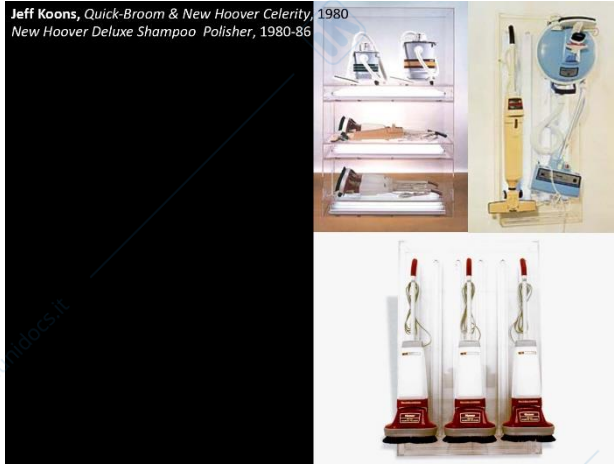


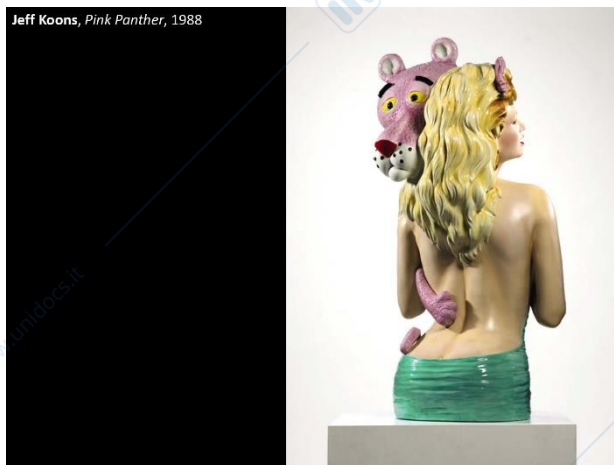
TOWARDS THE ART OF THE PRESENT

We have arrived at the present. This is the last institutional lesson. This lesson is not really a formal lesson but rather simply a journey crossing different experiences of the last 20-30 years. Professor chose works of art he thinks are meaningful and likes. It is rather a kind of subjective overview on the last years or decades.



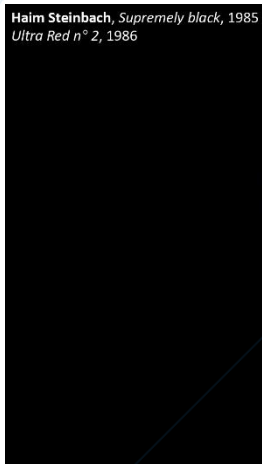
The first author we meet is Jeff Koons. He was a much talked about artist during the 1980s and 90s. He started exhibiting works such as these ones; a kind of transparent shelves showing the typical house facilities equipment such as vacuum cleaners. These are not really ready made because the meaning of the object doesn't really change; a vacuum cleaner still is a vacuum cleaner, you don't have this typical shift in meaning that you have in any readymade. They are simply shown, they are exhibited in a museum or

art gallery as witnesses of everyday life (as small monuments of everyday life). Obviously, it is an ironic approach but anyway it is probably the first time you have such a kind of investigation on these typical facilities that everyone uses it. It is extremely interesting for us as designers because in general these objects are part of the design culture; to design household appliances is precisely what a product designer does and so this is a typical strategy of the early research by Jeff Koons.



Here we move to statues like this called the Pink Panther. You see there is the very famous cartoon giving a hug to a beautiful woman, and she is in fact Ilona Staller (at the time, a very famous porno star and Jeff Koons wife). It is a tribute to a particular kind of female beauty mixing up with bits and pieces of popular culture, especially the culture of cartoons. Jeff Koons says that kitsch is what middle class really likes. The art is no longer shocking, but rather the art is pleasing. This means that the avantgarde is

definitely over. Artists adopted the market approach; it is a matter of consumer satisfaction. Even artist have to give consumers what they like (they like kitsch, so why not using this kind of language?) This strategy is not really new because also British pop art was interested in it; they also thought about the relevance of kitsch culture, but professor thinks in this decades (1980s) this approach was more evident specially in works like this. What is particularly meaningful is the fact that the age of the avantgarde is definitely over, so the artist doesn't play a critical role in society.



Haim Steinbach is a German artist, and he also reflects on what is the artist's role in the society of the 1980s. He shows this shelves in which you find the typical products you can buy in the supermarket. Fundamentally the meaning is that we are all selling or buying something. Our role is related to this fundamental activity of exchanging money and goods. Again, in particular in Steinbach, it is a political issue; it is a question: what can be the role of an artist in the 1980s? The answer fundamentally is that you cannot work

without following the rules of the economy, of the market.

Allan McCollum, Over Ten Thousand Individual Works (detail), 1987/89

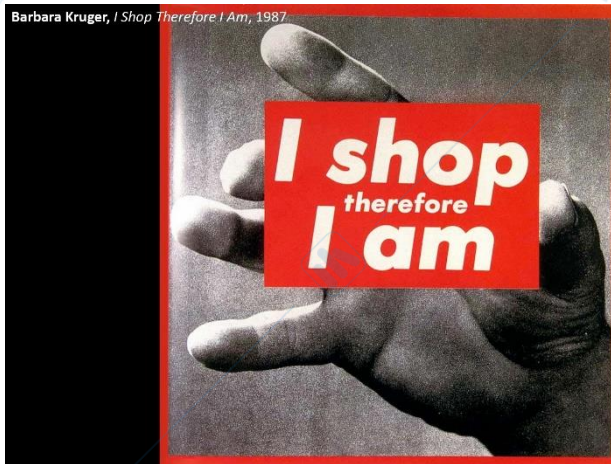


Allan McCollum investigates a completely different area: it is the problem of living in a globalised economy and overpopulated world, but also understanding that we have moved from the typical standardised mass production of the 20th century to mass customization. His strategy is the one you see in this picture; showing a large amount of objects halfway between standardisation and customisation. All these objects are different one from the other, they are handmade and usually made picking up the typical plastic bottles and rearranged

in different shapes and painted in the same colour. Usually in this installation you have large amounts of these objects. The idea is to reach the number of 7 billion pieces (to have at least one object for one single living person on the earth). What is particularly interesting in this research is that it is a metaphor of our role in the market because at the same time each object is a customized object and also representing a human being (fundamentally our role is that of being customers, but each one of us is different from all the others).



