

**HERMANN NITSCH**

**UNDER MY SKIN**

## Personal Structures Art Projects # 02

HERMANN NITSCH

UNDER MY SKIN

This book is the documentation of *Personal Structures Art Projects # 02*. It has been published as a limited edition. The edition comprises 250 copies of which 50 DeLuxe, numbered from 1 to 50, and 50 DeLuxe hors commerce, numbered from I to L. The 150 Standard copies are numbered from 51 to 200. Each item of this limited edition consists of a book and a DVD of the 130<sup>th</sup> *Aktion* by Hermann Nitsch in a case, housed together in a cassette. The DeLuxe edition is signed by the artist and additionally contains a piece of bloodstained cloth originating from the 130<sup>th</sup> *Aktion* of the *Orgien Mysterien Theater*.

This limited edition has been divided as follows:

# 1-50: DeLuxe edition: Luiscius Antiquarian Booksellers, Netherlands

# 51-200: Standard edition: Luiscius Antiquarian Booksellers, Netherlands

HC I-L: Not for trade

© 2010.

Text by Hermann Nitsch, Karlyn De Jongh & Sarah Gold

Photos by GlobalArtAffairs Foundation

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without permission of the editor.

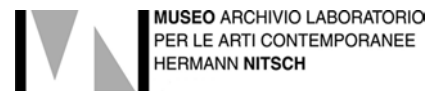
Concept by Rene Rietmeyer

Design by Hermann Nitsch, Karlyn De Jongh & Sarah Gold

Printed and bound under the direction of Andreas Krüger, Germany

Production in coöperation with Christien Bakx, [www.luiscius.com](http://www.luiscius.com)

Published by GlobalArtAffairs Foundation, [www.globalartaffairs.org](http://www.globalartaffairs.org)



# HERMANN NITSCH

## UNDER MY SKIN

KARLYN DE JONGH  
SARAH GOLD



## DAY 1 17 MAY 2010 KARLYN DE JONGH

I woke up before my alarm went off. Through the small window above my bed I could see it was sunny outside. I was in a large room in Naples, in Italy. I had a good night sleep and I was ready for the day. For me and Sarah it was the first day of the *Personal Structures Art Project #02*. Our first book in this series, with Lawrence Weiner, had just been finished and now we were going to create the next one, with Hermann Nitsch. This new project with Nitsch was about experiencing with the senses and experiencing Nitsch. It was not about giving an art-historical description, to judge, to criticize and draw conclusions. It was about being open, to experience, to live.

It was Monday morning and the first day in the series of events that would lead to the 130<sup>th</sup> *Aktion* this coming Sunday, where Sarah and I would be taking part as passive actors. It was exciting. I was looking forward to this week with new experiences, new people to meet, a new test for myself and our new Art Project.

Since a few days there had been this strange discrepancy between my body and my thinking—for as far as one can separate them. I had decided to open myself further up and to experience everything with my senses as intensely as I possibly could, to be as conscious as possible about feeling, hearing, seeing, smelling and tasting and also, especially for this week, to have no moral restrictions, because that is what Nitsch is all about. Basically, this discrepancy existed since we had left Venice, since Sarah, the

Dutch artist and I had left our home, on this journey that would lead to the *Aktion*, to the final moments with Nitsch.

Especially the sense of touch had a great influence on my Being. Since I had opened myself up more, I was extremely sensitive and more emotional than I would normally be. When we were driving in the car in the direction of Naples, and especially during our visit to Montepulciano, I felt everything on my body: I felt my pants stroking my thighs, the air on my skin, my nipples touching the soft surface of my bra, the satin of my thong slightly touching my pussy, just everything. I was very aroused by it, constantly, without any break. It was there all the time, but not in a very direct way. It was more indirect, it was as if I had lost control over my body. Everything had an erotic feel to it, whatever it was. Already the week prior to this day, I had been masturbating extensively, fantasizing about hanging on the cross, about somebody having power over me, about feeling the air on my naked body and being touched by people I had never seen in my life. I fantasized about it every night. It had me captivated. Even while having dinner, I felt the excitement, it was as being in a constant state of foreplay, like the preparation for an extremely intense orgasm. I wanted to have sex the entire time.

I also felt like that this morning, but I had to be focused on the conversation that might take place, the conversation with Nitsch. I wanted to have my control back; I knew I did not have it. I was in a state of complete openness towards experiencing everything. And then there was the excitement about the new Art Project, the new event with Nitsch that Sarah and I wanted to do very, very much. I wanted to experience it. Hanging on the cross, was for me the realization of a fantasy I had had for many years. Not knowing what would happen exactly, how I

would handle the situation, the smell of the dead animals, the blood, the intestines and the shit. I could not imagine what it would be like, how strong the smell would be, and how it would affect me. I expected having to vomit, not being able to physically handle the situation, that I was overpowered, that I had to let myself go completely. It gave me a sense of fear, but this fear aroused me in such a great extent, that I just wanted to have it. I think that this in particular caused the incredible sexual desire that I had towards it.

I was not sure what my body would look like on the cross. Nitsch had not seen us naked yet and we first needed to be approved. In the months before, I had taken the effort to pay extra attention to my weight, I wanted to be fit. Some people would be filming us, and this morning in Naples, I did exercises on my mattress. It was nice, the sun was shining on my body, the air stroking my legs while I was moving them, and the draft along my wet pussy gave me an extra impulse. Especially this draft always makes me feel like I am exposed, as if I am completely open and as if everybody could see inside of me. Voyeurism was one of the reasons for my excitement about hanging on the cross. It was not only the beautiful idea of becoming part of an artwork; it was very much a sexual experience for me as well. The combination of fear, of being overpowered, the fear of blood, of having it in my mouth, it disgusted me at so many points. But this fear was sexual. Actually, I desired it very much. Because of my exercises, I got aroused again, but Sarah and the Dutch artist already came downstairs and I did not want to masturbate at that point. I wanted to start the day. I was ready for it.

Although I had a one-person mattress, Sarah and the Dutch artist joined me in bed. We cuddled for a while, it felt nice, warm

and we all had a positive attitude towards what was about to happen. It was pleasant to share that moment with them. We were a team and we were on our way to new adventures. It was like a new beginning and I looked forward to experiencing it together with Sarah. It felt so warm and beautiful in bed that we completely forgot about the time. When I looked at my phone, it was already 9.15 am. But we had promised to be at the Museo Hermann Nitsch at 10 am. I rushed to the shower, washed my hair, brushed my teeth, put on my clothes, packed the things I needed and off we went to the museum. Dizzy from the long winding stairs, I opened the front door of the building. The sun was shining in my face and I looked over to the Vesuvius. Sarah took my hand and together with the Dutch artist, we walked to the museum. It was loud on the streets; I had not heard these sounds upstairs in the apartment, there were so many cars, so many mopeds. They were honking their horns, partly at us and partly at each other. The atmosphere was hectic and maybe because we were in a rush, it affected me.

The walk took a very long time, or at least so it seemed. We did not have time for coffee, nor for breakfast, although I needed it and I needed it badly. We reached the museum around 10.30am. We were late, but fortunately there was hardly anybody there. There were some people working in the main museum space. We could hear the hammering and sawing from a distance. When we arrived in the space, I saw they were making large, wooden tables and other objects in preparation for the *Aktion*. The atmosphere seemed relaxed. Suddenly, I saw Nitsch. He was dressed in black, sitting with his back towards us, at a small metal table. He was alone. I was impressed by his presence, by his appearance. Now it really was about to happen. The steps

that I was taking towards him, were like the last steps before this event would really start. I thought: get yourself ready, this is the start of seven days with Nitsch, seven days in which you have to be completely consciously aware, completely honest and completely open and without any moral restrictions. What a chance! I hoped that he would actually have time for us and that we would actually be able to speak with him. While I was walking towards him, he felt like a giant mountain that I would have to climb, a real challenge.

Sarah and I had met Nitsch already a few weeks ago at his house in Austria. I was in love with his smile. He has this cute little tongue that comes slightly up halfway between his lips, when he is laughing. He seemed honest and open. Now it was our turn, but was I able to? Especially, with the knowledge that everything you are thinking will be published? I had opened myself up, but now it was time to show it and do it in such a way that Nitsch would actually become part of me, I had to let him under my skin. At that moment, I knew that it did not depend on Nitsch whether that would happen. It was me. It is not easy to be completely honest and open about what you are thinking, not even towards yourself, but I felt sort of ready. This was finally happening. What a chance that we could actually do this and become part of Nitsch's artwork. I imagined that he had already been living an intense life for at least 50 years, and had been living his life to the fullest. He spoke so directly with us at his home in Prinzendorf, and so eloquently. I felt respect and admired that he was so capable.

Nitsch was still with his back towards us, he did not see us coming. We kneeled next to him and said hello. He turned a little and seemed happy to see us. When I looked him in the eyes, I

forgot about all the thoughts and doubts that had crossed my mind. I was ready. Let's do it. Nitsch invited Sarah and me to sit down and I gladly accepted. I had expected that he would be surrounded by all sorts of people but he appeared not to be. There was a warm atmosphere, he looked friendly and then he said, "Let's do it now, let's talk." I was very happy that Nitsch immediately decided to spend time with us and do the first interview for our book. For a split second, I was unsure whether I was prepared well-enough, but quickly said, "Yes, let's do it. Let's go."

It was quite noisy in the space, so we went outside for a more pleasant and private atmosphere. From the museum terrace there was this beautiful view over the city of Naples and the Vesuvius. We followed Nitsch to a *heurigen* bench and he sat down facing the museum. We first spoke a bit more about our book project, but soon after, we started asking him about his *Aktion* and his work in general. I was actually quite emotional, 'fighting' might be too strong a word, but it was as if I was fighting to stay with the conversation, to focus on it and not drift away.

Nitsch speaks German in a soft tone, most of the time he has his head tilted downwards, not directed to the receiver, but he goes into the matter, he does not stay on the surface. He gives a serious answer whenever you ask him, and so I felt obligated to come up with serious questions. I had to trust myself, to do it now in this moment. Nitsch did his best. I was impressed by his answers. This just might be the only time we would be able to speak with him and I wanted to get the maximum out of him. I wanted to continue the conversation and stretch it for as long as possible in order to get a look inside this person. Who is he? What is he thinking?

This artist, Hermann Nitsch, was one of the first artists that I was captivated by. When I was 15, I got a big art book that had a photo inside of Nitsch's 80th *Aktion*, and now I was sitting here, sitting opposite of him and in a few days—50 *Aktionen* later—I, myself, would become part of his art. The photo in my art book showed a person hanging on a cross, but this time, it was me who would be hanging there. It was difficult to keep my attention on the conversation and stay with the moment. I looked at Nitsch and it seemed he was getting tired. His Austrian assistant came over and it was a good moment to finish the conversation. We thanked Nitsch for his time, however, just thanking felt not enough. The goodbye therefore felt a little awkward, but we left the table anyway and went for coffee on Piazza Dante.

During the conversation, Nitsch had said that he wanted to see us naked. He wanted to do it this Monday, but I was not prepared. I spoke about this with Sarah while we were walking through Naples. I still had to wax my legs. I was insecure about that moment, standing naked in front of Nitsch. Still there was a chance that Nitsch would decide not to take us. Or he could place me somewhere in a corner, which was also not what I was hoping for. He had told us that there were plenty of passive actors. It would be terrible that he would see me naked and then decide not to take me, just skip me. He had already made a remark about my length and age when we were in Prinzendorf. There, dressed, we had to stand in front of him. He had observed us and told me: "You are almost too tall."

Over coffee, we spoke about the conversation and decided to record what we had been experiencing in these few hours with Nitsch. While doing so, I could not help but think about the art book I had gotten when 15. I thought about how sexually at-

tracted I must have been to this photo: being taken over by the power of another person, being bound and powerless with no control about what is going to happen, about this blood being poured into my mouth. It must have been completely arousing. I do not recall masturbating over that photo, but it had been like a magnet. I remember that I could not get enough of the photograph and had spent hours and hours looking at it. It had made such an impression on me, but over the years, in my mind, I had completely transformed the photograph into something spectacular. I saw the photo again a little while ago. It was just a simple photograph, just a man hanging on a cross with two others standing, one on either side. They were not even giving him blood, I had just fantasized that as an extra. It is this strange situation, that you think you do not want something, that you are horrified by it for various reasons, but that you lose control over your body, that you cannot resist anyway, even though you are trying very hard to be against it. Something completely arouses you, and although you are horrified by the thought of actually doing it, your body is reacting in a different way. My body reacts in the way it always does when I am excited, while my mind can be in a completely different place.

I also thought about the symposium that Sarah and I had organized in Tokyo in 2008, where the Japanese artist Toshikatsu Endo showed works by Nitsch. I could not understand a word of what Endo was saying, but it became clear that for him Nitsch was very important. From that moment on, I had been looking forward to meet Nitsch myself.

I remember visiting Nitsch's museum opening in Vienna last year, it was the first time that I saw videos of his *Aktionen*. All the blood, the rummaging, it looked disgusting to me. I nearly vom-

ited right there in the museum. However, I was also fascinated by it, by how these organs must feel on my body. In that sense, they looked pleasing. I was mostly horrified by the thought of the happening and by the smell. When you do not know what is happening, and when you cannot see, the smell is even worse. How am I going to do that?

During a car drive from Miami to New York in February 2009, the Dutch artist, Sarah and I, had spoken about the possibility of doing this particular Art Project with Nitsch and to try to become part of one of his *Aktionen*. Almost a year later, in January 2010, when we came to install Nitsch's work in an exhibition Sarah and I had organized in Austria, we had a chance. We spoke with an artist friend of Nitsch about our ideas and he contacted Nitsch. It all seemed so easy, but it took many small steps and a lot of conversations, to actually be here in Naples and have the chance to be part of the 130<sup>th</sup> *Aktion*.

After a short walk through the city center, Sarah and I went back to the museum to pick up our computers and the key of the apartment we were staying at. On our way over there, we decided to apologize to Nitsch for not saying proper goodbye after the interview. When we arrived, there were still people working in the main museum space, still making more tables. We entered the office and there was Nitsch. He was sitting at a long table together with his Italian assistant. Sarah and I went over. We knelt down next to Nitsch and explained. Everything was fine and in return, Nitsch asked us whether we were ready to get naked now. In a very subtle way and with a lot of charm, Sarah explained that we were hoping to do it the next day. "Do what you have to do," he said and we agreed upon the next morning.

With a kiss, we sealed the positive atmosphere. We were done for the day and walked back to our apartment.

After dinner, I went for a run on the Corso Vittorio Emanuele. It was amazing. It was such a beautiful view and I was so happy with the day, how it had gone. We had gotten our chance and we took it. When I was running down the street, I felt free. Even though breathing in the exhaust fumes was heavy on my lungs, I felt as if I could handle the world. I felt strong and thought about our Art Project: it was becoming a success. I was happy that Nitsch was so positive. The sun, the beautiful view, the atmosphere of Naples. The chaos on the streets, the cars and the mopeds. I noticed them, but I was in my own world and it felt good. I was open to the situation on the cross and now knew that I would be able to handle it, to be in control over this situation even though I would be bound and used. I could let go and be submissive, and strong at the same time.

When I got back from the run, Sarah was in the kitchen waxing her legs. It was nice to see we were in this together. I took a shower and also started waxing. During, we spoke about being naked the following morning, as a day of judgment by Nitsch. We had not spoken about that before, but Sarah had also prepared herself. Like me, she had grown her pubic hair and was also insecure about her naked body. I felt close to her at that moment and I felt free to show her who I am. When we finished, we went upstairs to look at the photographs of the interview and we spoke about what had happened that day. After some time we were all exhausted and I decided to go downstairs, and crawled into my bed.

In an attempt to relax my body, I masturbated, thinking about the *Aktion*. I needed the orgasm; otherwise I would not be able to focus on any conversation. I fantasized about hanging on the cross and the party afterwards, being in the vineyard, naked and observed by the estimated 1000 visitors. Nobody touched me; they were just looking how I slowly got wet. Still naked, I joined the table where Nitsch was sitting surrounded by others. I sat down on the lap of the German Art Historian, who got scared by this sudden event and did not know how to handle me. It gave me a powerful feeling. Then Nitsch ordered him to touch me. When I came, I knew it was not enough, but at that moment I was too tired to come another time, and it would not help. Exhausted, I fell asleep.

That night I woke up around 1.30am. I had to go to the toilet and needed some fresh air. It was very dark outside. It smelled very nice and very clean, nothing like what I had been breathing in the rest of the day. It was quiet, I did not hear anything, no cars, nothing, just the breeze. When I looked up, I saw the monastery on top of the vineyard, it was lit in a bright, white light. Very fair and powerful. Everything else was dark. It would be six more days and then I would be hanging there, naked on the cross, in Nitsch's 130<sup>th</sup> *Aktion*.



Monday, 17 May 2010, the day I turned 32, was also the first day of a very special Art Project. Karlyn and I had started to create and document a series of Art Projects and we had decided that for this particular project, we would try to capture all our feelings and thought while being with Hermann Nitsch for 7 days. This documentation was planned as a very subjective personal view on our own experiences, not trying to reflect on the work of Hermann Nitsch in an art historical way. While trying to approach this event with Nitsch in an emotional and not in an intellectual way, we also had to try to write free of personal shame and cultural boundaries. Because, that is what Nitsch is also about.

We had met Hermann Nitsch some weeks ago in his castle in Prinzendorf in Austria. He gave the impression of being a gentle soft man, who enjoys life and likes to laugh. He had developed his *Orgien Mysterien Theater* since 1957 and now, more than 50 years later, he was still creating new events called *Aktionen*, in order to heighten the awareness of the senses for everybody involved, so they learn to live life to the maximum.

It felt a great honor to me to be a small part of Art History, by being allowed to participate in his 130<sup>th</sup> *Aktion*. I remember well that he, in the castle, asked us to stand up in front of him, telling us to spread our arms and saying with a sweet, naughty smile that at one point he would have to see us naked. I really did not know how I would feel being bound naked to a cross and have blood poured

into my mouth. I tried to be as open-minded as possible about it, not to have any anxieties or premeditated thoughts and opinions; I just would let it happen, experience. I think, if I would not have had the experiences I gained in the last couple of years with the many, also sexual encounters, with people from all over the world while at the same time being in such a stable relationship, it would have felt much different. For now, I was quite relaxed. It was only the fact that, being naked on the cross I was not too comfortable with. But I thought, if I really will not feel at ease I will ask if I can wear a so-called *Malhemd*, which Nitsch has used for many years in his *Aktionen*, apparently the idea taken from the painter Gustav Klimt, who wore it working in his studio.

So, when we drove down from Venice, Italy, where we are living at this moment, towards Naples, I was overall pretty comfortable with this Art Project. I had done some research and had read some books about Hermann Nitsch. It was maybe also because I had gained some knowledge, that I felt sympathy for this man and looked forward to find out more about him.

Just a couple of days before my partner a Dutch artist and the initiator of the project *Personal Structures* came up with the title for our book: *Under My Skin*. This seemed to me, for the person and the artist Hermann Nitsch, to be a very fitting title. And this is what we wanted to do, to get under Nitsch his skin, and let Nitsch come under the skin of Karlyn and under my own skin. Try to express our thoughts about feelings and emotions. Experience this whole event as intensive, open-minded and conscious as possible.

When I woke up this Monday morning of 17 May 2010, I felt very horny, I fucked my partner and without having coffee or breakfast, I walked with Karlyn down to the museum which is situated in a

poor but nice neighborhood in Naples. I felt that I had to start now, now was the moment to take it seriously.

The Dutch artist had been talking to me and Karlyn a lot in order to prepare us, because we not only had to take part in this event, the *Aktion* with Nitsch, but we would also be the subject of a film and a documentary. Two cameramen from Austria would come two days later to Naples. One of them would film the *Aktion* itself, something he has often done since the eighties. The other man independently creates television programs and had heard of us from the documentary maker. He planned to follow us all the time with his camera, documenting our journey in the art world in order to make a kind of real life short film of which Karlyn and I would be the subject.

I have almost no television or camera experience, so I felt unsure and hesitant, thinking: "What do we have to do and how?" We had been told: just stay natural, speak clearly and be yourself. But it is not so easy to transfer good advice into your brain and act accordingly.

When Karlyn and I arrived at the museum, several people were already busy covering the whole floor of the museum with quite tough plastic. To me it looked like as if a mass murderer was making serious preparations for his massacre.

In the museum we met Hermann Nitsch, who seemed to be happy to see us. We said hello and went outside together to sit on the terrace overlooking Naples. The Dutch artist explained to Nitsch the thoughts about the *Under My Skin* Art Project. After about 10 minutes the Dutch artist left Karlyn and me alone; now it was up to us.

When driving in the car to Naples, we had been talking about how we should create this Art Project. This would be the first time that Karlyn and I really would have to interact as one. I think, although we had been working together for more than two years, this particular moment was special, now we really united. It felt fantastic; it went so well, we spoke with Nitsch for more than one and a half hours and he really seemed to like it, too. Also I felt that we are touching the inner of Nitsch and at the same time finding out about ourselves, about our feelings, thoughts, goals and emotions.

After this first conversation I was totally exhausted and overwhelmed. All our questions apparently had drained Nitsch of his energy. He was looking pretty tired, but I was ecstatic in how well it went. Karlyn and I decided to walk to Piazza Dante, where a statue of Dante is looking superior over the Piazza, over Naples and the world. It was a very intense moment. We drank some coffee and discussed how it went. We spoke into our voice recorders to capture the moment, to capture these thoughts. I felt that I was becoming stronger, more serious, and more professional.

We took a little stroll through the old town where we saw many bookshops. Karlyn had just told me, that we should think about presenting our Art Project books also as pocketbooks in order to reach a larger readership. So, we looked in the many little bookshops at pocketbooks to see which size we liked best. Walking around Naples is very special. It has this unusual atmosphere; it is not like any other Italian city I know. Perhaps because of the many different influences it had over the centuries; Greek looking faces are everywhere. Again and again I had to think about how wonderful it was to be so close to Karlyn and really feel her presence and how cooperative Nitsch was: I could not have wished for a better start.

During our walk we met a girl on a piazza, who we had met a month before, when Karlyn and I had visited the museum in Naples in order to discuss our then future plans. I liked this beautiful looking girl in her twenties, curious, not really knowing what to do with her life. She reminded me of myself. The Dutch artist told her that she could join us this week in order to find out more about us, but Karlyn said she needed the time and attention from the Dutch artist for herself, and she would not be able to give that girl enough attention. You can meet people, but you can also really meet and actually make a difference in their life. But if you do that, it means time and dedication. Living the life we live, being occupied with our projects, especially at this moment with this particular project, really trying to get the inner of our emotions and deepest thoughts written down in a book. At this moment, for Karlyn and also for me, it was a little too much.

The tension was high, since Sunday I felt that my heart was often beating very fast and hard. I think that this was mainly because of the growing relationship between Karlyn, my partner and me. And although I thought that I knew what likely will happen in the future and that that actually did feel good, I still felt insecure. I think what I needed to do now is to find the strength within myself, to let the future be open, not having to know what the future will bring or how it will end. To be strong enough within myself to handle whatever comes my way. To have my life in my own hands and form my life and my reality the way it fits me best. But to accomplish this, everything has to be strong and stable, my character, my personality.

We went back to the museum where, when we got into the office, Nitsch was sitting there with the owner of the museum, who has been a patron of the artist since they first met in the early

seventies. I apologized to Nitsch for leaving him after he had given us so much attention and time. He smiled. I told him that we were so overwhelmed by the whole event that we forgot to show our respect and appreciation towards him by properly saying goodbye. He seemed content when he heard this and said: "Now I have to see you naked." That was also the first thing he had told us that morning. Karlyn and I had spoken about it, but we did not feel 'ready'. It sounds really stupid but we first wanted to 'prepare' ourselves which mainly means: waxing our legs. Again I apologized to Nitsch and asked if it would be possible to show ourselves naked the next day.

On the photos of the *Aktionen* I had noticed, that the women were always very bushy. By which I mean that their body hair had been kept natural. Without discussing it with each other, Karlyn and I both had let our pubic hair grow more large, so we would match the traditional Nitsch Aktionsmodel a little better. We had also tried to stay on a diet but when we visited Nitsch in Austria, he had told us not to do so; we should be just the way we were. So, I had stopped my diet and within no time put the weight back on, which I had lost.

Still in the office, we got back the keys for the apartment we were staying at, they had made copies because other people, who would be helping during the *Aktion*, would come and stay with us. I quickly checked my e-mails and then we said goodbye to Nitsch.

This first day was quite an interesting day for me. It was the first day since a long time that I felt 'mature'. I had to perform and be in charge together with Karlyn and it felt wonderful, exciting, and very fruitful. On our way back to the apartment we saw a pizzeria, it was about six o'clock and we decided to eat something. Although it was not open yet, we were welcomed by a woman, she seemed happy that we came into her restaurant.

While waiting in the restaurant, I quickly went to a tiny shop next door, which was filled up to the brim with all kinds of household goods. I bought some waxing strips and candles to have soft romantic lighting for the week to come, when lying in bed overseeing Naples. I have always been sensitive to lighting. I had noticed walking through the poor neighborhood of Naples that many people have these fluorescent tubes in their homes, which are to me an atmosphere killer. I am quickly distracted because of visual impressions and I am also very sensitive to smells. When I think about it, all my senses are functioning pretty well. I cannot listen to music when I work, because when I like the sound I want to dance. Also, I am very sensitive to touch, I can nearly get an orgasm by getting touched anywhere on my body, or even thinking about being touched can drive me crazy.

Back in the restaurant, dinner was served, every time I heard a 'ping' sound, probably from a microwave, a dish was coming, consisting of some strange deep fried balls filled with tomatoes, mashed potatoes and little pieces of meat or cheese and some unidentifiable other ingredients. They seemed clearly from the day before, but I think also fresh they would not have won a gourmet price. We ate the unidentified objects because we had not eaten all day. Being in that little pizzeria with that big fat mama and her children which were young but already had the same round shape as their mother, I could feel and see their difficult life: the reality of Naples and the reality of my own life. How I should enjoy every moment, every minute, every second and every day in my life: because this day will never come back.

That night I waxed my legs and Karlyn joined me after she came back from running. It was a very nice bonding moment to stand there with her in the kitchen, side by side, each having one foot

on top of the shelf. It really was not even a kitchen, the only thing the space had was a sink and a shelf, but it was fine. I was getting a little nervous. Although there is nothing special about being naked, it was not easy for me. The waxing was an attempt to feel better about myself. I am sure most people do not even really care if you have hair or not. Anyway, does a man in his seventies notice if your legs are totally smooth or not, and even if he does, I do not think he will care. His generation is familiar with the natural look. So, this physical preparation was more of a mental one; and I am ashamed to admit that this was such a difficult thing for me, showing off my own body which I am not content about. But nevertheless, in general I had a good feeling about Karlyn and me, creating this Art Project *Under My Skin*.

What I did notice as well that night, since we arrived in Naples I felt extremely horny all the time. I am already a very sexual person who loves and needs to have sex on a daily basis, but now it felt that, whilst the pressure was higher, as if the tension of experiencing was also heightening my hormones.

## DAY 1 17 MAY 2010 HERMANN NITSCH

*Karlyn De Jongh: For me, being part of your Aktion is also a sexual experience. When I was 15 years old, I already had strong thoughts about your Aktion, and also yesterday evening I masturbated while thinking about it.*

Hermann Nitsch: Now I have to put something forward, there definitely is a Pan-theism and a Pan-sexuality or Pan-eroticism. For me, everything is erotic, every moment, every flower. Therefore, something like e.g. Otto Mühl makes, that I do not need at all. If people criticize me that far too few erotic things occur in my work, then people do not understand the handwriting. So, there is not only a Pan-theism, but also a Pan-erotic. This is something I have always known; therefore, your behavior does not surprise me.

*Sarah Gold: Now it is up to us to report how we experience this week with you and as a bonus, we hope that we get to hear from you how you experience it. Because, after all the literature that is written about you and all the thoughts we have, we believe there is even much more inside of Nitsch.*

HN: I hope there is. I have no secondary education, because I was thrown out of every school, but even so, I became a professor and doctor, even without taking the civil and academic efforts I reached it anyway and I am proud of that, but it was life itself which made me who I am today. Unfortunately, I have achieved all this after my mother died, she would have loved to see it.

*KDJ: But perhaps she knew that you would be able to do it.*

HN: She knew it exactly. She always scolded me and asked, "Why are you doing this nonsense? Why don't you go to a bank, or become a schoolteacher? But, whenever I had visitors in my mother's apartment and I was, for example, on the toilet, she expressed her pride to these people. Under the bed, she kept old drawings of me, which she then showed to them. If I had not done my work anymore, my work that she so hated, then my mother would have been bitterly disappointed. Basically, she believed in me.

