

**Transcript of an interview of Catherine Opie by Curators Daniel Strong and Greg Manuel.**

Conducted in conjunction with the exhibition, *Queer/Dialogue*, on view at the Grinnell College Museum of Art from 7 September through 12 December 2021.

Daniel Strong:

Please introduce yourself in a way that you feel most appropriate for this exhibition.

Catherine Opie:

Okay. Hi, I'm Catherine Opie and I'm an artist predominantly working in the medium of photography. I am also a professor, long standing now, 20 years of teaching at UCLA in the art department. I have worked in photography in relationship to talking about community and I'm a lesbian. I talk about my own community as well as other communities in the bodies of work that I've made for over 30 years, and I feel very fortunate that I've been able to have a long voice in this world we call the art world.

Daniel Strong:

You went to LA when you were about 12 from Sandusky, Ohio—

Catherine Opie:

13. Not to LA, but to a little community called Poway, California, which is North County San Diego. I moved to LA for graduate school when I went to CalArts. I started living in LA in 1988.

Daniel Strong:

When did you begin showing your work?

Catherine Opie:

Right after graduate school, there was this great, amazing poetry outpost out in Venice, California called Beyond Baroque. And at that point in time, Dennis Cooper would be reading Bob Flanagan, Richard Hawkins, a really amazing queer kind of literary community of people here in LA. And after graduating, I had focused most of my work on master-planned communities in Valencia, California, because I went to grad school at CalArts. And so a lot of looking at community was thinking about kind of the white flight from major cities and what it meant to make a master plan community. And the irony of it all is I had all these amazing queer professors like Catherine Lord, and even Douglas was teaching at that time. There was an amazing mix of voices and politics.

I had left San Francisco, and the AIDS epidemic was full force, my community was shrinking vastly, and I was off photographing suburbia. And my professors were like, "Well, why are you photographing suburbia?" And I said, because I think that we need to analyze all aspects of community and culture in relationship to my own idea of where I belong, like where is queerness, so to speak. And so then I moved in and the show that I did at Beyond Baroque was actually also looking at a transitional community, which is MacArthur Park is a very fringe community an enormous amount of El Salvadorian refugees, a lot of gangs. I moved into that and then thought about that history of what MacArthur Park

was in the middle of the city. Because I was living in a house that was built in 1898, which is really old for LA.

Catherine Opie:

And so I started to think about what ... So going from suburbia, which isn't gentrification, which is doing its own kind of ... I would consider suburbia somewhat dystopic, but they think of it as utopic, on to then true kind of urban gentrification and what that meant for a community, especially of refugees and in terms of El Salvador. So that was the beginning of the work. And that body of work was called A Long Way from Paris. And that showed in 1989 in Beyond Baroque. And then I went ahead and switched from that kind of work and went into the studios [inaudible 00:06:18], which was all of my friends wearing fake mustaches and beards. And then that showed at a collective art space in New York, a women's collective. And then I was showing up in San Francisco with all the early portraits. And then I ended up getting gallery representation with Regan projects in '93, and I was in the Whitney Biennial in '95. So that's a little background. Sorry, it was a long background.

Daniel Strong:

No, it's interesting. So you've been with Sean Reed a long time.

Catherine Opie:

Yes, I have.

Greg Manuel:

Amazing. One of the things that I found interesting looking at ... And I've always found interesting looking at your work, is the variance of topics. And one of the things you said, I think you mentioned it in the film that we're also going to have on the website, the one that Cindy Anderson did-

Catherine Opie:

Oh, Cindy's film was a beautiful film.

Greg Manuel:

Yeah. And you talked about a holding space and you mentioned that, I think in several interviews that I've read and when I've heard you speak, you often talk about holding space for community and holding space for people and holding is just a general term that I find quite interesting. And you've also described the ideas of identity and architecture and body and those facades that are sort of similar and relate to each other for you. And I wondered if you could maybe talk a little bit about that idea, those ideas.