Barbara Kruger is also exploring the typical issues of contemporary society and lifestyle. She is an expert in the field of advertisement since she was working in a creative enterprise, so she knew all the typical tools of communication and advertisement, and she transform them in a meaning. This is an example of a Solo exhibition in New York in 1991.



This is probably her masterpiece: I shop therefore I am. It is a paraphrase from the very famous sentence by René Descartes (the father of scientific thinking in the 17th century): I think, therefore I am. There is a dramatic shift from being humans because we are able of thinking rationally to being humans because we are simply customers. The very essence of human beings nowadays is simply that of being able to buy or shop. It is a very sad interpretation, but professor unfortunately thinks its true.

Moving to the 1990s there is a video by Matthew Barney, who is a very talked about artist in that period. His art is halfway between video art and cinema. His works are usually huge productions since they last many hours and are displayed in real cinemas with a large audience. These films involve a lot of artists and so there is a direct comparison between the world of visual arts and cinema (movie industry). Obviously, the fundamental difference is the content of these films. He is mostly interested in showing us the complex, transforming nature of our bodies; the fact that we are somehow becoming hybrid. He is focused mostly on genetics and the possibility of transforming our body through genetics and biology. It is not a matter of cyborgs, but rather a matter of redesigning human beings from our DNA.

[Professor shows the video Cremaster Cycle Trailer by Matthew Barney].



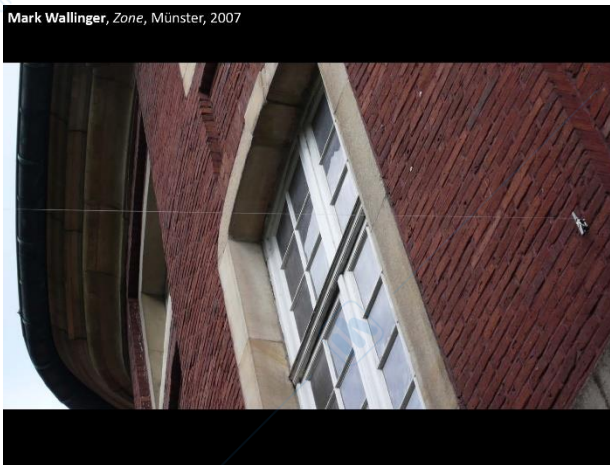
Maurizio Cattelan is probably the most famous Italian artist at the moment. Here you see one of his installations: The 9th hour. It represents the then pope (Jean Paul II) hit by a meteorite, crashing down to the floor. He is a sculptor and usually, in many pieces he investigates the notion of life and death, but specially death. As a main strategy, he still adopts the typical Dada strategy; that of shocking people. Most of these installations and sculptures are fundamentally built up to shock people and make them react in some way

because of the experience and their cultural meaning the sculpture shows.

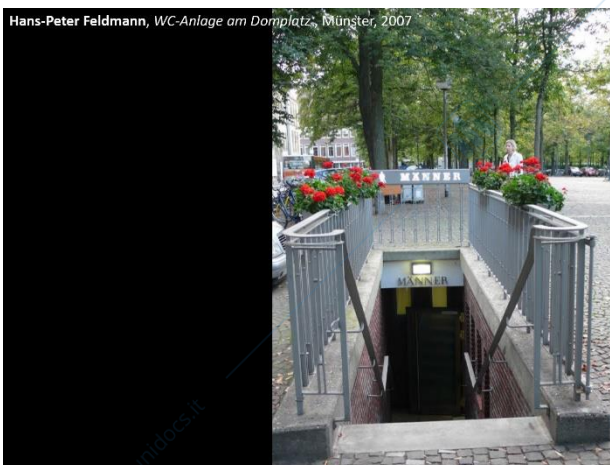
In 2007, there was a very interesting combination of events in Europe. The most famous periodical art exhibitions were held in that year. It was opened the Biennale in Venice, it was opened Documenta in Kassel, Skulptur Projekte in Münster and Art Basel in Basel. Many went through this art journey ("the grand tour"). From here on, some photographs that the professor took on that trip will appear.



go closer, you can hear people living in Münster and telling their own stories/lives. It is a mean to get in contact with the history of common people living in that city, understanding what it means to live in that small town.



Mark Wallinger suggests a completely different experience. Obviously, because it is an exhibition of public art, most of the art pieces are exhibited in open public spaces. The very first thing you do when you arrive in Münster is to go in the public art museum where you can get all the information about what you can watch and where all the pieces are. The museum is precisely at the centre of the city, geometrical centre (not historical). The very strange thing is that centre of the town is simply a crossroad with a roundabout in the middle. Wallinger simply drew a circle pointing the centre of this circle precisely in the middle of the roundabout. Then, he reproduced in reality the circle he drew on the map of the city with a thin metal wire. What happens is that it is very difficult to see the wire although you know on a map that you are precisely in the place. This is simply an example but is an interesting experience because you walk around and when you know you are reaching the circle, you start looking up and trying to see where the wire is. It is a complex experience because it involves your body, walking across the city and also having an idea of how the city is looking at a map.



yourself into these place:

This is from Münster, which is a beautiful small town in the north-west of Germany, close to the Netherlands border. They have this public art exhibition that takes place every 10 years. The most interesting thing is that most of the sculptures that are produced for the exhibition become part of the city space (patrimony) after the exhibition. This big installation is called Flower for Münster. It is a strange object, and it is placed in the very centre of the city. It is made of windsurfing boards and there is a display right at the centre. If you

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Here we are with another German artist: Hans-Peter Feldmann. This is an issue; the role of public services. To be precise, in this case we are talking about public toilets. In this square there are two public toilets, divided by gender (this one is for men). You can see something has happened because there are flowers in the balcony and that is strange. You want to understand what is going on and you enter the place. To tell the truth, public toilets are not usually pleasant places but when you walk down the stairs, you find

Hans-Peter Feldmann, WC-Anlage am Domplatz, Münster, 2007



represent ourselves. We should completely change our own idea of how public spaces should be designed (for example, waiting rooms in hospitals).