*SG: Do you have any idea why you made this so called 'nonsense'?*

HN: In a positive way, you come very close to me now. Now I will not answer you with academic rubbish, but I made it because I was convinced that it was necessary and still is. To work in this way and to question the world in this way. Christ said: "What is truth?" It was Pontius Pilate and Pilate makes an incredibly great figure in the New Testament. The fact that he washed his hands and really did not want to have anything to do with politics and, then plainly asks: "What is truth?" I want that too. I have always fought for the truth. One cannot reach the truth, but you can move in the direction of the truth. I never wanted to improve the world as a whole for that, the world is far too great, too difficult, too complex. You can only extract great moments from the world, in terms of large deep experiences that penetrate into being. But Being is actually the thing in itself. Since everything is inside of it: the terrible abyss, and the glorious splendor, the greatest moments of joy and the deepest holes. And yes, I have always fought. I would say, it was for the truth of Being.

*SG: Have you fought for us, for the other, or more for yourself?*

HN: That is all in one round. For example, it is the nature of art that she is altruistic, that she is there for others. If Beethoven would be sitting here now, with his last string quartet, then that is transferable. Art is a language in which moments of joy and deep experiences of Being can be transferred to thousands of people. Would that not be the case, then art would be without purpose and not socially intimate and it would to a large extent not be useful, which art really is.

*KDJ: Now you have been creating your work for about 50 years. Having lived in Vienna I am of the opinion that the Viennese Actionism was destined to arise there, have you been able to change something? Have you in your environment, or perhaps even to a larger extent, made a difference?*

HN: Look, a great example for me is Freud. Whether the therapeutic success of Freud was really so great is a question I do not want and even cannot answer. But he had a great influence on our whole culture, even on mythology and theology. Actually, he preventively has eliminated dispositions towards the classic Freud Neurosis through his educational work. In this sense, he was therapeutic in insight therapy and that is for me also the case. I do not believe in an improvement of human beings, or an improvement of nature. But I think that we can use the conditions that we have better and more intense and that everyone by himself, can intensively develop his Being.

*SG: Now, from today on, you will live maybe 10 years more...*

HN: I would like to live another 10 years. But you have to have good partners who can endure that you are not so fast anymore. They have to be able to deal with my wisdom, just like with the great painters, just like with Titian.

*SG: These last 10 years, what can you still give us as a final acchord?*

HN: I would like to make the most beautiful thing I am perhaps still able to make. I would like my work to become more colorful in every respect, and more undogmatic, unspeakably a message of Being. That Being says: "Come to me," you are created to be and experience it. You do not experience it in hell, not in distress and not in pain, but you experience it in the greatest joy. Just look the suffering and the Cross, the tragedy, the tragic and death, in the eye. The images of wars and Holocaust unfortunately, that all belongs to Being. I would like to be on the side, just because I have intimately and altruistically experienced Being. In that moment I am then fully there, when I am completely in luck, then I do not understand humanity. I do not believe in isolation that is so awful now, that people grow up in big cities. They have lost contact to the whole, they are really isolated. They are really narcissistic and have a poor existence. But there are also those who can enjoy honestly, in great pleasure there are no restrains. Another 10 years? Visions for the future, I am not really as interested in them as I am in experiencing the moment, the now, the experience.

*SG: Do you not have the feeling that, for the younger generation, enjoying honestly moved to the background?*

HN: I think this was so at all times. At all times, it has always given prophets who preached. He used to be called the Good Lord or something like that. There were always those who called for intensity, the essential. Perhaps it was a ridiculous figure, but there were always people who have called for such a thing.

*KDJ: A few weeks ago you met the two of us for the first time. Can you tell us how you experienced that?*

HN: I had seen your book, *Personal Structures: Time · Space · Existence* with the interview inside that the German art historian conducted with me. When I had seen the other interviews in the book, I wondered why, like with the other interviews, the two pretty young ladies did not come to me, I would have preferred the two of you.

*KDJ: But now we are here. What do you think now?*

HN: I cannot tell you, this is however not against you; rather these are social considerations which I must take. You will write it down then and that would not be good. Please do not think anything negative at all, and that I am not saying it yet, should not limit the intimacy of our cooperation.

*SG: But I think we are very open. So, you cannot shock us, whatever thoughts you might have, we are simply very interested.*

HN: It is only positive. Maybe we come to the moment that I let out anyway, but I would like to say that we will not continue this direction for now, now it is still a bit early.

Do you see my Italian assistant there; I have known him for a very long time. He was such a handsome man. I am not at all homosexual, but I would have liked to be both, and not be oriented in one direction only. By the way, sometime, somehow today, I have to undress you. I am sorry; are you washed?

*KDJ: Yes. It is nice to see that we are coming closer to each other quickly. Why does everyone call you just Nitsch?*

HN: I wanted it that way. My wife calls me Nitsch, and all my friends say Nitsch to me. I do not want to be called by my first name. And I also do not like this kind of intimacy that you tap people on the shoulder and say if someone is famous and his

name is Joseph, that they say: "Ah, yesterday I had lunch with Joseph." Furthermore, with the name Nitsch I have done something, there are lots of people called Hermann.

I am Nitsch, but in reference to our conversation, do not think, firstly, that I am infallible, and secondly that I have a desire to be infallible. We artists would of course like to become famous and now that I am 71, and have been an artist for more than 50 years, what is important to me is that I can say: "I am capable to do that." It has developed in such a way, that today young people like you come to me. Of course that pleases me; it should indeed be like that. With regard to this, I have been spoiled my whole life. I was known fairly quickly, perhaps notoriously, always polarized and always questioned. I believe that my work will never stop to be questionable, but I only show the world as she is.

*SG: Karlyn and I have talked together a lot about you and your Aktionen and it seems that a lot of people do not understand you, even though you explain it often and so clearly that I had thought many people should be able to relate to what you say.*

HN: You are absolutely right. Bankers, lawyers, and many others like that, are often not able to really read my art, and that is sad. I can only teach them to a certain extent, and I can teach them best through my work itself. I know that perhaps 80% of the people, who have kept me alive, in the sense that they buy my art, do not understand it.

*KDJ: Why is that, do you think?*

HN: A very drastic example: there is the Second Viennese School, the Schoenberg School. Schoenberg is the one who has determined the music of the 20th Century. Once there was a day of

death, or something like that, of one of the composers of this school, Anton Webern, and then the best musicians came to Vienna. He had only written for small ensembles, that is, the best soloists were there. Nevertheless, only a few listeners came. The work is so great but nonetheless is discarded in the world. It is so unbelievable that something may go away empty-handed like that. For me it is not considered empty and for the music and for those who know, he has been essential and still is essential. Also for example, like with Bach, someone who has made the most wonderful things, but when his work is played in a concert hall, perhaps only 1000 people will and can come, there are soccer stadiums that can contain 100,000 people.

*SG: Does that hurt you?*

HN: Well, an enemy that can not be overcome, one should simply join. Of course, these sports fights have also a lot to do with art, football is dramatic, and it has a lot to do with drama. Today, sadly enough, it is like that, but on the other hand, it is so that we have a say in it ourselves as well. This may be something one does perhaps not notice, but indirectly we together decide a lot.

*KDJ: You will be 72 this year, but you work a lot with young models. You told us that we, with 29 and 32, are almost too old. The age distance between you and your models seems to become bigger. What does this mean or say to you?*

HN: What shall I say now? Every age can identify itself with the heroes of that age, and now today I am an older lover. If I would say that I like women, but that I really am not constantly anxious to play the bells in some way to impress the women, I would actually be lying. Now it is so, the young people are easiest to get, the older-looking, one will not get. What I do not like is that bourgeois



obesity, but one that is reasonable skinny, that pleases me a lot, but one does not easily get a model like that. It is just a convenience that I just take the people from a student's repertoire, but otherwise there generally is no age limit.

*KDJ: So there also no limit for the models who are naked?*

HN: No. Not at all. In a given case, I would also take those who have this bourgeois fat. It is about the human, but then there is of course the tradition of art history, with the beautiful bodies of Michelangelo. And what always interested me... Why are you laughing, Sarah?

*SG: I had to think of Rubens.*

HN: Marvelous, marvelous. Without further protest, I would take such people. But it is the Christ-ideal of sculpture that is an ideal that has very much determined me. A woman with not so strong breasts has such a similarity with the body of Christ. Something like that interests me in particular. But the beautiful story comes through the Passion of Christ, and through Greek sculpture, in that tradition I have grown up, that is my cultural environment. Dionysus, for example, is not a fat god, such as Bacchus. Dionysus is slim.

*KDJ: What do you think about your own body?*

HN: Perhaps by a not so happy upbringing, I have not learned to love my body. But I am not against my body, I am for the body, but I am very much against the exaggeration of the physicality in sport. I have forgotten to love my body as it would perhaps be nicer, but still loved it enough.

*KDJ: Do you love the bodies of other people when you hang them on the cross? What does the crucifixion of these bodies mean to you?*

HN: It is an expression of many things. When I go into a museum and I see a crucifixion by Titian or Rembrandt there, I would say that, that is the human appearance, theatrical, until the tragic, until the resurrection. I do not think that the human body is more beautiful when it hangs on the cross, but it creates a dramatic expressiveness. Although I am not a practicing Christian, that tragic has a monstrous adventurous element to me, nevertheless tragedy is always associated with great beauty. That can also be seen in art history.

*KDJ: Do you believe there is a god?*

HN: I do not think that that is the most important question, however, our own existence, our Being, that is important. That is not even a question, but a command. It is the way that we become. We should enjoy our lives and in some way do it so intense, that you get goose bumps.

*KDJ: You seem to be a very intellectually oriented person, but at the same time also a very emotional person.*

HN: Yes, I am very much at the border of the intellect. And precisely for that reason, because I know I am on the border and move at the frontier of science, I am not against emotionality. Many are always against the intellect and say that nothing can be achieved with the intellect. But I also believe that I am passionate. In the past I seem to have been much more terrible. And now I do not know, but my work has always been a plea for sensuality. That is, however, done in such a way, that I always say, "sensibility is a mental thing", it is dealt with by consciousness. So, with this platonic thing however, mind separated from body, I do not play along with that. This is out of Christianity, that is

no longer my world. My work is an apologia for sensuousness. We no longer live in the Middle Ages, when the mind was everything and the body was condemned, and our life was only the preparation for the beyond. My life is no preparation for the beyond. The beyond is there, when I am intensely present.

*KDJ: Do you believe that you are always intensely present?*

HN: Yes, but of course I must die, but when I look around, when I look at the universe, it is always moving, always recurring. Everything that is destroyed comes back. I actually carry the whole universe really deep into my heart.

*KDJ: How do you see your relationship to the universe then, what is your position there?*

HN: I do not say that quite exuberant, but I say: "I am all that, all around, that is all me." There is identification with the whole and that gives me a great sense of happiness. Perhaps we are still on our way, but we should all experience this great awareness.

*KDJ: Are you yourself still on your way?*

HN: I will be my whole life; I will always be on my way, in the infinite space of eternity or infinity.

*KDJ: You stress the word 'always'.*

HN: I have had to suffer a lot in my life and do not know how much I still have to suffer, but nevertheless I want to experience it again and again, because it shows me everything: suffering, death, joy, lust. I would say that I regard myself as an intersection where a lot of experiences meet and above all as a human subject in which, by which, Being is experienced intensely.

*SG: Do you have the feeling that you have been able to experience intensely enough or would you have liked to experience more, do more, live more.*

HN: That is difficult to answer because I must be satisfied with what I have learned.

*KDJ: Are you happy?*

HN: At the moment, yes. But I am also often very unhappy. To me it always gets on my nerves when people ask me how I am. The question is incredibly hypocrite, for 95% the question is not meant genuinely, and people are shocked when you answer the question honestly.

*SG: Is there a moment in your life of which you say that you should not have done that. Or are you generally satisfied with what you have done?*

HN: Recently I have said to myself, I would not have decided otherwise when I would live on, or if everything would be repeated again. It is actually so, that I think... Not that I have made the right decisions, but I have been pushed into the right decisions.

*KDJ: Does that mean that these decisions are not made consciously?*

HN: For example: I told you already that I was a bad student. I was kicked out of grammar school. In secondary school I was then been put in the b-section. I got so angry, that school did not really interest me anymore and I despised it. I have always been a dreamer. When the teacher was preaching, I was always writing novels. They were always hero-novels, in which I lived in one country for a long time and then became a hero and, of course, then I went home to my mother. It is a long story. There is always so much energy in people, if we could channel that a little... One did not know what to do with me. I have always disappointed my

mother very much, but she had always known that I was good at drawing. There is a school in Vienna where you can learn graphic art, there you had to draw incredibly much and perhaps I learned more there than at the Art Academy. 300 children wanted to go there and they took only 20 and I had the good fortune to be among those 20. I was pushed into that, it did not depend at all on my own will. That is what I mean; it was the greatest luck in my life. The teachers encouraged my love for the old masters. That is what I mean, certain decisions one cannot make oneself.

*KDJ: With your hero-novels you always lived in a dream world. How did you get into reality?*

HN: Maybe I am still not there. But it is like that, what is real? Probably the world, of which I have told you, is the reality. The banking crises are not realities, because they only give an illusory world. The illusory world suddenly shows holes. In addition, that what we call reality, I would say, I do not recognize that as reality. That is the black reality. I often ask young people what they study, science or economics. Then there are always these cheaters who try to imitate something they themselves cannot understand. In that way we will all slip into a terrible imaginary world and forget that we exist at all, even though that is the most important thing. Zen Buddhism has very much dealt with this matter. So it is with Being, we are in the middle of it and do not see it.

*SG: How can you help someone to see that, do you have the feeling that you can do that through your art?*

HN: Yes, indeed, with my art and in the past for example, through the endless sitting at *heurigen*, with wine, with good friends. I have had wonderful conversations there. I learned more at the *heurigen* than in lecture halls.

*KDJ: At heurigen there is often a lot of alcohol involved. How does that relate to wanting to create a conscious life?*

HN: First of all, we humans are to some extent depending on drugs. Of course, who can do without drugs, that is wonderful. Alcohol, you have to be able to handle it, it can ruin you, but there is also a drinking technique through which you can handle the alcohol. For example: you can drink every other day. Asians for example, have other drugs. Also the Greek philosophers always drank a lot. In Taoism there is a sect, who have only been drinking and singing and they were very happy. But, I will not be an apologia of wine, and so far I have not exaggerated it.

*SG: I have read something about excesses, were these excesses created by intense Being? Or did they develop earlier on also through the use of alcohol or other drugs?*

HN: Look, existence or orgies are of course, to some degree almost synthetic concepts, a vision however that can come close to it. It is there as a vision and as a wonderful idea, as an excess in certain cases, it is always possible, and perhaps even necessary.

*SG: Why necessary?*

HN: We need it for our blood circulation. Today they all go to this wellness centers and things like that. I do believe that it is important to purify ourselves, and by that to be able to live intensely, by which intense life cannot be captured in a textbook.

*KDJ: Nitsch, you just spoke of a drinking technique. Is there also such a thing as a technique to live?*

HN: Maybe not a technique, but there sure is a way. I try to live intensely. I try not to be lazy. Lazy means going on holidays, skiing.

Real pleasure is extremely determined, pleasure is not only relaxing, pleasure is a large and deep probation.

*SG: When we talk with you like this, you seem to be a very gentle man who is very aware of his life, but I have also read that you like conflicts, how do you connect these two contrasts?*

HN: The world is movement, by the Greeks this was called *panta rei*, everything flows. As I already said, everything returns. At this moment everything is green again where I live and I think here in Naples too, and that is all fight and movement. I am a dramatist, and drama is actually the struggle for Being. Taking part in this eternal life, the life which carries all joy and the possibility of experiencing that joy is a fight. And now something very important, time, time does not exist at all. There is only space of eternity, and in that space of eternity, beginning and end are both given. We can never think differently than that a day is over when the sun goes down, we eat when we are hungry, everything with a beginning and an end in the temporality of our lives. You are born and disappear and that is something that you are not always so aware of. There would only be time when something begins, arises and passes away again. Now it is so, it is the truth of reality, this permanent flow, *panta rei*, there is no beginning and no end.

In the great Asian religions and also in Christian mysticism there are also no beginning and no end. And even the so-called God, he is without beginning or end, and cannot house time in him. Now, if I believe in it, that movement and fight are permanent, and then I know I will not pass away, I have always been and always will be. Look, you know your parents, your grandparents and perhaps their parents, but then at a certain moment it stops, but

that does not mean that there was nothing before that. We always talk about life after death, but what about life before death.

There is only movement, and not a real beginning. The real beginning some say, was perhaps in the Big Bang, but probably the Big Bang was not even the beginning because we know that there must have been many. Cosmology also believes that cosmoses exist side by side. I say, movement is the greatest thing and that is my answer to the fight. Without struggle, you will not get there, you will not manage. I am very much against wars, but war is then also more than a struggle, that is a terrible machine to mass destroy.

*KDJ: How do you see your own life in relation to this movement, following up from existing individuals?*

HN: I am a great admirer of Nietzsche; he said incredible things, for example: "I was really everything, I was Alexander the Great, I was Cesar, I was Christ... Or Napoleon." I also believe that I have been everything, and that I will be all that will ever be. This is perhaps an extension of the idea of reincarnation that the Buddhists and Hindu have, but my thought is much bigger. Since it is already about a Pan-awareness. I am also you now.

*KDJ: How do you see this connection when you say: "I am you"?*

HN: In literature apparently, there seems to be a recognizable development towards the subject in nature. This is already given in the lowest living beings. It already starts with plants; that a plant is on its way in the direction of a subjective perception. Then next are animals, and then people. According to me, God is the absolute subject. From there we are coming closer again to the first question. We are of course all related to this absolute subject and therefore in the great idea of love, it comes down to subjects

that dissolve into each other, in the mystical God. I would say, there are profound reasons of Being. Of course, there is also Being in which we are all connected with each other forever. That is the Christian idea, the Last Supper and love and the attempt to cancel and overcome the subject into the art of the higher subject. There is a man whom I admire very much and also of which I have learned a lot that is the C.G. Jung. He has spoken of a development process, in which I become myself. The I is the temporal. The self is shown as subject, based on the whole.

*KDJ: Do you see yourself as the center?*

HN: Inevitably, my psychophysical structure... Even though I know there are other centers, perhaps centers that are superior to me, but I am like that. But inevitably I see myself as a subject.

*KDJ: How do you see that in your Aktion, do you feel close connected with the spectators in all your Aktionen?*

HN: Yes. I feel connected. I wish that we will all be one.

*KDJ: When I hang blindfolded on the cross, should I then feel connected with all these other people who are watching me?*

HN: You do not have to do anything. You feel what you want, what you perceive. The rules need to be followed however, unfortunately. Look, if you play a part in a theater, you cannot suddenly say something else. You have a role, you have a function, and certain actions need to be implemented.

*KDJ: How do you see your function or position in your theater?*

HN: I think, I have renewed theater as such a lot and fortunately there are several people who understand me.

*SG: What will the next days, the preparations for the Aktion, be like?*

HN: You have to get more and more involved in the process. Once I will really have to see you naked, so I know how the two of you look. And then, on Sunday we will first have about five hours in the museum. Then you will be carried to the top of the mountain. Unfortunately, because of censorship, you will have to wear this dress, this painting shirt called *Malhemd*. Then you can partly stand and partly lie, but I still have to think about how exactly I will do it. Then you will get blood and slime in your mouth again. Then you will be carried up the hill and there you will be naked again. At the top, under the monastery, something will still be happening. And then there will be lots of food and drink. Roughly, that is what will happen. On the tables are objects, fruit and large fish. But I will not do anything you do not previously know, and we will rehearse it, too.

*KDJ: Shall we stay here at the museum the next days, ready for you?*

HN: As you like. Look, if I really cannot talk with you, then I will tell you. We can also talk about nonsense; we do not always need to cite God and the world. I much prefer quite banal conversations sometimes, so after work, I prefer them over conversations that are about the great crisis with intellectuals who want to have everything better and know everything better.

*KDJ: Is the intellectual challenge, not also something you need?*

HN: It does not exist. It is just a cataloging of stupidity that is not an intellectual challenge. I never really played along when the intellectuals have somehow played together.

*KDJ: Nitsch, we have heard that there is a waiting list for the actors, why did you choose us?*

HN: I have not chosen you, you have been announced to me, and I approved afterwards, because I was expecting a certain intellectuality of you, or at least that we can talk about certain things. Well, and then you came to my house in Prinzendorf, there had already been a lot of noise about the two of you of course; everybody somehow knew I wanted you.

*KDJ: What is normally your relationship with your actors?*

HN: It is always only just friendship, I have many actors who have participated many times. I am not telling this to make propaganda for my work, but there are many who have told me that it was the most intense experience of their lives.

*KDJ: Have they told you why they felt like that?*

HN: I would say it is evident, because they were so impressed by the sensual experience of it. Also from being naked, when the meat falls on top of you and everything you see and hear. This then really goes, as I say, "under your skin."

*KDJ: Sunday is your 130th Aktion. How do you experience your Aktionen yourself, since you have already created so many?*

HN: In between it is wonderful as life itself, and in between things sometimes do not work, but people should not notice that, because then it is terrible. But in between, it is quite fantastic.

*KDJ: What is for you so fantastic about it?*

HN: Now again I compare it to when I hear a Passion by Bach. If everything is right and when you are being carried away, I would say that this art is existentially powerful. I wish that as well for my art, that it can carry.

*KDJ: What do you wish from your Aktion this Sunday?*

HN: That I can win my audience for the idea, and that I can make new friends again.

*KDJ: Would you like a friendship with us?*

HN: Otherwise I would not be sitting here, and if I do not get it, I cannot even ask for it.

*KDJ: What does friendship mean to you and what do you hope from a friendship?*

HN: Many things, but above all that we can celebrate together.

*KDJ: But that does not mean only the positive moments, does it?*

HN: No. There is a beautiful expression in literature: festivities of life. I do indeed believe in these festivities of life. I would like to celebrate my life and that of my friends, to make life a festivity. My *Orgien Mysterien Theater* is actually a large-scale celebration, especially as I would like to realize it in Prinzendorf.

*KDJ: What does it mean for you to celebrate your Aktion in Naples this time?*

HN: I have some friends here and feel very much at home. The Italians are very sensible people, we, from Austria, have a baroque tradition in common. Naples even was a few years very close with

Austria. The Italians in generally, and especially many people here, understand me. I have always believed that the Americans understood me best, but the Italians understand me even more.

*SG: Where does this sensuality in you come from?*

HN: Nature, like with all people in general it is nature which reveals itself and which wants to experience itself, nature experiencing itself through the senses. The eye is a sense, the ear is a sense, smelling, tasting, touching...

*SG: Do you have a certain sense that is very strong?*

HN: Perhaps hearing, music, but the senses all join together, and I would like to make anyone more conscious about each and all of them.



## DAY 2 18 MAY 2010 KARLYN DE JONGH

On this second day, the Dutch artist, Sarah and I even had time for a coffee on our way to the museum. It was a sunny day again, the same traffic in the streets and again the amazing feeling of walking hand-in-hand with Sarah into our new adventures. I felt good this day. The running had done me well and I felt prepared: I did not have any hairs on my legs anymore, I was ready to get naked. When we arrived at the museum, Nitsch was not there yet. So, we waited outside on the museum terrace. Sarah and I spoke into our voice recorders to capture as much as possible from what had happened the day before.

After some time, the door opened, I looked up and saw Nitsch. Immediately he said, "Let's get naked." I was pleasantly surprised by his direct approach. I had not expected he would be so straightforward about it. This was also a moment of judgment, at least I felt it like that. Would Nitsch like my body? The worries disappeared quickly. They seemed gone before I reached Nitsch to kiss him good morning. Nitsch made the impression he wanted to get it over with and after receiving his kisses, he turned around and walked back into the museum. Sarah and I followed him. Apparently, he wanted to do it somewhere inside there.

It was loud inside, there were people working. They were making more tables and some sort of giant canvas. I was not sure where we were going. I imagined, he wanted to do it in a more private area, so that we would be alone and that we could have sex af-



terwards, without anybody knowing. Nitsch looked us straight in the face. We spoke about the blood and the slime, which we would get served during the *Aktion*. Nitsch assured us not to worry, "The slime is nothing toxic." He also told us, that we did not have to drink the blood. I did not like the blood, or so I assumed, because every time I thought about the moment I would get served the blood, I nearly had to vomit. Now I felt more relaxed about hanging on the cross, getting the blood, but its smell and the smell of the intestines, were still troubling me. I had tasted my own blood and that of others, but not to this extent. Now I would be getting big amounts; Nitsch had ordered 300 liters of blood. I did not know how many passive actors there would be, but a large part of the blood would be for me. We stopped at a table, it was made of wood and had a beautiful, white, immaculate surface. No private place, it was here that we had to undress, in the center of the museum space. Standing next to the table Nitsch clarified that we had to lie down on it.

"Who wants to go first?" I did not want to take a passive attitude and offered myself. I also just wanted to have it over with. I did not know what to expect, Nitsch had not said anything except for the fact that he wanted to see us naked. I was still a little bit insecure about my body, but there was nothing I could do about it anymore, nothing to be changed, this was it. This was everything I could offer Nitsch. If he did not like it, then that would be my bad luck. Sarah helped me out of my dress and I took off my shoes, my bra and my thong. Now I was standing naked in front of Nitsch. He asked me to lie on the table, which I did. I felt uncomfortable, not knowing what was about to happen. I had fantasized about being naked in a crowd, in a public place, making myself come. I had fantasized about that plenty of times, but

this time it was nothing sexy, nothing erotic, nothing at all like I had imagined. It was light in the space and I hoped Nitsch would not see my fat bottom. I had to sit on the table first, before lying down. I squeezed my bottom not to touch his immaculate table with my wet pussy. The table was so bright, so white, so fresh and new, that I did not want to leave a mark on it. I positioned myself in the center of the table, in an uncomfortable way. Two assistants came with a wooden stick that reminded me of something I had seen in Nitsch's videos. They asked me to position my hands on the stick and they pulled me up. It was uncomfortable, especially because I was paying attention not to look too fat, keeping my belly pulled in. It did not feel well. There I was, in this 45° angle, hanging in a way that I imagined could not look any good. I wondered what my breasts would look like, whether they would be okay. Nitsch said nothing at all.

They pulled the stick up higher. This was fantastic! I looked straight ahead and felt power coming into my body. I felt very strong. I could see through the space, through the window, over the museum terrace to the Vesuvius and the city of Naples. It felt spacious and light. I noticed that I was being photographed. The Dutch artist was taking pictures from the top of the staircase and another man was filming me, circling around, observing me from every corner with his camera. Although I was being controlled over, I felt completely in control over the situation. It felt amazing, free, the sun on my breasts, my nipples were getting hard and my complete body had the sensation of being naked. An incredible desire overcame me. I was sucking up every moment of it. I was feeling the space. Everybody was able to see me there. The feeling of the surface of my skin, it was incredibly sensitive. It was as if I was being touched by the space. It was so powerful, that I experienced it as

a very long moment. My thoughts were interrupted when Nitsch said that it was enough. I could have stayed there forever, but the two assistants moved me back down and let me go.

Now I was lying on my back again. When I got off the table, Sarah handed over my clothes and helped me in my dress. Now she got undressed. I helped her out of her clothes; it was a very warm moment: we were doing this together; together, we were stepping over our fears. She looked beautiful, Sarah, very sexy, with her wild hair. I still could not imagine that I may have looked nice, but Sarah looked amazing, very beautiful, erotic, sexy and wild. It was only a very short moment that she was lying there on the table. It was over in a split second, or at least: so it seemed. When Sarah got off the table, I asked Nitsch what he thought about our bodies now he had seen us naked. "You do not have boring bodies."

Nitsch wanted to sit down and there was one chair in the center of the room. Sarah and I kneeled next to him, it felt close. Again Nitsch took time to speak with us. He seemed happy and the conversation went really well. Also the flow between Sarah and myself went well. It was noisy in this space, they were building a large wall behind us, using an electric saw, screwing and hammering. Nitsch seemed happy to be sitting down there and looked as if he did not want to move, and we did not propose to sit somewhere else. I was also happy to be where I was, today Nitsch seemed more open towards us. I do not know the reason, but it just felt better than yesterday. It was also easier for me to be more open and I told Nitsch about the sexual excitement that I had felt in the days before and that I was still feeling that, even at this very moment sitting there with him. Although Nitsch was visually not sexually attractive for me, I was aroused by his presence.