Catherine Opie:

Yeah. I think I use holding in all these different ways. I think it's interesting that you brought that up because it is a word that I use. And I think that it's funny, people tell me that I'm a really good hugger. They're like, "Oh, I really need a Cathy Opie hug." Right now during COVID-19, my friends are calling me and saying, "God, I really miss your hugs." And maybe holding is part of being a good hugger, I have no idea. This is the first time I've ever verbally saying this by the way. But I think of being held in all different ways. And I think it's about what art does for us actually. When I go to a museum and I'm

standing before a piece that just I love, or that enters me in a different way, say Alice Neel's portrait of Warhol.

Catherine Opie:

When I stand before that painting, the vulnerability of Warhol in that painting and the relationship of what it is to look at it, it's also holding me. It's not only holding me visually, but it's holding me on all these other kinds of psychological levels of what art can do in terms of moving you in a visual platform. And I think I like that term for those ideas of what art can bring to us, that there is this silence in looking, but a cacophony of ideas that end up being a receptor in your brain for what it was a person was thinking about and looking at. And I like this idea of being held in terms of thinking about art, I guess.

Daniel Strong:

The things we think about in terms of queer art, we think of it as, I shouldn't say we, because I don't know who we is, but I give it that it's confrontational or that we as queer people are confrontational. There isn't that kind of confrontation in a lot of your work, although I'm sure with Self-Portrait/Pervert, I'm sure people saw that as very confrontational, but it's also very tender. There's a tenderness in a lot of your work that I don't see as confrontational, even though, I mean, people who are homophobic, queer phobic, just see us, in our identity, we are just naturally to them confrontational. It is a confrontation. Whereas your work doesn't seem confrontational in that way.

Catherine Opie:

I've never really, I mean, I think that Pervert is even a hard piece for me, to be honest. I mean, it's the one piece that I went ahead and I released the last AP of, and the Guggenheim got it, because I didn't actually need to live with it, whereas Self-Portrait cutting on my back is a piece that I just feel is so much epitomize me. But it's interesting that you say that because Pervert was an angry piece. I was angry when I made that piece. And I try not to live in a place of anger. I think that anger can do an enormous amount. There is enormous amount to be angry about, and I do believe in protest. I do believe in action, but I don't want to necessarily make work that only comes from one emotional kind of space, and especially a space of anger. I'm really happy that people make that work.

Catherine Opie:

I think about some angry work that I just go to and it's so utterly important, but I wanted to be able to really grapple with homophobia in relationship to a larger way that we think about identity in community and who is even in our family. I have friends who have parents who are Republican and they don't talk to their parents anymore, nor do their parents want to talk to them anymore. And I certainly have members in my extended family on Julie's side, that are very much Republicans, as well as I grew up in a Republican family. But I don't think that there's value in a discourse that doesn't open up ideas. And so I'm more interested in always kind of opening the door and what visibility means and how visibility is performed within my own community. And hopefully not maybe changing somebody from being homophobic, but certainly having them ask a lot more questions. And anger tends to close things down in a lot of ways. There's only one kind of perspective.

Daniel Strong:

I mean, the best place to start, I think, in joining, in bringing communities together is just them seeing each other.

Catherine Opie:

Yeah, visibility.

Daniel Strong:

That's what your work does in a very powerful way. One of the first works that I acquired for the Grinnell College Museum way back in 2002, I think, was the "O" Portfolio.

Catherine Opie:

Oh, yeah.

Daniel Strong:

And I actually bought it, I didn't realize that Susan Inglett had published it, can you talk a little bit about how that came about? Because I still have a relationship with Susan Inglett, she's found some great things for me over the years, but your portfolio was one of the first ones that, and it's still the only thing we have in the collection to date. But can you talk a little bit about that portfolio? Just because having you on the phone, I'd be remiss if I didn't ask you about the piece we have.