Andreas Siekmann, Trickle down, Public Space in the Era of its Privatization, 2007



Andreas Siekmann is another German artist. The big blue machine you are watching in the foreground is a waste compactor (machine that works to destroy and compress waste). What you see in the background is a big ball made of colour plastic pieces. It is the result of the work of a waste compactor. Here, Andreas Siekmann is talking about something that we know very well, even in our campus (Politecnico Bovisa). The more and more we have experienced in public malls and also in public places, the appearing of huge plastic objects happen. Mostly shaped as animals, sometimes shaped in different ways, these huge plastic animals or objects pretend to be works of art. According to Andreas Siekmann, they are not. They are simply waste and should be destroyed precisely because of the idea they try to share; that you can simply design a big plastic object and becomes a kind of example of pop art. It is not, it is a fake art. The only thing we can do is to throw them away. It is a very polemical installation, but professor agrees with him.

Bruce Nauman, Square Depression, 2007



really focus on the border of the square. It is a very interesting experience.

It is hard to analyse according to specific categories what artists do today. There is a large variety of approaches; most of the artists are socially and politically committed, most of the artists are

interested in interacting with the audience, the languages are very different one from the other, the strategies are very different and even the technologies involved are very different.

Tue Greenfort, *Diffuse Einträge*, 2007



This is a very strange machine. Münster is the capital of food industry in Germany. All around the city is full of factories treating meat (mostly pork). For this reason, the lake you see here (the one crossing the city) is very polluted. This machine is supposed to clean the water. On the one hand, water is pumped into the machine, cleaned into the machine and then simply spread on the lake. Obviously, it is a non-sense activity, doesn't work at all. But it let us think about the problem of the polluted lake and about food

industries. In a certain sense, it also says that this kind of environmental problems that are produced by industries and the use of technology, cannot be solved with a technological approach. Technology is useless so there must be a far bigger change in lifestyles and production.

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, *Roman de Münster*, 2007



Still in Münster, this is a beautiful kindergarten where all these objects are reproduction in a smaller scale of artpieces that have been showed in different editions of the exhibition *Skulptur Projekte*. The first exhibition was in 1977, so that of 2007 was the 4th edition. The artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster made these reproductions of the art pieces and spread them around in this beautiful garden so that children could play.

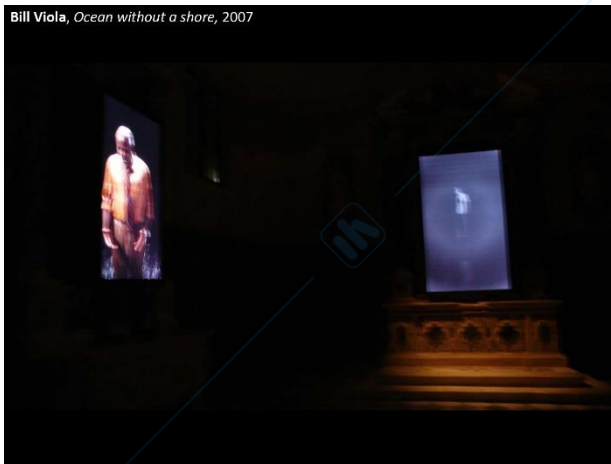
Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, *Roman de Münster*, 2007



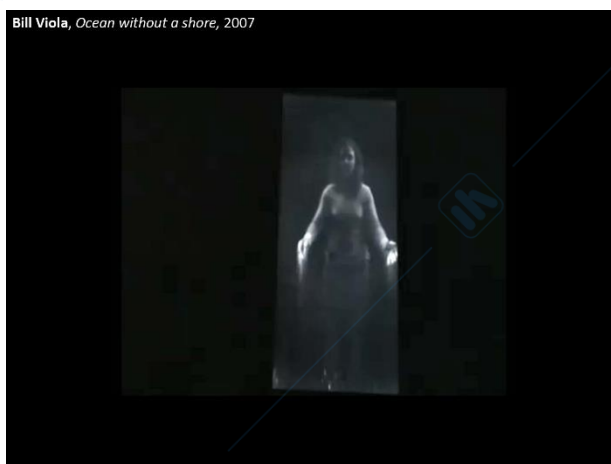
It is a beautiful idea; instead of having these typical toys that you can find in kindergartens (like swings, etc), children play around and inside these art pieces; at the same time, they enjoy themselves and learn something about the world of the arts.



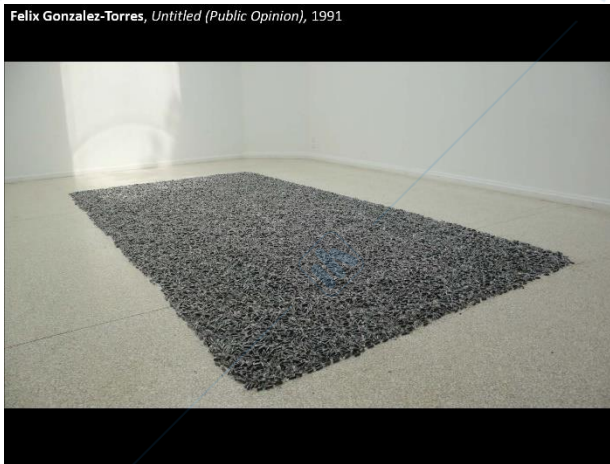
Now we move to Venice. We are in the Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation, where there was a solo exhibition of Richard Hamilton (he was one of the artists belonging to the British pop in the 1950s and went on developing his own ideas, author of the poster of the exhibition "This is the future" in 1956). Here you see some aspects of his research that have been developed. For example, the girl with the vacuum cleaner is here represented as she was represented in that poster. It is a combination of different technologies. It is interesting because it is an ink jet on paper. It is a file; the art piece was designed using a computer. It is designed according to the rules of perspective and then different elements were added to the presentation using normal software for elaborating images as Photoshop. Professor finds it quite interesting precisely because it is one of the first examples of a very famous painter who moved from the traditional techniques developed in the 20th century to the new software and technology that you can use on computers.



We are still in Venice. This is a very beautiful installation by Bill Viola, one of the most famous video artists of the present. Here we are in a very small church, the one of San Gallo in Venice. It is a small single room environment. In this small sacred environment, Bill Viola put three big HD screens. In these three screens are reproduced videos that tell us more or less the same story about life (how we are born, how we live and how we die). These three big screens are a triptych. Bill Viola mixes pieces of the renaissance tradition with new technologies (precisely video art). When you enter the place, you don't really understand what is happening. You simply hear the sound of water falling and then you find yourself in front of videos.



[Professor plays this video] There is a person in black and white, then she crosses a waterfall and the image that was in black and white becomes coloured. The person makes a few steps standing in front of you and then he/she turns his/her back and go back to the waterwall, simply disappearing. The reaction of all the actors depends on their own, obviously it is not difficult to understand that the water represents the treasure between life and death. When firstly the wall is crossed, it is a metaphor of our birth and when it is crossed again it is a metaphor of our death. Because the whole representation is inside a church, the whole atmosphere and experience is really strong for the audience.