Nitsch looked sweet and he seemed to enjoy being there with Sarah and me. At a certain point, we looked each other straight in the eyes, we had been doing that more often, but this time it took longer. It was fantastic to see the sparkle in his eyes and I felt myself growing stronger. When I smiled, he turned his head away from me. An assistant interrupted the conversation to tell Nitsch about the shirts, *Malhemden*, that had arrived and he wanted us to test them. There were plenty of these shirts in two different types of fabric and they were of different length as well. I tried one on, it felt incredibly unsexy. I spread my arms, I felt like an angel, in an unusual way. Sarah and I found a cotton one that fitted and I was happy with the natural fabric. When Sarah left to get stickers with our name on it, I spoke with Nitsch. He wanted to know about the books that I read. I told him and he replied by saying that he once met the philosopher Gadamer and had gone out with him for drinks. I realized that in a few years I would be talking like that to another person about my own experiences with Hermann Nitsch.

When Sarah returned, Nitsch told us he wanted to go for lunch and have a bit of a break. He promised us that in the afternoon, we would listen to music together. We had spoken about it during the interview and he wanted to show us. But first Sarah and I had coffee at Piazza Dante, in the same café like yesterday, because with all the hectic on the streets, we needed a quiet place to relax. The place upstairs in the café was a relief in this busy city. We spoke about the television people that were about to arrive the next day and would film Sarah and me creating our project. I was quite tense about it; there were still several things Sarah and I had to improve about ourselves in order to be ready for it.

Back at the museum, Nitsch was sitting at what appeared to be his favorite spot, close to the window and entrance door. We joined him there, but he immediately called for an assistant who brought us upstairs to an apartment. Nitsch arrived a few seconds later with the elevator. The apartment had a beautiful large work by Nitsch hanging on the wall next to the music installation. We had to take a seat in front of the stereo. It was nice to be with Nitsch again. I had even missed him in this little time that we had been gone and appreciated that he had kept his promise to be listening to music with us. It took some time before everything was ready. The volume was set at 70 and a wall of music came through the speakers. It was loud, very loud.

I looked at Nitsch, who seemed to be listening to the music, and I decided to focus on it as well. The music was not my taste, but it was powerful and the loudness was so overwhelming that the music surrounded me like a blanket. I closed my eyes and listened to it. Suddenly, Sarah was trembling. I put my arms around her and held her tight, stroking her back. I wanted to be there for her, to comfort her, especially with the high tones she was shaking. While I was holding Sarah, I looked at Nitsch, he was leaning forward. At first I thought he was very concentrated on the music, but now it became clear to me that he was falling asleep. It was amazing, he was dozing off with the music at level 70. I enjoyed observing him, the way his head was tilting downwards. It was beautiful to see and I admired that he was able to show himself in that way. He did not care what we were thinking about him. I focused on the music again. I imagined how powerful it must be during the *Aktion*, when you cannot see anything. After we listened to three quarters of the piece, Nitsch wanted to go downstairs again. I think he needed to continue with the

preparations for the event. I was happy that, again, we had spent so much time with him. Together with Nitsch, we took the elevator. When Nitsch went back to his chair, we went outside to capture the moment in our voice recorders.

I thought about what Nitsch had said the day before, about friendship, and wondered about whether Sarah and I would be able to develop a friendship with him. At a certain moment, we were asked to come inside. Nitsch was sitting on a chair on his favorite spot and another passive actor was also there. We had to put on our *Malhemden* again. I put it on over the dress that I was wearing and took off my shoes. It must have looked ridiculous, at least so it felt to me. Then I saw three crosses lying in a row on the floor. Nitsch asked us to lie on one of them. It felt incredible. Only for a moment I thought about the story of Jesus Christ, about the Passion and the Stations of the Cross. I also wondered whether this was the feeling that you experience when you are dying and I thought about the suicide wishes that I had had. I wondered whether this would be what it is like to actually jump and experience the last moment before you die. My life is too interesting at the moment, so I quickly left these thoughts, and just tried to experience this moment to the fullest.

I never imagined it would be a liberating feeling to be on the cross, but it was. It was nothing silly at all, nothing kitschy, it did not even feel like theater. We were making the preparations for Nitsch's *Orgien Mysterien Theater*, but it felt real to me, it felt erotic and free. I felt the complete surface of my backside lying on the cross. I heard voices, but could not hear what they were saying. I tried to look up, to see what was going on and what happened with Sarah. They had bound me, so I could not move any further.

I saw Sarah lying close to me and I decided to just look straight ahead at the ceiling. I felt my freedom. I felt alive. Footsteps were coming in my direction, the Austrian assistant and the Dutch artist were coming towards me. They lifted me up from one side and positioned me vertically. It felt incredible. The air zoomed around my body, it was such an amazing feeling, I have no words to describe it. I looked straight ahead, full of power. There was Nitsch, I looked him straight in the eyes. Even though I was bound to the cross, I felt as if I had control over him. He said something which I could not hear. I was in the moment, it was my moment. I realized it was like my fantasy, but I did not want to fantasize at this moment. I did not want to think about being licked or being penetrated there on the cross. I wanted to be in the moment and feel everything around me, and I felt it, I felt the liberation. I looked outside through the museum's window, over the city, the Vesuvius. It was powerful. I think I was breathing heavily, opening my mouth to suck in all the air. It took forever. Then I was placed on the floor again, which felt very low, as if I was lying under it. It felt very, very deep, almost as being buried into the floor. They lifted me up again, this time horizontally. I felt submissive and dominant at the same time. I felt like a queen on the cross. I felt full of power, full of energy. There was no real sexual activity, but I was living my fantasy very intensely.

They placed me back on the floor, quite close to Nitsch. Someone came with a small piece of wood. Apparently, they measured my length and made the cross custom to my body. They marked the position of where the piece of wood would come. This was now my cross, my moment, my death, I could have laid there forever. I did not want it to end. What I wanted was that somebody would come to lift up my *Malhemd*, rip of my under-

pants and start licking me, start fucking me, to take me while I was lying there, not being able to move. He would just do it, and shoot me full with his sperm. I was still very much in my own world. Nitsch was looking at me. I do not remember what happened next, but some time later we were finished. They put a sticker with my name on the cross, it had become, my cross.

I think we stayed in the museum for a little while longer and then went home. Sarah and I went running. The running did not go as well as the previous day, this time the exhaust fumes were heavy on my lungs and I thought I would live a few days less because of it. But I was happy to be here in Naples and experience this week with Nitsch. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity. After running, we had dinner in a restaurant and spoke about the television people that would arrive the next day. After some time we went home and met our new flat mates. I masturbated twice. I needed to relieve myself and get rid of the sexual tension. I fantasized about the *Aktion* again and imagined myself back on the cross. After my experiences of the day, the sensation was different than the previous times. I thought about what I had felt that afternoon and imagined being taken by a group of men, one after the other. I was in the vineyard again, full of cum, this time with a dozen of women licking my pussy clean, including Sarah. When they were done, I masturbated while looking Nitsch straight in the eyes. I came so intensely that I screamed all over the place and everybody looked in my direction to see what was happening. Although I was exhausted, I did not get much sleep that night.

Today it was again quite cold, especially for this time of year, but it felt warm walking hand in hand with Karlyn to the museum. We even had time to stop at a charming little coffee shop where you could drink your coffee standing at the bar. The owner seemed to be pleased that two young women, who clearly were not from around there, were in his bar. We each drank a cappuccino and after that, I had a double espresso to wake up completely. When we arrived at the museum, Nitsch was already there and said "Let's get it over with, let's get naked."

Karlyn was the first to undress and she lay down on one of the tables. I think there were about eight of them standing in the space. Two big plywood walls had been erected, which were covered with white cloth. Now the floor was covered with this tough plastic, still reminding me of a mass murderer. I caught myself thinking about this and said to myself: "What a nonsense."

After Nitsch was 'finished' with Karlyn, it was my turn. Many people were walking around minding their own business, screwing and hammering away, making crosses and stretchers. I got naked and laid down on the table. For some reason I was not that uncomfortable anymore. I just got undressed. When you are going to the beach people see you as well, basically everything. So, what was the big deal? I have had sex with so many people and I know that my body is quite average. I got a round wooden bar which I had to hold on to with my hands. I got pulled up by two

people, who were holding the bar on each side until I sat straight up, legs flat on the table, in a 90° position. I caught myself thinking again: "I hope my belly does not show too many rolls." Nitsch told me, that in this position I would get blood poured into my mouth during the *Aktion*. I remember well how he was looking, seemingly enjoying what he was seeing. I looked straight back at him, feeling happy because he seemed content.

After this moment of intimacy it was very comforting to sit down with Nitsch and Karlyn in the space. Workmen were still hammering and drilling. We did another interview and our conversation came naturally. But as there were so many acoustic distractions, it was difficult for me to hear Nitsch well and to react properly upon the answers he was giving. I was really trying to understand Nitsch; I tried to see him as a person, not worshipping him because he is a well-known artist. The human being is, what I wanted to get. And because it seemed unjust to only ask, I also told him when the topic of the conversation fitted about my life, for instance about the different sexual experiences I had and how interesting it is to discover humans so personal, in their pure core of being. After nearly two hours Nitsch told us with a smile, which he had with us most of the time anyway, that our conversations felt to him like psychoanalysis. He seemed to like it and said that he was looking forward to continue our communication.

For now we said goodbye and thanked Nitsch properly. Karlyn and I walked down to Piazza Dante, where Dante was still looking at me. We went to the same coffee bar where you could sit quietly on the second floor, overlooking the piazza. We checked our voice recorders and our recordings were sounding horrendously bad: you could hardly hear Nitsch. You could hear the drilling and all the noise in the background much better than the words

which had been spoken. I was shaking, this was not good at all. It had been such a nice interview, it had felt so right and because of the wrong environment I thought that we could have lost all the spoken words of the many moments, because of bad organization. I should have realized that the surrounding was not good for recording and done something about it.

Still being angry with myself and feeling all kinds of different anxieties, we walked up to the museum. Just before arriving, Karlyn asked me if I was OK and I just bursted into tears. I felt the tension which had been building up for a long period, while also for days now having this fast heartbeat. I think a combination of factors was causing this, but it was mainly because I and the Dutch artist were getting closer to Karlyn. It was unusual but it felt good and in the end it is better to be mature about these things; life is always changing and the stronger you are the better you can deal with life and the more interesting your life can be.

Standing in the alleyway before reaching the museum, I remember that Karlyn reacted very nicely to my sudden outburst, by holding me tight in her arms, comforting me. After some minutes of crying in Karlyn's arms I felt relieved. I pulled myself together again and we walked to the museum. Nitsch had invited Karlyn and me to listen together with him to the music he had composed. Maybe he had done this because he wanted to share his life and passions with us, music being one of them.

On the second floor of the museum there was an apartment where Nitsch was staying; it even had a sign with his name on the door. The living-room had a huge window and the view was amazing: the Vesuvius, Naples and the sea. What a mighty view.

The Italian assistant of Nitsch did put a CD in the player. The music started softly and slowly, it was called the *Ninth Symphony - the Egyptian*. Apparently Nitsch had composed it when being in Egypt. We were sitting next to each other on the three chairs, facing the small CD player. The music started with flutes and immediately caught me. It was amazing how my body reacted. I started to shake and I searched the closeness of Karlyn. My heart was beating so hard, nearly jumping out of my chest. I felt that the music was taking control over me, tying me tighter and tighter and I was holding on to Karlyn for support. She reacted very sweet and I realized that she cared for me, it was a beautiful moment. The long-term assistant of Nitsch was walking around, I think he was smoking a joint, he took off his shoes and laid down on a little couch. Nitsch, Karlyn and I were sitting on the chairs in front of the stereo, the volume was now on 70, it was very loud, the sound-waves hitting my ears, hitting my eardrums and at the very same time Nitsch was dozing away. He held the remote control in his hands and I witnessed that he totally relaxed and it looked to me as if he was actually falling asleep.

At one point his glasses slid off his face and onto the floor and I was afraid that he would drop the remote control which he was holding in his hands. I picked up his glasses and took the remote control out of his hands and put them on the table. Then the very loud experimental music, became very high-pitched and I burst into tears. I could not hold myself; it was too much for my ears, my emotions, and my physical state. I hardly had slept and it had been a very busy period in my life. I felt the pressure on me and now sitting in front of his small little stereo, opening up to Nitsch and Karlyn, to my thoughts and emotions, the music took over. I was feeling more and more ecstatic as the music kept going on. I start-

ed to feel horny and I would have loved to make myself come at the spot, but I felt that would not be appropriate. Also getting up and going to the toilet to make myself come, to give myself an orgasm to calm myself down, I felt I should not do. We listened to the music for more than an hour and I was totally exhausted afterwards. I remember coming outside and speaking into my voice recorder, unable to control my emotions, because this was new for me.

Nitsch had told us at the very start of our Art Project that he is not almighty and that he does not know everything. He had broken new ground by trying to open up cultural restrictions at a very young age in the 1960s in Austria, I had noticed that sexuality for him seemed to be not such an easy topic. I had the feeling that he had not really achieved this freedom of expression, of living it for himself. It was fascinating to observe this and it showed me how difficult it is, to be really honest, to be really open.

Most of the times I am pretty rational, so, I was amazed by the impact the music had made on me. It might have been a combination of little sleep and high tension, but also the awareness of sitting there between Nitsch and Karlyn. Karlyn, who I hope to know until the day I die. Being aware that Nitsch was sitting next to me, the buttons on his shirt under tension, I was scared his heart would not be able to beat enough to keep his body going. I felt very intense, this awareness of the moment sitting there with a man who had dedicated his life to his art, being a *Gesammt Kunstwerk* himself, dedicating his life to show *Sinnlichkeit*, to make us aware of our existence, *Dasein*. To show that we have to live life to the maximum, also by being aware of our senses, and this sound experience was just amazing. It blew me away, my whole body reacted physically and also mentally I could not control myself and it was amazing being there listening to this

music which was totally wild and experimental, not at all in the way when you hear the word symphony. I had been thinking of 'normal' classical music. It is also the fact that I started to feel so horny after having all these emotions, wanting to touch myself and make myself come so badly, but not having the courage to actually do it. You know, especially when you are with Nitsch, you should let yourself go. All is natural, you should not worry about how many kilos you are, or how your pussy looks, if your lips are too big, your breasts are too small. Although it is not simple, you should let go, and act according your own moralities, following your own judgments.

Now, back with Nitsch and Karlyn in the main space of the museum, he still had to do our 'cross fitting'. It turned out to be lying on a stretcher with one piece of wood put across, making it a cross shape. During the *Aktion* we would be setup straight into a 'crucified' position, and because we luckily would not be nailed through the wrists, they would place a 3 cm wooden strip under our feet, like a little resting place for your feet. They measured where to put my wooden strip according to my length. It all felt a little unusual to me, because still, although I am not religious, I had to think of Jesus Christ, I imagined how in the story, Jesus was nailed to the cross; he and others did not get a 'fitting' cross, they were just crucified and left to die. It was good to know that this was not our destiny. I knew that we would survive. Nobody meant to harm us in any way or do permanent physical or mental damage. Therefore my first 'cross fitting' felt quite comfortable.

We walked back to the apartment and then Karlyn and I went jogging. Separate from each other we ran down the very long 'Corso Vittorio Emanuele II' and we met at the bottom. I think, that this run has cost me at least a week of my life, because the fumes are

horrendous in Naples, and that might be the reason why you do not see anybody running there. I was wondering what the average age is of people in Naples. I wanted to go running, trying to shape my body before getting naked in front of hundreds of people and being filmed for television and also for the Nitsch documentary. I hoped that these films will not haunt me for the rest of my life.

At night, Karlyn and I looked at the photos that the Dutch artist had made of us, in order to show us how we look when we are naked. It looked OK and I got a little bit more comfortable. This Tuesday, May 18 had been another cold day in Naples, another step in my growth as a human, of getting more close to Nitsch and Karlyn.



## DAY 2 18 MAY 2010 HERMANN NITSCH

*Karlyn De Jongh: When Sarah and I will be hanging blindfolded on the cross this coming Sunday, we will get served blood and slime. The slime that you use, what is it made of?*

Hermann Nitsch: It is nothing poisonous. Slime can also be made out of flour, and that is the basis for me.

*Sarah Gold: Somebody told us that we should not actually drink the blood?*

HN: I do not really care, we have enough blood.

*KDJ: What were you paying special attention to, when we held up our arms at our first rehearsal?*

HN: This sequence will, in any case, be in the *Aktion*, that two actors will lift you up like that. Also then you will get blood and slime in your mouth. I especially looked at your upper body. Often they are quite boring, but both of you have very nice upper bodies. Your upper bodies are like in the Passion of Christ. The English painter Lucian Freud also shows that in wonderful pictures. Not as with Rubens. I was fascinated by it, whether people really looked like that in the time of Rubens or whether it was only an ideal.

*SG: In my opinion, it is also a sign of wealth, that if you were able to feed yourself very well, you were a bit more round.*

HN: Yes, and from the inside they were also beautiful. The fat ones have been regarded as rich and healthy. Where that is also

wonderful to see, is with these sumo wrestlers from Japan. That seems to be the ideal for the women over there. And they die soon, because they are so fat, they eat themselves to death. The women then inherit, and these wrestlers are often quite rich, women love them.

*KDJ: Nitsch, yesterday you spoke about a Pan-eroticism. What does this mean to you? And what does, what we have just done, mean to a relation, the undressing, the seeing us naked?*

HN: I would say, simply because the two of you are so attractive, it is special, but otherwise it would be more like someone who goes to the doctor.

*KDJ: For me it has something erotic to undress myself like that, with all these people around.*

HN: Yes, with these people, I did not want to do it with them around, but we are here to work. Actually, I wanted to send everybody away. But that would not have made any sense, because in a few days there are many more people present. As to your bodies; in general I would say that shape, this specific language in art, is an erotic language. And that is also what I understand under Pan-erotic. Everything that is beautiful, including your bodies, has to do with eroticism. And then there also is what we have already discussed yesterday, the beauty of the tragic, that is also a very erotic thing.

*KDJ: Do you see your life as something tragic?*

HN: Inevitably, because I must die. I would say that life, Being comes down to tragic. And I would say that the overcoming of the tragic is religion, as in the church, that everything is always repeated again. Not to the same degree, but simply slightly dif-

ferent, just like the leaves and fruits are different from season to season. It is a permanent repetition.

*SG: Is there for you a situation that is ultimate? That is perfect? If that would at all be possible?*

HN: No, you can only come very close to perfection. Look, what ever I say, that does not mean that it is like that, it only means that I see it like that, I take no claim to objectivity. Others can do that. I cannot do that and I do not want to do that, I want to have the color.

*SG: What situation would then be a near-perfect situation for you, for your own life?*

HN: An example: if I walk somewhere, in the vineyards, highlands, in the woods, I am so strong present then that I feel as if I am the center of the world and at the same time just another little thing: in infinity there are an infinite number of centers.

I can be very much present, when I am listening to music for example. I can be very present, in love, when I love someone very much and someone loves me. I would feel that, that is a very strong state of existence, or state of Being. There are so many different moments, one can experience it everywhere. But, there is not one moment, that if I reach it, that then everything is perfect. Recently, I was in Paris. In Paris there, with the last painting of Cezanne, or with *The Jewish Bride* from Rembrandt that is in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. That is such a beautiful painting. It is as if the world is suddenly perfectly alright. This gives me a wonderful state of Being. Suddenly, I know I am there. Suddenly, I feel that everything makes sense. And one day, this will all pass away, all these wonderful things: the paintings by Rembrandt, Rogier van der Weyden, Titian and Breugel. Then

I am pleased, that they are there and that they filled our hearts with joy and that we have recognized it like that, in such a way, in the sense of Being. Or the mystics, who say it is the ideal state to ascent into God. Various formulations, the same experience.

*KDJ: Is this perceiving, sensing of your Being, something that is created by thoughts, is it something intellectual, or really a feeling with your senses?*

HN: That is given to us by nature. Nature wants us to feel our existence, to feel Being.

*SG: What exactly is nature?*

HN: I cannot define it, others have already done that. Anyway, I think of a philosophy whereby one makes oneself understandable without logical gimmicks. There are many philosophical schools that say, "Yes, they have not expressed this or that correctly, that is wrong." With hands and feet one can however, also make oneself understandable. With great pleasure I make use of a philosophy that is not identified by logic and superiority, but one in which you try to understand each other, that is a great thing. A philosophy that searches for the conformity, rather than one that constantly disagrees and corrects.

*KDJ: Does nature have a will?*

HN: It is like this, in philosophy there is Schopenhauer, who speaks of the will. Buddha has turned that around and says: "The will to be alive like that, is rather bad, it is a negative thing and must be overcome in order to live properly." Nietzsche says: "The will is everything, the will to power." The will is of course always one of these things that require a definition. And if you go around it too long, you will not be able to continue at all.

That is the will? Can she be grasped? Can you point her out so abstractly at all? Are we not simply pulled into it, when we smell roasted pork, smell flowers or a woman? That is like with the will, you are being dragged into it, are you not? Both are somehow there. But I believe that nature, which we have not defined now, that nature has such a power that she draws us within, in the best possible way and most vividly. The birds sing, they want to feel fine, comfortable. Everybody wants to have a pleasure experience. Tragedy comes by itself anyway. Look, if I like to eat well, then I have to make an effort. If we live now, then we must always make an effort in life. And then maybe later, we are shown what is the highest, what is larger and perhaps there is something even bigger, that we just do not know yet.

*KDJ: Are you looking for the biggest?*

HN: I would like to experience the best things there are in life. But if I will succeed in that, I do not know. But I have already had so many wonderful experiences.

*KDJ: What is the most beautiful experience for you?*

HN: That what we have said about the perfect. But there is something else, with the Asians, Zen Buddhism. Because the distinction between imminence and transcendence is often annulled there. That is a distinction which I do not like, that all is beyond or on this side. That our life is a preparation for the hereafter. In Persian Buddhism you will be born again and again, until you no longer wish to live. It is a salvation, when you are no longer driven by life. If you are released just now, then you will not be born again, you will go into Nirvana. The Zen Buddhists go so far as to say: "Even in this life, while being alive, here and now, you can enter into to Nirvana." This is the enlightenment: suddenly they under-

stand the world. However, not intellectually, nor scientifically, but the awareness of any possible centers. They feel, they understand how everything goes, and that is all correct, and this is called the enlightenment experience. I would say that these experiences not only occur among Asians. They occur in our world too, that we feel the world so similar and so strong that she feels mystical. That we enter into it, without a concept of God. That can be built into it later, can it not? The point is that our experiences exist and that they are as sensual as anything else. There is nothing that is being excluded. It is not a drawing-board experience.

*SG: You have now worked for such a long time with Being and experiencing, can you remember when you thought for the first time, "I can feel it"?*

HN: In nature there are many experiences that happen half unconsciously. I think I have had that, such a moment. Maybe I was 18 or 17 years old, that I went for a walk in the field or in nature and I saw a sunset. I then suddenly felt a lot more as with a normal everyday walk. And then also later: in the arts, in painting and music, and even in my own art.

*SG: Can you remember which moments that were? When did you write down your first thoughts about your art or your first Aktionen?*

HN: In Prinzendorf, I have had this very strong enlightenment experience. Previously, I still was an admirer of Schopenhauer and that meant that I still had a world-denying position to art. The opposite. Then I suddenly felt quite strongly the nature in Prinzendorf. Everything was in bloom, the birds were singing, everything was a celebration of life. I did not have the philosophical vocabulary to grasp what I experienced and felt at that time. That feeling has actually repeated itself then, again and again.

*KDJ: How do you experience your here and now at the moment?*

HN: Well, the two of you have to imagine it like this: if we are the same when it comes to our senses, we can say that we are standing in front of a display and there are wonderful things, wonderful pies, wonderful sausages, fruit, and then in the next display there are wonderful books and records and so on. We are standing in front of it, the three of us together, and talk about it without biting into it.

*KDJ: Without biting into it?*

HN: Yes, I would call it like that now, that what the three of us are experiencing right now.

*KDJ: But your eyes began to shine when you said that.*

HN: Yes, maybe.

*SG: Would you like to bite into it?*

HN: Yes, but you cannot always just bite into it. You cannot always so easily bite into something, either sexuality or in food. All has to be when the time is right.

*KDJ: When is this time?*

HN: Would you like to have a normal response? With a tautology? It is time, when it is time; if the opportunity is there. There are also these breakers. The crushers will bite into something, want to force it and in that context that is not always so funny, not always so nice. But there is always time. One always fights for it. Then there are suddenly birds in the garden and all what they really only want is joy. Everybody wants to have joy: birds, dogs, everybody. We humans have often disadvantaged having pleasure, although we still want to experience it.

*KDJ: What was it like for you to see us naked just before? Was that also such a joy?*

HN: It was really pleasant, because—I do not want to make you a compliment now—since you are both very beautiful women. I do not often say that. There I see you naked, very beautiful, and I will now make you a compliment, that should come into our book, you are both amazing, both of you are actually equally beautiful, and both of you are equally well usable.

*SG: How can you for yourself categorize how 'useful' someone is? Has that got something to do with feeling or physique?*

HN: With the language of form. I work a lot with soft substances, such as liquids and it is also about odors and taste values. For me also color is the object; fish and meat and a flower and the naked body. Within the meaning of this form-language, I paint or I am a sculptor in which I take you, your shape, already preformed.

*SG: You have said that blood is poured in our mouth as well as slime. Why blood or slime? Why did you choose these substances?*

HN: Look at the history of art: the matter of the spiritual, Christ, all these matters and everything. Always if blood is present in art, it is exciting. In painting, if there is blood, there is always something tragic.

*SG: Tragic and erotic at the same time. For us, it is also a strangely erotic and unusual situation with you. We noted that our sensibility increases and that it is all very exciting. How is that for you?*

HN: Similar.

*KDJ: For example, even during the preparation of the Aktion I want to experience as intensely as possible what you say, and in the process I*

*feel my whole body. I feel my skin the whole time. Everything feels close and I am very sensitive. Is this something that also you always have?*

HN: I have it too, but not always, but there are many moments where I also feel myself completely. Especially in view of other people who I like, who I desire, that is a normal thing in human existence.

[Nitsch and Karlyn look each other straight in the eyes for some time.]

*KDJ: With pleasure, you look people in the eyes, you see them naked?*

HN: I like to look into the eyes. That is why I do not like sunglasses. I do not want to be in a conservative role, but it is also with the contact that people have to each other these days. Previously, a letter took three weeks time to arrive. When you write: "I love you", three weeks had already passed. Today we can get an immediate response. And if you question me like that, in terms of my art and you being naked, there is only bad erotic art and good erotic art. What pornography is has always been determined by the State or the respective religion, and that is an absolute nonsense.

*KDJ: What does erotic mean to you?*

HN: A wonderful thing. It is the experience that it now sounds a bit sweet but, I think the most extreme state of Being is love and what love is in general: from sexuality to the altruistic sense of being alone. The highest form of being is love, and of course erotic is very much included there.

*KDJ: Do you love everything you see, when it comes down to a conscious experience?*

HN: Actually, yes. I find it difficult today, when I see the economy like it is. Now, I do not play so much around in the economical

crisis, but actually I also love that. Being is revealed in its lowest form until its most extreme form. Similar, is that I would actually like to love everything.

*KDJ: You have talked about the affirmation of life. Is this affirmation also an attempt to love everything?*

HN: Somehow, yes.

*KDJ: Is this affirmation then also about breaking boundaries, your own boundaries?*

HN: We have this great saying of Nietzsche's *Beyond Good And Evil*. This really means: if you are proven right, a new morality must be built. We always have to be and we are all always in transition.

*SG: You speak about morality. What is your morality? After what resolutions are you trying to live or to be a good person?*

HN: In no case I want to be obstructed, and on the other hand there must be the struggle of the people in the world and of the animals as well, in competition, in the sense of struggle and of Being. Yes, it is there, but it should be so that the Good happens righteously. It should not be so that one group murders another group.

*SG: That means you believe in social justice.*

HN: A social justice and a fairness, but then just for the bigger things, the bigger picture, the smaller bad things can stay.

*KDJ: Do you not also try to help other people and increase their consciousness in order to make them more aware about their lives?*

HN: I would say that is the task of art. That we let others participate so that they can experience intensely. That is what great

artists do. I do feel that Beethoven has given something to the people. He has shown them a way. Or with Rembrandt, incredible things happened there.

*KDJ: You often speak of these master painters. Is there for you such a thing as a hierarchy there?*

HN: When I was about 21 years old, I thought that there is indeed such a strict value measurement. What speaks within yourself, if something is of good quality, whether you can measure that exactly? This is a pointless battle that is emotional. To tell a girlfriend: "This Rembrandt is so much better than the other." You can try to prove it, but that is a private matter, that is subjective.

*KDJ: People call you Nitsch and you have told us about it yesterday, that this name has a meaning for you because you have achieved something with it. Can you measure achievement?*

HN: I like that, what I have achieved, to not have achieved that only for myself, that I did not only reach it for me. It is only beautiful when I have achieved it for all others as well. I am not ashamed for what I have done.

*SG: Are you proud of what you have achieved with and in your life? Or satisfied?*

HN: I could not be satisfied. One should never be satisfied.