Catherine Opie:

Yeah, absolutely. No, I think that ... I mean, the "O" portfolio is a play with language with Mapplethorpe's X Portfolio.

Daniel Strong:

Right.

Catherine Opie:

"O" is not only what my last name begins with, but it's also about kind of a play of language, it's like, Oh. Or it can be thinking of a vaginal opening, Oh. And then there's of course the famous book, the Story of O, and then in relationship to sexuality, and then there's another play of that in terms of its title, and that I'm playing Tic-tac-toe with with Robert. And so the idea of X and O is like a Tic-tac-toe game. So that would be like a very much embedded within the title of the idea of like, "Okay, I'm going to have a conversation with you Robert, I never got to meet you. You were always in my stratosphere, the X Portfolio was something that as an undergraduate student at San Francisco Art Institute, that I would go to time and time again at Fraenkel Gallery to look at. And at that point, I think the portfolio was like \$1,200 or \$1,500, and Jeffrey would keep teasing me saying, "Do you want to buy it?" And I'm like, "I don't have any money. I'm an artist at San Francisco Art Institute."

Catherine Opie:

I should have bought it. I should have figure figured out that one. And so it was a body of work that was always out there that was incredibly important to me figuring out my own identity and relationship to the leather community. And so I basically wanted to have a conversation with Robert and I had made all of these black and white photographs over the years of my friends that I had never shown because it was always too close to Robert's work. And it's a good thing to have a conversation with an artist, but sometimes things are too close. So if I started showing square black and white photographs of the SM community in the 80s, when I started them, as well as in the 90s, they would have been thought of as

being too close to Mapplethorpe. And so what I was able to do is kind of go back into those negatives and pull out details.

Catherine Opie:

So each one of those images in the "O" Portfolio is actually not the full image. It's racking me in larger all the way up and pulling out one little grainy detail of what would have been a perfectly square format image that kind of a Mapplethorpe composition. So I'm really interested in ideas of just the way that actually women see versus men and how they see. Men kind of go through the world like this, where women tend to, are able to like, and this is actually true because with my 18 year old son, he is like, "Mom, where is it?" And I'm like, "It's right there in the middle of the fridge." He's like, "I don't see it." And then I go and I show him it's right there, exactly where I said.

Catherine Opie:

And so the "O" Portfolio plays with that idea of not only kind of changing the aesthetics of Mapplethorpe, but the little bits of details of what we, the kind of [inaudible 00:17:23] within the SM community. And then using platinum printing copper plates and paper. And I wanted to get away from the silver gelatin print and I wanted that embedded within the paper and what that process is, and kind of ink, and it's a different relationship to photography, but it has just the most utterly beautiful qualities in terms of printmaking.

Daniel Strong:

XOXO is actually also shorthand for hugs and kisses.

Catherine Opie:

It is. [crosstalk 00:18:01]. I often sign things XOXO to friends. There's usually always hugs and kisses at the end of my notes.

Daniel Strong:

But now, I get maybe it's the reception of Robert's portfolio. I mean, it was seen as more confrontational, whereas yours is not. I mean, were you thinking in terms of that of taking his more confrontational work and not being that confrontational? It's more intimate, it's almost more private, your words, I mean. Was that-

Catherine Opie:

Yeah, I wanted the intimacy. I wanted the privacy. I didn't want this kind of ability to turn away, and I had learned that a little bit with Pervert, even though Pervert is really, really beautiful, or even the large Polaroid pieces I've made of Ron Athey, some of it is cringe worthy and there's a one image in Mapplethorpe's X Portfolio that does make me cringe. I mean, most of them don't, but there's one cringe worthy in which the man's balls are smashed and there's blood and that's [crosstalk 00:19:18]. Even though I watched Bob Flanagan nail his scrotum to a board, and I can certainly go with things that are potentially cringe worthy, I think that I also wanted a delicacy to it that would be, even though I'm Butch identified, that would be kind of a femme response to Mapplethorpe so to speak. A female response, not a femme response.

