more all the signs.

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Here are different levels between the distinguishing, between  
different levels of, yes, between that and living, or higher levels of  
consciousness, more developed than only living, at first the babies of  
that material, simple formed material, to living material, for  
instance in plants, then a higher developed material, living material  
in animals, with inside mental development like a soul, like the  
feelings, and then the higher developed human existence, with his  
self-estimation and thinking ego. And then we spoke about ego  
problems and social problems, and I think that ? declared, and now  
perhaps are more questions after pointing this blackboard, looking  
for, like for work of another artist, to have another feature, a  
picture from Rembrandt, sure, or another modern picture from ?  
or Henry Moore, they are directly ideas.

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Questions? You have questions?

Then I think we can come to an end. Thank you very much.

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