*KDJ: Would you yourself like to hang on the cross in one of your Aktionen?*

HN: No! I do not do any sports and on the cross it is so uncomfortable.

*SG: On Sunday you will create your 130th Aktion. You have created many, but I do imagine it is very different every time.*

HN: Yes, it is different every time. There are certain basic elements, but it is always different.

*SG: How do you feel about it, are you still able to be excited, or agitated, in a positive or negative sense?*

HN: It used to be so that I did not have time at all to get excited. Because I used to have so much work, and it is really true that earlier on, I had only just finished the preparations seconds before the audience came. I still have planned a great work that I would like to realize once, it will be a very beautiful realization. This is the *6-Tage-Spiel* [6-Days-Play]. I have it in my mind, this great work. I have developed a lot, especially musically. My music has undergone changes and I would like to try everything out again. Here, on Sunday, it is more of a small work. If perhaps it does not work out quite well this Sunday, it is perhaps because I am saving the strength for this big planned performance, the six days, in three years, when I am 75.

*SG: Why would your work perhaps not completely succeed here? What are your quality standards?*

HN: It is only a possibility. It does not have to be like that, but I can remember *Aktionen* that were less good and also many that were better.

*SG: What was better there, or is it a pure emotional judgment?*

HN: Art and the quality of art should not be rationalized over and over again. Look, it is also like this: You sit in the Opera and they are just playing Rossini and you are so much inside of it that you think that it is the most beautiful music there is. Then they are playing Beethoven and you are in it so much that you think this is the most beautiful music in the world. Then you hear

Johann Strauss and that, some compositions, is also the most beautiful music in the world. You only feel that you have to be in it. In some way, there must be the possibility that you completely go up in the matter and that you at the same time should not think of too many other things.

*SG: You just said that you have previously had no time to be excited. How is that today? Now almost everything is being prepared for you, this must be a very different kind of experience.*

HN: It may be quieter, and I might have some more time to enjoy, but the main points are still to come in the next few days. It is my wish that the actors perform my theater very precisely. I also write a score so that it can be realized completely. Because in the future, I would like to give my theater out of hand so that it can still be played after my death. I have a son, he is physiotherapist, and he is absolutely knowledgeable about my theater.

*KDJ: Is this one of your dreams, that your theater can still be realized after your death? Does that have anything to do with what you told us about repetition?*

HN: Yes, if you will, yes.

*SG: Your 6-Tage-Spiel that is perhaps your final last play?*

HN: Yes, but I even have already thought about a theater that would last for three weeks. That would go even more deeply, that would go in even further into life. However, at the moment my wife is still not supporting that, because there is so much to organize then.

*SG: 6 days, 3 weeks, how do you come to these specific numbers of days?*

HN: I had been thinking about a working day, six working days and then it was Sunday, it has to do with the ritualization of life,

and that you should extend it into an entire lifetime. That would actually be my goal.

*KDJ: Your Aktionen are called a theater play, the actual acting should happen in a specific way, how does that relate with the genuineness experiencing life?*

HN: I have not propagated a theater where everyone can do what he wants. There are structures and there are real events staged and realized, but it is similar to following the rules of a football match. If one attacks the other, he gets a yellow card. My theater is the same, life is the same.

*SG: If the world would be entirely free, if there were no limits and no constrictions, would your Orgien Mysterien Theater look different?*

HN: Do you think that the world would look different if there were no gravity?

*SG: Would you have liked that?*

HN: Unfortunately, I do have to deal with many things that are, that are present as existing reality.

*KDJ: Nitsch, why are you telling your models exactly what will happen to them during the Aktion?*

HN: So that we have an agreement. By that, I can tell the other people: in about 10 minutes there will be warm water. It is an announcement, so that they are doing nothing wrong. By showing the rules of the play beforehand, the play is possible.

*KDJ: But Sarah and I are passive actors, we are just hanging on our crosses or lying somewhere, why should we know what will happen?*

*Why do the active actors not simply do in the Aktion what they need to do, without informing us?*

HN: Next time perhaps I should have to do it like that with you two.

*SG: I believe it also is erotic for Karlyn, to simply be taken, to be on the cross and then everybody can do with her what they want.*

HN: Would you really want that?

*KDJ: Yes, in this specific case, your Aktion, I would really like that. Not knowing what will happen, I find it very exciting.*

HN: I cannot say anything about or against that.

*KDJ: Why not?*

HN: I am not Moses, he had gotten these stone tablets: the Ten Commandments, I am...

[Nitsch's assistant interrupts and tells him there are 30 pants, ready for the actors.]

HN: Can you please bring these pants over here, so that my mind is brought to other thoughts.

*KDJ: But Nitsch, hopefully you will create it so, that the whole situation becomes exciting to me.*

HN: Yes, yes.

*KDJ: Except that you like that yourself as well, what do you think?*

HN: Well, I think I may have actually chosen the right profession.

*SG: Would you like to make use of it?*



HN: You ask these psychoanalytic questions and now you are asking someone who is actually very well familiar with people's conscious and unconscious desires. If you may or may not do it, and then still does it... You do not have to ask me. But, I do not want to hurt you, that, I do not want. Nonetheless there are several sado-masochistic elements present in my theater, but there it turns into tragic. There it will actually turn into destroying and after that I will take care that there will be reconstruction and that we really do not hurt you.

*KDJ: If this experience, being part of your Aktion, is so erotic for me and life in general is erotic for you, does that mean that we are then having sex with each other.*

HN: In this play we do not have physical sex. There have been pieces, where it was planned. After what I have spoken about Pan-sexuality, the actual physical act is not really necessary and it is therefore not built-in. In every sequence which is designed in the play however, Pan-sexuality or Pan-eroticism does play a big role.

*SG: Has there ever been sexual intercourse in one of your Aktionen?*

HN: Yes, but that is not easy. People are all excited then, but they are not so far that they are able to integrate properly.

*KDJ: Would you like to include elements as Otto Mühl does? That it goes in that direction?*

HN: That has repelled me so much. I did not approve of what happened at Otto Mühl's, for example, that one may not be in love. Being in love is something wonderful. People in his group were not allowed to sleep together again the next day; otherwise they could have fallen in love with each other.

*SG: Sexuality as it was practiced in the Otto Mühl project, have you experienced that in some degree yourself as well?*

HN: I have not experienced that and I was not interested in it either.

*SG: To me, a lesser morally restricted handling of sexuality is something very nice. I had beautiful sexual experiences with many different people, women and men. It has something exquisite, this more free human exchange of tenderness.*

HN: Absolutely, but there I am too conventional. I am often in love and happy in love, I find it something very beautiful, and I like it when it incorporates in all areas. It is something wonderful when there is attraction from both sides; it builds up and then comes to sex. I would not have necessarily needed to have that, but I am not at all against it.

*SG: Although I am sexually relatively open minded, it was remarkable to me, that because of simply undressing myself here in broad daylight and with all these people around, I have gotten even more aware of my body and therefore became even more sexually free. Do you think that that might also be the case for you? That if you perhaps would be even more aware of your body that you would also be able to discover more sexually?*

HN: I have already said, that partly because of my upbringing, I do not have this positive relationship with my body as I would like it and how it would be healthy and correct. I would like to expand that: Because of my mother and my grandparents who were still alive at that time, I am brought up very conservatively. Although, as a sensibly minded man I was naturally aware of my body, but why should I show of with something that does not exist? So, this absolute physical freedom is lacking me, but I do not think I have

therefore lived less intense. And with regard to freedom, I want to stay very tolerant and therefore I keep accepting everything.

*SG: You propagate freedom of thoughts, to live life intense and you have done so much to explain that and yet there are still angry letters about your Aktionen.*

HN: Upstairs, I have books with letters from people who scolded me, there are already three such books now. I cannot say that I am brought up very freely, but that has nonetheless made me to a revolutionary in this respect. Because I have seen that everything is insignificant: all the inhibitions, the moral boundaries.

*KDJ: Do you have any inhibitions yourself which you want to dissolve at this moment?*

HN: The effective area and the opportunities to live intensely are so varied, that I do not want to look again into a box of which I do not have the keys. But I am quite open, and I would propagate the things that you are telling me with regard to your own life style. So, I think our meetings are extraordinary.

*KDJ: Sarah and I are also excited that we are allowed to discover who you are.*

HN: I do not have to hide behind my art. My art is so much life. I think that all phases of life reach into it. And I get to know people who are younger and more attractive than I am and talk with them about how they see the world. And perhaps also about how I myself see my work. I am looking forward to tomorrow.



## DAY 3 19 MAY 2010 KARLYN DE JONGH

I woke up early again and did exercises in bed. I had a strange feeling this day, like the quiet moment before the storm: tonight the film crew would arrive. I had to do my maximum best, in order not to regret what I had done at a later stage in my life. Tomorrow would be the real start. Until now, Sarah and I could still make mistakes, but with the cameras running there was no escape possible, and the editing would be done by somebody else. That thought scared me a little, at least I was very conscious about the situation. We would now be depending on other people, in a way that I did not feel comfortable with. But they would not start before tomorrow. Today was still to happen, and today we did not have anything in particular to do at the museum. We walked over there and it was similar to the last days: we stopped at our café, hectic on the streets and again it felt nice walking with Sarah. I was proud walking with her. We were being watched and we were being wanted.

When we arrived at the museum, Nitsch was not there yet. It was much later when we kissed him good morning. We took a seat at his favorite spot in the museum for another interview. Of course I enjoyed to be with Nitsch and to speak with him, but today I enjoyed mostly the contact between Sarah and me: we were a team. Questions came, but at times, especially at the beginning, the conversation felt chaotic. Nitsch would have a television interview a little later and that interviewer interrupted us several

times to discuss practical details with Nitsch. Maybe the position was also a little unsuccessful, since we were so close to the entrance door people were walking in and out. It was busy. I had not slept enough the night before, so maybe I was simply too tired to concentrate.

I had been even more honest about myself and more open to Nitsch, also about my sexual desires. We spoke about them during the interview and Nitsch seemed to appreciate that we expressed our anxieties about the *Aktion*. Being there with Nitsch felt warm and I had the feeling we were getting closer to each other. When Nitsch was asked to go outside for the film interview, I watched him through the window. He looked serious, the way he was speaking there seemed to be in a distant atmosphere, nothing like his behavior with us.

After our interview, there was nothing much that we could do at the museum. To stay around just in case, Sarah and I took a tour through the museum and watched photographs of previous *Aktionen*. Taking a closer look, we found out that often there were no private parts to be seen on these pictures. I was a little relieved and felt more relaxed about my own body. After our tour, we were still not needed in the museum; we had nothing to do there, so we went to the old city center, had lunch and went for a walk.

Around 5 o'clock, we were home again. We were both quite tired and decided to close our eyes for a moment. Sarah and I lay in bed together. When I saw she was sleeping, I closed my eyes for a few minutes as well. The Dutch artist came with strawberries and then the telephone rang, Sarah picked up. We were needed in the museum, and apparently it was urgent.

Afraid that we would be missing something and that Nitsch needed us, we rushed to the museum. Even though we did our best, it still took half an hour to get there. When we finally reached the museum we saw Nitsch sitting on his chair. He asked where we had been and what we had had for lunch. After we told him, we spoke about possible future projects. Then Nitsch's wife arrived, who invited us for drinks upstairs on the roof terrace: gin and tonic. Before we went upstairs, we made a date with Nitsch for the following morning. We were going to the fish market with Nitsch, to buy material for the *Aktion*. We had to be at the Museum at 10 o'clock, not one minute later. I was happy to have this chance to go with Nitsch and buy the seafood and fish for his artwork.

On the roof terrace there was another *heurigen* bench where everybody had taken a seat. Other actors were there now as well, including our flat-mate and his girlfriend. Nitsch came a little later and took position next to his wife. Apparently, we were just supposed to have a drink together. I was quiet most of the time, drinking my gin and tonic and toasting with Nitsch, who was drinking wine from the vineyard of the museum's owner. I think we toasted at least 10 times. In this way we could have contact, maybe not physically or intellectually, but in this way there was at least some connection.

Although I enjoyed being there, I wanted to go home, I was cold, hungry and tired. I did not feel as if I could add something to the evening, and we still had another important meeting for which we had to be fresh and lively. Nitsch wanted to go with his wife for dinner and we went to the restaurant close to our apartment on our own, here we had had eaten the night before as well.

After dinner, just when we arrived back home, one of the filmmakers contacted me to say that they had arrived in Naples and wanted to meet us, now. It was already 10 o'clock. We went back to the restaurant which we just had left. There, while I fought against sleep, Sarah and I waited for them. An hour later they arrived and we spoke about how we were going to do the filming. We spoke for a long time, but I must have been too tired to recollect any of the details. I think it was 2 o'clock when we finally were back home and could go to bed.

**DAY 3 19 MAY 2010**

**SARAH GOLD**

I was sleeping on top of the roof of a six floor building, in an unsophisticated construction which resembled a glasshouse. It had a fantastic large terrace. Every day I was awakened by the rising sun, which was around five o'clock. It was still cold then; I was shivering and I remembered that I had dreamed, advising friends that when they booked their holiday they had to make sure to take an extra blanket. Although I am normally not a morning sex person, being in Naples I was, I needed it. I got up, took a shower and I walked as usual with Karlyn over the streets, to the coffee bar where I drank the coffee but skipped the sweet bread, and on to the museum.

Slowly I began to get more anxious about the whole thing, the two cameramen from Austria would come to Naples that night. One of the cameramen, who would film the *Aktion* as a documentary, had filmed all Nitsch's events for many years. We had met him in Vienna, a friendly soft man who liked our project and who was willing to give his film material to us, in exchange for artwork of the project initiator, the Dutch artist. He had also told a friend of his about us, and that friend also really liked our Art Projects and had contacted us some weeks ago. While we were in Murano, Venice, Karlyn and I had a screening with him via Skype and he liked us. He decided to come to Naples to film Karlyn and me during the event, in order to see if he could produce a pilot for a series about us. Except for a very short television appearance, this was the first time for Karlyn and me that we would be on film

and this made me nervous, because now I would be documented, forever visible with all my mistakes and faults. I would try to do my best, but the difference and difficulties between thinking and trying and actually doing, and since I am not a machine, I could not just pull a switch. I knew that some behavior of myself that I do not like, I can only correct slowly, it would need time, time which I did not have. With this on my mind we arrived at the museum, where Karlyn and I sat outside arm in arm, holding each other while looking over Naples and awaiting the day.

Nitsch came and joined us and we started another interview with him until one o'clock in the afternoon. It was such a good feeling that it became better and better every day, and although I had not prepared any questions beforehand, I had the feeling we that got more and more into the human Nitsch. I tried to feel this man, trying to find out about his life, his thoughts, about who he is. How did he feel seeing us naked? Did he like it? Would he like to have sex with us, with me and Karlyn? I also spoke about my own life, about experiencing sexual encounters with men and women; about sharing tenderness. I could see in his eyes, at least I believe I could see that he, in a positive way, envied me. He said something like: "You have seen a lot more than I have seen".

After our conversation with Nitsch, Karlyn and I went to Piazza Dante again, where Dante was still standing. I was trying to assess my feelings, my emotions. We walked through town and we passed a sushi shop. Karlyn and I were hungry, so we went inside. I remembered being in Tokyo and eating sushi there, so many different lives and so many different realities.

As we were walking through town I tried to focus on the next couple of days. Karlyn and I went into some shops to see if we can

find some clothes, on television we should wear a variety. We had no success but also no energy; we were just tired. So Karlyn and I decided that we would go home to take a little rest. The Dutch artist would go to the museum for us, to check if everything was okay and if we were needed, or not. We went home and I was trying to get closer to Karlyn, to connect even better with her. We were lying on my bed, talking. I had a good feeling with her and I felt, that since Monday, we were physically and mentally really getting closer and closer. I tried to understand her, I was trying to develop together. I offered Karlyn a massage which, she gladly accepted. She has such a petit upper body, long and thin; it felt unfamiliar because, normally I only massage my partner. This was such a different feeling, so slender and slim; very beautiful to see, very erotic. I felt comfortable with her; I fell asleep, Karlyn holding my hand. After some minutes, the Dutch artist came home; he had bought strawberries for us. Shortly afterwards, I received a telephone call, telling us to come to the museum, "Nitsch needs the two of you." I felt a little disturbed and stressed; I never feel good when I wake up after falling asleep during the day. I think it takes a little time before my brain is fully functioning again.

When we arrived at the museum, nothing special was happening; I think I started to understand Nitsch a little more; he just likes to have people around him, having this social touch, enjoying each other's company. We got invited by his wife to have a gin and tonic on the roof terrace of the museum, where we had a short talk with Nitsch. The view was spectacular; Naples, Vesuvius, sunset. Some of the so-called active actors had also arrived the day before; some of them were staying in our apartment. Amongst them there was a man from England of whom we had heard rumors of that he liked sex with dead people and loved to drink blood.

We stayed a while, but then Karlyn, the Dutch artist and I, went for dinner to the osteria where we had been the night before. Late evening, just when we returned home, the Austrian filmmakers called us: they had arrived and were hungry. We told them to come to the osteria we had just left; we walked back and had a very long conversation with them. Now, tomorrow, it would all become serious. This Wednesday May 19, was the last day of waiting, tomorrow the official rehearsals for the *Aktion* would start.

I had felt pretty confident and stable, but that night in bed, I was lying awake, thinking about how to be in front of the camera, thinking about how Karlyn and I could present ourselves and our Art Project. Just before sunrise I fell asleep.

## DAY 3 19 MAY 2010 HERMANN NITSCH

Hermann Nitsch: There is a type of question that often appear in my interviews and which are quasi attracted by my work. If the questions are reasonable then it is ok and then I always like to answer them, so far with the two of you, everything is okay.

*Sarah Gold: We are obviously very young, inexperienced and unknowing, but we try to explore your work and you as a person.*

HN: There are, of course, still issues where you can ask more questions.

[Other people come inside and welcome Nitsch in Italian]

*Karlyn De Jongh: Your Italian seems to be very good.*

HN: I can speak it a little, but my wife, she speaks Italian perfectly. In the beginning I spoke it a lot better, but then my wife came to Naples with me and after that she has always spoken on my behalf.

*SG: We were not quite sure if you now live upstairs in the museum?*

HN: Upstairs in the museum is the apartment, and behind that is my own room. Then there is another room, a second bathroom and there is the space where you have been listening to music with me yesterday. That was made available to us by the Italian museum's owner. That is our apartment in Naples. The apartment has a wonderful view.

*SG: I think when you see such a famous historical mountain such as the Vesuvius through your room window, you will probably be very aware of history and place.*

HN: Yes, but also the culture, the architectural culture, takes place here in many layers: the huts which they once built up the hill, and then the palaces and churches, that is so wonderful. It is comparable with precious plants and weeds, everything is nature. It is a remarkable city. Goethe said: "See Naples and die." That is so terrible while traveling around in Italy; everywhere you have a plaque of what Goethe said.

*KDJ: Have you been to Pompeii often?*

HN: Once. There you see these wonderful frescoes. They are so fantastic. With this wonderful red. One time I was there.

*KDJ: We were there a few weeks ago and it was very interesting to get an impression of how life was at that time.*

HN: Yes, comparisons between how life was then, and how we live nowadays. But let's go inside now. Tables are already prepared there; objects will be placed on almost all of them this Sunday.

*SG: What kind of objects?*

HN: Fish, fruits, tomatoes, grapes, peaches. Several different fish: Seafood, squids, octopus, and all these objects are thrown on top of you and squeezed and bruised. You will then be lying on the table, partly covered, partly not covered, and then it will start. First of all, these objects are thrown on top of you. Blood in your mouth, and that blood will run slowly, and time and again an animal or a big fish will be consecrated: on your body Sarah, and also on that of you Karlyn. And then the pig will be consecrated, and this will then increase and go up, it will take from 12 to approximately 5 o'clock in the afternoon. It starts in the museum and then it will continue outside, and there will be a grand

finale. And I was thinking, if you have the courage, then I will put both of you on the floor while you are lying on the crosses, with your heads together, the pig on Sarah, and the biggest fish on top of you Karlyn and then all the stuff will be thrown at you. And the active actors will then remove the guts from the animals. If you dare to do that.

*SG: We dare to do that.*

*KDJ: Yes, Sarah and I have said to ourselves that it will be the day in which we are willing to do anything, the day of your Aktion.*

HN: You will be watched after and when that is all done, there is a break and then you can wash yourself and then you will get dressed with the shirts, the *Malhemden*, and after that you will be carried to the vineyard on top of the hill, just beneath the monastery, in a procession that will last about one hour. You will be placed down and then there will be poured blood and slime in your mouths once more. Every time when it is not visually beautiful, you will be wiped clean with water. And then there is again a small break and an orchestra marches along, humpumpum humpumpum.

*SG: Is that then music that is composed by you again?*

HN: No, this time it is not by me. It is going to be original Sicilian music. Then you will be carried up to where the people are sitting and eating and then you will have your peace.

*KDJ: How does this work with you, the creation of your Aktion? How is the preparation? How do you get to the idea that with us you would like to do something with fish?*

HN: Look, there are so many beautiful Dutch still-lives. On these there are fish and dead animals, consecrated animals, and so



on... We should have to actually also ask these painters, how do you do it? Do you begin with the apples or with the meat? I start with something that catches my eye. Of course, the intestines are still on the table as well, and the brains, many things out of which I can choose. For you, and for Naples, I wanted to use fish and seafood, it fits to you.

*KDJ: Four months ago, we made an art project with the American artist Lawrence Weiner, and he said that he starts each day with certain questions. And the questions with which he starts are about the making of his art. Are these the questions with which also you wake up? What questions are on your mind?*

HN: I am glad if anything is clear in my mind, and I do not really like to ask questions. I much rather be here than that I am asking questions. My condition, my existence, that I am here and that I can make the world my own is more important to me than to ask questions. As I said yesterday: that the conversation itself is superior to the content of the conversation. This does not mean that we cannot talk about a good substance.

*SG: We will try to do our best; to be sincere and to experience as much as possible from you, and not only to enjoy the moment.*

HN: Sincere. Most people do not even know this word. Well, it is of course fine. I have no desire to be infallible. I am full of errors. I just try to follow the call in life.

*KDJ: Nitsch, you said you do not ask yourself too many questions. But how do you then develop your thoughts? For me personally, I need to debate and question things in order to develop myself.*

HN: I will say one thing: I do not like debates with fights, like you see on television, where a giant debate arises, where everyone

says something different and each of them wants to convince the others and believes that he is the better one. That is like a tournament in the Middle Ages, where one always wanted to get the other out of the saddle. I have many conversations in which people say corresponding things, where they agree on something and confirm and know each other. I would like to tell you that through life, through the function of life; questions, to a certain degree are answered by themselves and acting and feeling then even becomes a permanent questioning. The salvation would then be a fulfilled state of happiness.

*KDJ: Is there such a salvation? Does this state of happiness exist?*

HN: Currently, yes. I have already mentioned that several times. I believe in momentary, deep experiences of happiness, in individual inspirations, that you can experience yourself totally in the happiness of Being. But not always: it goes away again and it comes back. It is a happiness that is promised by the old religions, but I do not believe those and I cannot understand them either, and they do not speak at all about the creativeness of nature.

*SG: If you are in such a state of happiness, how long can it flourish?*

HN: It can be like a flash, like a few seconds. It can be a day or in a weakened form, it remains a week, and then a new state of happiness builds up again. I speak also of questions that have to be in the work. To my students, I have repeatedly said: "The work is the most important. It leads to everything." If one just sits in a café and does not do anything, one is just waiting for the brilliant idea; then it goes no further. But perhaps the word 'question' is not properly used here. The pursuit of life is a permanent question. Live differently. One could ask life: "Do you still love

me?" It is a beautiful question, but also an anxious question, like when you ask your partner: "Do you still love me?"

*SG: We have already spoken about the fact that the word 'love' is often used in the wrong way. Its meaning is no longer as it should be.*

HN: It has been abused to such an extent that we can no longer say it in the right way. I also believe that, as a matter of fact.

*KDJ: Do you still have the power to ask that question? "Do you still love me?" It is a dangerous question because it can change your life completely if the answer is not as you expect it to be.*

HN: Prepared for anxiety, ready for uncertainty, from that I am not free and maybe you are not either. Then you ask your partner when she is in a good mood: "Do you still love me?" "Of course".

*SG: It may also be vanity, that when one feels weak, in such moments, you ask such questions.*

HN: Yes, that is right. I would see it like that, too.

*SG: To return to your Aktion, how do you feel before an Aktion and how do you feel afterwards? Do you see a pattern or are your feelings unpredictable?*

HN: It is always nice when an *Aktion* succeeds well, when all participants are somehow satisfied and have experienced something. Then of course there are *Aktionen* that do somehow not turn out that well. Each time, it is an adventure.

*SG: Is the adventure also what you are looking for?*

HN: That is also a matter of definition, how you see that. I mean, life is an adventure, a monstrous great adventure with an incredible number of dangers and moments of happiness.

*KDJ: What makes it adventurous for you? What makes it exciting for you? What do you want from life?*

HN: I would say life is incredibly exciting. If it does not feel that exciting, then you are doing something wrong. Life must really always be this tremendous excitement.

*KDJ: Do you need this excitement? Do you look for it?*

HN: I am looking for this excitement, because I want to experience, most people are afraid of death and have a fear of life. Both of them, you should not fear.

*KDJ: You are not afraid of death?*

HN: Yes, I am afraid of death, it would be a lie to say no. But we should live so intensely, that the thought of death is somehow replaced by the intensity of life.

*SG: Do you think that when you die, that it is over then? Do you believe in something, such as heaven or reincarnation? What are your ideas?*

HN: The idea of reincarnation of the Asians is a wonderful concept, but it is also a mythical one. With this idea things are being explained over and over again. I believe in a kind of reincarnation that, when you die you are instantly returned in the other. It is kind of hard to explain, you cannot really explain this concept well, it is not a scientific fact. It can only be expressed in parables. I mentioned already yesterday that we all were Napoleon and we all were Wagner. I believe that we were everything and are everything and will be everything. The individual is somehow something that is very limited. I believe more in nature, in Being, than in myself as a subject. Because this nature will again produce other subjects in which I am inside.

*KDJ: The French-Polish artist, Roman Opalka, with whom we will create a new art project next month, often speaks of Heidegger's Being-towards-death [Sein-zum-Tode], which is very important to him. How do you see that? Is the fear of death also something that makes us enjoy life better?*

HN: It is like this: I always refer to the tragic. I would see that in the same way, but the fear of death is actually a fear of the uncertain, just like children are afraid before going to sleep and are happy if they again wake up in the morning. Thus, death is for us associated with an uncertainty and for that reason we are afraid of it. But when we create philosophies for ourselves which clarify and tell us that, "There is no death." Philosophy stays just philosophy. I remember when my wife died in a car accident. That was so very terrible for me. There were times back then, where philosophy was not helping me at all, no emotional help. I continued to believe in it, in this philosophy, but it could not help me. In the long run perhaps it did, but at that moment... In the experience of the death of my wife, philosophy meant nothing at all.

*SG: The experience of death in reality often triggers emotions, while your own death stays imagination and can therefore easier be handled with intellectually. Philosophy should be and give an intellectual approach.*

HN: Heidegger also speaks of preceding into death to a certain extent. Because death is our destination and we can only partially prevent it, but not forever. It is always a realization of life, he always speaks of a man whom he despises, and then he says that it is important that one detaches oneself from that man. I do believe that philosophy can also be very emotional. You can have moments of happiness in your experiences. Mysticism is for me one of the forgotten points of philosophy. I would not like to wash philoso-

phy clean of emotions. The death of a fellow human is something which affects me very emotional and immediately.

*KDJ: Roman Opalka has also said that in order to make his art, he has made certain sacrifices. He has no children, for example. Did you also make certain sacrifices for your art?*

HN: Nietzsche has influenced me very much here, I am not especially a disciple of Nietzsche, but the idea of sacrifice is unknown to me. I do not wish to make any sacrifices and if so, than they would not be sacrifices. Perhaps, to do a reasonable deed of which I know that the act itself would not be for my own benefit, but because of which other people could survive. But a sacrifice, in the Christian concept that means, if god is angry and he then presents his son, who then reconciles him on the cross and with it redeems the entire human race. This is actually a mercantile thought. Most sacrifices are mercantile. God or forces of nature are what you want to alter positively with these sacrifices, and that is definitely not the case with me.

We should also continue something from yesterday. I believe that was this very deep and psychological issue, whether we want to do something that is forbidden. In this regard, we can talk about the essence of theater, because in theater and also in art, things are being done that are normally not allowed to happen.

*SG: If these prohibitions would not exist, would your Orgien Mysterien Theater look differently?*

HN: If there were no prohibitions, my whole *Orgien Mysterien Theater* would not be there. I would even go so far to say that, if there were no prohibitions, there would also be no world.

