

## **Art and Anti-Art: provocation, elemental life form of society**

Panel discussion on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1970

Panellists:

Artist and Professor Joseph Beuys

Professor Max Bense

Professor Max Bill

Professor Arnold Gehlen

Moderator: Dr Schmied

**Translated by Stephanie de Roemer, October 2019**

Welcome

Ladies and gentlemen, the forum for education welcomes you to the 67th episode in the series 'opinions vs opinions'.

I welcome our participants in this discussion; Professor Bense, Professor Beuys, Professor Bill, Professor Gehlen and as chair Dr Schmied.

Ladies and gentlemen, when we planned this discussion our opinions couldn't be any more diverse and opposing concerning if this discussion would at all be of interest and see anyone participate.

Maybe the reason for our large audience numbers despite pessimistic expectations lies in the complexity of 'Art' itself which as its deed provokes complex questions.

While the definitions of the classical Art forms disappear - the fluidity of transitions between them increase.

The interdisciplinary trend 'attached' to many such areas also appears to seemingly impact and mark the Arts.

Parallel to this enrichment the question of 'quality' becomes ever more pressing. While before we encountered 'occasional esoteric', the Art of our times is characterised and defined by mass culture and consumerism. Even in this guise which is not necessarily a negative one there is opportunity for the artist to relate to society and become engaged.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the context of this discussion we anticipate and expect provocations and reflections on Modern Art, which many suspect and accuse of being 'void of art'.

I pass over now to Dr Schmied

**Dr Schmied:** 'ladies and gentlemen, the topic: 'provocation, elemental life form of society' will be discussed. The organisers have consciously abstained from adding a 'question mark' here, and have thereby postulated the provocation as that that challenges the elemental life form of society.

Me personally, and I assume all of us here accept the premise of this statement. The subject area of our world, where the debate of provocation as elemental life form of society is to be investigated, is 'Art and anti-art'. Of course, this is as ambiguous and general as the provocation that went before is precise. Art and anti-art, what is art? What is anti-art? Is art that that doesn't provoke? Where a consensus arrived at over time is the accepted status quo? Does anti-art itself provoke? How do we define art? How do we define anti-art? How do we define the meaning and function of art today? ...in the past, in the future? How do we define anti-art?

I begin by questioning Marcel Duchamp who is closely associated with the term 'anti-art'. I asked: 'what was it you were aiming for when you attached the bicycle wheel to a stool, signing it, placed it in your home, later send it to an exhibition? What was your intent? Did you want to provoke? Did you do anti-art?' He replies; 'God no! I have nothing to do with 'anti-art'. These are terms that were invented later by art historians and art critics. I was never interested in the theoretical investigations of such terms. I took great pleasure in painting for a short time, then I lost interest in painting, I couldn't stand the smell of turpentine any longer and I wanted to do something different, and so I took this bicycle wheel, an object I like, into my home, set it up, signed it - later some people took it to an exhibition and I was ok with that, but, I never wanted to make anti-art'. I can imagine that many artists will agree with Marcel Duchamp. And indeed, that the term anti-art only exists because it was born out of criticism and reflection. All art, all new art, new and thereby provocative art is always perceived as anti-art by parts of society. For example, the 'Salon painters' in the 19th Century and the 'Impressionists'. For many this must have been perceived as anti-art, even though it would have been expressed and termed differently.

Mr Beuys, may I ask: did you ever ask yourself: am I making art? Am I making anti-art? Do I want to provoke? Could you answer from your stand and viewpoint please?"

**Joseph Beuys:** of course, did I ask myself what I am doing when I am making art. And I am not - if it is true what you just said about Marcel Duchamp - such a bad thinker as Marcel Duchamp, if it is true what you said about Marcel Duchamp. For me the first question was; what is it? What is it I do when I make art? I also realized that this question stirs humans, that they ask, what am I doing? Is it something that has relevance to us humans? Is it therefore essential to make art? It is this question that let me to explore from the beginning of my practice the term 'art' theoretically in a sense Marcel Duchamp may reject. I coined a definition of 'anti-art' which is likely to be different to the definition of 'anti-art' for other artists. I attempted with the term of anti-art to encompass and address the 'complete human'. To encompass and address all questions concerning the 'human being' that present themselves. I therefore attempted to expand the art term to include any human activity that is set in motion. That through the expansion of the art term - I also want to express this schematically - and we encounter the term of 'expansion of consciousness' here - and I have to sketch this schematically - is for me directly connected and related to the demand to expand this to the sciences as well. Therefore, in my definition of 'anti-art' lies the question of 'human being'. This comes out of a process of going back and asking the question: 'how is it justified to claim every human is an artist?' I can only start presenting this schematically by saying 'here is the artistic' and the definition 'every human is an artist' is equal to saying 'every human is a creative'. Every human, from inside every human there is a source of origin, of creation, an element, which at the point of 'thinking' - here I place the term 'thinking' as the most important term for my definition of 'anti-art' - through thinking something radically new is brought into the World- which converts and clarifies the understanding of 'freedom'. What reveals itself if it is real, is that at a specific point the process of 'Plastik'- and here sits my term of 'Plastik' - that the process of 'Plastik' is primal and creative, a captured emerging situation, that introduces something new into the network of matter of the

Earth, from the supernatural into space from an opposing space or anti space or, how shall I say, let's take religious categories from a metaphysical context which enter into the World of matter. Here is where the understanding of 'freedom' is to be discussed as humanity encounters here the ever-present question: "Is the human being a social being, which means dependent and bound by the substance ratio of the physical world or is he a free being?"

Here, we have of course, to differentiate the examination on the premise that the human being is a social being. Here it is especially important to recognize that furthermore he is also a free being who for the part where he is connected to society, where he has to work together with others, has to introduce new modes of thinking, new substances to earth in order to work out a new model towards the social and the evolution of humanity..."

**Dr Schmied:** "Mr Beuys ..."

**Joseph Beuys:** "this is in regards to art and anti-art, provocation is another thing, which would have to be explored from here onwards."

**Dr Schmied:** "your definition of anti-art, if I understand you correctly, is merely an expanded art term since the question of human kind has also always been asked in art but you have simply placed your expanded art term above art like a hat."

**Joseph Beuys:** "yes, but I have to say here I have to be more precise and I have to alert you..."

#### **Audience talking and shaking heads**

**Joseph Beuys:** "do you not understand? Well, then the microphone must be set up wrongly... So, here I have to say that of course, art has always asked the question of human kind but in different ways. We encounter now a historic cultural situation - it may not be too farfetched if we say that humanity stands before a significant, the most significant transition of change since the existence of this planet. That humanity may endeavour to achieve a new level of consciousness and therefore the examination of the 'human' how I explained it, meant in a very specific way. Of course, this would have to be further explored into all directions to prove, test and evidence. That's why I'm here and I advocate contrary to conventional debates that are scheduled to last one and a half hours, and then off to the pub, - that we debate into the early hours in order to clarify the specific points. Well, otherwise it's not possible! It makes any discussion problematic some general stuff appears but nothing else."