Daniel Strong:

Right. The rich velvety quality of the photograph you were, I mean, almost emphasizes that intimacy, that kind of almost pleasure of the tactility of the images is one of the things that I find-

Catherine Opie:

Well, photogravure requires kind of a hand, right? It's a different thing than taking an enlarger and putting it all the way up and just projecting on a paper, which is how I got to them in the first place, but to go through the aquatint and then the actual kind of physicality of what it means to wipe and buff a plate when I watched Greg make them in the studio, it was just really magical to me, just how you can get the image to respond in a certain way by the touch of the hand. And there's not much touch of the hand in photography,

Greg Manuel:

Yeah. Greg Burnett printed those?

Catherine Opie:

Yeah.

Greg Manuel:

Okay.

Daniel Strong:

I don't think I knew that. I mean, with photography, it's easy to forget that it's an object. I mean, especially now, when everybody's photographs only live on their phones, they don't actually exist in the real world anymore. I mean, in a photograph where you get a sense of it as an object, not just as an image, as an actual thing.

Catherine Opie:

Yeah. No, and I like photographs as object. I mean, I think about scale, I think about paper. I really think about the photograph in that place. There's a reason why I picked the materials that I pick when I'm printing an exhibition or thinking about work. I think that now it's so easy to just flick through the phone that, what does it mean to stand before something? And that's going back to what Greg asked me, which is being held in a certain way, how does the physical artwork actually hold us? And we can't do it this way. The same thing with teaching through Zoom, it's very difficult because you need to hold that classroom. You need to be watching all the body language around you and you can't do that in these little snapshot windows at this moment.

Daniel Strong:

No. I don't know. It's weird not being able to be with people, but having to interact with people, it's very strange.

Catherine Opie:

Yeah.

Greg Manuel:

One of the questions we've been asking the artists in the show, I mean, mainly because it specifically relates to the show, but is around the word queer, and there's a wide variety of artists in the show from different ages and from different backgrounds with ... All of them have had a different response to that word, whether it's something they're comfortable with or not, or how they decide that they fit into it. And I guess I want to ask you the same thing, if that's a word you're comfortable with and where you fit into it?

Catherine Opie:

Yeah. I would say that I fit into queer and I would say that I kind of adopted queer throughout the latter part of the 80s, and the act up when queer nation was kind of brought in, and especially within kind of the leather community, there wasn't much fluidity to a certain extent in what you could call yourself. I mean, I proudly called myself a dyke as well, I always liked that word. I love the Dyke March, I'm dykey, there's lots of things you can do with that. And then lately I've kind of reclaimed lesbian, which is so odd. It was a term that I kind of pushed away in throughout the 80s and 90s, and most of 2000s, and now, I'm just like, I'm a lesbian.

Greg Manuel:

Why did you push it away?

Catherine Opie:

I pushed it away because it felt too prescribed in relationship to kind of defining of a very specific kind of women who love women. It didn't encompass kind of more of my wildness in the way that I thought of things, it felt too suburban, I suppose.

Daniel Strong:

I was actually thinking that, I was going to interject that. It's like, was it too objectified, too suburban? And there the, I guess that's my own thinking of it as it's almost too mainstream, which is not, I mean, there's no element, well, I guess it's getting more mains. I mean, it's being more accepted obviously to be queer and to be called a queer, and to be called a dyke. Whereas at one point, I mean, when I was young, they were insults, even queer people wouldn't call each other that because it hadn't been occupied yet. Whereas now obviously it is. Was there a point where ... I mean, for example, if a homophobe were to call you queer, would you be insulted or is it kind of like the [crosstalk 00:25:13].

Catherine Opie:

No, then it would feel like, Oh, you see me?

Daniel Strong:

So it isn't? Even from the non-queer community, if they're using it as an insult, you don't take it as an insult?