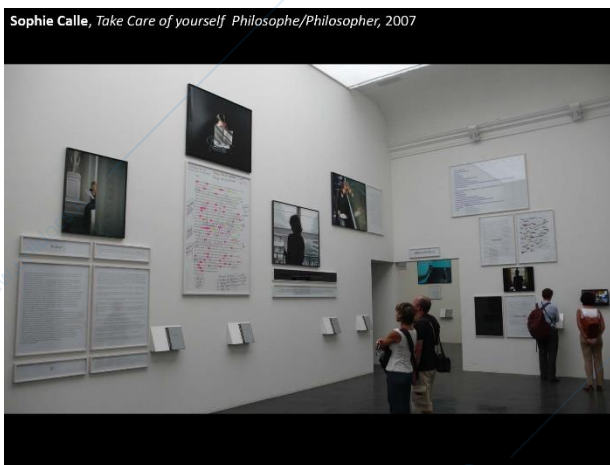


redesign as a kind of resurrection.

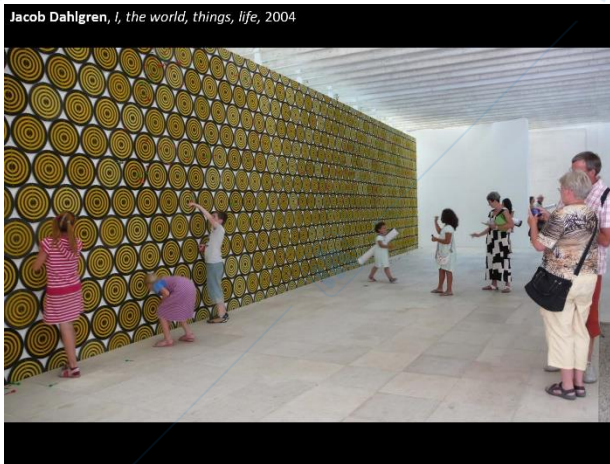


Here we are in the pavilion of the USA at the Biennale. In that year (2007), there was a solo exhibition of Felix Gonzalez-Torres, who was very well-known at the end of the years 1980-90s (we met him talking about the Portrait of Ross in L.A.; bunch of candies). In this case we have a carpet made of candies and the strategy is always the same: you can pick up a candy and put it in your pocket as a souvenir. Obviously if everyone picks up a candy, in the end the carpet disappears. So, each day the carpet is remade and

Similarly, here you can keep up a poster showing the sea. People like the posters and picking up one of them. Slowly, the installation disappears again without really understanding what they are doing; people kill the installation, and this is the very meaning of these works by Felix Gonzalez-Torres.



This is a spectacular exhibition by Sophie Calle, who is a French artist. Professor has never seen such an installation, called Take Care of yourself Philosophe/Philosopher. It displays a love story that ends abruptly. Sophie Calle has a boyfriend and once he writes her a letter saying that he can't be no more her lover. To be precise in the letter it is written "you cannot be my second lover because I have found a third one". What Sophie Calle does is an extraordinary process; she picks up the letter and translates it according to different languages or different rules (for example using the language of blind people or different languages of the world such as phone writing "language"). She transformed the letter using these languages and then asked 18 friends to read the letter and then perform the reading. These 18 friends are very famous Indo-European women, so you could have all these different representations of the letter, also the videos of the actresses reading the letter and the picture showing the women reading the letter itself. In the end, the number of different representations becomes so large that she can fill up the whole French pavilion and people can really understand what it means to make a woman angry. It is a very cruel revenge, but an extremely beautiful installation.



the fundamental meaning of this work and why professor enjoys it a lot.



from two opposite corners of the room; one painting in black and the other in white. When one of the white washers reaches the black part, she covers it with white and vice versa. This performance goes on for four months. This is the particular interpretation Solakov provides us with about the meaning of life. When the professor firstly saw this performance, it made him recall of a very famous cartoon by Blake Edwards, author of the Pink Panther. The very famous cartoon in which the pink panther appears was designed in 1964 and that cartoon won the academic award for cartoons ("the Oscar"). The Pink Painter is painting a house in pink and there is a white washer painting the same house in blue.



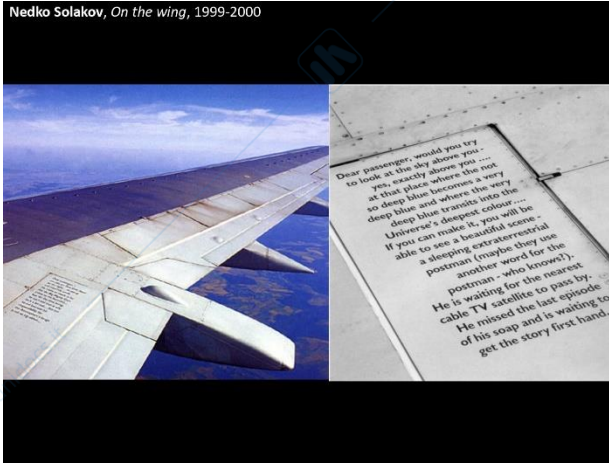
they have is new. That is not the case. They work the same as the others. This is the really interesting meaning we can find out from the comparison of these two situations. Everyone is a designer, everyone is an artist. It depends on what happens on your life, but we have all the capacities, the structure of our brain, hands and body that can help us becoming (depending on

This is a completely different philosophy professor likes a lot. Jacob Dahlgren is a Swedish artist, and this is the Scandinavian pavilion of the Biennale. The title of the work is I, the world, things, life. There is this huge wall where he has simply printed a vast number of targets and you can play darts. The experience consists of playing with darts. Life is simply a matter of being active, of doing something and pleasing (playing). The wall doesn't mean anything without people playing. In what we play, we live is

Nedko Solakov is a Bulgarian artist. Here in the main building of the Biennale, he shows this performance that again is showing the meaning of life. But the meaning by Solakov is completely different from Dahlgren's. On the one hand you have activity (the idea of doing something, of playing and enjoying) and here you have a kind of completely useless work (the repetition of something). There are two painters (white washers); one has black varnish and the other white varnish. They start painting

[Professor shows a video of the Pink Panther] It is precisely the same but the only thing that changes is the combination of the two colours, but the effect is really the same. Obviously, the context is different, but professor was fascinated by the fact that deals with human beings and the way in which we think. Specially when we think about the world of arts, we think that artists/designers are creative and means that they are extremely original: any idea

us) good designers and good artists. Sometimes we find ideas that are very similar although we are working in different fields. By the way, professor met Nedko Solakov in Milan and asked him whether he knew this very famous cartoon and told him "I am Bulgarian and when I was a child, it was forbidden to watch movies coming from the western world and specially the USA." It was the first time he heard about the Pink Panther.