**Dr Schmied:** "'Max Bense, you like to respond...'

**Max Bense:** "'well, let me start by saying that everything Mr Beuys just said is a total dilution of the entire subject. Because.... well, because I have no idea what he is talking about, when he talks about 'freedom', when he talks about 'anti-art'... What is anti-art?! Anti-art has to pick up 'art', otherwise I don't understand the term 'anti' –

**Audience:** "louder!"

**Max Bense:** "even louder? The second question is this: why is the actual topic for which I was invited been simply amputated by Mr Beuys? I was invited to discuss the topic: provocation! Does art manifests itself as a provocation of society? Why is provocation an elemental life form of society. I personally think this all to be general paraphrasing, general nonsense if it isn't defined!"

**Dr Schmied:** "Max Bense, may I ask you then for our first definition."

**Max Bense:** "yes, what about? What do you like to have defined?"

**Dr Schmied:** “the topic.”

**Max Bense:** “alright, the topic! I'm of the opinion if we talk about provocation than we talk about an artist creating something, achieves something we are able to define as work in the conventional way which within society - to use Mr Beuys terms – is to achieve a change of consciousness. If the art work is really meant to change consciousness or facilitates such a change, I would like to know which change of consciousness the so called 'works' by Mr Beuys have achieved.”

**Josef Beuys:** “well, I couldn't care less about what change of consciousness my works –“

**Max Bense:** “you have to define! –“

**Josef Beuys:** “well, don't interrupt me –“

**Max Bense:** “yes! Sometimes an interruption is good, precisely one which forces the opponent to be precise. You have to say; what is it you want to change when you provoke?”

**Josef Beuys:** “Ah, so you are my opponent –

**Max Bense:** “In this discussion, yes! Well, do you think you have none? I have them too.”

**Josef Beuys:** “So, of course, I can't continuously ask to which extent I achieved through my art, my work, a change of consciousness. I can only say that I always attempted to introduce that that trigger the change of consciousness. So I can't say that I ponder and speculate long and hard about the value of my work. I work at a point through thought to reveal something, namely my 'will'.”

**Max Bense:** “What do you want? what do you want?”

**Josef Beuys:** “I want to expand the consciousness of humans especially towards the real political situation”

**Max Bense:** “Alright then...”

**Josef Beuys:** “I do not hold the view for example that we are living in a democracy, I do not hold the view that we are nurtured to become free beings through our party political administration, etc... I am ready to start right here with my provocation!”

**Max Bense:** “That's right! Me too, me too. My first provocation - is it still my turn?”

**Dr Schmied:** “Max Bense”

**Max Bense:** “My first provocation goes back to the original topic; if you want to expand consciousness or change consciousness, you have to know into which direction or it is all nonsense”

**Josef Beuys:** “Well that's why I said I am happy to discuss this into the early hours.”

**Max Bense:** “No! This has to be decided now!”

**Josef Beuys:** “Aha, in one sentence!”

**Max Bense:** “It has to become clear! If you have to say something about the change of consciousness you have to be able to say in which direction!”

**Josef Beuys:** “Indeed, and I can only say this is only possible through education by connecting humans with the terms of anthropology.”

**Max Bense:** “What is a term of anthropology?”

**Josef Beuys:** “A term of anthropology is for example, to observe the total anatomy of the human, the outer anatomy and the inner. So, I ask what is the internal pole of ‘freedom’? What is the internal pole of ‘will’? What is the so called ‘empathy’? from which emotions..., what is the so-called sub conscious of which psychologists talk? These are all questions we face...”

**Max Bense:** “These questions are way back in the past!”

**Josef Beuys:** “I see, and what have you revealed?”

**Max Bense:** “Well you have to research the works of those who are experts!”

**Audience:** “Booh!”

**Max Bense:** “Excuse me? Yes, Psychoanalysis exists! ... at least since the year 1900”

**Audience still booing**

**Max Bense:** “Well is this all wrong?”

**Josef Beuys:** “Psychoanalysis is exactly what I view critically”

**Max Bense:** “Yes, me too.”

**Josef Beuys:** “Yes suddenly you too! A minute ago you wanted to research...”

**Max Bense:** “No, you should research... because you said you'll get stuck...”

**Josef Beuys:** “I did a lot of research.”

**Dr Schmied:** “Tonight we don't want to research - we want to discuss. Arnold Gehlen...”

**Audience complains about the room being too small**

**Dr Schmied:** “At the moment we have to make do with this small room. I am not the organiser, I haven't booked this room for the discussion, which was as unknown to me as to some of you. We have to...even if regrettable to be in this small room, there is nothing we can do about this, even if we find this regrettable.”

**Dr Schmied:** “Professor Gehlen, may I ask...now...to enter this discussion.”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “yes, now gentlemen, when I accepted this invitation, it was on the condition that we will have a conversation about art or 'anti-art'. The title 'provocation as elemental life form of society' I consider already too vague and open and as a subject beyond art. To apply this to art, I would say I want to see that individual who is still able to be provoked by art. This used to be different, I myself in the year 1920 went to one of the first 'Dada events' then as a pupil, but what happened there that was truly provocative. This was enormously successful, which of course is not repeatable, and I believe...I believe, we should, if no more specific...specific thought on provocation reveals itself, we should divert from this. But, the topic 'art' and 'anti-art' we should think about more. Mr Schmied said, the term 'anti-art' was invented by the critics - that may be true. What I struggle with - I want to pre-empt - I am a loyal art lover and because of that often disappointed.”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “And...I miss something to grab here of the 'shape' or comprehension...- may I demonstrate; in the moment when the previously mentioned Duchamp in the year 1914 signed a metal bottle-“

**Dr Schmied:** “a bottle stand”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “No, he signed a metal bottle, that's what he did. Set up a bottle rack and the by you mentioned bicycle wheel - in this moment something essential appeared – that made this Duchamp for the current situation likely more important than Picasso - there appeared that every and any object, a beer bottle or whatever, somehow by being placed onto a plinth with an accompanying comment from Art History and Science works as art. This already expanded the art term...and now... something else was added; the boundary of play got blurred. Everywhere where I have to twist something or press some buttons, or walk through...yes?... the border of engagement... 'look! This is something to engage with', has arrived at this boundary. Now 'play' becomes current and it now gets dangerous, because there is no 'good' or 'bad' in 'play'. There is only 'boring' or 'fun'. These are totally different categories. We now have such an expanded remit of art into which every 'handmade' is included and every 'game' as well, that we have to remind ourselves of the ancient logic thinkers who said the broader and all encompassing a term becomes the greater the absence of content and that's true. I am no longer able to define with the term 'art' any meaningful understanding. And I believe some artists feel the same who then enter politics. And then you are back...you are back on shaky ground.

Yes, that's how it is, isn't it? Help me here...”

**Josef Beuys:** “Do you want to remain on shaky ground?”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “Yes Mr Beuys do help...”