*SG: Why do you think that is?*

HN: First of all, I am an anarchist... Everything what we see around us here, is a play of forces. Because there are prohibitions, a concentration is being created, a compression. I think the world is so constructed that again and again there is a coming into being and then a destruction. The more intense the whole is happening, the better it is. Nietzsche has said that because of the denial of sexuality, all these love stories have become the central theme of tragedies. I believe that with my work I continue to fight against the restrictions in sexuality. And with that also against the restrictions of the actual execution of love, I have always fought against that. I must say however, that up to a certain extent, all life is being driven by prohibitions.

*KDJ: Are there for you personally certain prohibitions in sexuality?*

HN: I have got no prohibitions there, since these prohibitions are imposed from outside. I, for myself, do not see any prohibitions there.

*SG: So, if all parties agree, then for you all is possible.*

HN: I think it would not be so amusing when everything would be possible.

*SG: Do you not think it could be an interesting experience?*

HN: I would not want to... Why are you dressed? Why are the two of you not constantly pleasing each other while we are talking? I have often been told that I am a dreamer, a romancer. Now I am doing my theater, I live this world and I do not wish myself a better world. Together with my friends, I want to make the best of this world. When, as a young man, you start to think and get to know the world's literature, music and art, then you first think:

why am I not permanently high? This is something you realize not until now: the old colleagues who have always drunk a lot, they die early and that is associated with suffering. It is also about body economics that one deals with lust in a responsible way. It is like with a bank account: you always have to put something in it first, before you can take anything out.

*KDJ: Do you believe that you deal economically with your desires and with your life?*

HN: To some extent, but I think that I give myself enough pleasure and satisfaction and that they in certain cases damage me but that they are useful as well.



## DAY 4 20 MAY 2010 KARLYN DE JONGH

Today we would go to the fish market somewhere outside of Naples to buy several fish, octopuses and squids. I was very much looking forward to it, buying the materials for Nitsch's *Aktion*. I got up early to be fresh for the film and to have plenty of time for two cappuccinos at our favorite café. When we arrived at the museum, there was hardly anyone there yet. Sarah and I waited outside on the terrace, together with Nitsch's son. The son told us many things about the *Aktion*, about his experiences with other passive actors and what he assumed would happen to us. I thought about my fear for the blood and imagined the feel of the dead pig or fish on my body and the intense experience it would be.

An hour later Nitsch came. He opened the entrance door and Sarah and I rushed ourselves over to kiss him good morning. He said he did not want our kisses: he had not brushed his teeth yet. "I am going to kiss you anyway," I said and bended over. Nitsch covered his mouth, turned his head away and offered me his cheek. He smiled. Sarah then kissed him on his mouth. Nitsch walked over to the bench where we had been sitting and we waited there together with him for another hour before we would actually go to the fish market. Sitting on the bench, Nitsch and his son told us about the early days and the story about the son being held in prison when still a teenager, because of his father's *Aktion*. They made it sound very funny and tragic at the same time.

More actors arrived and joined us at the table. It seemed that also the other actors wanted Nitsch's attention and therefore, it was not possible for Sarah and me to have a conversation with Nitsch like we had had the days before. Instead of being content with the situation, some of the other actors were complaining about their housing, that it was too cold and that there was no warm water and so on. Nitsch asked them questions: what is happening in your life? How was your trip? They had a negative answer to almost everything. They were all active actors and I wondered what they would do to me when I would be bound to my cross on Sunday.

The museum's owner came over and Nitsch asked him when we would leave and what the plan was for the day. Apparently, there was a problem with the number of cars. Shortly after, Nitsch and the museum's owner went to their little Smart car, which was parked close to the museum's entrance. The Italian assistant accompanied Sarah and me to Piazza Dante, where we would meet the television crew with whom we would go to the fish market. On our way, we passed the Smart car and saw Nitsch sitting in it. It looked cute, this big body in this small car. We kissed him goodbye and followed the assistant to the Piazza.

After Nitsch's arrival there, we followed the Smart with our car. Nobody else knew exactly where we were going. I always like going to markets and this time it was special, because we were going with Nitsch. I looked forward to seeing the fish and learn which ones Nitsch would select for the *Aktion* and why. There was a very nice atmosphere in our car, like a team of people that were now on their way together to new adventures. It was also very nice with Sarah. I held her, it felt cozy.

After some time we arrived at a parking lot of a large seafood company in a seemingly industrial area. This was nothing like I had expected. The museum's owner went inside and we waited outside for a moment. Sarah and I sat in the boot of the car, Nitsch joined us in the middle. We spoke about birthdays, Nitsch and I were both born on August 29, but with a 42-year gap in between. The museum's owner returned and told us the shop had closed for their lunch break. It was impossible to buy anything now, but we could come back after one hour. Luckily, there was a restaurant close by where we went to have lunch.

The others of the group went ahead, Sarah and I stayed behind with Nitsch. We walked slowly. Alone with Nitsch, we took the opportunity to ask him whether now we could consider us real friends with him. It was a beautiful moment. Friendship meant a lot to Nitsch and I felt honored. To be a friend of Nitsch, that meant something. Nitsch said that already since the previous day he had counted us as his friends. We sealed our friendship with a kiss and then continued to the restaurant, where Nitsch ordered us to sit next to him.

At first, the conversation was about normal things, we spoke about food, but then after some time, it turned more seriously: sacrifice and killing were the topics now. I felt it went well, and that I could ask Nitsch almost anything at this point. My questions were okay and at the same time I could have a normal conversation, and we made jokes together. I was happy to have this sort of private moment with Nitsch. It was a challenge. Of course, there were at least ten others at the table, but nobody interfered. Rather, they were looking at us. The filmmaker, who was sitting opposite of me, seemed to take a close look at what I was doing

and how I was doing it. Even though they did not film, he was watching me constantly. Although I would probably not have considered him at any other moment, I looked at him in a sexual way. I felt my nipples being hard, I felt my wet pussy.

Nitsch spilled some cheese over his beard and shirt. It made me very happy, to clean his shirt and take the cheese out of his beard. It felt very beautiful to take care of him like that and I thought I was becoming warmer as a person myself. Nitsch seemed to like it too. When I asked him whether it was all right for me to take off the cheese, he immediately stretched his belly towards me and opened his arms as if he wanted to give me all the space I needed.

At times, I did not have a question ready, but there was such a friendly atmosphere, that I was just sitting relaxed next to Nitsch, eating my pizza. I enjoyed the moment, being together with all these people. It was like being with a good friend, it was not always necessary to speak. After lunch, the seafood shop was open. Again the museum's owner did the talking. We waited in the main hall with Nitsch. There was no fish to be seen: just a large hall with doors. After 20 minutes we heard that all the fish they had were frozen and without heads. In the meantime it was already 2.30 pm and Nitsch wanted to be back at the museum around 4, because the musicians would come for a rehearsal.

We stepped into the car and drove back. After approximately 10 minutes, we passed another fish wholesaler, similar to the one we had just visited. We got out, waited again for some time, and then went back to the car. Apparently, also they only had fish without heads. Nitsch needed the whole fish, the total, including the intestines. During the wait the documentary maker recorded a conver-

sation between Sarah, Nitsch and me. It was different now, with the camera running, and it did not go so well, especially in comparison to the moments in the restaurant. I felt too tall in comparison to Nitsch, and I was not being natural, not being myself.

We had been busy for almost 6 hours now, waiting at the museum and buying fish in Naples without result. We were back at the museum around 4 o'clock. The new plan was to go to another fish market on Saturday. At the museum, Nitsch said he wanted to do more rehearsals with us. I do not recall what rehearsals he wanted to do, but Sarah and I were necessary for them and so we waited outside in the sun until Nitsch had finished doing something else. The waiting was, however, also an opportunity to get to know the other actors in the *Aktion*. We spoke with several people and heard many stories and experiences. It was interesting to hear. For example, I learned about the *Aktion* in the Burgtheater in Vienna, where apparently they had opened the intestines of a large bull and spread the shit of that bull all over the place, it must have smelled horrendously.

Around 5.30 pm, instead of rehearsals, there was a birthday celebration of one of Nitsch's family members. Everybody went upstairs for a glass of champagne on the roof terrace. There were around 30 people and Nitsch was sitting on one of the benches, in a group of people, but nobody seemed to pay attention to him. Sarah and I went over to talk to him, which he seemed to enjoy, and we toasted many, many times.

Nitsch invited everybody to the birthday dinner; it was at Leon d'Oro, at Piazza Dante. I was a little tired of the day, even though we did not do much, but we walked to Dante, together with the television crew. In the restaurant, we picked a small corner in the

back. We thought in that way we would have a quiet moment for ourselves to discuss the happenings of the day and our plans for tomorrow. The restaurant was still almost empty, the others were outside smoking or simply not there yet. Nitsch came to join us at our end of the long table. I was happy he did. In addition, it appeared that sitting next to Nitsch during dinner time, is a lucky position, since you are being served first. I was very hungry and the dishes were brought in immediately. I believe we did not say much to each other, we were all eating, but the atmosphere was very warm and positive. We drank white wine and toasted on every possible opportunity we got, then Nitsch left to speak with some other people. After several more dishes we walked home. It was dark and there was hardly anyone in the streets. We walked up the hill, it was a liberating feeling. I was glad the day was almost over.

## DAY 4 20 MAY 2010 SARAH GOLD

Where we were sleeping, on top of the roof, there is this amazing view. We were housed on a hill, on the top floor of a large 19<sup>th</sup> century building, overlooking this dirty, busy, loud and interesting city, Naples. On this morning I took a moment to myself and tried to reflect on my situation and the world surrounding me. I could see the people working, fighting to survive; all the suffering and all the beautiful stories. Life.

Like we had done all week, Karlyn and I walked to the coffee bar where we had become regular customers already; they knew, that we would start with a cappuccino and that I would order a double espresso afterwards. We had to be at the museum at 10 o'clock; ready to go and buy fish with Nitsch. When we arrived, we sat outside on the terrace and spoke with Nitsch about seemingly insignificant things. It was an interesting feeling that to me, he felt so close already; how uncomplicated and at ease I felt with him. For some reason the other people, who had known Nitsch for many years, seemed to feel uncomfortable with us around; as if we were unwelcome strangers entering their world, and taking their Nitsch away from them. But it was often Nitsch who would come to us. In the morning when he saw us, he got a big smile and he liked to get his kiss on his mouth from me and Karlyn. I think he liked our warmth and optimism. To me it felt that there was a connection between one human and the other.

Finally, it seemed that we were ready to go. Nitsch and the owner of the museum, his Italian patron, went and took the Smart car, which



was able to drive down the small and narrow alleyways. Karlyn and I had to go to Piazza Dante where the film crew was already waiting for us. Now we had to go and buy fish, which turned out to be a four hour undertaking. There were three cars, the Italian assistant of Nitsch driving in front in a blacked out four-wheel drive, then the owner of the museum with Nitsch in the white Smart car and then us, together with the Austrian filmmakers in an Audi. Finally we arrived at the fish wholesaler who was on lunch break at that moment, and we were told to come back in one hour. Because we had to wait anyway, we went for lunch next door and I will never forget that Nitsch, Karlyn and I walked together to the restaurant.

It was a memorable short walk, Nitsch told us, that we gave him a lot of joy. He liked spending this week with us, our curiosity and our interest. He told us that he would have liked to be bi-sexual, but that he had never tried it. He asked us if we were lesbians, and I explained him that Karlyn and I are both bisexual and I told him some of my history. How I had started to find out in the last years, how much I enjoy other women. And that from the first moment I tried it, I could not imagine living without the touch of a woman. I really enjoyed this moment of intimacy with Nitsch and I asked him, if we would be allowed to call ourselves *ein Freund von Nitsch* [a friend of Nitsch]. He was seemingly moved by this, he agreed with a big "Yes" and we sealed our friendship with a kiss. It was a beautiful moment, I will never forget.

Very slowly we walked on to the restaurant. Although I was happy with the new friendship, at the same time, I did feel sorry for Nitsch. People very close to Nitsch had told us that in the last couple of years he had put on a lot of weight. Can you see that as a soft slow gradual suicide? Did he not really want to live anymore, being tired of all the fighting going on in his life? Reading

about his life, how it was, how there must have been many difficulties, with his art that he had been doing, getting bad press, even being thrown in jail. Fighting and drinking a lot, now, nearly 72 years old, he had become this man. Nitsch was still optimistic, because that is his nature, but I got the feeling that he was broken by life and he seemed to me also lonely. In the moments we did not share with him, he would be often sitting alone.

We arrived after all the others in the pizzeria, Nitsch, Karlyn and I sat next to each other, and we ended up having a conversation, the two Austrian filmmakers were filming us. We spoke about all kinds of things: about the nature of man and why Nitsch does not eat the crust of his pizza. Slowly I felt that I began to understand more of this man, more of his work and his ideas; not only being, but living and feeling an intensified life. *Dasein, Lebensexase*, but also enjoying taking a walk, seeing an insect crawl over a flower, sharing moments with people you like, people you do want to share your life with, being together enjoying each other's company.

After one hour we went back to the wholesaler. It was a strange situation; Nitsch, Karlyn and I were standing in the big industrial building which had many shutter doors on both sides. Nobody knew what was going on. The young Austrian assistant of Nitsch, his long term Italian assistant, the owner of the museum, all talking to people from the company. It was a strange atmosphere; also I think that the two cameras were not helping to ease the tension. In the end it turned out, or that is what they told us, that the fish were already gutted and beheaded. This meant that the fish could not be used in an *Aktion* from Nitsch, since these were key elements to have.

We drove off and stopped at another fish wholesaler, there we were also not allowed to film. It all seemed very secretive. We might have been too many people, the tension felt high. What exactly was going

on was difficult to judge, because I do not speak Italian, I could only try to interpret the gestures and tone of the voices. Finally only Nitsch was allowed to look for himself, but also here the fish were no good.

We drove back to Naples where we parked the car and had a cold coffee at our favorite coffee shop on Piazza Dante; afterwards, we went to the museum where everybody was waiting around. Musicians had come to rehearse the music which would be played during the *Aktion*; Nitsch sitting on a chair in front of them. I remember well how the boy with the gong reminded me of a Caravaggio painting. How amazing, after hundreds of years you can still see the same features. It quite moved me, he was so beautiful and young, so pure, I felt old.

After the rehearsal we were invited to the rooftop again to toast on somebody's birthday and we had a short conversation with Nitsch. Everybody got invited to have dinner in a restaurant in town and also the two cameramen came with us. There had been many discussions about the copyrights on the material, but luckily this issue was solved. Films could be made and material could be used for our project.

When we arrived at the restaurant on Piazza Dante, most people were standing outside. We decided to sit down at the end of one of the rows of tables, where nobody was sitting yet. We did not want to cause any trouble or standing on somebody's toes, but Nitsch saw us, walked over and joined us. The Dutch artist spoke to him and Nitsch was so moved by his words, I saw that this mature man had to cry. I was also touched deep inside and so hurt at the same time that this man, Nitsch, who had given a lot and cared so much for his friends and the people accompanying him, seemed to be alone, at least in this moment of time.

At a certain point Nitsch got up and said he had to walk around and talk to other people in order to not upset anybody. A little later

we saw him sitting at the end of the other row of tables, on the other side of the restaurant. He had fallen asleep in his chair. After all courses, which they eat many of in Naples, some of which we had skipped, we left and went home.

I felt that we had not done anything today. Driving around Naples, waiting, trying to buy fish; all this waiting, this is not what I am used to do with my lifetime. But this was not just waiting, for Nitsch it is being accompanied by friends, sharing life, that is what he is about. I also like to share lifetime, tenderness, with other humans very much, but as Nitsch told me, this he has not seen as sexually explicit as I have seen it, and he probably never will experience that anymore. I am quite sure that Nitsch would have liked to be more sexually free. To me, his whole work is sexual, the *Aktion*, the being naked, the blood, the organic materials he uses, the meat. All this is rough and purely natural, animalistic sex, but for some reason he has not been able to go further. There must have been several reasons, one of them being probably that he wanted to distance himself from Otto Mühl, another Viennese Actionist who had been in prison because he had sex with minors.

These were my thoughts while walking home, it was still cold. Nitsch had told us, that we would start rehearsing the next day. I began to feel pretty tired already, because it were long days, and I woke up every morning very early, and going to bed late. So many different emotions. I could not place them, but I was trying to keep calm and focus on the day of the *Aktion*. The day of truth was coming up soon.

## DAY 4 20 MAY 2010 HERMANN NITSCH

*KDJ: During the first rehearsal for the Aktion, when I hung for the first time on the cross, I experienced it as a liberation. For me, there was no suffering present. How do you see that?*

HN: We have been educated by the cross for approximately 2000 years. The cross is of course still very taboo, the idea of blasphemy is present. You have already been brought up quite differently, and therefore I can well imagine that it gives you a freedom, similar to the liberation it actually was for me. Although I did not intend blasphemy; for me, the whole *Aktion* has a very erotic character, with all the slime and intestines. That has something incredibly erotic for me.

*SG: Why is the slime and blood so erotic for you?*

HN: When I was 20 years old, I already tried to experience sensuality to the fullest. Not only that which is sweet, like with a cake, or with a beautiful woman. I wanted to experience the sensuality until and even into the tragic, until the killing experience of the predator. Psychoanalysis has helped a lot, I think. In the old days, sensuality was much more repressed. My work should remove this repression. I have often said: with my work, I never want to provoke. With my work, I would like to show intensity. I am the opinion that: love and sexual love and the feeling of pleasure, are the only forms of mysticism of secular people. This means, that normal people are in the position to feel ecstatic,

even mystical. Freud has seen a reduction of our awareness during sexual intercourse. I would like to see that differently. There are various categories of awareness, we can make a division between a quantitative and qualitative consciousness. The qualitative consciousness is the awareness of the quality of your state of Being. Now, when you are having an orgasm, then it is not the case that by that our consciousness is reduced, it is just that our qualitative awareness prevails over the quantitative one. I would almost say: Thank God that a normal human being can experience the physiology of a very intense state of Being. There it is really about the quality of enjoyment and the quality of the experience of Being. And in my opinion, sexual pleasure belongs to the most important ones in this matter.

*SG: Nitsch, what does your own sex life look like at the moment?*

HN: At the moment it is just, how shall I say? The more relaxing the whole concept of love, of erotic and also the altruistic areas of love, the better it is. Everything is present in my consciousness and fortunately, the qualitative emotion of lust or of an orgasm is currently given.

*KDJ: Nitsch, it seems that when we talk about sexuality, that is not so easy for you and you do not like to speak about it in a direct way. Nevertheless, you have often said that sexuality is very important for you.*

HN: I think, that is only because I have a different idea of it all, as what one generally has.

*KDJ: What is then more precisely your idea?*

HN: That is simply the Pan-erotic, that sexuality is included in everything. I have been brought up differently than you have.

For me, sexuality is something incredibly beautiful, something incredibly important and what more important can I say about it than; that she is always present to me. But I can also not just lay down there in a permanent orgasm. For me it is also an orgasm, when I go for a walk in the evening. Then the moon rises, the stars as well and then I feel completely present. That also has a lot to do with orgasm and this is something I would very much like to experience with other people together.

*SG: Karlyn and I experience many things together, and are both bisexual.*

HN: That is really great. I have already said that I have always wanted to be like that.

*KDJ: Have you tried it, with a man?*

HN: Yes, as a boy, but it was not really a question of trying it out, it was more touching and wrestling in sport. But they were beautiful boys, and then at some point it no longer interested me.

*SG: Do you think that this is because of your culture? Did you perhaps consciously or unconsciously block them, these men?*

HN: No, my interests have simply shifted back then, but I do not think it was because of pressure from outside.

*KDJ: I quite early on I thought I am bisexual but, that then shifted to the background for some years, later it became more present again and stayed.*

HN: Yes, not with me. I would have very much liked that, basically it would have been liberating. But it would not primarily attract me in an erotic sense.

*KDJ: Is for you a male body more beautiful than a female body?*

HN: Well, that I could not say, of course there is a strongly present erotic aesthetic. For me, this is only there with the female body. In case of the other it is simply, as I would call this notion now, sublimated aesthetics.

*SG: Nitsch, we actually wanted to ask you something. For us it is really a fantastic experience with you. We actually wanted to ask you whether Karlyn and I are allowed to call ourselves true friends of Nitsch.*

HN: Yes. Yes, you are allowed. Straight away. Already since yesterday.

*KDJ: That is wonderful. Thank you very much.*

*SG: We will seal it.*

HN: Yes.

[We kiss each other and go into the restaurant.]

*KDJ: Nitsch, how are you doing?*

HN: All right. That is a question which I do not really like so much, "How are you doing?", because you cannot always tell the truth. It depends on the moment. As in "What is your favorite food?" What do I love to eat? Pork roast and it has to have a crust, with sauerkraut and gravy with grease drops and dumplings.

*KDJ: Do you cook yourself as well?*

HN: No. I am a talented eater.

*KDJ: How often do you eat your favorite food?*

HN: Almost never. It stays a dream.

*KDJ: What is the future for your Orgien Mysterien Theater?*

HN: I will try to realize it more often, to improve it more and more. And what I can already tell you now, music will play a much greater role in the future.

*KDJ: What is most important to you in art? Is for you the making itself, the planning of the Aktion, or the moment of the Aktion, the most exciting?*

HN: Most of the times it is like this: firstly, the *Aktion* itself is most important, for me that is comparable to an orgasm. But actually, if an *Aktion* has been realized, then it continues right away. Immediately I think again about how I can further expand it all and how I can improve it. With regard to the preparation: I always speak of a celebration of life, whether dependent or independent of my theater or not. A colleague once told me: "Nice, this celebration of life, but where is the preparation for this celebration of life?" Then I replied to her that the preparations for this celebration are also a celebration of life.

*KDJ: What does this celebration look like for you?*

HN: This question is difficult to answer, because you have to take subjectivity and a subjective way of feeling into consideration. I do not believe in objectivity. I would be glad if one could say: "I have lived intensely, respectively; it is possible for me to live intensely." I experience it as a celebration. When I look around, there are so many beautiful festive expressions of nature and in art as well. I see it primarily as a celebration.

*KDJ: Celebration is not always solely something positive; could it be something negative too, such as, the celebration of death?*

HN: Look, if you have a cosmic world view, then you know that death is only a transitional stage and that everything permanently returns. I would like it when at my death, that means at my grave, that the last phrase of Beethoven's Seventh is being played. Because that is the eternal recurrence; the permanent openness of life.

*KDJ: What does this recurrence mean to you? What does it look like?*

HN: Life unravels and new life is being created. The return of everything, but I am very capable to speak about my subjective return. I have also told you about Nietzsche. In his craziness he said: "I was already everyone, Alexander the Great, Shakespeare, Richard Wagner, Napoleon, etc." And I believe that it is like that. We were all already there. And that will happen again and again, but not so good that it is exactly the same, that it is cloned. Something new arises. And then, what is very much worth to consider is the concept of the subject in philosophy. A critical review would be necessary. We have also talked about the fact that the I can be intensified into the self and always experiences the self in it, and then you are actually secured in the whole and you should not be afraid of death.

*KDJ: Which philosophers are most important to you? You have already spoken about Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.*

HN: I am obviously not engaged with the whole history of philosophy, but I very much appreciate the pre-Socratic works, such as Parmenides. Actually, everything is fascinating. I also appreciate Plato really very much, but it is a bit out of my way.

*KDJ: Is it for you then not still important, because the texts differ from your thoughts. Is it not important to read Plato, because of the difference between his and your thoughts?*

HN: In that sense, yes. For example, Schopenhauer thinks close to the opposite of what I think. Very important to me is the phenomenology, the way it is by Heidegger, and of course you cannot go around Wittgenstein. He is very important. I have always been interested in philosophy, to hear about everything they have to say, without attaching myself to one of them. Without saying: "he is right" and "he is not."

*KDJ: How was it for you, to write your own book about Being, Das Sein?*

HN: I must say that Being has always fascinated me. I have always seen it in such a way, that my theater should show a way to Being. It is also the case, that Being is not a matter for only some. Being is incredibly important in the entire world philosophy. And also what I do, my philosophy of Being, should give a direction for life. Being is for me the great notion, that everything actually encompasses what is, what ever was, what is present now and what will be. Being is for me the creation of oneself as such. Everything that happens and what is, is included in this term.

*KDJ: Nitsch, your son has told us this morning that he believes that every person has a certain desire to kill. Do you have something like that too?*

HN: I would say that it is an unconscious desire. It is the wish of the predator in us. Through psychoanalysis and through my kind of art, we have to expose this desire to kill and make ourselves aware of it. It is just like that in nature, and especially by the predator it comes down to the idea that the hunter somehow kills. By a traffic accident, where people position themselves around it, it shows that we have a need for a procession, for an intense experience that is rooted in us. We want to quasi realize and experience that beyond good and evil. In theater that is possible.

Theater should somehow be macabre. Wanting to experience is a desire, and now it is about making that desire conscious and replace it with an experience that is even more intense than only the temporary experience of killing. That is where love manifests itself in life. Love is an experience which eliminates the experience of killing, which overcomes.

*KDJ: In the past you have killed bulls in your Aktionen. Did you ever have the wish to kill a human being in your Aktion?*

HN: I have not killed these bulls; the bulls that were killed would have been killed anyway. These were bulls that were bred for that. As a dramatist, I had them shot in my theater, they were slaughtered and eaten. But what is important is that, I have not slaughtered any animals just for my theater. This is very important to me. I have only shown how that is with slaughtering. I wanted to show the phenomenon of killing in my theater.

*KDJ: That means that for you, killing should have a use, that it should not be done without an acceptable reason?*

HN: It must make sense. Would it be non-functional, then I would reject it. But it is so that I believe in this desire to kill that is simply included in our Being. We have to get rid of it, we have to become aware of it, and release it.

*KDJ: Did it work for you? Are you released from it?*

HN: Yes, but it is also so, that to a certain extent, I am not able to be realistic about myself, we will discuss it again when I'm hungry; this desire to kill. We are under influence, when we want to kill another person; you just have to take a look at these terrible wars.

And when killing becomes art, should it then be legalized by the state? "Thou shall not kill." My work, my *Aktion*, has of course a lot to do with death and the erotic of death.

*SG: What does erotic of death mean to you?*

HN: Well, there is a wonderful example: Tristan and Isolde. It is the greatest work of art there is. In particular, it is the music that has there even gone to its limits. It is also associated with Schopenhauer. She has such a longing to live life through love and to quasi live love again and transcend it. Death does have an erotic attraction. An attraction that goes as far, that suddenly an erotic ascendance into the whole takes place. This experience of death is already an unconscious desire for the freedom to die. This must not be misunderstood, it is an abstraction.

*SG: Does that have anything to do with power?*

HN: There is an Austrian poet who speaks about the unstoppable extreme desire for victory and power. Everything is latently present inside of us and art has the chance because in this field it is positioned beyond good and evil. I believe that the analytical nature of my art can achieve many things, and can turn many things into something aesthetic and also can make them conscious.

*KDJ: How are aesthetics and ethics connected to each other for you?*

HN: Strictly speaking, there should be absolutely no difference. It is all one and the same. Ethics also tempts us to slide off into something cruel, that we act in the area of the cruel. In reference to that, there is also the beauty of destruction, and I think that aesthetics shows us everything; it shows us both construction and destruction. In the history of art there is always the theme of

construction and destruction. Aesthetics is tragic. The destruction in art can be very beautiful.

*KDJ: Yesterday or the day before, you said that you want to build something up, that you want to achieve something. What is the opposite of that? Is there also something that you have destroyed?*

HN: I have not destroyed anything. If, like in my opinion, construction and destruction are the same, and that creating means both constructing and destroying, then I have reached the position of creating. When I will become sick and the bacteria are celebrating, making a feast in my intestines, then they are having a ball, while I am actually dying. Much is happening at the same time then: Construction and Destruction.





## DAY 5 21 MAY 2010 KARLYN DE JONGH

No interview with Nitsch was planned, rather it was the first official day of rehearsals and the documentary- and filmmaker would really start filming today. Waiting for my turn to take a shower, I had a short talk with our flat mate. I got the feeling he did not like me, and when I closed the door behind me that morning, I remembered the story I had heard the day before about the *Aktion* in the Burgtheater in Vienna. Thinking about how he allegedly had covered an actor with real shit, a feeling of fear and desire overcame me. I imagined how he, in two days from now, would take his opportunity and just spread the shit all over me. I had always said that this sex with shit, I would never do, but this time, trying to have no moral restrictions, it was a challenge and I thought it was the excellent opportunity to test my ability to handle smells. If the *Aktion* was about experiencing life, experiencing your senses to the fullest, this was for me the ultimate test and I wanted it. I wanted somebody to go crazy just to do that to me. What would it be like, when you are blindfolded hanging on your cross? What would it feel like? I had never tried it, but looked forward to trying it now, I wanted to be taken, be used like that. Just this one time, for Nitsch's *Aktion*, I wanted to get everything I had never imagined to want.