Again, Solakov with this very beautiful installation called *On the wing*. Suppose you are simply flying from one place to the another and you have the look outside right on the wing. You are extremely disappointed because you can't have a look outside at the landscape outside, but in this particular case you can read an art piece which is really funny. Professor likes very much this kind of works because in a certain sense it is so easy to let people cry, it is much more difficult to let them laugh and at the same time think. This is

precisely what happened with this installation by Nedko Solakov.



This is much easier. This installation by Lars Ramberg was in front of the Scandinavian pavilion at the Biennale. These are standardized public toilets, simply painted in the three colours of the French flag: white, red and blue. On top of these toilets there is the French revolution motor: *liberté, égalité and fraternité*. So, humans have to be free, equal and have to be brothers. What makes us brothers and equals one to the other, and at the same time free is simply that have bodies. Our bodies are 8 billion bodies in the

world, and they work the same. This is the message, and in a certain sense is really easy: you don't have to study the history of the arts to understand it.



This is a beautiful picture professor took when he was in Kassel. It is right on the middle of the city; there is a huge Volkswagen factory and also this other typical neoclassical building (typical architectural language which is self-confident of being a real museum). You look at it and the building tells us it is a museum. It is the main place where Documenta Kassel takes places each 4 years. The thing is that in this picture there are three works of art. The title (*Poppy Field*) has given a clue; the field of

flowers is one. In fact there is a mixing of two different kind of poppies: one is the typical red poppies and the second are opium poppies (the ones used to produce opium). When you walk across this field you find yourself in front of this strange mixing of vegetables (the normal red

poppies mixed up with the opium poppies). The strange wave on the façade in the right is another one. It is a polycarbonate structure, and it is an installation inside the room that portraits outside on the façade. It is a kind of environment that should help people interact together. The third work are the trees, they are two of the 7000 of oaks that were planted by Joseph Beuys in 1986 (professor showed us a picture of him working precisely in front of this building). The bigger one was one of the trees planted by Beuys and the smaller one by his son (who completed the work of his father when he died). These are the three art pieces you can see in this picture.

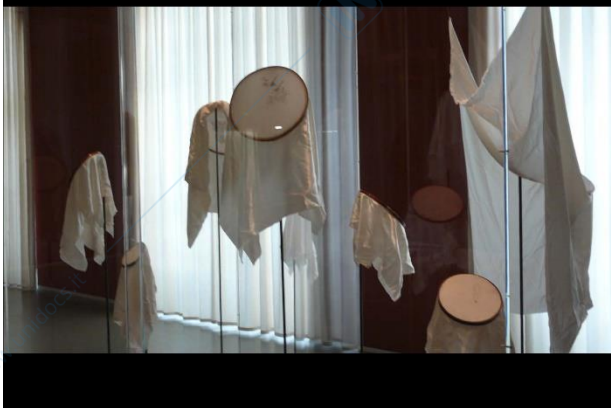
Trisha Brown, *Floor of the Forest*, 1970



The performers (all women) move walking, moving on this grid up and down, inside and outside mimicking the acting of sewing as if their bodies were needles. It is a very interesting performance.

This are some of the pieces that were shown inside the building. Inside, there was this interesting performance by Trisha Brown. She is a very famous British artist who is very much involved in understanding the role of women in society. This performance was made for the first time in 1970. Here, it was reproduced in 2007. You have this metal wire and these garments organized in a kind of grid. The performance is about the act of sewing and embroidering, which are typical feminine activities. The

Hu Xiaoyuan, various works exhibited at Documenta XII, Kassel 2007



of her body). All the decorations are related to women body or women world. It is a whole story about the world from a feminine perspective.

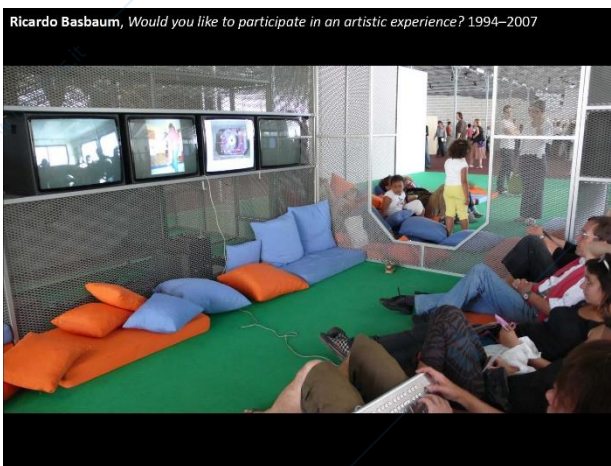
Again, we have a Chinese artist. A woman who is again interested in reflecting about embroidery. In this particular case, the embroidery that you see in the picture is made with her own hair. It is strange, you don't know it until you read the instructions or explanation of the art piece. In this way, the drawing (decoration) that has been embroidered on the material is part of her own body, becomes part of a body. It is not only the action she does (she really uses part of herself and transforms it into an extension