**Josef Beuys:** “Or do you want to help towards steadying the shaky ground into a secure base for humans?”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “I don't want to thrash empty phrases, I want to...ask you something specific:”

**Audience complains**

**Arnold Gehlen:** “...yes, yes...it's alright...I want to...ask specifically: Do you have any criteria for art works? I am not talking about yours, but any, including yours, do you still have any criteria to say 'this is good - this is not good, this is useful, this is nonsense.’

**Josef Beuys:** “yes of course. Of course”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “Well then tell us so I can get back to the art term.”

**Josef Beuys:** “Well of course, the definition of 'anti-art' includes the old definition of 'art'. I said 'anti-art' includes 'art' and 'anti-art'. There is the old definition of 'art' where rules of aesthetics - and I have to bracket the term (aesthetic) as this term is no longer relevant to me as I said 'aesthetic' = (equals) 'human'. We have to discuss this further, these old terms of an old definition of 'art' of course coexist alongside the expanded definition of 'art'. Therefore, criteria such as measure, order, size, scale, etc... their proportional relation, all the things known from classical art theory - tension, etc..., of course, they are relevant to me and are useful to some degree in providing a basis for pedagogical art lessons. However, these have to be expanded with terms of observations of the human as an evolving being. Who endeavours to aim and move towards new things. Who asks: Can this art induce something to 'being'? This is the question. This is the question of many humans that effects them day and night. Is, for example, my art relevant to politics? You shouldn't ridicule the term 'politics' by declaring it to be the usual vague term. We want to see that in the future something new for everyone has been developed that is useful, that for example allows development of new pedagogical models... I believe that from an expanded art term and an expanded comprehension of anthropology which are connected, we of course make some

conscientious statements about pedagogy. This is of course directly connected with the attempt to work out models, to operate 'project science'. There is nothing more important to us Europeans than to have a clear vision about our future; is it for example our task to compete with large economies? Is it of any interest to us to compete with the Eastern and Western super powers on economy and technology? Or may this become our path of ridicule for us? And maybe instead, for Europe, questions of and for humanity should be the focus? Evolved from Europe and spread across the entire World, etc, etc..."

**Dr Schmied:** "Mr Beuys, this is very general... Mr Gehlen, you said the boundaries of art have become expanded and you no longer feel art to be able to provoke. A few weeks ago an event happened which moved many minds, a so-called 'happening' at a University in Braunschweig, where a pig was slaughtered. As a reaction to this about 18.000 signatures were collected under a statement that this was abuse of 'human dignity' - 'Action human dignity - PO box 18' was the name of this action in Braunschweig. Do you think that a happening, an event of this kind -and it doesn't matter if good or not - is no longer art? Or art no longer provokes? How do you answer this question?"

**Arnold Gehlen:** "well, I did not say that art isn't able to provoke anyone anymore, I only stated that I'm no longer provoked by art. And..., well, and... and the story you just mentioned- which is only fragmentary - well, much more than that happened, yes? I read in the paper, back then, that a pig was slaughtered and that the intestines were emptied over a young lady who in a state of undress... well something like that... Ok? Yes."

**Dr Schmied:** "well do you see this as provocation or not?"

**Arnold Gehlen:** "...yes, well...I wouldn't be offended by this...I have seen much worse, I have seen much worse... just a moment, I haven't finished! ...But... my interest in the process as a thinking human- is a total different thing. I think there is the attempt - I assume the man was thinking of something - and there is apparently the attempt to execute an expansion of consciousness to trigger disgust, a desire of humanity, which in our polished surface doesn't receive much attention - and he wanted to emphasize this, which he obviously succeeded in. That's how I perceive this. I do understand others, who feel that their boundaries have been crossed and they don't want to pay to see this, but for me this isn't a provocation."

**Dr Schmied:** "Max Bense."

**Max Bense:** "prior to the question of provocation there is the question if this is an artistic action."

**Arnold Gehlen:** "yes, but everything is art we just learned!"

**Max Bense:** "yes but is this correct? I am not..."

**Joseph Beuys:** "but it is correct!"

**Max Bense:** "just wait you don't know what I want to say!"

**Joseph Beuys:** "yes, but it is correct."

**Max Bense:** "I am not denying... I say the following; art is a form of the epicurean enjoyment and in this context the slaughter of a pig is a valid expression of an epicurean enjoyment. And as a consequence of that it is safe to say that the act generates 'lust'. Generating lust may as well trigger an expansion, a transition of consciousness, to use his terms, and is possible. If we assume that the essential of the epicurean enjoyment expresses itself in art - I concede that the slaughter of a pig

delivers such an enjoyment. And I am willing to admit that in specific circumstances, a butcher who masters a fine art of slaughtering a pig will have the same emotion and experience, the same expansion of mind as someone who applies colour and paint onto canvas.”

**Joseph Beuys:** “yes, yes”

**Dr Schmied:** “the alternative Mr Bense, you owe us, if there is no epicurean enjoyment at play...?”

**Max Bense:** “if it isn't the case, I am prepared to say that in this case the slaughter of a pig has nothing to do with any artistic processes and that in this case, a change of consciousness such as disgust, as Mr Gehlen mentioned, is a completely different thing and belongs to a different sphere.”

**Joseph Beuys:** “I have to say, you all are drowning in sense overload. I already explained my idea of anti-art referring to the human ability of thinking, and when I say, that as a principle; every human is an artist - I address the human and define him as a creative. I am not interested in outlining a palette of various shades of possibility through art in the sensory world... I aim through epistemological endeavour to arrive at the point where the human realizes himself as a free creative being. Where he realizes that he isn't subordinate to the mechanism of society, where he isn't depending on the ratio of substance - including nature – but that he is a free creative being. If someone slaughters pigs, or whatever he likes to do then that doesn't need to be a highbrow artwork. I never talked about this. I never talked about these materials. I spoke about the idea. And the term provocation is of interest in order to reveal what it means in its essence: provocation means if examined in its essence nothing else but 'production'. If a Physicist presents a new idea to be discussed he is likely to provoke some of his peers. Therefore the term 'provocation' is synonymous of 'production'. What enters here is the question what is the 'goodness' of production. One has to query quality in this, one has to ask: 'how did the idea originate? How did the idea evolve as Plastik? How is the matter of expression 'goodness'? But also how is the 'goodness' of the recipients? All of this is of course, connected with the process of provocation. But here I also have to acknowledge it is correct what Mr Gehlen said that nobody is really willing anymore to be provoked by art. That's why in my view everything that speculates with 'shock' is nonsense. But important is to observe that provocation is a continuously human production and the only question to ask is: how is the 'goodness' of this provocation? And what are its intentions! If the intention is an artistic one, the question to ask is 'how'? If the intentions are political the question is also 'how'? To ask 'what is it you want?' To be precise in describing what your political intentions are, etc... That's important to me. In addition, today, and what seems to be incomprehensible to many humans in a positivistic World is that through provocation something enters what seemingly appears to be irrational. Something that doesn't enter via our 'ratio' but partly from the human 'will', partly from human feelings – emotions – 'emotion' is the negative description for something that can be expressed positively as the moving element. Therefore a provocation is still significant if the idea content follows it. Therefore, for the motion towards revolution, the provocative element that originates from motion - and therefore originates from emotion - is necessary. Simultaneously is, what many contemporaries define as the irrational aspect of provocation, the element that originates from the 'will'. And it would be desirable for the future that revolutionaries are interested to develop a rational beyond that that evolves with their provocations, that is a given.”