I walked through the streets of Naples with Sarah and the Dutch artist, still thinking of this and felt amazing. After our regular coffee and croissant, we went to the museum. There were even more actors around now. Sarah and I went inside to quickly say hello to Nitsch, who was talking to a father and son. The father

and son wanted to go sightseeing today instead of participating in the rehearsals. Nitsch's response was adorable. It was after overhearing that conversation that Sarah and I took the opportunity to make it extra clear to Nitsch that we were prepared to do anything he wished. I think we went outside afterwards and waited until it was time for the rehearsals. At least I am sure that at 10.45 am we were lying naked on our tables in the main museum space. We both had our own table, which were placed parallel to each other with a distance of about 60 cm in between. On my right hand side there was one other table that would later be used for placing fruits and fish. On these tables we would spend most of that morning, until it was time for lunch.

The cameramen were filming now. I was aroused by their presence, I felt being watched. The table was hard, and after some time, I felt all the pressure points from my body on the table. I imagined how it would be being blindfolded and I focused on what I was hearing, feeling, smelling. There were not so many smells around, or maybe I am just not so sensitive after all. There was nothing in particular that caught my attention, I mainly heard people talking. I could not hear them word for word, it was more this noise that was constantly there, with higher and lower tones depending on who was talking. It was almost like music. Whenever someone walked by or when a door was opened, I could feel the draft on my skin. It was cold, but at the same time very pleasant. Lying on my table, I closed my legs tight together. It gives me extra pleasure to squeeze the muscles of my lower body like that and at the same time it was functional, as I did not want everybody to see how hot I was. My condition felt a little silly: this was nothing yet, this was just the rehearsal. The actual *Aktion* was still to come, and already I was so aroused, I was breathing heavily. Someone had told me

Nitsch wants his models to breath slowly and intensely, bringing the rib cage up as far as possible, which would allow him to see all the ribs, to resemble images of Jesus on the cross. To me, it became a very pleasant way of breathing; at that moment I could not do it in any other way. Totally cold but aroused, it was as if all my blood was flowing somewhere in the direction of my clitoris. My whole body was shaking, trembling.

Things were happening in the space. The blindfolds would come the next day. Now, I could still see everything that was going on. It was strange to lie naked on a table. It was as if I was a dish, like a big piece of meat for a dinner party. It reminded me of scenes in American movies, when the turkey is served for Thanksgiving. Everyone else in the space, except for Sarah, was fully dressed. They were working, running around to make preparations for the *Aktion* or standing and waiting until it was their turn to perform. People not really seemed to pay attention; they seemed busy with whatever they were doing. Not that they would have to pay attention to us, but it added to the situation and the feeling it gave me. It was the same feeling as I had, lying on the cross a few days ago, as if I was not part of it, completely isolated on my island. Nobody was allowed to touch me, and nobody came over to talk. Sarah and I sometimes spoke with each other, I felt close to her, as if we were lying in the same bed together.

At a certain point, Sarah and I were asked to lie on one table together. Sarah came and laid next to me. Nitsch did not say anything about what we were supposed to do, he kept it open. It would become the scene where Sarah and I would have sex together. Nitsch had not mentioned any of this. In the previous times where he had explained us steps of the *Aktion*, there was

never mention of a scene that would be even a little bit close to this. But I liked it. For now we were just cuddling. It was very nice to be with her there on that table. She was also very warm and it was good to feel her soft skin. Only a few days ago I had hoped that Nitsch would place us together and not somewhere in a distant corner, and now it became clear that we were about to become the central actors in the *Aktion*. We were the centerpiece, that was what Sarah and I were going to be.

Around 1.30 pm we were asked to get dressed. The Dutch artist and the film crew were sitting on the terrace. Sarah and I joined them there. It was nice to heat up slowly in the sun. I was already so cold again, with blue lips and goose bumps. Before we got off the table, we were told that there would be more rehearsals in the afternoon. The word 'fear' is too strong, but I was conscious and alert about the possibility that we would have to practice drinking blood. Actually, I hoped we would practice it: it was the only thing I was still unsure of. Sarah and I had spoken often about it and agreed that during the *Aktion* we would have to keep our face as neutral and straight as possible, no tense muscles, not showing any emotion, just neutral. But some emotions I cannot control. I did not want that to happen while drinking the blood. I was worried about it; I thought it must be very strange, only the idea of tasting it nearly made me faint and I did not want to spoil it for the others. Practicing it would be great, but I considered it would be best having some food in my stomach. Already I was a bit light in my head. There was a group of actors that were going for lunch in a nearby café, and we joined them. During lunch we sat at one table with the filmmaker. He filmed us, while we told about the *Aktion*, and everything that had happened so far. I also must have hung on my cross before going

to lunch, but I do not remember when it was exactly. What I do remember is that I told the filmmaker, after he switched of his camera, that I had been so aroused and that I had wanted to have sex. Not with anyone in particular, I simply wanted it.

When we arrived back at the museum, Nitsch was working with his musicians. Standing against the staircase in the main space with Sarah and the filmmaker, I listened to the music and watched them play. It was a chaotic atmosphere. Nitsch was directing his musicians. It seemed to take a long time and Sarah and I decided to go outside to wait for the next round of rehearsals. After a while, the Dutch artist advised us to visit Nitsch who was playing his keyboards and seemed to be enjoying himself. We disturbed him for a short moment. I do not remember what, but we said something and Nitsch laughed. He had this twinkle in his eyes. I wondered what he was thinking, he had this naughty look, as if he had something planned for us. Sarah and I went outside again, and after Nitsch was done with his music, there were new rehearsals for us. We continued from the point where we had ended before lunch. Sarah and I had to get undressed again.

When we were naked, we took position at our tables again. From the food I had gotten some energy to keep me warm, but it was still cold in the museum. I imagined what it would be like in two days, what the smell would be like, how it would feel with the sun on my skin in the vineyard, how it would be to be completely depending on other people, to be carried on my cross, to be hanging on my cross. I was fully aware of the documentary maker, who was filming me from the balcony of the first floor. I was aware of his presence constantly. I felt him filming my naked body. I wanted him to see me, to touch me, to touch me through his camera.

After a short break Nitsch's son told us we would start from the beginning. This time it was more serious, with more hanging on the cross. It felt good to be bound again, to feel my custom-made cross under my body. But I was less happy when they placed me against the wall. They placed me so straight, that I felt my weight on the wrong side of the balance. I tried to explain my unlucky position, but there was a language difficulty and this time I did not have my hand and feet to clarify. I was screwed. It was hard to keep standing straight. At a certain point, I was afraid to fall over with my cross, flat on my face, but I thought it was better to get used to the situation. When they would place me like that during the *Aktion*, I somehow had to deal with it. This was a good test. As a distraction, I tried focusing on my position within the theater setting. Aware of my future perspective as a blindfolded person who is supposed to be looked at, now I could still see what was going on. Bound to my cross, I could not assist in anything that was going on. Instead I watched. I took in all the information I could get. I looked at Nitsch, the other actors, how they behaved and I tried to follow what they said. The atmosphere seemed almost aggressive. Although I could not move, I felt active in the sense that there were a lot of things happening around me.

After some time the standing became uncomfortable, standing on this little wooden bar, my weight was solely on my heels. The binding of my arms was so loosely done, that my arms did not carry any weight. I was heavy, and we had skipped all the 'breaks', the moments we would lie on the table or would be positioned outside to get washed. At some point they carried me outside, to test carrying the weight of my body and cross. There was supposed to be a procession as part of the *Aktion*. It meant that they would have to carry me from the museum to the top of the hill, to the Vineyard. It was

a long walk. They would pass our apartment building and already that was half an hour on foot, and that is without the extra weight.

It was around 5.30pm. It had started raining heavily. There was a dinner on the top floor of the museum, but I wanted to go home and have a break. There would be two more important days and I had not had much sleep during the nights before. Plus, the next day we would have to be at Piazza Dante at six o'clock in the morning. But Nitsch had asked us and so we stayed for dinner. It was very nice to be sitting there in that room, surrounded by Nitsch's work. The room was actually an exhibition space and between two parallel dividing walls, benches were placed. On these dividing walls were two very large, early anatomy drawings that covered almost the entire wall. The two long tables were positioned between them. On the other walls were compilations of photographs from previous *Aktionen*. It gave a special atmosphere to the dinner. Nitsch had asked us to join him at his table. Food was brought in and placed on a separate table that functioned as the buffet. It was delicious. Exactly what I needed: strawberries, melon, mozzarella, tomatoes, nut bread and a small piece of spinach quiche. I had the feeling we were all tired and hungry, I knew I was. We drank white wine from the vineyard of the museum's owner again and toasted with Nitsch. There was a very nice and friendly atmosphere. Some people from Istanbul joined us and also one of the filmmakers. When Nitsch was falling asleep, dozing away, it seemed all right to leave. We made appointments with his Austrian assistant and with the documentary maker for the next morning and left.

At home, we watched photographs the Dutch artist had taken from us, to make us feel more at ease about lying there naked.

We looked okay. The photos were sharp, but not too detailed. When Sarah and the Dutch artist went to bed, I listened to some music. I wanted to relax a little bit before going to sleep and take a moment to realize everything that was happening. There was a CD from *Il Turco in Italia*, of which I had seen a performance in London a few weeks prior. I enjoyed listening to it a lot. When the music finished, around 1 am, I masturbated thinking of the documentary maker licking me while I was lying in the grass of the vineyard after the *Aktion*. I imagined the feel of the cold grass tickling my skin. Then I fucked his brains out. When I was done with him, some female actors came to lick the cum out of me. They used me, held me firmly down, while one came sitting on my face and another fucked me. After my orgasm, I set my alarm at 5:15am and fell asleep.

**DAY 5 21 MAY 2010****SARAH GOLD**

Although I was still totally tired that morning, that did not stop me from being sexually aroused; I came strong on top of my partner and when Karlyn and I walked hand in hand again to the coffee bar, I was still feeling horny; pleased to know that his sperm still was inside my pussy.

Today would be rehearsals all day long and the last of the so called 'active actors' would arrive. At the museum Nitsch was giving instructions while holding papers in his hand; his 'Partitur', the script for the 130<sup>th</sup> *Aktion* of his *Orgien Mysterien Theater*. As he went along, he was always writing things down in it.

I had seen a shopping list lying on one of the tables saying: 50 kilo strawberries, 20 kilo grapes, 50 kilo tomatoes, and at the bottom of the list it said: 300 liter blood. That impressed me. I had been trying to train my brain, in case I would encounter any unpleasant smell or taste when being on the cross, to think positive.

By 10.45 Karlyn and I were both lying naked on the tables we would be lying on during the *Aktion*. Shortly after 12 o'clock Nitsch united Karlyn and me by bringing me together with her on her table and he told us: "Do whatever you like to do". Because I did not want this unusual situation to turn awkward, I took Karlyn in my arms, said something to ease the moment and started to kiss her very softly, she kissed right back and it felt very natural and sensual, kissing her, caressing her body with

my hands and lips. I felt honored that she touched me, so nice, so tender. But, it all felt as a moment of restricted passion, the boundaries being stronger than the will to really proceed further. This was the first time I got so close to Karlyn in public, and it moved me that Karlyn dared to touch me. I had hoped and expected this for in the future, but I had not thought it would come in this way, it being at a rehearsal for the 130<sup>th</sup> *Aktion* of Hermann Nitsch, in catholic Naples. But it felt very good, it gave hope for the future, knowing that I liked the way Karlyn uses her tongue, the way her body feels, the way she moves. Then, we got dressed again, I helped Karlyn getting dressed and she helped me.

We got some vouchers given by the organizers to have lunch. Together with many other people who were involved in the *Aktion* we went to a small osteria near Piazza Dante. In the restaurant we gave a short interview into the camera of the Austrian who was staying close to us all the time. Many different courses came, the main being a dish which seemed to be a favorite one in Naples, a mixture of different varieties of pasta, potatoes and to give it flavor, some meat cut up in little cubes; it was not my favorite. But it did not matter, I was not here for the food; and anyway, to use the words of Lawrence Weiner, I am not a food snob.

When we returned to the museum, Nitsch was playing on the synthesizer, it seemed to be set to sound like an organ. Karlyn and I put on our *Malhemd* and after waiting sometime outside on the terrace, we went to Nitsch. I felt like an adolescent angel in this white thick cotton dress which we had put on over our clothes. Kneeling down beside Nitsch, I asked him if it would be possible to do a 'looking back' interview for our film on Monday after the *Aktion*. Our Austrian filmmaker would have liked to do it immediately, after the *Aktion*, because of the 'reality' feeling which he was looking for.

But after the *Aktion* at night, it would not be a good moment to reflect; we would be too tired and also it would not be convenient for Nitsch. Therefore we decided to ask him if it would be possible to do it on Monday, which was no problem for him.

Going to Nitsch whilst he was playing, had needed the Dutch artist's encouragement for Karlyn and me. Nitsch seemed to be playing so concentrated, not ready to be disturbed. I know that I should not make assumptions, because mine are often far from right. It was such a nice moment, to see that he enjoyed that we came to him. He kept playing on the synthesizer when talking to us, at a certain moment he asked his assistant to give him a block of wood, which he put on the black colored keys and, pushing the block down, he created an overpowering sound experience. I really felt that he liked the attention we gave him. Even when I assumed he would have no time for us, I was always proven wrong.

The rehearsals started again. We got undressed and had to begin where we had stopped; Karlyn and I together on one table. This time being too aware of our surrounding we had no sexual interaction, we were just holding each other; but I was feeling at ease and comfortable, it felt very good with her. At one point Karlyn had to go to her cross and was put straight up against one of the walls; I was happy that it was not me. Because your arms were not really tied to the bars of the cross, you were standing with all your weight on the little wooden strip, which is not wide, just the back part of your heels carrying your weight.

After some time, it seemed an eternity to me, I was brought to my cross. Now I was lying on the floor, arms bound to the cross, naked, seemingly helpless and vulnerable. A young Italian man who was one of the carpenters walked passed and this must have

been for him a very unusual setting; a girl lying naked on the cross. He looked at me and I looked straight back at him: "Come on: just take me." This thought surprised me, since I see myself in general not as a passive 'wanting to be taken girl' but more as an active one. The Italian did not come and use me, maybe I scared him by looking straight at him, or maybe he did not like the way I looked, but I will never forget this moment. Me 'helpless', being tied down, lying on the floor, naked, wanted to be taken.

The rehearsals continued. I looked around to see what was happening; Nitsch's son, being the executor of Nitsch's wishes during the *Aktion*, told the active actors what the next step would be. I did not want to know what would be done with us, in order to be surprised. I wanted to stay open-minded, so I could experience the *Aktion* uninhibited and could describe it as truthful as possible and uncorrupted by previous thoughts. Therefore I often looked to the ceiling, thinking about my life and my life in comparison with that of other people.

When I got lifted into the air, lying naked on the cross and being carried outside, the sky arose in front of me and it looked magnificent. It was so impressive, being on that cross, naked, carried, and the sky looking so dramatic, this sheer awareness. Today it had become quite warm and when I was put back down on the floor again, it was scary for me to feel that I had become dizzy, not being helped by the fact that I was not lying flat but with my head tilting downwards.

I closed my eyes, because during the *Aktion* I would be blindfolded and unable to correct my 'balance organ' through any visual input. I think one of the reasons of being blindfolded during an *Aktion* from Nitsch, must be to sharpen your other senses; sup-

posedly vision or better 'visual impact' is for most people their strongest sense? Have we not lost the sharpness of our senses by the way we have been living; gotten degenerated by sitting behind a desk all day, not having to hunt or being hunted? It felt good to consciously focus on my senses.

I was lifted from the floor of the terrace and was put up straight against a wall; I tried to keep my eyes closed, but I had to open them, I got so disorientated, I thought I would faint, falling off my cross; technically this was not possible, since my arms were tied to it with rope. But, and that started to worry me, as far as I knew nobody ever fainted during an *Aktion*, and I was not planning to be the first to do so.

Then, I was carried back into the museum, I believe onto my table; the brass band which would be playing during the *Aktion* was rehearsing in the background. I was so dizzy and had gotten very worried at this point; because I could not control this dizziness. I felt like I could ruin the *Aktion*. Nitsch's son checked how we were doing. I told him how I felt and he took my hand, pressing a fingernail into the inside of my little finger, very hard, and the dizziness or at least the worst of it, was gone at once. For a moment I felt relieved, but straight away the worries came back; I still could ruin the *Aktion* and put shame upon myself, the Dutch artist, Karlyn and Nitsch. But the son told me that during the *Aktion*, I would have someone watching me all the time and that he would constantly check how we were feeling. I decided that I would not worry about being dizzy anymore.

That night we all had food inside the museum, again we sat at the end of the table, not to offend or disturb anybody, and again Nitsch saw us and joined us. It felt that he liked our company and I liked

his. He seemed to be content; we talked a while and shortly after, when Nitsch left to speak to some other people, we went home.

I wanted to see the photos the Dutch artist had taken of us today; he had mainly done so to take away my worries about how I looked. They were not as bad as I had thought and anyway, now it was too late to worry. This Friday, May 21 was the first day of serious rehearsals, which meant that if you are a 'passive actor' like Karlyn and I, you are lying around on tables or being on a cross in a horizontal or vertical position. Not very exciting, but since an *Aktion* is a kind of theater, it is necessary to rehearse, because there are so many people involved.





## DAY 6 22 MAY 2010 KARLYN DE JONGH

I woke up around 5 am that morning. We were going to the fish market and had to be at Piazza Dante at 6 o'clock. Nitsch had told me that in the finale, I would get a big fish on top of me. Today we would be buying the fish that would end up on my belly. Only a small group of people would go, only Nitsch with his two assistants, the museum's owner with one assistant, the documentary maker, myself and Sarah. Nitsch's assistant knocked on the door and shortly after, Sarah and I were walking together with him down to the Piazza.

The air was really fresh outside. It was still a little dark but we could see the Vesuvius and the sun, which had just risen. The sky had beautiful colors and it smelled really nice, the air had nothing of the exhaust fumes from the previous times we walked through Naples. There were hardly any mopeds, and we could walk on the streets without having the feeling of being run over at any moment. In comparison to other days, there was no sound at all. At exactly 6 o'clock we arrived at the Piazza, and at the same time the car with Nitsch and the museum's owner came driving around the corner. It looked cute again, this small Smart car with the two men inside. But these two men looked awfully awake, especially Nitsch. I had often seen him dozing off in quiet moments, but now—at 6 o'clock in the morning—he seemed very awake while my eyes were still only half open. I needed a coffee. Nitsch stayed in his car and

reaching through the window, we kissed him good morning. It was so great, this new day. It was as if we were waking up with Nitsch and it felt warm and cozy. A few minutes later everyone was there and we headed off.

There was a good atmosphere in the car and I enjoyed the ride. I sat on Sarah's lap, curled up, it was very nice. It all looked very beautiful that morning and it was so quiet. It was a very nice route along the sea, with a beautiful lane of pine trees and little fishing boats in the water; it was very idyllic, a classic Mediterranean view. I heard the others mention that we were on the slow road to the harbor, but I liked it and enjoyed every moment of it. It reminded me of the time we drove with Nitsch to his museum in Austria, where Nitsch would give us a tour. Nitsch had shown us the scenic route through the valley, which was at least double the length, but it was a beautiful ride. After parking the car, Sarah and I went over to Nitsch and helped him out of it. He showed us a newspaper and pointed to the full page article about the upcoming *Aktion*. Nitsch smiled and had this teasing, boyish look in his eyes again; the article mentioned the plans he had with Sarah and me.

Together with Nitsch we walked over the parking lot to the fish wholesaler, it looked similar to the ones we had visited on Thursday. I hoped that now we would be more successful. We waited for 15 minutes while the museum's owner spoke to one of the people from the store, again not the right fish, so we went to another more classic type of fish market, close by. Fortunately on our way over, we stopped at a coffee bar, I was very happy. I had been longing for that since I got up. The coffee was excellent and even the cherry and custard filled croissant I

had with it, tasted fantastic. When all had finished their coffee, we continued our walk and reached the fish market. There were about 30 salesmen, who all tried their best to sell their seafood and fish. Sarah and I followed Nitsch, while the documentary maker filmed our every step.

All salesmen focused on Nitsch, who was slowly passing the market stands with us on his side. Nitsch seemed to enjoy the situation. He walked around and pointed to certain fish he wanted to have. The museum's owner came with the money right after. Nitsch explained us every time why he chose each particular fish, and I took every opportunity to touch them, to get an impression of what their skin felt like. I looked forward to feel the fish on my body. They were so slimy, so slippery, it felt fantastic. Especially the octopuses were nice. They were still alive when we bought them and Nitsch explained that they would unfortunately die a slow death; they should be dead right before the start of the *Aktion*, tomorrow at noon. Alive, they looked so very beautiful, the textures, the colors.

We were the only customers at that moment, but still there was a chaotic atmosphere at the market. Nitsch was discussing his shopping list with his assistant: 15 octopuses, 30 squids, 20 of these, several of that, and some of those. He picked out the ones he wanted to have and always took a few extra, just in case. Suddenly, I saw a wonderful large swordfish lying in one of the stands. Together with Nitsch and Sarah, I admired it. It was still whole and seemed to fulfill all Nitsch's requirements. It really was a beautiful fish and I imagined it lying on my belly. Even without the sword and tail, it was my size. I imagined the weight of the fish on my body and how the fish then would be lying between

my legs. I would have liked to rub my pussy against it, but instead Nitsch chose a much smaller fish, like tuna, one without a sword.

Everything we bought was brought to a white van while we headed off to the fruit market that ran parallel to the fishmarket. I love fruit and seeing the stands filled with all these different types of fruits and vegetables was beautiful. It was a rich feeling; there were mountains of strawberries and melons, as well as some types of fruit I had not seen before. The colors were just stunning, nice reds, oranges, greens and yellows, and it smelled extremely fresh and sweet. Nitsch bought strawberries and then we walked over to a small café. He sat down at the only table in the space, Sarah took the other chair and pulled me on her lap. The others stayed at the counter. We all quickly drank a coffee and at 10.30 am we took the motorway back.

Sitting in the car, Nitsch's Italian assistant showed us the newspaper with the article in it about the *Aktion*. The headline said something about Sapphic love, it meant Sarah and me lying together on our table, touching each other. We did not know what exactly Nitsch had in mind, but I really liked the idea of having sex with Sarah on that table.

When we arrived at the museum, there were already many people. We had to start straight away. It was a lot warmer today and for the first time that week, I was actually quite warm. Sarah and I had to get on our crosses, with our clothes on this time, and some actors carried me to the wall outside that was prepared for the final part of the event tomorrow. It was quite heavy to be there, on that cross this time. I felt the little wooden plateau pressing in my heels and the sun was burning. I got light in my head and felt drops of sweat dripping down my legs, it was very,

very warm. Many people were outside, observing the scene. Most of them were looking in our direction, some were chatting, others were filming or taking photographs. Even though it was quite tough, it still felt good. I imagined what it would be like, to be standing there and looking me straight in the eyes while I was hanging there, on that cross.

It took a long time before we were finally taken off the wall and were carried inside the museum again. There we had to undress immediately. It already became normal, to be naked in a room full of people. Sarah and I climbed on our tables. Nitsch's son came to tell us that, during the *Aktion*, nobody was allowed to touch us, only him and Nitsch, and that we did not have to be afraid. I would not have mind being touched at all, on the contrary: I wanted to be touched! What a fantastic experience that would be, when you are hanging on your cross, blindfolded, and then somebody would just come over and make you come with his fingers. But it was not so, and then I remembered a man, who had been taking photos of Sarah and me non-stop while we were lying naked on our tables the day before and I thought, not being touched was probably better.

It felt good to be naked again, my table was like an island, it was my place. An attractive woman came to blindfold me, she had very soft hands and her movements were very careful and caring. It was interesting to be blindfolded like that. Having my eyes covered made me more aware of my other senses. I sensed people passing by my table. Everybody seemed to be rushing around to take care of the last things. I was still able to see something; there was a little gap between the blindfold and my cheek. Besides that, the blindfold was just a small line of cloth and so it was

still possible to have your eyes open. There was a bright white light shining through the blindfold. It felt like cheating, looking through that gap. I did not want that, I wanted the full experience and having my eyes open made my other senses weaker. So, I kept them closed, at least most of the time.

A few minutes later, Nitsch's son came over to me and touched my body. "Now you will get the blood," he said. Sarah and I had just seen the blood being brought into the museum, we knew the blood was there and so the option that they would actually serve it to me seemed very real. He asked me to open my mouth, which I did and I remember longing for the taste and at the same time feeling "oh fuck; now it is really happening." Nitsch's son took my forehead and slightly moved it first to the left and then slowly to the right and then back to the center. Then he let go of me. That was it. There was no blood. When I come to think of it, it seems quite logical that they would not really give me any blood at that moment, they had to keep the tables clean, but at that moment my longing was so strong, that I had skipped all logic. When he moved my head, the son told me that now the blood would be flowing over my cheek on the table. Hearing this, my mouth and cheeks felt more sensitive and it felt as if something was missing. I desired the blood to be in my mouth, pushing it slowly out and let it flow over my lips down to the side, but: there was no blood.

Trembling again from the cold, I felt the bruises where my skin touched the table. It was hurting quite a bit and lying there became uncomfortable. The pain, however, was also pleasure. I had to lie on the table and was not allowed to move. I liked being controlled in that way. My lips were getting blue again and

my body was shaking. The blood was getting out of my limbs. Although I could not see them, my fingers were getting white, at least it was the same feeling that I have in winter times when they slowly start to die. I was so unbelievably cold. Then somebody came and put a warm hand on me. I wanted that person to just come lie on top of me, to keep me warm. But of course she did not. She came to collect me: apparently it was time to be bound to my cross. The cross was positioned on the short end of my table, in the center of the museum space. At first, I kept my eyes closed, but then I noticed that that person was not really leading me. I was a little disoriented and dizzy and just in case, I looked through the small opening along my cheek down to the floor. They tied me up again. It felt so good.

They lifted me up and carried me to the left side of the space, to place me against the wall for the next act in the theater. There I stood for some time, experiencing the moment. Sometimes people passed by, but I did not smell any perfume or sweat. Most people were also quiet, the only thing that was particularly loud was the whistle that introduced a new situation in the play, and Nitsch's son was loud, raising his voice so that everybody would be able to hear him. He explained the steps, what the actors were supposed to do and how they were supposed to do it. There was distance between me and them, as if I was not part of what was going on. I had my eyes closed and it felt as if I was dead already: everything just continued, but now without me. I felt as if people were not looking at me, I did not feel being watched at all.

After some time I was carried off the wall and placed on the floor in front of it. They did not carry me back to the center of the space, they let me lie there. My fingers were losing blood, it was

as if my hands were already dying. My lips were blue, I knew they were. Lying there on the floor, it felt as if they had dug a hole and placed me in it. It became very quiet around me and I was not sure what was going on. They were doing something else and I did not know what it was. There was no explanation by Nitsch's son, nothing. All of a sudden, from very close by, I heard the documentary maker say, "Is she all right?" I did not feel part of this world, blindfolded, 'observing' everything from a distance. I was not sure whether he was talking about me. The voice was close by, but it could have been about anyone. Then I heard the Dutch artist say, "Oh, that is Karlyn, the only thing you can do is stroke and cuddle." A hand came, touching my hand, my arms. It was really nice and warm. It felt as if life was coming back to me. It was a weird feeling though, to hear people speak about you as if you are not there anymore. Their conversation was not directed to me: they were not asking me, but talking amongst each other, about me. Then the whistle blew and they picked me up and brought me back to my table.

Lying naked on my table in that main museum space had always been arousing to me. Especially while still being blindfolded, my skin was extra sensitive and it was as if my total body was longing to be touched. Not knowing what exactly was going to happen, was erotic to me. I started breathing heavily, more and more, nearly reaching an orgasm right there on the table. I imagined what it would be like, during the *Aktion*, when it was 'for real'.

I was in this mode of nearly reaching an orgasm, when there was the sound of the whistle again, this time it meant that now there was a break. Immediately someone came, helped me into a sitting position and started to unroll the blindfold from my face.

After she was done, I held my eyes closed for a second. When I opened my eyes, a film camera was pointed in my face, and the red light was on. "How do you feel?" was the question. I had forgotten about this filmmaker, but here he was. The camera rolling. I searched for words, suddenly having to speak German. Expressing my sexual excitement in that language in front of the camera, was not so easy. Aware of the red button, I looked straight in his camera and told him how I felt in the best way I could and as honest as possible. The filmmaker was smiling behind his camera. I felt so great, so excited, I could not say much, but I guess my facial expression was clear enough.