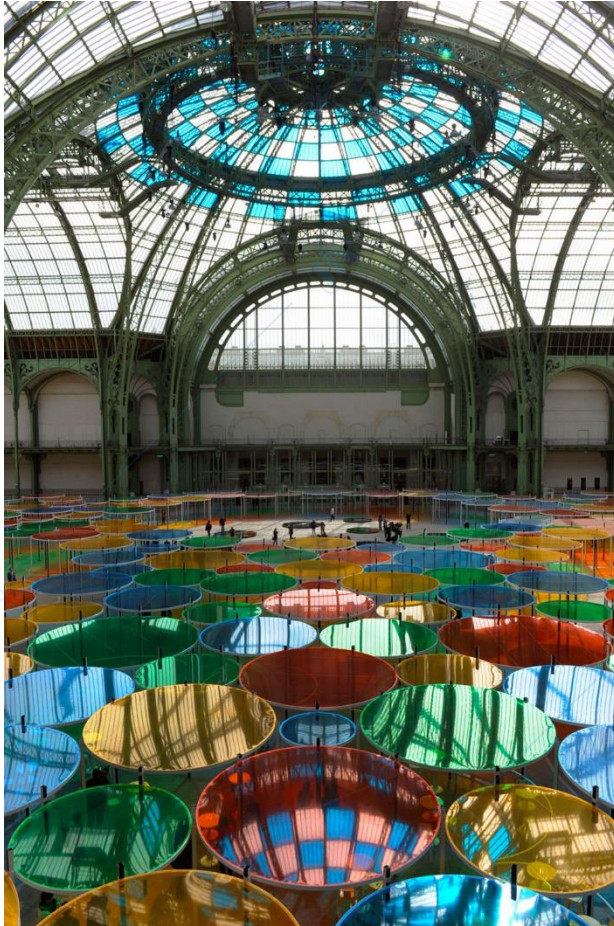
This one by Sheela Gowda is really fascinating. There is this environment; you enter the place and find yourself in front of these large tables made of a metal grid. On the metal surface you see these strange objects and recognise them (sometimes garments, pieces of paper, jewellery, wires...). The thing is that they are not the object, they are the ashes. There is a secret message inside this. We say in our religion "we are ashes and will become ashes". We are really looking at things that have been burnt. They have died and become very fragile remains of objects. Again, this is a very strong message of things that go through and disappear.



Again Nedko Solakov. He was very popular at that moment. It is a book. There is this very strong tradition of art books. There are very beautiful editions of very famous artists. In this particular case, the book is made of 90 pages and here the 90 pages are shown in this kind of small frames. 90 pages for 90 different fears. They represent 90 different fears we can have. We are overwhelmed by fears of different kinds and Solakov represent all those that are meaningful for him. The meaning is that an artist can dominate his own fears, can work with them and make them both useful and beautiful. In a certain sense, what we see in this installation is the personality of the author (it is displayed in these 90 small frames). It is a very interesting and emotional experience.

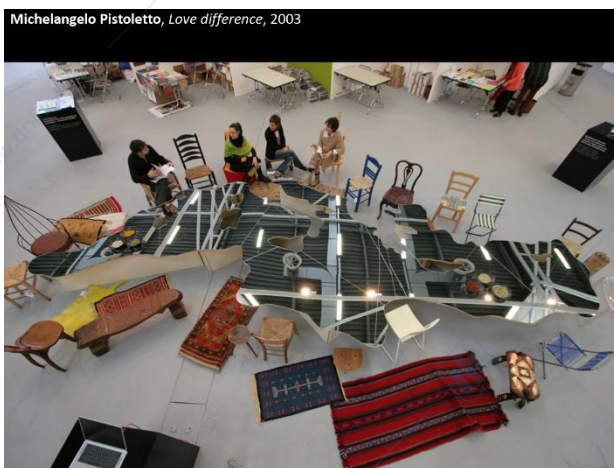


Ricardo Basbaum is the typical example of procedural art. What we see here is a picture of an installation showing a very complex process. This is what was shown in the exhibition in Kassel but the history is like this: Ricardo chooses an object and it is shown in the monitor. It is a plastic object big as a tray (and looking as it). He picked up 1000 items and give them to 1000 friends, asking them to use each of them someway. Then he recording his friends performing with the objects (trying to use them) and he had 1000 videos. These 1000 videos together with the object and some of the results of the objects are exhibited in this kind of spaces (metal framed boxes). You see people relaxing looking at the videos, chatting together and interrupting together in the exhibition. It is the design of a big performance and we see only the result. Again, it deals also with common sense, common life... with what we call bricolage: using objects without being experts. This is another very interesting installation that year in Germany.



[Professor shows some pictures out of the presentation that he took in Paris in a solo exhibition by Daniel Buren and the BNPT movement (mentioned in the lesson about conceptual art).] The installation is occupying the whole space and is in a certain sense an interior design project. It investigates the effect of light (and specially colour light) with the canapes. It is very spectacular not only because of the colours but also because of the scale of the installation. He painted the huge dome with blue and white transparent film that are reproduced right in the centre by a rounded mirror. It is a completely different way of using in a certain sense an art installation, it becomes a social advent involving large amount of people, gathering them and becoming themselves part of the installation (actors in the installation). The combination of very beautiful environments and the production of large installations is typical of those years. Obviously, you can understand an installation like this is not only a big art

event but also part of an economic strategy because obviously attracts a lot of tourists in Paris and makes all the economy. After the pandemic, we can go on with this kind of events. It is part not only of an art strategy but also of a way of involving the art in the city and making it part of a larger strategy. In any case, the installation was very beautiful and interesting for those focusing on temporary exhibition of fairs.



The author of this art piece is Michelangelo Pistoletto, member of this group named Arte Povera. This is a table which is shaped as if it was the shape of the Mediterranean Sea. The surface of the table is a mirror, that is why you see the ceiling reflected on the mirror. All around this table, there are chairs or simply objects onto which you can seat in different ways. Each one of these chairs represents the culture of the country there is at the border of the Mediterranean Sea at that part of the

table. (for example, Spanish chairs, French chairs, Italian chairs, Turkish chairs or different other objects related to the culture living around the Mediterranean Sea). It is a very beautiful installation because the chairs (which are really relevant in our work) are not only for seating, but they really shape our body. In this case, they are not only related to our bodies but also related to different cultures. The table, meaning the Mediterranean Sea, is the environment collecting all these cultures and people together. Precisely, this happens because the table was designed for organising meetings of people belonging to these different cultures and meetings of ONGs. It

shows a philosophy of people who wants to leave in peace together, who really wants to consider the Mediterranean Sea as a common space for conversation. That is why it is a really meaningful artwork. Most of the art pieces professor chose are related to social and political commitment, because he really thinks this is the fundamental message art can provide us with in this precise historical moment.



environmentally quite problematic. At the same time, they are part of the destiny of poor people who simply use plastic bags to carry out their belongings. Each part talks about different stories and at the same time, it is a really easy strategy. It is not a complex use of technologies; it is very simple and cheap, but the meaning of this installation is very strong and that is why it is very meaningful.



The ceiling becomes the floor, and the floor becomes the ceiling, and you have these big mushrooms on the floor ceiling, and you really think (because you have crossed the labyrinth and went through the darkness) that you have suddenly arrived in a different world. It is an emotional experience. All these mushrooms slowly spin around. It is a way of thinking about our certainties: we always think that a floor is a floor, and a ceiling is a ceiling, and we know what the normal size of a mushroom is. By the way, these mushrooms are very big and also dangerous (they are Amanita muscaria, which are poisonous, and you can die if you eat them). You also have this experience of a kind of dangerous environment/interior/room.