Catherine Opie:

No, if they called me a dyke, I would know it would be an insult, but if they call me queer, I feel like, Oh, you're kind of understanding the landscape that I operate in, in terms of your own cisgender.

Daniel Strong:

But even if Pat Buchanan called you queer, you wouldn't, at this point?

Catherine Opie:

I don't even think he would know how to title me as that. Quite honestly, I think he would be like, "Is she a man? Is she a woman? What is she?"

Greg Manuel:

The definition of that, well, there is no ... Well we've posited that there's an ever changing sort of fluid definition of that word as well, which is what makes it to me, and in conversation with Dan, I think you'll agree that it is sort of an umbrella term that can fit a lot of different groups within it.

Catherine Opie:

Yeah. So there's a fluidity to it. [inaudible 00:26:24] is defined in terms of ... Yeah, I like the fluidity of it.

Greg Manuel:

And in that way, I wonder how you responded to ... Because I've read also in the past, you've mentioned, and I think this is fair, but you don't identify only as a queer artist, and that is ... Which I don't know anybody that really does anymore, but is that something that's very conscious, a conscious kind of pushing away of that term because it's limited or?

Catherine Opie:

No, it is about kind of how we get boxed in and relationship to a singular identity. And that's something that you've heard me say in interviews if you've dug in, is that I'm not interested in a singular identity. I'm a human being with a lot of ideas in my mind and I'm looking at the world and trying to answer these various questions that come into my mind about how we function as human beings and society and beginning to craft work and relationship to those internal questions.

Catherine Opie:

And they certainly come from a question of a queer body in terms of my own identity, but that doesn't mean that that's the only identity that I operate on from, that I am still a daughter from the Midwest, from a conservative Republican family, and you can't erase all of that kind of laid upon you as well. And so I think that the way that I'm most interested in ideas around identity is the acknowledgement and creating visibility for an identity that I am quite proud of about being out and how hard it was to come out, but also to make sure that that's not the only entry point in relationship to the things that I think about or care about in terms of mapping out communities and society.

Daniel Strong:

Yeah. I think you've certainly never been in one direction as a photographer. I mean, you're one of the, probably the only person in this exhibition that we can talk about bodies of work, separate bodies of work, and you've always worked that way. And it's never been, you can't pigeonhole your work as the work of a queer artist and clearly that was intentional or was it? Is it just because your varied interests, it was just naturally you were not going to be a one trick artist?

Catherine Opie:



Well, I think it wasn't intentional when I've got so much attention for the early portraits. And still every interview starts out with the early portraits. "In the 90s, she made this." I was like, "Five periods of my life in 30 years of making work." And that doesn't mean that I don't dip back into making work in relationship to my own identity, in '98, I made Domestic after I made American Cities. I think that I left it and started making Freeways because I did realize that I was being put in shows that were only about my identity. And I wanted to make sure that that wasn't just the case.

Daniel Strong:

Right.

Catherine Opie:

And then I had a lot of other interests. And I didn't want all the work that I had done through undergraduate and graduate school, and even after grad school, to be lost because I'd all of a sudden went into the studio and started making portraits and the way that I began to make them.

Daniel Strong:

Right. And one of the purposeful things we did with this exhibition, which if you read, the prospectus was prompted by a student, he was a sophomore at the time, or was he a junior? I forget how long it was. And he came into the office and he said, "I think we should do a queer art show." Which we hadn't done. One of the things he wanted to be a component of the show was to bring in a sample of the AIDS Quilt, because he had never seen an exhibition of that. Now, we ended up not doing that, but-

Catherine Opie:

I guess what you can do, you can put it on [inaudible 00:30:35] monitor because they just announced this week that the entirety of the AIDS Quilt is now visually online.

Greg Manuel:

Oh, wow.

Catherine Opie:

Yeah, that just happened this week.

Greg Manuel:

Amazing.