After lunch, there was the second round of rehearsals. We started with the part where Sarah and I would be lying on our table together. After we were both blindfolded again, Sarah and I took position and lay next to each other. Nitsch's son came and pushed us closer, having one hand on my back and one on Sarah's. "You can get closer; you can move a little." I held Sarah tight. She was nice and warm and I felt her soft skin again. It was beautiful to be lying there with her and I stroke her back. We did not say much to each other I guess, maybe just whispering words. We were just being sweet to each other; at least I experienced it as a very warm and loving but also short moment: it appeared to be the only moment that I would be lying down for the rest of the afternoon. The next few hours there were only me and Sarah hanging on the cross.

After having been on my cross for a while, standing became very uncomfortable and it took ages before there would be a short break. It was painful, but still I enjoyed the situation. However, with the pain in my heels, most of the erotic was gone. My skin

was stiff from the cold and I felt the hairs on my body standing straight. Feeling was not so pleasant now. To stay positive, I tried focusing on my other senses instead. Since there were still no particular smells, at least not that I can recall, I mainly listened to what was going on around me: the whistle, Nitsch's son announcing the next situation, Nitsch and his son discussing the sequence for the *Aktion*, the footsteps of the actors moving around, voices when people were talking to each other. It was interesting to follow, especially since I was just on my cross against the wall and they were doing something somewhere else. I could only guess what was going on. I wondered where Sarah was and how she was doing.

After some time, Sarah and I were carried outside. It was good to heat up. Finally, it was time for the last part and Sarah and I were positioned on the floor, head to head, in the center of the museum terrace. When all steps in the *Aktion* were taken, we practiced the procession. Several people were carrying me a few hundred meters naked on the cross through the alley, which was leading away from the museum. I was happy to be lying down again for a moment, being carried. Again I felt distanced from the people around me. I smelled various flowers and plants and being in this narrow street, it sounded differently. The footsteps were echoed and I could hear them intensely. The sun did not reach there, but although I was in the shade, luckily it was still warm. Then they brought Sarah and me back into the museum, we were finished for the day. We had practiced the entire *Aktion* twice and it was enough.

Sarah and I put on our *Malhemden* again and went outside where Nitsch was speaking to all the actors. He told us that he would very much appreciate it when everybody would be at the

museum the next morning at 8 o'clock, whether you had something to do or not. When Nitsch finished his speech, the Dutch artist, Sarah and I went for dinner with the filmmaker and the Dutch lady who buys and distributes the books we make about our Art Projects. It was a very nice talk and dinner, but around 10 o'clock we went home. Tomorrow was the big day. We spoke a bit more when we were at home, about everything that had happened but, we went to bed quite early: we had to be fresh for the next day, the day of the *Aktion*. After my orgasm, I lay on my back with my hands behind my head, thinking about what was going to happen the following day. Many thoughts crossed my mind. I was too exhausted to think in a straight line, but it was just pleasant. I was ready for tomorrow.

At 5.15 in the morning I woke up by the alarm of my phone. Unfortunately not even time for sex; we had to be at Piazza Dante at six o'clock to go to the fish market together with Nitsch. Although I was exhausted and my eyes did not seem to open anymore, I felt honored that we had been invited to come along and was looking forward to going there. Walking down to Piazza Dante early on this a Saturday morning, Naples did not feel like Naples. In the couple of days that I had been here, I had never seen it so quiet: no cars, no honking horns and no people. It was a tranquil and at the same time, an unusual experience.

We arrived at the piazza and just one minute later we saw Nitsch and his patron, the owner of the museum, driving towards us in the little white Smart. Nitsch was smiling and seemed happy. We walked up to him and greeted him in our daily manner, with a kiss on the mouth. We were picked up by a driver with a big car with blacked out windows. Accompanied by the young assistant, the Italian assistant, and the Austrian documentary filmmaker, we followed the Smart car. We stopped at a news stand; the papers were already writing about our 'female love'. The owner of the museum seemed content; he had a big grin on his face when he showed us the papers. But was this really good news? In Italy religion is taken seriously and to me it felt that religion in Naples is even more present. Walking in the streets, you see many shrines for all kinds of saints. Every one being decorated differently, some with neon lights others with paper flowers, the diversity being endless; an

interesting phenomenon. But now I was not too sure about the feelings people would have towards us, were we going not conform their religion; two women having sex together and hanging naked on the cross. Could we be in trouble?

I think we drove for about 45 minutes and stopped at a fish wholesaler somewhere in a harbor. Although I could not follow the conversation it felt to me that the tension was high. Finally we were told that they could not allow us on the premises because of 'insurance reasons'. We left to drink a coffee in a little bar nearby and not long after that, we were picked up: they found a fish market where they expected to find what Nitsch needed. It was quite a big market for all kinds of things, and of which one section was designated for seafood. There were about 30 different merchants, who were just starting to display their products. Walking with Nitsch over the fish market was a touching experience for me. When I saw how much he enjoyed being able to choose the materials he would need for his art. He was like a painter walking through a paint shop. It seemed that he was indulging in the feeling of the richness of the differences of the given materials, enjoying the moment of selection. I noticed that he only chose certain kinds of fish and no shellfish at all and I asked him what the criteria were. "I like the moist and slimy ones"; to this I could relate, finding moist, soft and slimy very sensual and erotic qualities myself. But the reason why he does not use the fish that are flat bottom feeders, but only the ones with a 'human like' body, I did not understand; might it be for aesthetical reasons? Nitsch selected a variety of different fish, amongst which also two really big fish, which would be cut open on the spot during the finale. Also many boxes full of different squid, calamari, were bought. Nitsch chose also at least a dozen of octopuses that were still alive, trying to sneak out of the tubs

they were kept in. When we were finished at the fish section of the market, we walked towards the street, half way we saw a fruit stand and bought some trays of strawberries. Because the owner of the museum was paying for all the fish and organizing the transportation of it to the museum, we stopped for a cup of coffee to give him some time to arrange it all. Karlyn was sitting on my lap and Nitsch shared his little sweetbread, feeding us.

Before noon we were back on our table in the main room of the museum. I had been told to lift my left leg a little bit into an angle, a position of which Nitsch's son had told me that they call the 'Egon Schiele' position. I am sure that these girls by Schiele, were not lying on a hard table; my ankle bone was not too pleased with this position, but it was the only thing which was hurting today. I felt more and more at ease lying naked on the table. I had given up making a hollow back, which made me look a little more elegant, but had caused a terrible back pain the night before. Today, I would not have this self-inflicted problem again; the punishment being far too high for the gain. Because I was lying in a more relaxed way now, I could easier focus on the different sounds and scents. I could smell the flowers of the plants outside, a full-bodied, sweet and at the same time soft scent. We had these flowers in the garden of the house where I grew up, I used to smell them as a teenager when I was coming home at early hours in the morning. It felt warm and welcome.

We had lunch and Nitsch shared a piece of his pizza with us. We went outside on the terrace and I saw some plastic canisters filled with a dark liquid passing; was this the 300 liters of blood? It was. I looked at the end of the alleyway and saw a small jeep there. Something was happening so, Karlyn and I walked up to the car and saw the pig. It was not huge, but it filled the boot of the car. It was stiff, had a stamp on one thigh and was shaven;



it looked friendly, with a smile and cute happy ears. Once I had seen barrels with dead piglets alongside the road, but this was the first time I saw a grown dead pig from that nearby. This was the pig for the big finale and either Karlyn or I would get it on top; the active actors would put blood, intestines and all kinds of fruit and seafood inside and start rummaging.

Back into position, on my table in the museum, the rehearsal started again. Today being blindfolded with gauze, only able to see very little when you looked straight down. We now rehearsed the 'crucifixion', two women led to my cross, I could tell it by their voices. With rope I was loosely tied onto my cross, I got lifted and was set up straight, leaning against a wall. To be crucified was not an easy job for me, after some minutes I felt my feet starting to have trouble, being only able to rest with the back of my heel on this little bar. To ease this, I put one foot in the length of the bar and let the other hang down to rest; swapping position every once in a while. At a certain moment, Karlyn and I were placed together on a table, like the day before. But although I had really enjoyed our soft, first encounter, I did not want to proceed and shock Karlyn too much with more real life intimacy. Lying just next to her, I put my leg across hers and held her hands, feeling very comfortable in her presence.

The rehearsal went on; it was very unusual for me to do nothing, being so inactive. Nitsch's son was very kind, telling us about every little move they would do; I got a small bench which was made to fit over my upper body. When I asked what it was for, I was told that it was for my protection: "You will get the pig." I would have preferred to really 'feel' the pig, skin on skin; having its head between my legs, rubbing my pussy whilst being rummaged, feeling its body on mine, but they told me, for security reasons this was not possible.

Later on that day, the son of Nitsch told us, that his father had done something very special; Nitsch had adjusted his Partitur, making Karlyn and me the center piece of the *Aktion*. He said to me: "I do not know what you did to him, but he really likes you."

That evening we got invited to join Nitsch for a musical performance in a church where he had an exhibition together with works by Caravaggio. It turned out that we could not enter because it was overcrowded, so we went for dinner instead with the Austrian filmmaker and a Dutch woman who, until now, buys most of the books out of our Art Projects series, that Karlyn and I make. After dinner we took a taxi to our apartment, this was the first time since we arrived that we did not have walk uphill home, only having to climb the stairs of the six floor building in order to reach our apartment, to reach my bed.

The Dutch book lady had brought with her a few samples, from the book Karlyn and I had just made with Lawrence Weiner. We had it printed in Germany while we where in Naples, and asked her to bring some by plane. That book was the first, out of our Art Project series. It looked fantastic. What a life I have, receiving the first book out of this series, while already making the second one; and how different this one will be. Tomorrow would be the big day. We would not just be part of the 130<sup>th</sup> *Aktion*, but we would also have an important role; Nitsch adjusting his Partitur, placing Karlyn and me on a table together, and using us in the grand finale. While I was lying in bed, I was very excited, I needed to come. Feeling my partner, the Dutch artist lying next to me, I got on top of him and let myself come several times whilst looking at him; such a good feeling. I sucked his sperm out with my pussy and fell asleep peacefully.



## DAY 7 23 MAY 2010 KARLYN DE JONGH

Today would be the day, after 6 days of preparations, Sarah and I would become part of Nitsch's 130<sup>th</sup> *Aktion*. I was in Naples, Italy, and woke up around 6am, from sheer enthusiasm. How I looked forward to this! Now it was really happening. I had this positive tension. Especially for this day, I had promised myself to have no moral restrictions, to just experience what happens, without cultural boundaries, because that is what Nitsch is about. I stayed in bed for a while, thinking about what was going to happen. What a chance this was, to be part of Nitsch's artwork. Not only would we be part, we would be the centerpiece, the finale. We had build up such a relationship with Nitsch that he changed his script and rearranged it around Sarah and me. How fantastic that was! And Sarah and I would be writing about our experiences, making a beautiful book. What an adventure it had already been, spending these previous six days with Nitsch, seeing so much of the preparations, being able to ask him any question.

We had to be at the Fondazione Morra, the Museo Hermann Nitsch at 8 o'clock and I had plenty of time. We did not have to prepare anything: naked and without make-up was how we were supposed to present ourselves to Nitsch that morning. Off we went to the museum, it was around 7.15 am. It was quiet and beautiful, there was this fresh heat as in summer mornings. Sarah and I walked hand in hand as always. We passed large billboards with announcements for the *Aktion*, for our crucifixion. It was early Sunday, but our favorite café was open. We stopped

for two cappuccinos and a croissant and continued on our way to the museum. When we arrived, we did not have anything to do and so we took a seat in the sun on the museum terrace, chatting with the filmmaker, the Dutch artist and the book lady, watching the others set up the space and make it look beautiful. It was warm outside and I drank quite a bit of water. Some active actors with experience had warned me for dehydration and advised me to drink a lot, because we would not get any water during the *Aktion*, just blood and slime. Although I longed for it, I was still nervous about the blood being poured into my mouth. It was 11 o'clock, the *Aktion* would start at 12, but we had to be ready before the visitors would arrive.

I was sitting there, naked on my table, my island, and observed the other tables and the objects lying on them. They were all covered with white cloth. Some were set with the fish and other seafood we had bought on the market. They were placed side-by-side, very straight. It was interesting to see that so much attention was being paid to how all the fish were positioned. Large lumps of intestines were brought in. It was very possible that at some point one of these lumps would end up upon my body. I tried smelling them, but it was too far away, there was only this very light scent, and it was so light that I could not describe it. The fish were more impressive in that sense, but also their smell was not so strong yet. After a few minutes, the cloths were drained with blood or water, depending on the object lying on it. Stuff came out of the intestines. I remembered the liver having a beautiful color, a very dark deep red. I imagined what it would feel like, firm and soft and how slippery it would be.

Everything was seen by me from an erotic point of view. It was as if you are bound to the bed and you know that in a certain amount

of time you will be taken and you, very consciously, watch what is going on around you and put everything into question. What will they do? How will they use me? Nitsch had told us in great extent what was about to happen to us, but during the interviews he had also made a remark that during the *Aktion* he sometimes changes things, depending on the situation. I liked this idea of not knowing completely what was about to happen, it triggered me: everything was possible. I observed the other tables and the piles of strawberries and tomatoes that were lying on them. It was interesting to know that the objects could be used for my body. There were the beautiful, natural reds of the strawberries, cherries, tomatoes and also the intestines of animals, and all with different shapes. Then someone came and blindfolded me.

Lying in my position on the table with my eyes covered, I was ready to start. Sarah and I did not say much to each other anymore, maybe just a few words in between, but most of the time I was just lying in position. It was comfortable on my table and I entered my own world, feeling a little distant on my island. Maybe I was just tired from the previous days as I had not slept much. It had been long days with many impressions and now lying there on my table, I was very relaxed. The nervousness was gone. I closed my eyes behind my blindfold and suddenly felt myself dozing off. This was a bit too comfortable. Now when it was finally happening, I had to be awake. I opened my eyes again and looked through the gap between the blindfold and my cheek. Looking through that gap felt like cheating, but it was for the better. When the *Aktion* actually would start, I would close my eyes and really concentrate on my other senses. It was interesting to experience the difference, having your eyes closed or looking through that gap. Having the ability to see, I automatically neglected my oth-

er senses and focused solely on what I was seeing. People were moving around, rushing to get everything ready in time, and upstairs on the balcony of the first floor I could see the documentary maker in position. I could not see whether he was actually filming, but the thought of it was a pleasant one.

After some time, it became quieter in the space and I heard Nitsch's voice. He spoke softly and I could not hear what he was saying, there were other sounds in the space, but I do not remember what they were, because I concentrated on Nitsch. The tone in his voice seemed a formal one and it could have been around 12 o'clock. I assumed he was making a speech as a preface to the start of the *Aktion*. As far as I could hear, he mentioned aspects of what he had been telling Sarah and me during our interviews. I wondered how many visitors there would be. I closed my eyes and took this sound of Nitsch as the actual beginning of the *Aktion*.

There I was, lying on my table, being one of the passive actors in Hermann Nitsch's 130<sup>th</sup> *Aktion*. All that was about to happen would only last a short moment. To my recollection, I had experienced so much while just being in the moment, that I forgot about the time that was passing. Sometimes I thought about the sequence of events following each other, and sometimes I wondered how long I had been hanging on the cross. I had however, been thinking more in the sense that it was remarkable that I did not experience the length of time, that it was as if my sense of duration was gone. Later I was told the event in the museum had taken about 4 hours, while I had just experienced the 'now'. At a certain point, it just was over. I had experienced all the scenes in the sequence we had rehearsed in the days before, but besides the feel, smell, taste and sound of things, in the moment of the *Aktion* there did not seem to be anything else.

Naked, on my table, having my eyes closed, I tried to get as many impressions as possible, to experience everything around me as intensely as I could. At a certain moment, I felt the hand of Nitsch's son on my arm. It was nice and warm. Already from the beginning, I had been cold again and his hand came as a pleasant surprise. "Here is the blood," he said. When I heard him say it, I thought, "Oh fuck!" I had feared this moment from the very beginning, and now I would be served my blood. I opened my mouth, slowly. My lips and tongue, the whole inside of my mouth and actually my entire body, I felt everything longing for this taste. I opened my mouth. The blood..., what a fantastic fluid! It was a little cold, but it was this thick, really nice tasting, wonderful liquid. My mouth was anxious, as if the complete surface of the inside of my mouth was full of desire to get all the taste. My tongue reached inside this stream of blood that was flowing into my mouth. It was filling my cheeks and I let as much of this blood inside my mouth as possible, to taste it as intense as I could, everywhere in my mouth. This was such a fantastic experience. This was so erotic. This was so unlike anything I had ever tasted. This was wonderful.

The blood kept coming. Nitsch's son poured more and more blood in my mouth while he slowly shifted my head to the left. I wanted to take as much as possible and relaxed all the muscles in my face in order to stretch my skin and make more room in my mouth. It took several seconds before my mouth was filled to the top and was overflowing. I felt the blood running over my lips and the corner of my mouth. It run over my cheek and gone it was. Nitsch's son asked me to now slowly press the blood out of my mouth. I listened to him, pressing it very slowly out. It was wonderful to feel the counter-pressure of the blood while I was

pushing it out and at the same time feeling the delicious taste of a thin layer still covering the inside of my mouth. There was something about this thick, sticky fluid, it was so erotic. The blood felt warmer now, which was even better and allowed for a fuller taste.

The blood was sticking on my lips, I felt them full and swollen as if they were burning, as if my own blood was being aggressively pumped through them. I felt my body reacting: my nipples were getting hard, my pussy getting wet. It was as if my whole body was trying to come closer. Even now, when I am writing this, it is as if my tongue is again reaching for it, wanting to taste it. The blood came again. Nitsch's son poured another amount of blood in my mouth and then pushed my head to the opposite side. Again my mouth was filled with blood and I felt my cheek started hanging from the weight. Slowly, I pushed the blood out. It was running over my lips. They were swollen, thicker than usual. Everything in my mouth was completely sensitive, my jaws, the blood sticking on my teeth. When he was finished, the blood on my cheeks dried quickly. It was sticky at first, but later I felt these two dry lines on my face. They were tightening my skin and it felt as if this dry skin kept my lips open. The blood on my lips stayed liquid for quite some time. I imagined how red they must be now.

I heard some noise coming towards my direction. People lifted my arms, placing my hands on the wooden stick, in the right position. I was lifted up. It felt amazing. It was as if my legs were tied to the table. The rest of my body on the contrary, felt very light. I felt the openness of my chest, my breasts and the desire that came with it. I wanted to be observed, to be touched, to be taken. More blood came. I still had the taste of blood in my mouth from the previous time, but now there was more. They poured it in. This time, there was so much at once, that it flew over my chin

down to my chest almost immediately. Only a part came into my mouth. I felt the blood running over my breasts. It was incredible. I had wanted to be touched and now, instead of being touched by people, I was being touched by the blood. It stuck to my skin. The blood was running down, down over my belly and my pussy. The cold blood was tickling my clitoris.

There was a pool of blood growing under me now, and I was sitting in it, this wet spot. The blood was getting warmer from my body temperature and when they put me back horizontally again, the blood was drying on my body. I felt its presence: the places where the blood was and those where it was not. My body was so sensitive and everything felt so good, I was getting more and more aroused. I imagined the power these actors now had over me and it felt fantastic. I wondered what it would be like to fuck in the blood, to be rolling on that table with another person, to be taken and that someone would lick the blood off my body. To be licked clean and get penetrated, taken with all these people watching, with the cameramen filming me. I wanted it. I wanted to have it. I wanted it here, in the *Aktion*. The desire for more blood was so strong that water came into my mouth. My lips were still open, ready to take in more.

Nitsch came. He told me that now something new would happen: "An octopus will be laid on your lower body." I enjoyed his presence, hearing his voice. My lips, still sticky, swollen and curled up from the blood, were burning. The rest of my body was trembling. Some things were happening around me, I heard footsteps, rumbling and some other sounds. There was also the music. It was as if all the musicians were coming in my direction, positioning themselves in a half circle around the top end of my table, close to my ears. The moment the octopus fell on my

pussy, was the moment they started their fortissimo. The octopus was cold, I was shocked, I moaned. I felt its long, slimy tentacles running down, immediately reaching my pussy. With the overwhelming music and the tentacles of the octopus around my clitoris, I nearly came. It was just a little too cold to really reach an orgasm, but it was wonderful.

Squids came, all my muscles were tightened, and my skin and my nipples were hard. They were such slippery, slimy animals, it felt fantastic. I wanted the tentacles to go inside my pussy. I wondered what it would be like to have the whole squid in my vagina, not just staying on my lower belly, but going deep inside. How good would that feel? More blood came, it was mainly poured over the octopus and squid now and I felt the stream of blood bouncing against them, making more pressure on my lower belly. The blood felt like a fountain with quite some force, as if the octopus was spitting it out. It was like a big power and it was on exactly the right spot, the place where I normally push to force myself into an orgasm. Drops were splashed everywhere on my body and the pool of blood I was lying in was growing. The drops of blood splattered around. The smell of it was great. It was light, but it was there. I was completely in the moment, fully concentrated on what was happening right there on my belly.

There was no more blood, they left the squids where they were and poured warm water over me in a similar way. My body relaxed for a short moment from this sudden heat and I nearly peed over the table. The squid was still lying there like this hump of jelly and I wanted to grab it and rub my pussy against it, to feel its slimy soft texture even better. I was trembling on my table, breathing heavily, while being inside this fortissimo music. It was very intense, so loud, that it overpowered all possible other sounds. It was as if I was one with

the music. I felt very light, as if my weight was gone. It was as if all the energy was taken out of me and the blood in my body had disappeared somewhere. I was losing consciousness. I tried to control my breathing in order to stay 'present', although I was also tempted to just let it go. The musicians left now and the music became less loud. I was still on the verge of losing consciousness when Nitsch's Italian assistant laid his hand on me and asked if I was all right. That got me completely out of my mode. It was for the better, I guess. It was as if I was back amongst the living again. Although I had not moved, it felt as if I was back on my table, back in the *Aktion* again.

A person took my hand and carefully helped me off the table. I had to sit down for a moment first, to adjust to the vertical position. There were two people now and both were very friendly to me while assisting me to my cross. I was still trembling. I did not feel strong. Slowly, I positioned myself on my cross. Ropes were placed around my arms and I felt a knot was being made. I felt free. My arms were spread again, bound to my cross. It was a liberating feeling. I took a deep breath and filled my lungs with air. It had a feeling of safety, to feel my cross against my back. I was being lifted up and I was brought in the sun, until I felt the warmth on my entire body. It felt really good to slowly heat up again. The blood that was sticking on my skin, dried even harder. It felt nice to have this dry blood tightening my skin and my body feeling the direct heat of the sun. Then a soft sponge filled with warm water, touched me. I was being washed, still tied to my cross. I had the feeling I was parked outside for a moment, as if I was not part of the *Aktion* now, no longer 'useful'. There were voices around, not this soft, sensitive way of speaking that was present inside the museum. I wondered what was going on inside now. At a certain moment, I heard people say something to Sarah, whether she wanted some water. Apparently

she was lying on my right hand side. They asked me too, but I still had this taste of blood in my mouth and was not sure whether I wanted to wash that away. Everything in my mouth was thick; all had this layer of blood over it. I did take the water and it felt great, this stickiness and then the water, the blood became liquid again in my mouth and this time I swallowed it. It felt clean and fresh. It had been something I did not want, I had been so tense about the blood, but in reality it was absolutely erotic. It has been one of the most erotic things I have ever tasted in my life.

A little later, I was being brought back into the museum and placed against the wall. There was the sound of the whistle, which had been there each time there was a change of scene. This time it was the start of the rummaging. I was hanging on my cross, next to the pig. There was only a very light smell of meat. I wondered how close the pig was to me. There was something going on somewhere else and I noticed I had no clue of where that was. My feeling for orientation was not well anymore. Sometimes I felt drops of blood splashing on my body. Feeling these drops made me feel even more distant to what was actually happening. And with the ropes around my wrists loosening, it was less erotic for me. I felt the small bar under my heels. Now I did not feel so light anymore. I felt the weight of my body. However, all pain had disappeared. The previous days, during the rehearsals, it had been painful to be on my cross, but being in the *Aktion* I no longer felt it.

Hanging on my cross, there were more scents around. I smelled flowers, and I smelled strawberries, which made me hungry. I wanted to eat them, to bite in them and feel their juices. Still, it was mainly the sound that was present. The rummaging was going on quite close to me. Actors, I heard their emotions, the screaming,

the moving around, the sound of meat being squeezed, of liquids being poured, splashes. The emotions seemed controlled, the screaming stopped and started whenever there was a whistle. They were shouting, "Blood! Blood!"; but it did not sound convincing, the pain or the desire was missing. At a certain moment, I was being served blood again. The taste was still nice, but they poured it more along my under lip. I felt the pressure of the blood and my under lip started hanging. The blood was running over my chin, my chest, along my nipples, down over my belly, to my pussy and over my legs. It was as if the cold blood was cooling off my warm body, relieving it a little from its desire to be touched. Another amount came. I took the blood in my mouth and slowly let it flow. It was fantastic. Feeling the blood run down my body.

Some time later, I was taken off the wall and brought back to the center of the space. Two people unbound me. I was assisted back to my table. I had to sit down first and felt the cold pool of blood and water that was still lying there. It actually felt quite good, this cold liquid. It felt as if I had already peed, but I wanted to let it go when I positioned myself horizontally again. I now felt Sarah's warm body. It felt comfortable and it was nice to be there with her and experience it together now. I told her I had to pee. She replied that she had already done it. I liked the idea of just letting it go, but I felt restricted: we were about to have sex for the first time together in public and to start by peeing now, seemed too much. We started kissing. We took it slow. While kissing, I touched her nipples. I felt how soft she was and started licking her breasts. They had the taste of blood still on them. I felt her nipples hard in my mouth and twirled my tongue around them. We were mainly kissing a lot and I had my hand on Sarah's pussy while still kissing her nipples. Rolling in this pool of

blood, pressing my pussy against her thigh, it aroused me. It felt good to be with her: strong, firm, warm, erotic.

All of a sudden somebody touched us. There was the voice of Nitsch's son. I could not hear what he said, but I stopped kissing Sarah to ask her in a whispering voice whether she had understood what he had said. She was not sure either. For a second, I feared that we had done something wrong. Nobody had told us what we were supposed to do while lying on the table together. We decided to slow down and just continued kissing each other. We kissed and cuddled.

Nitsch's son returned, saying that we could be a bit more active. This I heard clearly. I went down with my hand and put two fingers into Sarah's pussy. Slowly I started fucking her like that. I heard her moan and I heard cameras flashing. Still with my fingers inside Sarah, I started fucking her a little harder. There was a sponge on my back, as if a person was washing it. The presence of this other person and the soft feel of the sponge were wonderful. I felt being watched and I liked it. Sarah then put her fingers inside of me and it felt really incredible. I felt myself sliding over the table backwards, with Sarah's fingers in my pussy. I was screaming, reaching for air and felt a weight pushing me closer to Sarah. It was a nice soft push, as if someone was pushing me with his belly. Unfortunately, I was too cold again to be able to reach an orgasm. I would have liked it. We stopped, we were probably asked to, I do not remember.

I was brought to my cross and sitting there, my blindfold was taken off my head. It had gotten loose and had to be renewed. Now the blindfold was gone I felt empty, incomplete, as if something was missing. It felt as if my face was covered with blood. I opened my eyes for a second and looked straight in a camera. My eyes

felt as if they were on fire. The blood was everywhere and for a moment I felt like a predator, ready to take her prey. In this short moment, I saw a dark line of people. There were many and many were looking in my direction. It felt as if I had them in my power. I felt calm, serene. I imagined what my light colored eyes would look like in this face that was covered with blood. I was not ready to return to reality and closed my eyes to get back in the *Aktion*. Someone took my head and put a new blindfold around it.

They bound me back to my cross, I believe I even asked them to tighten the rope stronger, and placed me on the wall. It was similar to the previous time. More blood was poured in my mouth. This time it had clutters inside. Before, when Nitsch had explained that the blood was half cow and half pig blood, he said there was something being put inside in order to keep it from clattering. The clutters felt a little strange and the pouring was less soft as the previous times. It felt as if it was being done faster this time, abrupt, as if in a hurry. I still had to pee. I wanted to let it go, have this warm rain running down my legs. I tried several tricks, but it did not work. I gave up.

After some time I was taken off the wall and carried outside again for another short break. After two people delicately washed me, the ropes were released from my wrists. I felt close to the persons doing it, although I really did not know who they were. The filmmaker made himself known to me, by asking a question. I guess he wanted to know whether I was all right. My face was washed, but my lips were still sticking together from the blood, they were still swollen. It felt awkward to speak and hear myself talk; I do not remember what I told him. This time, I did not have to keep lying in the same position; I could stretch my body a bit. It felt really good. The sun felt amazing again, so



light and warm. My muscles were loosening up. I had not realized they were so tense. I spread my legs and felt the warm sunlight on my body. Now it returned, this strong sense of excitement. I imagined how the filmmaker was filming me, the idea of his presence and that of the camera made me wet. I wanted him to desire me. I wanted him to come closer, to touch me, to see every part of my body through his camera.