**Dr Schmied:** “Professor Gehlen, may I ask - you heard what Mr Beuys said, provocation equals production. This means he wants to have his production to be understood as provocation. Do you feel challenged by his work? Do you feel moved or do you feel his art, his anti-art as a moving element?”



**Joseph Beuys:** “what is the relevance of my work to all of this? Let's throw my works out of the window! And all of your works-throw them all out of the window! ...and then we start discussing...on the premise of thinking. And not by consulting my books, or the writings by Emmanuel Kant or whatever. Begin to think and demonstrate that the human at any point in time has the ability and opportunity to take a step forward and to communal action, not one against the other.”

**Dr Schmied:** Mr Beuys, we would like to think how you explain it and we will leave your work as you wish aside. But when you claim 'production equals provocation' - equalling both terms...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “yes, but that has to happen.”

**Dr Schmied:** “on the other hand saying that art is no longer perceived by audiences as a provocation the function of art would be over. I like an answer to this... beyond your art works. Professor Gehlen...”

#### **Audience member asks to hear from Max Bill**

**Arnold Gehlen:** “the claim that ‘production equals provocation’ I view as wrong. These are different things. I do understand however, that artists today may be reluctant to abandon the term ‘provocation’ and believe they still provoke. And that's because the art of today has no opponent anymore. It is difficult to assume a fighting position and there is no one to fight. From which follows that I too, as an artist would cling to the term of provocation. Even if no one is provoked one has to say now ‘provocation is production’, right? That's that. My previous enquiry about criteria to judge ‘good’ and ‘bad’ in contrast to boring and fun has not yet been answered in the context of Modern Art. And I believe that it isn't possible. If we would talk about this we could try again to...hm...converse in a thoughtful manner. Mr Beuys...I understand and honour that you want to not include your own art, but I do have a question: In the Cologne Art fair in the previous year, a work by yourself was presented, which was a VW camper van and out of this van 'poured out' a large number of ...I don't know...20? Please correct me “

**Joseph Beuys:** “40!”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “40 small sledges which were all the same model and were all wrapped in the same way. I spent a long time standing in front of this and felt amused! That I didn't really want to admit to you!”

**Joseph Beuys:** “but that's good!

**Arnold Gehlen:** “no...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “yes! Fantastic! Why not?”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “well then you are a play maker”

**Joseph Beuys:** “yes, and why not? Why wouldn't we want to laugh? Do you want to eradicate laughter? Do you want to eradicate fun? Do you want to revolutionize without laughter?”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “I want to ask you something specific...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “and I would like to have my cake and eat it with a revolution...”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “yes I believe you”

**Joseph Beuys:** “and I want others to also have their cake and eat it.”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “yes I believe that, but I want to ask: why didn't you use prams?”

**Audience and panel laugh**

**Joseph Beuys:** “why? I would say I determined the theme, I determined it with sledges...you should use the prams...and try...”

**Laughter from audience and panel**

**Joseph Beuys:** “...and try to create something of interest yourself!”

**Dr Schmied:** “now thoughts again. Max Bill...”

**Max Bill:** “I fully agree with Mr Beuys that we are here to think. However, it isn't necessary to think until the early hours. I don't agree to that. We talked and discussed, Mr Beuys and Mr Bense did, that art is provocation. I am not sure if art - if the only meaning of art is provocation. All new art has the ability to provoke but that isn't art's only intention. There are other things art does not only provocation. There are also other ways to provoke with art. I think that this is something that can't be approached as Mr Beuys just did, he said: The 'goodness' of provocation plays a role. How do we measure the goodness of provocation? How do we measure any quality? And this makes it difficult to discuss this subject. If we want to start measuring quality, the quality of artistic expression, the quality of provocation, etc..., who measures this? Who is able to measure this? This has never been done before!”

**Dr Schmied:** “Max Bense, it was mentioned you measure quality. Are you really able to do this and how do you do this?”

**Max Bense:** “well I am not sure if this is relevant to the topic.”

**Audience laughter**

**Max Bense:** “no, this isn't relevant. No, I want to ‘pin down’ Mr Beuys on a different point. He said at the beginning...”

**Audience:** “don't divert!”

**Max Bense:** “ok, Mr Bill you have the word... I didn't interrupt, I was asked to comment...”

**Dr Schmied:** “alright, Max Bill, please....”

**Max Bill:** “furthermore, I share the view of Mr Beuys that questions concerning humanity should be the focus today in Europe. I refer to probably different humanitarian questions as Mr Beuys. We are not able to discuss what we understand under humanitarian questions ...well, this isn't easy...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “yes, it is, for example the political humanitarian questions which of course are directly relevant to what art does. What meaning is there to develop everything from art, this must be in relation to what humans need. Otherwise it is nonsense to make art.

**Dr Schmied:** I do think we can talk about this?

**Max Bill:** “yes, I will answer to this with; does it make sense to make art? Or does it make no sense to make art? And where does the sense come from? And why then does one make art?”

**Audience:** “what is art?”

**Max Bill:** “exactly! That's what I ask myself often...”

**Dr Schmied:** “well, what is art? That's a discussion we wouldn't finish even into the early hours ...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “but yes, I solved this question ages ago!”

**Max Bill (laughing):** “he's a happy human!”

**Joseph Beuys:** “the human is the art. The human is the aesthetics. The human is the art work.”

**Max Bense:** “so, the conception is an act of art?”

**Joseph Beuys:** “of course! Of course, in this sense it is a human act and act of interest to observe. In the context of the history of the world the conception of a human being, to ask how does a human being enter into the world and how does he exit the world. These are all significant questions for artists.”

**Dr Schmied:** “Max Bill, would you like to conclude? Or have you already concluded your topic?”

**Max Bill:** “I believe after Mr Beuys explained that he views himself as a producer of art and provocation that he's a very happy human and believes he really makes art. I am accepting of that because I don't know these things about myself. I do something. I do something I have an interest in, something I consider addresses a problem. I set myself to investigate, which may come from my environment continuously, and this problem comes to a solution, a remedy with potential effects or maybe no effects. This doesn't play a significant role at the beginning. I can't say if a thing has to have an effect or not. In general, it may have an effect. But if what I make has an effect or not that isn't significant. This is what Mr Beuys said as well.”

**Joseph Beuys:** “Yes, sure. I can only confirm that.”

**Max Bill:** ...

**Joseph Beuys:** “that's why one shouldn't debate how significant or insignificant one's work may be. It should be possible to pre-empt that - even though I can't claim this for myself. But of course, everyone should endeavour that work - let's talk about work done conscientiously, not specifically of artistic work- is thought through every layer. Otherwise he (human) can't take responsibility for the product. I claim that I can at least say that I am able to take responsibility for my work. There is no need to discuss this further because it is a question of talent. It is a question of how talented am I? How talented is Bill? How talented is someone else? I am not interested in querying my talent. I only observe that there are different human talents and it is clear that one day there may be humans who view my works as inadequate and simultaneously present something that convinces me as being much better. Everyone is called upon to correct what I am doing wrong, to highlight my mistakes.”