Catherine Opie:

That you can see every single panel of the AIDS Quilt now online.

Greg Manuel:

Wow.

Daniel Strong:

That makes me particularly proud of the fact that the first charity I ever consistently gave to was to the NAMES Project.

Catherine Opie:

Oh, no, I used to go in, I'm not a very good sower, so I would just help them with other things. But San Francisco, I used to go up and volunteer as the quilts were being made and the NAMES Project, it was still to this day, one of the most beautiful, personal political works in my mind.

Daniel Strong:

Absolutely.

Greg Manuel:

When we first interrupted-

Daniel Strong:

Sorry I interrupted you.

Greg Manuel:

When we first talked about this show with you, you were very quick to decide on the work that you wanted to show in the exhibition, which is that the film, *The Modernist* and accompanying images. And I wondered if you could talk a little bit about why now and why that seemed like the kind of the body of work that would be appropriate?

Catherine Opie:

Yeah. I mean, because of its ability to be in the world at this point without having to actually kind of spoonfeed the audience with what that queer body is doing within the mix of that. And I think that the other work is not only my own kind of celebration of my community, but it is also kind of there to begin to talk about visibility and begin to educate people. And *The Modernist*, I feel is all of my ideas that have encompassed my work in the last 30 years.

Catherine Opie:

So you have architecture, you have income disparity, you have *Pig Pen's* body that I have been literally making images of *Pig Pen's* since 1980 in the late 80s and a dear, dear friend. And so I just felt like that piece, I wanted to show a piece that was of the moment, of what people are thinking about now. And I wanted the queer body to just exist in space without saying this is a queer body. And so I just felt that *The Modernist* was the newest work that I had made that felt like it encompassed all of these other ideas in relationship to other bodies of work. And that was why I was like, I want to show *The Modernist*.

Daniel Strong:

And it's almost kind of like a premonition. I mean, when you made that work, you had no idea this was the world we were going to be living in.

Catherine Opie:

Well, yeah. Or even *Parasite* that came out later and then won an Oscar. I mean, *The Modernist* was grappling with the exact same things that were laid out within that film. I mean, except for this is about the artists and in conversation with Chris Marker's *La Jetee*, that was the fear of the future. And this is about the longing of the past. And then now we're even at a deeper longing of the past with a weird

nostalgia. And that's what the current body of work is trying to do, rhetorical landscapes. And that's the beauty of being an artist and making work is would I have ever gotten to what I'm making now without making *The Modernist*? So you hope that as an artist, you just engage in a long conversation with your own ideas, as you traverse through multiple bodies of work.

Greg Manuel:

The-

Daniel Strong:

Sorry, Greg. I keep interrupting you.

Greg Manuel:

Go ahead.

Daniel Strong:

What was the logistics of doing that, of getting to the houses and just ... Well, I mean, it is like a movie shoot, so-

Catherine Opie:

Yeah, it's like a movie shoot. I mean-

Daniel Strong:

It was your first film-

Catherine Opie:

Yeah. Well, second film actually, I made a documentary that people don't really know about. It did the Film Circuit, it won in Cleveland. It won a couple prizes, but it's called *Same Difference*. And I made it with Lisa Udelson. And it's considered a short, and it was basically children talking about what Prop 8 did for them in California in relationship to not allowing their parents to be married. And it's really from a kid's perspective of what it is to grow up in a queer family. And so I made that, and that was great, but Lisa, my good friend that I made it with is a filmmaker. And so it was a collaboration, but it was also her editing and her baby. And this is my first time making a piece that I'm fully controlling.

Daniel Strong:

How long did it take?

Catherine Opie:

*The Modernist* took years and years of thinking about it, because there was a whole twist, there was a whole different ending and there was going to be a different story, but with the election of Trump and everything that was happening politically as I was making it, because I finished it, knowing that Trump had won ... Did I know? Let's see, when did it show at Regan? Either he had won, I have to look at the time clock, but anyway, you'll notice in *The Modernist*, in terms of the newspapers, you see Hillary got nominated, right? So you have real news with fake news before fake news became-

Daniel Strong:

You created fake news.