I heard other voices around, but I do not recall what happened next. Someone bound me to my cross again, but I believe they did not move me yet. It was only after some time that they lifted me up and placed me on the wall outside. I heard the whistle several times again and there was the smell of the white flowers. I was given more blood and I heard the active actors during the rummaging. When the whistle sounded again, I knew it was time for the finale. Now it was my turn to get all the intestines on me, the moment I would get the large fish, my fish, placed on top of me. They lifted me up and carried me a little distance from where I was. Then I heard footsteps coming my way, and voices. They were carrying Sarah closer and placed her next to me. I felt the cool shadows over my body. Sarah and I were now head to head. It was time for the finale.

I got a sort of mat on me. I felt its weight and pressure on my body. It was relatively heavy. It felt like a prison, as if I was taken and locked up behind bars. I would have much rather preferred to feel the fish directly on my skin. It was as if the actors had taken control over me and deprived me from my pleasure. Then the fish was placed on top of me, its tale touched my face for a moment. Immediately, it was moved away. Now I did not feel it anymore, only its weight. There were voices mentioning something about a knife. From the sounds around, the movements,

the shifting pressure, I got the feeling it was a long, thin knife. Nitsch had already told me the day before, that the fish would be cut open on top of me. Now I was quite happy with my mat. Apparently, it was difficult to cut the fish open, because I felt them trying to push the knife inside. Nitsch's son was doing it, he had such a power on the knife, I was quite afraid that he would lose control and slide it right through my heart. To put myself at ease, I opened my eyes and peeked under my blindfold. I saw the knife. It was long and thin. I saw the belly of the fish, the knife on it, the long thin blade and a pair of hands pressing it down. It did not make me feel more at ease, not at all. But after some time, finally, the fish was cut open.

Now it really started. The sound of the whistle. The music in fortissimo. They started rummaging. I felt pressure on me, the mat was pressing into my body. Besides the varying pressure, I did not feel much of what was going on, on top of me. It was more the hard objects hitting my throat and face, as well as the squids and intestines between my legs, that I felt. The fish did not have a strong smell. It was more a combination of smells: fish, blood, strawberries. There were several people around me. I could not feel them, but I heard them rummaging, shouting, "Blood! Blood!" Blood was being poured over me, my face was covered in blood, and my nose was filled with it from all the splashing. The music was very intense. It was overwhelming and the musicians seemed to be standing very close to me. It made me breathe intensely again. The music covered most other sounds, but I could still hear the splashing of blood and squeezing of slimy objects. I was being used now. It was what I had been hoping for. There was no erotic feeling for me at that moment. It was more as if I was sucked into the sound. The music became

stronger and stronger. Then there was the sound of the whistle. The rummaging stopped. I heard Nitsch say something. Another whistle and the rummaging started again. The music seemed louder now, the weight moved heavily on my body and the active actors were shouting again, "Blood! Blood!" It was the grand finale. It really felt like being used, they were using my body, all of me was being used. After all the erotic of the previous moments, I had lost most of it now. Instead I felt serene, numb. The last whistle and the *Aktion* was over.

There I was, covered in blood. Used. The fish and all the other animals and things were taken off of me, and after that the ropes around my wrists. They helped me into a sitting position and I heard Nitsch's Italian assistant say, "Karlyn, it's me, it's okay." It felt strange and empty for the *Aktion* to be over. Someone took off my blindfold. Being able to see again was very unusual. Nitsch's Austrian assistant helped me get up and together with a young woman he accompanied me inside.

The floor inside the museum was slippery. It looked like a battlefield where an explosion had just taken place. There was blood everywhere, with dark red pieces mixed into it. Fruits and tomatoes were lying everywhere. I saw it all and was trying to adjust to my new situation; I was not really present yet. I was mainly looking and did not hear much. There was so much to see. They led me through the office space, outside to where showers had been installed. There were many people there. Some were taking a shower, others were observing them or making photographs or filming. Sarah was already there and I joined her under the shower. The water was cold, but felt pleasant. I washed away the blood and it took quite a long time before most of it was gone, off my body, out of my hair. I looked into the group of people

that were watching us, while rubbing myself with soap. The two cameramen were filming, the Dutch artist was taking photos and I heard many other cameras clicking. I looked straight into the lens. Now I was able to see again, this felt very erotic. I did not smell, nor hear, taste, feel anything. I just watched.

Sarah was done and I think she took me with her. After putting on my bathrobe, I became warmer and slowly felt more 'present' again. The filmmaker put his camera in our faces and started asking questions. Sarah did most of the talking. When we were done, we were told that there would be food and drinks up on the roof terrace. The Dutch artist took my hand and we walked the winding stairs together. There were many steps and somewhere halfway I became incredible dizzy. I had to take a break. I nearly fainted. I felt my blood flowing out of my head and tears were running down my face. The Dutch artist held me tight, squeezing my body just in time. We reached the roof terrace. Sarah was there together with the film crew and the book lady. I sat in the sun, drinking water and eating bread. I was doing a little better. There was a warm atmosphere in the group, we were all together.

It was time for the procession and Sarah and I still had to put on our *Malhemden*. We went downstairs, put them on and I carefully walked outside to take position on my cross. My cross was the last one in the row and had been lying in the shade. There was a pool of blood on my cross, the surface was still wet. I sat down on it first, so that someone could blindfold me. I felt my back and hips pressing in the blood, leaving a mark on my *Malhemd*. My *Malhemd* covered most of my body and I felt the cotton fabric on my skin. There had been many voices around, but after some time they were getting weaker, becoming sounds in the distance. I was lifted up and carried through the museum

alley. I heard my carriers speak and now other voices were becoming stronger again. Sometimes, I heard the musicians play in the distance. There were many sounds: the mopeds, footsteps on the stones, people talking, the music, but they mainly appeared from far away. The exhaust fumes, the footsteps of my carriers, the bouncing of my cross from their irregular steps and their voices, were the main things I experienced during the procession. People were talking to me, giving me their visual impressions of the procession. The route was similar to the one we had been taking the last few days when walking back from the museum to our apartment.

When I was carried passed our house, into the vineyard, the sounds were softened and the scents changed: the earth, plants and trees, flowers, fruits. At a certain moment I was placed on the floor, unbound and released from my blindfold. When I looked up, Nitsch was sitting on a chair and there were many people around. Sarah and I went to Nitsch and spoke about the *Aktion*. Nitsch was drinking the wine from the vineyard and we got a glass as well. We toasted many times. There was a beautiful view over Naples. I needed to be alone for a moment and take the last bit of sunshine. I watched over the bay and was looking over to the Vesuvius again. The view of the Vesuvius had been magnificent all other days of our visit in Naples, and I had enjoyed it immensely, and now, after having been blindfolded, it was even more intense.

Sarah and I, as well as everybody else were invited to the big garden party which started immediately after the procession. There were many long tables with many people and a lot of food. I absorbed it all, but I still felt quite numb, I had lost my conscious awareness. After Sarah and I thanked Nitsch, I took a walk up the hill with the Dutch artist. We sat in the grass, look-

ing over the bay and spoke about what had happened. When it was getting dark, we went down again to the celebration. There was a really nice atmosphere. I changed into my regular clothes and went looking for something to eat. During the celebrations of that evening, I thought about the experiences of the past few days. How interesting it had been and how special it was with Nitsch. I thought about my fantasies and how erotic the event had been for me. Now the event was over and I was still not really in this world, still trying to realize what all had happened, but I considered it was time to live some of the fantasies I had had during the last week. So, I asked a man I knew and went with him, I needed sex, and I needed to come back to reality. What an event this had been. What a life.



DAY 7 23 MAY 2010

SARAH GOLD

Today was the day I had so long been waiting for. In a few hours Karlyn and I would participate in the *Aktion* of Hermann Nitsch in Naples, in Italy. Having learned about the Viennese Actionists as a child, being familiar with the photographs from the sixties and seventies, I felt privileged and grateful that I could participate. Karlyn and I would document the *Aktion*, describe our experiences, our thoughts and feelings as honest and sincere as possible, therewith creating our own *Personal Structures Art Project #02 Hermann Nitsch: Under My Skin*. The awareness about this all had a positive impact on me, I had kept repeating these thoughts in my head.

I woke up before the alarm and felt very horny. I did what I needed to do. Now I was ready for the day. We arrived around eight o'clock at the Museo Nitsch. The 'active actors' were already preparing the tables and placing them in a certain order, inside and outside of the museum. I was standing on the terrace which has this marvelous view over Naples. What a melting-pot of activities, of life, overseen by the Vesuvius. I had a feeling which best could be described as stage fright. I was keeping close to Karlyn and holding on to a bottle of water; we had been advised to drink a lot, since the *Aktion* would take the whole day.

Walking through the museum, awaiting the moment, I saw a pile of bathrobes lying in the office. Karlyn and I got undressed and put on the robes, so it would be easier for us to get naked when needed.

Immediately I felt more comfortable, more like a 'real' model. We went back into the main space of the museum where Nitsch was sitting and we had a short talk with him. All week he had given us his time, I felt spoiled. He was always in such a good mood, and communicated as far as I could tell, as truthfully as possible: A grown-up man who had lived a full life. Today would be his 130<sup>th</sup> *Aktion*, for me the first and most likely the last one. We asked whether it would be okay, in case we needed to pee during the *Aktion*, to just let it go. If the moment was suitable, we got told, it was fine. I was happy to hear that, although I should have known that it would be all right to do so; Nitsch's *Orgien Mysterien Theater* was there to help us to learn to let go of all your boundaries, to free yourself from your social restrictions, to live life to the maximum.

While still feeling anxious, I also felt at ease in my bathrobe, beautiful and special; alive, a small part of it all. I was happy that during the week, I had gotten more and more comfortable getting undressed, being naked in front of many people, which had been the most difficult part for me until now. At 10.45 we were told to get undressed and to lie down on our table. This seemed very early, the *Aktion* would start at noon, but since the *Aktion* is like a theater play with set guidelines, I followed the instructions and took off my comfort shield. Standing next to my table a woman blindfolded me by rolling standard gauze around my head. Now, I could hardly see anything anymore; only by looking down I could get a glimpse. I was assisted getting onto my table and several soft feeling hands helped me to lie down into the Egon Schiele position Nitsch wanted me. The 'come and fuck me' pose, in which Schiele often depicted his models, was named after him by Nitsch and was now part of a very different kind of artistic expression.

All of a sudden the orchestra, 10 Italian musicians with mostly brass instruments, started to play. "Was it 12 o'clock already?" That would mean that I had been lying on the table for more than an hour already. I had started to feel the pressure in my bladder slowly building up; I had drunk a lot of water. Usually, the need to pee can be sexually stimulating to me, especially whilst sitting in the car, being the passenger, but now it was not the moment, to make myself come. I was a so called 'passive actor', here just to witness, to experience.

The second the music started and the sounds hit my ears, my body reacted with goose bumps, and shivers were going through my whole body. This was feeling very good. Just lying there, not having to feel bad for doing nothing. I tried to focus; my hearing and feeling were totally occupied by the music and the soft cool breeze which was stroking my body. I tried to memorize all I was feeling, in order to be able to write it down later. The music was definitely a very special element for me, grabbing me, blocking out all other sounds which were around us. I do not know what exactly was happening, not being able to see, but that was all right; I was alive, living life, experiencing life to the maximum possible at this very moment. Doing nobody harm, hopefully even doing good through this Art Project. Describing as honest as possible what I felt, by feeling my sheer existence and trying to share this feeling, trying to share my awareness with others. Me, trying to live according to my thoughts and ideas, to be a good human; kind, to give freedom, to be supportive and flexible, and to try to be without any culturally imposed moral restrictions; trying to experience as much as possible, each and every day; today, tomorrow, the rest of my life.

I live according to three important aspects, in order to have an interesting and fulfilled life. The first being: having an interesting professional life; I live my work, my work is my life. Of course I sometimes have to do also things which are less my favorites, but that keeps me flexible. Secondly: to travel; to see different countries, different landscapes, experience the differences in cultures, all this making me a richer, a more knowledgeable person. Understanding that things develop differently from region to region. Like realizing that different cultures have adapted different moral restrictions. Third: I like to experience other humans, to encounter people on a very personal level by which I mean also sexually. Through communication and sex, you get a thorough understanding for the other person.

Thinking about my life, I tried to focus on the *Aktion* again, which was not difficult since often a whistle would get you back into the moment of Being. Nitsch and also his son, who was assisting during the *Aktion*, had to notify the actors with a whistle when a new scene would be coming up, it reminded me of the lifeguards in Miami Beach. Lying on my table, my ankle bone was hurting, but knowing today would be the last time, I felt fine with it. "Now, you will be given the blood", Nitsch's son told me. Finally I would find out how this would be. I had been a little nervous about the blood; its taste and the smell. "Open up your mouth"; I obeyed. For the sensation I was about to feel, I could not have been prepared for. I never had even thought about this possibility at all. The feeling of getting blood poured into my mouth was more than surprising, the cool substance felt fantastic. This creamy liquid, filling the cavity of my mouth, running down along the side of my face onto my neck, this felt highly erotic. Immediately I wanted more, but I could not ask for it, I had to wait. Having

the taste of blood still in my mouth, I was trying to think what it reminded me of; it tasted like the smell of raw meat, and there was this saltiness to it. I cannot remember how often exactly I was given blood whilst lying on my table, but it must have been several times. I felt at peace. This sensation was every time so strong, I could have laid there forever while being fed with blood.

The music was still playing, filling the space and me. Now, with also the sensation of taste and smell, all of my senses, except sight, were triggered to the maximum. I was told to hold on to a wooden bar, two people were pulling me up until I was sitting in a 90° degree angle, my arms stretched far above me, holding onto the bar. I knew from the rehearsals that in this position I would be given blood again and I was looking very much forward to it. I opened up my mouth slightly and the blood got poured in; immediately leaving my mouth, running down my neck, over my breasts, straight into my pussy. This felt so exciting; I imagined sitting on my partner while blood was being poured over us and surrounded by beautiful horny women; feeling their slippery bodies against ours and me demanding my partner to fuck the girls whilst I was kissing and touching their sliding bodies. I seldom have sexual fantasies; I normally live them in reality. If it is being in a gangbang or fucking girls senseless with a strap-on, I try it all, but getting aroused by blood, that, I had never even thought about. Whilst thinking all off this, I was so aroused, I did not care anymore, I had let go of all my shame, I needed to pee and I did. It felt wonderful, the awareness that two hundred people were watching, photos and films where made, and I just let it shamelessly run.

Blood kept coming and in between the blood, I was given something which was called slime. During the last week, I had seen the

boxes with tapestry glue, recognizing the particular shape of the box. Knowing this substance very well, I was aware of the sensual feeling it used to have for me and normally I would have liked it, but after being so impressed by the sensation of the blood, the slime felt not special at all. After the slime, I got given warm water and was ordered to rinse my mouth. Fortunately, I did get blood again.

I had lost total sense of time, I really was experiencing just being in the Now, an act of life, my life. I could hear the wife of Nitsch asking Karlyn if she was okay. How long had I been lying on the table? Nitsch's son came again and told me: "Now, you will be given the octopuses on to your crotch." Shortly before the *Aktion*, they had told us about their plan. Maybe Nitsch had decided upon this just the night before, adding it into the 'Partitur', the script for the *Aktion*. It sounded like an interesting idea to me: the soft and slimy feeling, the substance of the octopuses and also the squids, their tentacles. Nitsch had selected them for Karlyn and me and now they would be united with us. The thought felt sensual and sexual. Being already very aroused by the blood, now it would be even topped, by getting the octopuses. The second they touched my body, it felt as if they were still alive, cool, touching my lips with their tentacles, sliding down, feeling my pussy, as if they were long fingers, trying to make me come. Maybe because I was blindfolded, my other senses much more sharpened, this was so sensual. I had the blood still in my mouth, and I decided to swallow it, this making me even more aroused. Now blood got poured onto all what was on my body. I felt the blood splashing into my face. The octopuses got stirred, the sensation of their bodyweight, feeling their tentacles again searching for my pussy, this all nearly made me come; it just stopped too early. This was one incredible sensual and sexual experience

for me. I could not see all the blood, but I could totally focus on the feeling; the touch, the tentacles caressing my pussy, the blood sticking onto my body. The way it felt, the way it tasted, at that moment, I really would have loved to have sex, rolling around in the blood, in total ecstasy.

The music still surrounded me, covering me like a big blanket, the blood slowly started to dry, it felt like a second skin. Often I could hear a whistle from Nitsch or from his son, directing the next move. I had no clue what was happening and I was very fine with it. Lying on my table, just being in the Now, experiencing. I had felt very comfortable, but now I got cold after lying still for so long. I started to shiver, I tried to control it, but I could not, my body was not listening to my mind. Fortunately, two women brought me to my cross, which was lying on the floor in the museum. I lay down on it and I was bound with rope to my cross. Straight away I got carried outside onto the terrace. The sensation of feeling the heat of the sun was incredible; I felt like a lizard having to heat up in order to function, I started to stop shaking immediately. I remember being washed, feeling a big sponge on my skin; it felt hard, although I know the sponges they were using were very soft. I had become very sensitive.

I knew everybody was watching Karlyn and me. What an interesting phenomenon in our society, our social rules normally do not allow us to look so shamelessly at two naked women, but now, in this situation it was allowed, because that is what Nitsch is about: losing your shame, losing your boundaries, experiencing life, live your life today. I liked these thoughts and it felt very good knowing that these people were standing around me, watching me. I had always pushed myself to try to overcome my boundaries, and as long as it would not leave any permanent physical or

mental damage to pursue and experience it, whatever it is. I really felt alive, and that is the essence of Nitsch's work; whatever you do, whenever and wherever you are, experience your life with all its aspects to the maximum and most important, enjoy it.

Sitting on my cross which was still lying on the floor, I had warmed up. I assumed that Karlyn was next to me, and I asked if she was alright, which she was. I could hear my partner, the Dutch artist, checking if we both were okay. I still had no comprehension of time passing; I was just being in the moment. I got bound to my cross again, with big tough pieces of rope, lifted up and carried back into the museum. Carefully I was put up against a wall. Karlyn should be next to me and the pig probably between us, but I was not sure about how exactly I was positioned, I had also lost my sense of orientation. The music was still playing. I was given blood again, I felt like a junkie, relieved. I felt the cool thick blood running over my chest again, over my belly and between my legs, into my pussy. This could have gone on forever, I felt so good, the blood coming and coming. I had to pee again and mixed it with the blood running down my body in between my legs. While receiving the blood, I got cleaned very softly and caring. This time, the sponges felt like unusual strange objects, caressing my body. Blood was again running down and it became a second skin, covering me all over. I was wondering how Karlyn was, would she also find this feeling, the blood, so unbelievably erotic?

I must have been on the cross for quite a long time because my feet were having trouble to stand on the small supporting bar. Again a whistle, I heard things flying through the air, moaning and other sounds of excitement. That must be from what they had been talking about, the so called rummaging; the pig being rummaged with intestines, octopuses, grapes, tomatoes and

that all mixed with blood and water? At a certain moment I was taken away from the wall and laid softly down on the floor with my cross. I got untied and two women led me to a table where I was joined with Karlyn. Nitsch's son was there, talking very nicely, making us feel at ease with the situation, saying something like: "Now you are with your girlfriend, enjoy yourselves." We had kissed a little during the rehearsals, but now there was a lot of public and now was not the moment to have any boundaries, now I should follow my natural instinct, which is, to take Karlyn.

With my hands and legs I could feel Karlyn next to me; I felt the blood, her slippery body, warm and cool at the same time. I was aroused; we were holding and really feeling each other. Touching each other's body with our second skin, the blood, sliding. We started to kiss, tender but strong and passionate. Now I could feel Karlyn very good, her tongue was playing with mine, what a nice texture and shape. It felt very stimulating and sexy. I do not know for how long it went on. While we were caressing each other intensely, I got cleaned with sponges and warm water, fortunately that took not too much away from the slipperiness of the blood. We were sliding so much on the table that I could feel an arm or a belly making sure that I did not fall off. I went down with my hand, touching Karlyn's pussy and circling the area of her clitoris. I could hear Karlyn moan. Should I fuck her also with my fingers? Karlyn responded to my action and also slid down with her hands and she softly started to fuck me with the top of her fingers. Now I knew I could fuck her too. I could hear a camera making photos at such a high-speed, trying to capture every moment of Karlyn and me having sex. Who would it be? At a certain moment there was a lot of commotion, something was being shouted. Did we do something wrong; did we go too far?



Taken out of our rush, we stopped; now we were lying in each other's arms, covered in blood, surrounded by spectators and musicians. I felt tranquil and exited at the same time; still enjoying the moments I had with Karlyn. The blood on our skin, sliding and slipping, feeling each other, I wanted to have real sex, no uncertainties or hesitations, touching and caressing, being penetrated by all kinds of objects, blood being poured all over us. Karlyn got taken away; I was left alone on the table.

Although so much was going on, I was in my own world, but being at the same time part of the whole happening. The son of Nitsch checked how I was doing and then I was brought to my cross again. I lied down and was bound on to the cross with the rope. I got lifted up and carried to the terrace again, but now the sensation of feeling the sun was a lot less. It is fascinating to feel the blood when it dries; it is like a second skin and at the same time it shrinks making your skin feel wrinkly. I felt beautiful and free of worries, no fear, just very much alive. I got cleaned and this time the sponge did not feel hard anymore.

They lifted me up and put me carefully against the wall. The musicians seemed nearby, making my body shiver. I was given blood and of course, it felt very good again feeling this natural erotic sensual material, but my body was slowly giving up on me. My legs were starting to shake. I had been on the cross for a long time today and it seemed that I had reached the maximum. Because I was shaking so much, two active actors, women, rubbed my feet in order to stop the shaking. I could feel by the way they touched me that they really cared. Unfortunately, in daily life, it is very unusual to get this kind of attention from total strangers which you cannot even see and perhaps because of that, I will never forget their caring touch.

You cannot imagine how relieved I was when my cross was lifted from the wall and taken away, being put onto the floor somewhere, still outside, on the terrace. Was this the end, was this the grand finale? The whistle was being blown again, things were happening. This was the finale for sure. Additionally to being blindfolded, I had my eyes closed for most of the time but, now I could not withstand the urge to have a quick look and by the little I could see from under my blindfold, I saw the pig coming towards me. The little stiff tail coming closer and closer to my face. Being told that the rummaging is extremely wild, I was not too keen on having his tail too close to my face. Now the pig was on top of me, his large head between my legs. The weight of the pig was spreading my legs, I had to give way and I liked it, I surrendered to the pig. It felt erotic and finally I would find out what this rummaging is all about. I could hear many people around me; they seemed to put all kinds of things inside the pig. I knew that that must be intestines, livers and kidneys, but also octopuses, squids, fishes, strawberries, tomatoes, grapes and other natural materials. The whistle was blown and I could feel many people going wild; like a feeding frenzy of piranhas. Objects were flying, hitting my face, sliding down my neck, this felt good. I could go nowhere. Give it up, let all your worries go, feel life, and experience death on top of you. Unite. Blood was being poured all over, splashing on my face and I had to stop myself from licking it off my lips. As a passive actor you were supposed to be as neutral as possible, not laughing, not speaking, just Being, and being used. It felt very intense and I felt safe. At a certain moment I realized what the things were that were hitting my face, they must be mainly the tomatoes and that big thick soft slimy thing, which was running down my neck, was probably a squid, or was it a liver or a kidney? What an interesting feeling it was all

together, although I had lost my orientation about time and how I was lying, I was consciously aware that I was very much alive, lying in Naples, being right now part of the *Aktion* of Hermann Nitsch, while again blood was being poured over me. What an incredible experience this all was, being used, by the actors, by the audience and being taken by the music, by life.

I heard a whistle, was it over now? Swiftly my pig got taken away from me and I got untied, the blindfold taken off my eyes. It felt unusual after so many hours having been blindfolded, now being able to see again. It felt like facing the world again, it had felt so safe not being able to see, knowing people were looking after you and nothing bad could happen, you did not have to worry. Your visual input being stopped, no eye contact, just hearing the music, feeling the air touching your skin, the blood, the octopuses and the squid, the warm water, the sponge cleaning your body, taking your second skin off, the fruits and organs hitting you, the blood splashing in your face, the smell, now that all was over. I was back in normal life again. Karlyn and I were taken to a shower which had been installed at the back of the museum. The water was cold, but it did not matter, I remember the blood gushing out of my hair, the water being red for ages. We showered for a long time, trying to get ourselves clean, although the blood had been feeling so good, it was nice to get back to 'reality'. All what was left were the memories and new gained experiences. My feeling of solely Being was replaced by the awareness of the factual time-space experience. I remember that after the shower, the Austrian filmmaker came with his camera and asked us how it had been. I cannot remember at all what I said, but I hope I was able to express my feelings at that moment. While I walked upstairs, the Dutch artist took care for

Karlyn who had lost orientation. I remember being on top of the museum in my morning robe and people coming up to me to congratulate me. It was very nice of them, but at the same time strange; for most of the day I had been only lying around.

It must have been from all the sensations, the music, the blood, not being able to see, trying to capture all the thoughts and moments in full awareness in order to write them down later. I was worn out. After break of maybe half an hour, we had to put on our *Malhemd*, a kind of big 'over through' dress, which Nitsch has used in his *Aktionen* for many years while the idea apparently was taken from the painter Gustav Klimt, who painted in it. I got my eyes covered again with the blindfold and had to lie down on my cross; I felt it was still a little wet from the blood. I got tied on to the cross again and now Karlyn and I would be carried 2 kilometers in a procession to the vineyard, uphill, over the same street we had been walking on so often. I got lifted up, I felt very bad that people had to carry me. I remember that the tune of *The Godfather* was played by the brass band. It felt odd being carried lying on a cross over the streets of Naples; blood stains everywhere. It took a long time until we were in the vineyard, there we stopped half way up. I took off my blindfold, now I could see that all the visitors and participants of the event had gathered. Food and drinks were prepared. I could see over Naples, what an amazing view that was, with the Vesuvius on the background.

Karlyn and I went over to Nitsch and asked him how the *Aktion* would proceed. He told us that he had wanted to finish off the *Aktion* in the vineyard, but that for the first time in his life, the blood had run out. Apparently all the blood had been used; all the 300 liters. The procession had to continue for another 500 meters. I was lying on my cross for the last time, and although

I had the blindfold on, I remember that I could fully enjoy the view of the sky, thinking what a wonderful, unusual and exiting life I have. After a steep hill, we arrived on top of the vineyard; I got placed on the floor and untied. I could see that in a cluster, many tables and benches were prepared for a big dinner. Now we would get to eat the animals which had been on my body; I especially waited for the pig to come, I wanted to taste him. Karlyn and I thanked Nitsch for the wonderful experience. I told him how erotic the blood had felt and I was delighted to hear that not only Karlyn and I had gained new experiences, but that for Nitsch it had been the first time that two women had sex during his *Aktion*. I was very pleased hearing this, now I felt I had not only taken but also given something to Nitsch. After the food I walked down together with the book lady and my partner the Dutch artist, accompanied by many glowworms. I felt very happy that the week was over; I was already curious what new experiences would be awaiting me. To finish the day, I needed to feel my partner and after short but intense sex, I fell asleep feeling his sperm inside my pussy.





## Karlyn De Jongh

Karlyn De Jongh (\* 1980, Netherlands), independent curator and author. Study of Fine Arts in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, Netherlands. Received M.A. in Philosophy and M.Phil. in Art History and Theory at the Universities of Leiden, Netherlands and Santa Barbara, CA, USA. Since 2007, working with the project *Personal Structures*.

[Photo: Starigrad kod Senja, Croatia, 4 September 2010, 6:35 pm.]



## Sarah Gold

Sarah Gold (\* 1978, Netherlands), independent curator and author. University education in Germany (Heidelberg) and received her M.A. degree in Art History from the University of Leiden, Netherlands. Worked as an assistant curator at the Caldic Collection in the Netherlands and is engaged in the project *Personal Structures* since 2005.

[Photo: Starigrad kod Senja, Croatia, 4 September 2010, 5:58 pm.]

## Personal Structures Art Projects # 02

HERMANN NITSCH  
UNDER MY SKIN

*Personal Structures Art Projects* are projects which are documented as special edition artists' books. Each project centralizes one artist and emphasises his work. All books in this series will be published by GlobalArtAffairs Foundation, the Netherlands. An excerpt of each project will additionally be published in the ongoing series *Personal Structures: Time • Space • Existence*.

Previously published in this series:

LAWRENCE WEINER: SKIMMING THE WATER [MÉNAGE À QUATRE]

As part of *Personal Structures Art Projects* will appear in 2010-2011:

ROMAN OPALKA  
ON KAWARA  
ARNULF RAINER  
LEE UFAN