**Dr Schmied:** “here is a question...from the audience? A question for Mr Beuys:”

**Joseph Beuys (reads note with question):** “it says: can you define what specifically do you understand as 'revolution'?”

Yes, of course. A revolution, as I see it, means that the human is able to observe himself on his possibilities. That he doesn't neglect the every day life experience for all the philosophical and anthropological insights. That through his education on the question ‘how can I become a better instrument in the World?’, he simultaneously is concerned about the well-being of others.

To simply ask how are the relations in the world? Who is the disadvantaged, and how can I help? That raises the question, what is going on in our political system? What can I suggest? And I could

suggest a lot! I could suggest for example that it is urgently required to overcome the party political bureaucracy through direct consensus with the population on every single point. I would suggest that it is very important to take the constitution seriously. That we take seriously that the human has self determination, that he is part of what is done. That he's asked if we want armed forces or none. That we have direct communication on all these points, that we continue to take seriously the question of equality, complete equality. That we no longer have some humans with privilege. That the nationalization of production and of private property in production is stopped. Etc, etc... Only a brief sketch... it asks further to which extent and what is the aim..."

**Dr Schmied:** "this is...moving into very general subjects..."

**Max Bense:** "no it contains a very important question!"

**Joseph Beuys:** "consensus is a common...communication with people towards consensus is presented here as a too general point...?"

**Max Bense:** "no, listen! You have to listen when I pose a question. Please don't interrupt my question. I want to ask you; if you view every artistic act as an act of political engagement, this is how I understand what you said-"

**Joseph Beuys:** "yes, I can only reply: of course."

**Max Bense:** "Bon. Then you exclude all results, all emotions, all intentions, tendencies of production of a so called art work. These are secondary to you."

**Joseph Beuys:** "no!"

**Max Bense:** "not secondary?"

**Joseph Beuys:** "no! They are complex and integrated and contained in it all, it can't be dissected because today every action politics is an act of politics"

**Max Bense:** I am allowed to continue my question... Now... Mr Beuys, do say... I follow from what you say that you are of the opinion that you as an approximation - produce art."

**Joseph Beuys:** "Yes, I produce."

**Max Bense:** "Good, you produce art. This means that you must when you aim to present a provocation – namely change of consciousness - have planned your art works"

**Joseph Beuys:** "Yes, correct."

**Max Bense:** "just a moment, this means that you must be able to present under which conditions political change of consciousness occurs. How does an art work have to look like that induces political change on change of consciousness? And are there art works who don't do this but are still art works?"

**Joseph Beuys:** "correct. I would first answer that the art works made by humans as human actions, I made clear, can never be separated from the political. Now we again go back to my art."

**Max Bense:** "no, no, I am not talking about you."

**Joseph Beuys:** "You said, 'you must be planning' when I make an art work, you said, so I must be planning."

**Max Bense:** "take Rubens..."

**Joseph Beuys:** “well, I don't want to talk about Rubens now...”

**Max Bense:** “about whom do you want to talk?”

**Joseph Beuys:** “well in this case my work. This is not a colloquium about Rubens.”

**Max Bense:** “ah, a colloquium about Beuys!”

**Joseph Beuys:** “No, I said I am not interested in that...”

**Max Bense:** “Yes, you just said that!”

**Joseph Beuys:** “No. I said that I am interested in these terms on a purely epistemological basis...to make information perceivable to humans...”

**Max Bense:** “Mr Beuys, you are following your own tactic of dialectic...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “yes, of course do I follow my own. Should I follow yours?”

**Max Bense:** “a vain one! One you always reflect on yourself when the dialectic doesn't fit.”

**Joseph Beuys:** “time will tell...”

**Max Bense:** “objective dialectic...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “time will tell if what I do is vain or not. Because every human thing has to evolve over time that is correct. It has to stand the test of time. And if it doesn't - chuck it! Get rid!”

**Dr Schmied:** “Mr Bense... can you ask your question”

**Max Bense:** “I want to know from Mr Beuys if he acknowledges that art works can be produced without any specific political engagement. He's in the dilemma, that he now has to interpret for every single art work the political engagement.”

**Joseph Beuys:** “I would say that's impossible because every art work includes political engagement.”

**Max Bense:** “Now I ask Mr Bill, Mr Bill, when you create, when you work when you create an art work - I may say so - do you pursue consciously a) a political...do you have a political engagement in mind, do you think about the change of political consciousness, the political situation, the misery - or do you simply think of doing what is fun to do?”

**Max Bill:** “I am of the opinion that every human has to think politically and be politically engaged. If as an artist he is obliged to politically engage, that's a different question. I am of the opinion that art just like other aspects, physics, etc... has to be developed through work, to develop a problem on its essence, and... these are problems in themselves which can have effects but the effects are not 'priori' contained in problems...”

**Dr Schmied:** “Max Bill...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “I disagree”

**Max Bill:** “I am not finished. I also want to say the following; Mr Beuys said before we are living in times of rationality. There is not much we can achieve with 'ratio'...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “I didn't say that.”

**Max Bill:** “he didn't say it exactly like this, but...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “but that matters!”

**Max Bill:** “the phrase goes different it is not the 'ratio' but the...there are things that originate from the 'will'. I now want to ask Mr Beuys; what...has a human...has he a human 'will' which works without human 'ratio'? I would like to know...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “yes that is of interest because I made exactly these terms the program for my art. I have in my work crystalized and isolated these terms. I transferred them onto art. I have more specifically transferred these onto the term '*Plastik*', and I said it is no longer possible to continue to talk about *Plastik* in its conventional sense, as if we knew what it is. To say; *Plastik* - well that's a thing that stands around in space, it is spatial and you can put your hat on it...I want to know about the forces...and I realised...I developed a theory...or even revealed a truth, I believe, that *Plastik* manifests itself out of varying forces. That there is something that comprehensively represents energy relapsing in isolation that is of chaotic nature. I, for example, tried to do that with Fat demonstrations which contrary...”

**Dr Schmied:** “the question asked is 'will'”

**Joseph Beuys:** “I am answering this right now! I am on this point demonstrating 'will' in *Plastik* - I have juxtaposed 'will' to 'form', and in 'form' is presented the thought or what can be termed 'ratio'. And I have placed into the centre 'motion' or what is termed 'emotion' or 'feeling'. I made these criteria for *Plastik*. And I tried to transfer this directly onto the human, so that what I am able to discover in the term '*Plastik*' - I can also discover in the human, that I can transfer this directly to a model....to a political model, so I can develop a new model of state...”