This is another beautiful work by Pascale Marthine Tayou, who is originally a Cameroonian artist who moved to Belgium and developed his art both in Belgium and France. This installation was exhibited in Venice in 2005. There is a metal grid onto which many colour plastic bags were hanged. Plastic bags are really light, so they move slowly according to the light, it is not a fixed form since they move and the shape always reacts to the wind. Plastic bags are part of everyday life and for many reasons are

This instead is a very spectacular experience. Carsten Höller really brings us into an extraordinary environment. It was exhibited for the first time in Milan in 2000 in the very first building of the Prada Foundation. It is a complex performance in a certain sense involving the audience. You enter into a labyrinth which becomes completely dark, and you don't see anything. When you finally find your own way out, you find yourself into the Upside-Down Mushroom Room. This installation is now visible in the new Prada Museum.

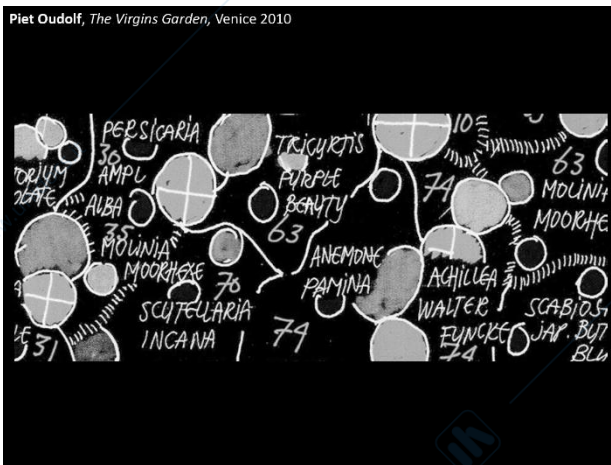


meaningful representation of a typical village in the USA. Professor thinks it is great.

Gregory Crewdson is an American artist who adopts the strategy of taking pictures. You don't really know whether he is a photographer or an artist. It is an artist definitely if you look at this picture. It is a kind of movie condensed into a single shot. You don't really know what the story is but you understand that there is a big existence: the role of this father, the trolley and what is there, the kind of light you see... There is a kind of metaphysical atmosphere that can recall Edward Hopper's paintings, but instead of a painting this is a real space. It is a very



Piet Oudolf, The Virgins Garden. This is still there in Venice, at the Arsenale. When you look at the picture you think you are looking to a bit of beautiful wild nature with wildflowers, grass, leaves, etc. and it is not. What you see has been carefully designed.



This is the sketch. Each single flower, the place in which was planted, has been designed. Professor finds this experience really extraordinary. Also, as a design methodology. We usually think we are the workers of the artificial but what really artificial is, is a puzzling concept because we design not only artificial objects but also, we use nature produced artificial environment. This is the reason why professor thinks it is a great installation; because it makes us think about what a way is of using nature and it is also

beautiful.



Here we go back to the typical artificial and to a kind of masterpiece in the 20th century. It is a car indeed and probably one of the most successful cars in France, designed by Flaminio Bertoni in 1955 it is the Citroën DS 90 and then 21. It represents a whole age in France (the 1950s and 60s). It is a real masterpiece. Tomas Maldonado (a design theorist famous in Germany and Italy, and one of the fathers of the School of Design of Politecnico di Milano) used to say that the car is the queen of goods. It really represents the whole century. But as you see, there is something strange in this car that Gabriel Orozco interprets the car in a very strange way. If you look it from the side, it is the real car but if you look it from the front there is something strange because the car has been cut and the middle part of the car was removed. Then, the car was reassembled, and the interior space now has room only for the driver. You can only be two inside the car: driver and someone in the back seat. This is a puzzling situation but also a way of reflecting about our lifestyle. We have huge beautiful and expensive cars, and, in most cases, we drive these cars alone. This is what Orozco tries to say; there is a misunderstanding, probably we don't really need these vehicles if we simply want to move around in the city. Still, they are very fascinating, they are part of our culture. For this reason, most of these artists, even in the present are continuators of some of the research of the 1960s about society, consumerism, etc.



Patrick Tuttofuoco used to be a friend of professor? He was based in Milan in the early 2000, then he moved to Berlin. This installation is made up of 6 different vehicles. They are bicycles with strange shape; each one of these 6 vehicles (in the picture we only see 3) are portraits. The shape of the vehicles represents the personality of 6 different friends of Tuttofuoco (three girls and three boys). So, each vehicle is a portrait. The thing is that you can use them as bicycles, and they were exhibited in the opening exhibition of the Kanazawa museum of the 21st century. They were exhibited precisely to let the visitors bike around in the spaces of the museum. They were designed for strong interaction with the visitors themselves. It means that art is not only a matter of understanding, looking at something, it can also be a matter of acting and also be useful in the typical interpretation we give to products.

Donald Judd, *Chair #68*, 1989; *Metal Chair*, 1989

This is another very interesting example for interior designers. It is a series of two chairs designed by Donald Judd, who is one of the masters of minimal art. In the late 1980s he started designing pieces of furniture or reflecting on what is the role of furniture in interiors and how to shape furniture (not in terms of affordances but in terms of shape). Here there are two chairs that reflect on the relationship between the space around and the chair itself and fundamentally what is a corner. At the same time, you look at a chair and try to understand what the meaning of a corner in a space is. That is why they are not symmetrical. Because they are not symmetrical, they go on with the typical minimal research that is not related to anthropometry (to the body). It is a way of looking at a chair as something that is not related to the body, it is a kind of contradiction/paradox.

Pingyao, Shanxi, reproduction of a Ming chair, 17th century



Once the professor was in China, he found this. It is a very beautiful chair designed in the 17th century during the Ming Dynasty. The chair is precisely developing the same research. Not the decoration but the concept is exactly the same Donald Judd was trying to develop or experience in his work.