Catherine Opie:

So you don't even, because the burning of the houses that we printed on the L.A. Times that the character would open, would be the real day news along with the printed fake news of the house burning down. And then the cutting out of the newspaper of all the arson and all of those things were all real news of real arson in California as California burned. And the collage is besides the report that Pig Pen cuts out about burning down the house. They're cutting out all real pictures and articles out of the newspaper. So the kind of artwork that the protagonist is making of the big collage in their studio, which is where they live as well with the most perfectly picked out furniture now. So it's interesting because the news just keeps happening and just keeps going on, but what I love about that piece is it touches on exactly what was happening at the time that I was making it.

Catherine Opie:

At the same time, kind of intervening with it, but it took, to secure the sites and stuff, to go back to your question, fortunately, the Sheats-Goldstein house is left to LACMA. And so Michael Govan just made a phone call and I was able to go up there without having to permit or any fees, because it's just like, I'm not really a film crew, I'm just one person with the camera. And the interesting thing about the piece is it looks like it's shot from multiple cameras in terms of the way that I edited it, but it's me just telling Pig Pen again, to walk this way, and then I would move my body and shoot from the front or shoot from the back or over the shoulder, or use depth of field. So basically making still images, I mapped out as if you were looking at a multiple camera set. And then fortunately, the owners of the [inaudible 00:39:13] Fair happened to be Taschen. And so I was able to access that house and then you'll notice that Pig Pen's only on the outside of Larry Gagosian's house, but we never get into it.

Daniel Strong:

Yeah.

Catherine Opie:

So what's odd is with Lautner, I'm a big Lautner fan in terms of architecture. Actually, our house in Three Rivers, Lautner had his vacation house in Three Rivers too, which were two prefab, geodesic domes. And I would visit that site all the time because we would sneak into the, it was the best swimming hall in Three Rivers. So we would always go there. But the odd thing is that Lautner is almost too high of a utopic architect to really burn down, right? Because their art works in a certain way. So it's not a case study house. It's not thinking of that kind of utopic moment, but obviously the character at this point would never even be able to get a case study house. So the character just goes for the one upper thing that is loved, which is Lautner houses. It's that old story, that myth, of you destroy what you love.

Daniel Strong:

Right. Greg?

Greg Manuel:

Yeah.

Catherine Opie:

You're laughing. You're like, okay, Cathy.

Greg Manuel:

No. I mean, I watched it a number of times and the last time I watched it, I paid particular attention to the headlines, and you've answered the question, but I did wonder, I mean, the first time I saw it, I said, "Is that really Larry Gagosian's house?" Is that a crack and/or a jab at him and/or at the art world in general? Was that an actual headline?

Catherine Opie:

No, that was my headline. It was really his house. It was the first house the character went to, to burn down because the character is an artist.

Greg Manuel:

Right.

Catherine Opie:

The character obviously hasn't been able to be a successful artist because they're living in a 500 square foot studio and they're making their art. And they're thinking about, what is the next big act as an artist? And that is to destroy what they can't have. And so it is about the haves and the have-nots in that way, which also, is very much true within, especially women and we're looking at Pig Pen's body and Pig Pen reads definitely as male, but Pig Pen is trans and also the trans body in relationship to the art world is something that is also hasn't been completely embraced to a certain extent. I mean, it's changed in the last number of years, but it's like we have a lot of queer art shows, but there hadn't been a lot of trans art shows.

Greg Manuel:

One of my favorite images is the image of Pig Pen coming in the next morning and opening the newspaper and on their face is just this sort of triumphant and yet subtle smile of recognition, of accomplishment, and it was a moment that I paused, because there was something about that particular look that said a lot to me. We're excited to have it in the show, very much so.