**Audience laughter**

**Joseph Beuys:** “alright, you can laugh, that's not interesting, but I did it.”

**Max Bill:** “yes, I would like to, I want to get back to 'ratio'. When you - lets say make 'fat corners'...you will be thinking how you will make fat corners...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “yes correct.”

**Max Bill:** “they don't make themselves without 'ratio' without pondering into a corner of fat.”

**Joseph Beuys:** “correct! But I already said this, it seems one has to explain everything twice in this discussion.”

**Max Bense:** “yes because it isn't clear!”

**Joseph Beuys:** “yes, because it isn't simple, that's why we should discuss this for a week!”

**Max Bense:** “no less!”

**Joseph Beuys:** “ok, that's what you think. But I shouldn't be this impatient. You maybe permitted, but... I can only say that of course, I have thought about - for example – fat, that at the beginning is in a chaotic condition and I shape into a geometric form in a spatial context; a corner. That in order to do so I developed a text which says schematically - that the term '*Plastik*' is here separated into the two principles of 'will' and 'ratio'. That action is a rhythmic entity which facilitates that which we term 'soul' in the old sense, or simply speaking: 'motion'. Now every single...every single entity can be approached autonomously. One can say, I can observe 'will' separately...”

**Audience/panel:** “what is the political relevance?”

**Joseph Beuys:** “the political relevance...the political relevance is there where I say it concerns the human, when I proceed to the point where I say out of the three terms; ‘will’, ‘emotion’ or ‘feeling’ and ‘thinking’, I have to arrive at the point where thinking originates. I therefore have to ask going backwards. At the point where thinking originates there is no other option. Even if I have the information model as the blueprint for something new that enters the world... That is the evidence for the freedom of the human, for his creativity... That he is able to give something new and is not bound by the ratio of production only...That is the model to transfer to the political...”

**Audience:** “please moderator! moderator!”

**Dr Schmied:** “this is now diverting into mysticism what you say”

**Joseph Beuys:** “mystic is extremely interesting!”

**Dr Schmied:** “but even mystic demands clarity.”

**Joseph Beuys:** “yes, but I said that this clarity can only be obtained in steps”

**Dr Schmied:** “Mr Gehlen”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “no not in reply to this.”

**Audience:** “margarine isn't mystic! It is simple and a clear formula!”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “don't all interrupt”

**Joseph Beuys:** “stop going on about margarine!”

**Audience and panel chatter**

**Arnold Gehlen:** “I would like to say something, as the sociologist, that's what I was invited for, I have already... I have already expressed my suspicion that the...that the desire of provocation increases proportionately with the indolence of the audience. And now I would like to express another suspicion, namely that art in reality has no longer any enlightening purpose to society...”

**Audience applauds**

**Arnold Gehlen:** “and because of that...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “stop applauding! You have no clue where this is going!”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “I don't want to be continuously interrupted, alright?”

**Joseph Beuys:** “but you are happy to be interrupted by applause...”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “and because art no longer has any societal function some try to add a political function to art. I fully understand this, but tell young people who attempt this: Art is the most useless instrument for revolution.”

**Joseph Beuys:** “Why? Reason please!”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “Because...because...because in all of art history there has never been an emerging revolutionary art of unifying and clear content. Therefore it obviously doesn't work very well.”

**Joseph Beuys:** “Aha...”

**Arnold Gehlen:** “please, do make sure I am not getting interrupted...There are probably, there are often art works concerned with empathy and cruelty just like the ‘*desastres de ageros*’ by Goya, and

of Kalo, Dix and others, that is real, but it isn't specifically and concretely made to cause a political change. I struggle to think of - or name an art work that explicitly and specifically has a political message."

**Dr Schmied:** "Well there are..."

**Arnold Gehlen:** "there are in literature, yes, Brecht for example..."

### **Protest from the audience**

**Arnold Gehlen:** "someone mentions the name Grosz- he's a cartoonist."

**Dr Schmied:** "Grosz, I believe, Mr Gehlen, was not only a cartoonist but an important artist. But Mr Bense wants to comment."

**Arnold Gehlen:** "let's discuss"

**Max Bense:** "I want to shift the discussion from Mr Beuys to Mr Gehlen...he had us...we pretend - I interpret that from the applause - why, Mr Gehlen has art today no societal function anymore? I want to point to the following; if we always and only understand under societal function political engagement then I would agree with you. But I can imagine and that is likely the case in the modern and urban dilemma, which incorporated much from modern art, that there are many constructive elements in urbanism that are directly connected with the results of modern art. Art without objects since Kandinsky especially in regards to painting, etc... There are many things from architecture - which plays a very significant role. Urbanism and architecture, which incorporated from previously determined concepts of art. And I am of the opinion that urbanism is an expression of society and since it has been influenced by the development of modern art therefore has a societal function. Or are you denying the societal function that comes from urbanism?"

**Arnold Gehlen:** "this is easy to answer. I have of course in my argument considered the entirety of the visual arts but not included architecture, town planning, which are evidence for crafts and for utility. But I struggle to find any evidence for art offering the same urge or pressing interest to society. If there would be such a function then surely there wouldn't be any need for all the marketing and PR."

**Dr Schmied:** "I am not sure if this is a big fallacy to think marketing is only for things that otherwise aren't relevant. But what Bense said has significance to arrive at a broad remit of constructive art, which without doubt is directly relevant to theory of - and to society, and should not only be restricted to architecture but it has been pre-conditioned by Mondrian..."

**Arnold Gehlen:** "that's passe..."

**Dr Schmied:** "I don't think it is passe and..."

**Member from audience:** "it is not about the art - it is about the artist who undergoes change of consciousness that's the point."

**Dr Schmied:** "of course, it's about art and not only about the artist."

**Max Bill:** "we all talk about art. I want to...what Mr Bense said the influence of art to society as influence to urbanism, etc... If you define this as art, it may be right, I would say there are investigations, there are aesthetic objects - and these objects have this model character in a sense that they influence decisions which impact our environment and not only as constructive art. I am of the opinion that the others - the non-constructive also have a model character- for the negative. I



would say that this character today is generally very much underestimated because it doesn't receive the same interest, missing out on the existing polarity."

**Max Bill:** I wanted to add that here..."

**Joseph Beuys:** I fully agree with what Mr Bill just said, but it simultaneously raises the question when is art necessary for human's survival? There never has been much attention to the instinctive education of the human and education through art. We all know that there is no appropriate art education anywhere in the world. Therefore, instinctively every human knows that a human is not able to survive without art. A human being without art education is wasted and human evolution without art over 2000 years would see the brain disappear. Here is an emphasis on art as an entity that animates the human into being out of a space we are not familiar with yet. But I attempt to describe with my term of the 'anti space', that I simply pose the question of the complete existence of the human being. How does a human enter the world? What are the energies that nurture him? What is the function of art in the sense of Goethe - and I bow in front of this statement - I accept it fully, when Goethe says: "Art has the best of two worlds: art is a technique within two worlds. Art has to explore/ confront the material world and the world that is outside the material world- the spiritual world" and that is the challenge of art. Through art something enters the human that makes him able to live for the physical aspect of life, what makes him strong even if he later decides to become a physicist - someone who is forced to think rationally. He will be better at thinking rationally if he nurtured himself on/ through art. I attempt to present art as a necessary fertilizer for the human, which he needs for all and every activity and to develop models for this..."