Franz West, *The Moon project*, installation at MoMA, New York 2001
Andrea Blum, *Garden and Fountains*, installation at the Biennale in Venice 2005

We are in the early 2000 and we find two artists: Franz West (German) and Andrea Blum. They are designers. In the picture on the left side, you have this mixing up of this kind of small sofas and the very famous metal chair by Harry Bertoia. If you were not an expert, you could think that both the sofa and chairs were designed by a (furniture) designer. Instead, they were sofas designed by an artist. In the right picture, you see these strange metal structure. There are benches but also structures holding plants and we could think of kind of urban furniture. Instead, they are part of an art installation by Andrea Blum in the Venice Biennale. The more and more artists experience methodology that is really the same a furniture designer could use, and it is really hard today to find the treasure dividing an artist from a designer in some cases. Sometimes the only thing is the place, if it is an art museum/gallery rather than a public space, but even sometimes in public spaces you have art installations. It is hard to distinguish from design works.

Dré Wapenaar, *Treetents*, 1998

For example in this case we don't really know if they are tents, if it is a camping field for tourists or an art installation. The technology Dré Wapenaar adopts is really the typical technology of tents but the meaning is completely different. These strange three tents are part of a larger strategy performed by a group of environmental activists that were fighting against the government (they wanted to build a highway crossing this wood). They decided to live inside the wood, inside these tents to fight against the government. This was a successful campaign because in the end they decided to move the highway from this part to another one and the wood survived. So, again objects that are really difficult to put in the field of the art rather than that of product design.

Lucy Orta, *Body Architecture - Foyer D*, 2002

This is even more evident in Lucy Orta's installations. This installation is halfway between a tent and a government. It represents the possibility of building up a community of 6 people or keeping people in touch using the typical language of sportswear. There is an interesting message you find on these strange sculptures and it is particularly interesting the mixing up of technologies and languages in Lucy Orta's work.

N55, *Snail Shell System*, 2001

Here is the collective N55, which is a group of danish artists who work on the topic of minimal dwelling. This is a kind of boat that you can use on lakes but also it is easy to be transported from one place to the other. So, in the end it is an investigation on the notion of dwelling, the notion of living in a particular environment such as a lake. It looks like a yoyo. Again, this is the work of a product designer in terms of language, but it is completely different in terms of meaning.



This is by the American artist Andrea Zittel. This art installation is called A to Z 1994 Living Unit. It was firstly designed by the artist to sell. She used this installation in her own small house. It is a kind of integrated piece of furniture that was designed to satisfy the basic necessities of living. This one is the first of a series. In the following years (1995-1996-1997, etc) she developed different living units. In this case, the units were customized (designed for a precise person) and were sold in art galleries. In a certain sense, she adopts the typical strategy of customizing products; there is a general idea and then there is a series that changes year by year (like if it was a car, for example). The car is always the same model but year by year something changes according to a different style, according to the optionals that you can put in the car. By the way, this is really an object that you can move from one place to another because as you see from the picture, you can close the object and becomes portable. There is also this idea of nomadic living inside the installation (basic necessities + nomadic living, which were typical messages of lifestyle of the 90s).

Specially from 2010 onwards, Chinese artists tried to enter the art market. China wanted to become relevant not only because of the economic power of the nation but also in terms of culture, and there was a strong development of the arts starting from those years onwards.



This is a video showing a machine that produces a useless work (useless machine) but is a very complex technological equipment. The authors are Sun Yuan and Peng Yu, and the artwork is called the Smoke installation. The artists are the same in the next artwork.



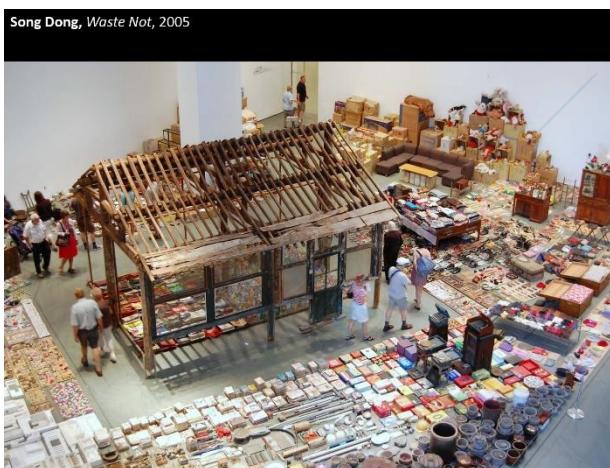
Significantly, they developed the same research with another huge machine in 2016. [Professor plays a video] It is a robot provided with an artificial intelligence. It works properly to clean the floor for this kind of liquid looking like blood. It is totally useless because the floor has a very gently slope so it goes on spreading, but the machine goes on and never stops. It is a completely useless work, and it is similar to the previous research. There are a lot of questions about these robots. What are they for? What is artificial intelligence for?

It is so relevant in nowadays life everyone is dealing with artificial intelligence. These pieces are precisely designed to help us understanding the meaning of new technologies.



experience because it helps us understanding that nothing is fixed.

This is another example [professor plays a video] but is not easy to understand. You can see a kind of carpet full of heavy bricks. You can see it is slowly moving and it is strange because when thinking about bricks you think they are steady. The reason why they move is because they are put on top of a water mattress (there is water behind the bricks, but we don't know). The result is a contradictory experience between what we know about the object that we see and what the objects do. This is an interesting



all the papers, all the shoes of the children from when they were young. It was an astonishing experience. Therefore, Song Dong decided to transform this life experience into an installation which is at the same time the story of his own family and a tribute to her mother after she died. It is really an emotional installation, something that many mothers do in their life. It is an attempt of fighting against the time passing keeping the memory of the family and at the same time of their own lives. The reason why they have lived which is the family. For this reason, it is an extraordinary installation.

The last one is Waste Not by Song Dong. Professor has never seen such an installation. The small wooden house you see is the typical poor one-room house in the countryside in the Republic of China. It was the house in which Song Dong was born (family house). Song Dong's mother lived in this small house throughout all her life. When at the end she died, Song Dong came back to the family house and found out that her mother had cut in this small house all the objects that were related to the family life; all the garments,



Banksy tries to fight against the typical institutions that govern the art market. Professor says the video is really interesting for the strategies and the result, the only thing is that unfortunately the market can eat everything, even the destroyed work (which is on the market). Precisely because that happening, it is even more valuable in terms of money nowadays. It is really hard to fight

[To conclude, professor shows a video about the very famous story of the auction in which the girl and the Balloon was sold (by Banksy, the most famous artist in the world nowadays).] (Once the painting is allocated, it is shredded in protest of Banksy against the institutions that govern the art market.) This happened a couple of years ago, it is a fascinating and meaningful video about the way in which

against the art market. Banksy is a really interesting artist, probably the one that represents the best the way in which professor thinks art should act in society nowadays.