**Dr Schmied:** "both, art and anti-art are equal?"

**Joseph Beuys:** "yes"

**Max Bense:** "...then we only need one term and we can get rid of anti-art."

**Joseph Beuys:** "yes over time, but not right now please.... Not every human has yet grasped the problem. We need yearlong discussions to achieve that we arrive at this point. For humans to recognize that they live in a culture that is continuous and not completed. That we are in a culture which will ask completely new questions, such as these. So we don't only physically travel to the moon but that we...so we can travel psychologically. What appears physically outside is reflected emotionally on the inside otherwise we haven't landed on the moon. So far, we haven't really been to the moon, so far, we haven't really been to the moon it was only the elevator principle...third floor or seventh floor we managed...what do we know of the moon?"

**Max Bill:** "yes I like to say what Mr Beuys said before flying to the moon - I am in full agreement with; I believe that without art humanity will perish completely. That is certain. If a human is a direct consumer of art, a conscious consumer of art isn't really relevant. He is a consumer of art, he can't not be one. Now, it does matter what the quality of art is, but this is difficult to discuss because we cannot simply decide on parameters of or for quality. We have to assume from the artists, the ones who view themselves as artists, that that what they do is proper and originates from a good sense out of a consciousness of responsibility, then it should work. I don't think there is any other way to view this. The opportunity that art, that many things decline because of if art doesn't exist - and that therefore art education in schools is of great importance - there is no doubt about this. Because in the moment where any professional worker has never been in contact with anything of artistic character, he will be lacking specific artistic ability. Ability of making value judgements...and because of this art is important, especially because all the dilemmas that require decision making by each and everyone of us. If he's an engineer or if he sells apples, or anything he does; education to being able

to make value judgements that is directly linked to art. That art is something that's difficult to define that it is continuously changing and has to change, otherwise art wouldn't exist anymore. That is an observation and fact to those who deal with such questions and problems as a given; the continuous transition."

**Dr Schmied:** "Art is change, change of consciousness is a motion, not static. Replication isn't production. There has to be something new and elemental added in meaning. May I pass over to Max Bense..."

**Max Bense:** "Mr Bill, are we not in danger that while we find many grand words for the necessity of the artistic process that we only ever view art as evidence for the artist, who as Mr Beuys described is willing to be active as an artist? But, if we talk of art, I don't talk about the artist or the process but what he created - we seem to pretend that there is art, an artistic feeling, an artistic thinking, an artistic intention without artistic works - and I am not yet quite ready to accept that there is art for the sake of its process. There is also art as art's work, that what at a specific point in time has been manifested in a work and I think this is what we need to discuss."

**Joseph Beuys:** "correct..."

**Dr Schmied:** "a decisive question. Art as completed work, as a product or art as process. Maybe it is one characteristic of the change of evolution of art in this century that it has become increasingly process not a completed art work but open work – process, and thereby the role of the audience the recipients increased and has grown and becomes stronger. That the art work involves the viewer in ever increasing measures, which Professor Gehlen described as 'play' is maybe not only 'play' but the attempt of art works that are not completed, who require the viewer to become completed, which only when a viewer encounters them are able to reveal their character completely, by being walked around who can manipulate them, who can move them."

**Dr Schmied:** "I believe that we have arrived here at a very decisive subject and Mr Beuys I have next ... Gehlen..."

**Joseph Beuys:** "I have my hand up."

**Dr Schmied:** "I had passed the word to Gehlen..."

**Joseph Beuys:** "yes all right!"

**Arnold Gehlen:** "I fully agree with Mr Bill that there is a human desire for art. I didn't challenge that. It appears to me that the current industrial society has no clear demands, no clear tasks allocated to the visual arts. It allows to be bullied into what happens. And because of this we require so much comment rhetoric which Mr Beuys is such a Master of. If we all would have a consensus on what art is for we wouldn't need to have this level of discussion but could evolve from this agreed point forwards, but this is exactly what we can't do. And because of that I permitted myself to head advice: 'do think carefully when you are young, if art truly - if you have a revolutionary urge - is a suitable medium for movement."

**Joseph Beuys:** "of course! I would say art itself is what allows to even pose such questions. Especially because art expanded the terminology of process. Because art doesn't only ask for a result but goes back and asks after the process. By default art arrives at the origin and has to ask; where does the process begin? And here arrives at the point where thinking happens, or in higher realms, where the intuition or the imagination happen. And you have to ask; where at which point does imagination happen? And through what? Is it something that is dependent on - that is reflected - through the

environment the material world? Or is it something that comes from a superior space or to translate a real spiritual realm? This is the most burning question: am I a prisoner in the physical World? Or am I beyond the physical World? Art therefore goes back to ask after the process. Art poses the epistemological questions Science doesn't ask. I want to state this. And Art arrives at the result that thought in the evolution is to be understood as a process of '*Plastik*', and where the thought sparks into language, language becomes art. And it would be desirable that humans learn language as art. That language becomes art that's important. Language is of course art and can become art. And of course, can language recorded in text become art when the thought is transformed through neurological impulse into hand writing it can become art; poetry. Further transformed through motion it becomes dance and performance. If it continues energetically and grabs material and shapes it can become a *Plastik*. It is important that through art the process is queried through the human, the exploration of the human through this process to being able to say something about the human. Only then can we know what matters to educate a human. Should a human being be educated according to pragmatic political necessities? Determined by politicians? Yes? That's how it's done today...in general. Why don't we have a free education? The politicians today think they are entitled to determine what humans need to be educated in."

**Max Bense:** "the contradiction in the exchange between Mr Gehlen and Mr Beuys can be summarised into a formula, a question, which was already significant to Hegel. Hegel, in his aesthetics expressed that we - in 1835 - no longer had any desire to express a thought through art. I am under the impression that this is the position of Mr Gehlen. I agree with this partially- and Mr Beuys radically is in the camp of the anti-Hegel, that of course, we today have the real and absolute desire, the engaged desire to express a thought in the form of art."

**Joseph Beuys:** "correct. Because Hegel's error was that he didn't realize that his system itself was art."

**Dr Schmied:** "Max Bill"

**Max Bill:** "I am afraid that Mr Beuys after what he said before about politicians knowing what makes for a good educational system - he's against the politicians. So, he now goes against the previous claim, now politicians are worthless, but we should all think politically."

**Joseph Beuys:** "I didn't say that politicians are worthless"

**Max Bill:** "well yes..."

**Joseph Beuys:** "I didn't make it that simple"

**Max Bill:** "not that simple, but similarly simple...it sounds like if only you or maybe someone else know best how the education system has to be."

**Joseph Beuys:** "you missed some things that were said and that is...why in this discussion everything has to be said twice! I said at the beginning; if we ask questions of the political and revolutionary programme we talk about 'self-determination'. Self-determination on every single point. This is not about that some other revolutionary group founds a new government. This is the dilemma, that we always want to form a government. There must be no government. The human being is able to self-govern. The human is able to self-determine. We do not need a revolution where we get another government or another minority that determines education! Everyone can engage and work on this!"

**Joseph Beuys (directly to Max Bill):** "yes you went backwards in Switzerland, you were better..."

**Dr Schmied:** “that isn't the discussion. Max Bill, you have the word...”

**Max Bill:** “I only want to say to this we have one area where we genuinely have freedom and where freedom is close to perfection is the area of art. And this is the reason why in the area of art there are diverse and different and multiple things possible. If we, however, claim art to have a model function, then we have this model character in art, in the manifold character of art, in the manifold attempts which are possible. And I believe that this is an important point. Mr Beuys himself has ...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “accepted.”

**Max Bill:** “...made...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “so don't stop here!”

**Max Bill:** “it is a statement by him where he said art has been set free.”

**Joseph Beuys:** “that's right.”

**Max Bill:** “and that art has been set free in some sense without any ties and possibilities in all directions, even in completely wrong directions doesn't seem to play a significant role. The confrontation in the setting of art exists. I want to now reply to what has been forwarded to me as a question. It says: “you spoke of the woman who sells apples, such people read 'thirty penny novels' if they can read at all. The art you make is only for a minority'.”

**Max Bill:** “I want to condemn the arrogance that comes out of this question. I condemn this, to compare someone who sells apples with 'thirty penny novels' ...”

**Audience:** “but that's the reality!”

**Joseph Beuys (to the audience):** “well then engage to make it better!”

**Dr Schmied:** “Max Bense...”

**Max Bense:** “I have to return to a question at the beginning which Mr Beuys brought up because in my opinion we are still not clear - if I understood Mr Beuys correctly – he alluded that the momentum of creativity is what matters and let's get rid of government, etc...and all of a sudden switched his standpoint. He once said that he is tenderly concerned about the well-being of society. And I was under the impression that he considers the pre-marxist claim that the human is a social animal to be true. On the other hand...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “correct.”

**Max Bense:** “on the other hand however for the creative and in some - in quotation marks 'way' that his own standpoint to dissolve all into individual anarchy, where he then has the viewpoint that the creative-the one who is called upon to change humanity's consciousness - has to be the creative individual. And so I see on the one hand the skills of humanity justified in societal being – while on the other hand by the individual creator.

**Joseph Beuys:** “Correct. you got it.

**Max Bense:** “What now? I do understand sometimes...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “yes and from this follows that the creative is moved, that we shouldn't only talk about the societal being, that we have to observe the creative because in it we can find what is intrinsic to the term ‘freedom’.”

**Max Bense:** “who's freedom? The freedom of the individual, your freedom to do what you want?”

**Joseph Beuys:** “at first the freedom of the individual. We are all individuals, I am not growing intertwined with you.”

**Max Bense:** “thank God!

**Joseph Beuys:** “yes, we are all individuals and not intertwined”

**Max Bense:** “that is clear to me, I want...”

**Joseph Beuys:** “well obviously not”

**Max Bense:** “its the other statement you made. Do you think the statement the human is a social animal, and everything he does is a reflection of society, do you hold this as truth?”

**Joseph Beuys:** “I hold the truth that the human is a social animal.

**Max Bense:** “what does that mean?”

**Joseph Beuys:** “that he has to always live with others and is thereby bound to consider others. That he has to ask the other, that he doesn't just hit the other over the head. That to live together something has to be worked at to achieve better conditions.

**Max Bense:** “that doesn't mean to you then not to hit someone over the head to provoke!

**Joseph Beuys:** “I said, ‘provocation equals production’. I have to present the other with a new product or at least a product, it even can be an old one. I am not demanding new products every day. I simply demand that he is productive, that he thinks, that he is active, I demand that. I also said that beyond this statement of the human being as a social animal and dependent on society, dependent on his brother, which is a keyword in the French revolution of brotherhood. That beyond this he has to comprehend this from freedom. That he can only resurrect through the activity within himself -thinking - and present the other with the product: ‘this is my suggestion, what is your take on this? Where do you stand?’

**Max Bense:** “so your individual freedom from the creative is limited through asking the other: are you willing to accept?”

**Joseph Beuys:** “no, no, there are no limits. I only present my product.”

**Max Bense:** “without any intent to provoke, just as product?”

**Joseph Beuys:** “he can of course judge the product and say where he stands. But maybe someone else comes along and says: ‘this is a product I could use.’ There is the freedom that potentially my product is useful - potentially it isn't useful at all.”

**Max Bense:** “so, freedom under the condition that society acknowledges what you do.”

**Joseph Beuys:** “no, wrong. In my opinion in this system it is only possible, if something new has been created, it can't come from the system where one is bound. Where practically everything from the past is established. If we, today observe our society from the sociological standpoint then it is a product of the past. If we want to change something in the system in the future we have to add something from the creative - a new depot to it. And only the creative human is able to do this. Is this too difficult?”

**Max Bense:** “no, but this is ancient.”

**Joseph Beuys:** "ah, so now it's ancient!"

**Max Bense:** "I only want to force you to explain what the relationship of the creative individual is to the societal consumer."

**Joseph Beuys:** "consumer is again..."

**Dr Schmied:** "recipients, the product, production, the relation to its reception, the acceptance from humans towards their movement of consciousness..."

**Joseph Beuys:** "it is all so very important that these terms are clear. That the human has no minority complex within his work, his creative action. That he says; I am a prisoner in the system of society. He has to finally recognize that he can determine himself. That he can apply what it says in the constitution. Today he has an inferiority complex, he continuously allows the government to add to the basic rights and articles, new paragraphs until emergency decrees omit the basic right. He has to realize that he is a creative free human. That he can determine himself, and he has to know that he has to practice equality. So that there is no revolution which elevates again a minority which lines up the defeated one and gets rid of them. But that there is equality for every opinion and that has to stand the test of time."

**Dr Schmied:** "we had one and a half hours for our discussion. I have been reminded that the time is over. Would you like to close Mr Bense?"

**Joseph Beuys:** "well, does the audience not have an opportunity to take part in the discussion?"

**Dr Schmied:** "maybe afterwards...maybe after the allocated time, we have a short break and the audience asks questions after that..."

**Joseph Beuys:** "a break is never good. I have had bad experiences with 'breaks' ..."

**Max Bense:** "half an hour longer..."

**Max Bill:** "people are leaving"

**Dr Schmied:** "Max Bense, do you want to have the last word?"

**Joseph Beuys:** "should we not facilitate people's desire to ask questions? Who have something to say?"

**Dr Schmied:** ladies and gentlemen, the discussion at the table is hereby concluded. I thank you all. It is not possible to summarise the discussion. It was too - too far were the views, and not only the views but also the language and rhetoric. Mr Gehlen used the word retal (?) rhetoric, it went too diverse to be able to conclude in a sentence. But maybe that in itself has provided inspiration and maybe even in this open discussion is some meaning. I thank you."