Catherine Opie:

Oh, I'm so glad. I'm so glad you're going to be showing it because I mean, it's a piece that is ... I've explained it in other interviews and to other people that it's kind of like, it encompasses all the parts of me and I don't think I've had a body of work do that. And this one did that for me, where it was like, okay, it's not only this body that I love to look at that I've looked at for all these years as a photographer and love this person so much, but it's also about my obsession around design and architecture. And the fact is that also on a personal level, I've made work in that studio that I shot, and that was my studio behind my West Adams house, and it was 500 square feet. And I moved into that house and built the studios when Oliver was born.

Catherine Opie:

And that was the last piece that I made before we sold the house and I moved and moved studios. So it also was a little bit of a swan song to the fact that as an artist, I was able to make 15 years of work in 500 square feet. And when you think about the mega studios, and I do have a mega studio now, and I love it

and I hope that I can hang on to it because I went from 500 square feet to 5,000 square feet, which was a huge gesture for me to do to myself as an artist. But I just decided like, I can have space. My students have bigger spaces than me, then why can't I have space? And I just decided to take up space. And I think that is really hard even if I'm viewed as a really successful artist, it's like, well, what does that really mean in relationship to the world of art and the economy of art?

Daniel Strong:

How long has it been in the new studio? Is it a couple of years?

Catherine Opie:

No, it's four years now. Yeah, in October I signed another three year lease. I think I'll have to downsize, I do. But right now I've eked it out and I'm still teaching and I still get a paycheck from teaching, but I'm coming up to 30 years total teaching, 20 years at UCLA. And I think that Oliver's going away to college and it's a good time for me to think about wrapping that side of my life up and just only being a full time artist and a visiting kind of teacher would be a really different thing than having to do five classes a year, year after year after year.

Daniel Strong:

But you'd stay in LA?

Catherine Opie:

Which I enjoy, it's important, but there is a time where you decide like, I'm going to be 60 years old and I've been doing this for 30 years and I hold a really amazing space, but it's also time to give that space over to a different voice. And I'm very conscious of making room for new voices.

Daniel Strong:

You're going to stay in LA though?

Catherine Opie:

Yeah. I'll stay in LA.

Daniel Strong:

What's it like now?

Catherine Opie:

Well, I think we're going to go back into shutdown. I look out my window. If you're wondering why I look out, it's like, well, there's the city. I think we're going to go back into shutdown. That's okay-

Daniel Strong:

Has that affected your work? I mean, are you able to-

Catherine Opie:

Oh, I can't work. No. Here was the thing is, I was, and we are, I have given my studio over to Heather, and my assistant has a two year old son and they're being much more responsible during COVID than I

am, I'd say. I mean, I'm not going out to bars or partying, but I have a grandson that shares space with his father in Orange County and comes back to our daughter. And I didn't see my grandson for a month, and then it wasn't okay for me not to see my grandson anymore. So we were really locked down for a month and a half, and then it was too hard for me not to see my daughter and my grandson. It was too hard for us not to see the very closest inner circle of friends. And so we opened up to that and we've opened up safely to that, but that is not what Heather desires. And so I have allowed her to just be in the studio since March on her own.

Catherine Opie:

And I can go on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturday and Sunday if I want to be in the studio. But quite honestly, what am I going to work on? I can't make portraits right now. I tried to go out and I've tried to photograph LA at this time. I did photograph the protest. One of the protests that turned really violent on Fairfax, I was there when the cops started shooting rubber bullets and tear gas to us. So I've been participating in the protest. It's pretty hard for me not to participate in protests, as a person who's been protesting since my early 20s, I believe in protest. A lot of my work is silently about protesting. The big thing that I was going to do is, and we're still going to do it, is Oliver's college is going to start as he's going into his freshman year. He got into Tulane University.

Catherine Opie:

And so we decided to do a road trip because I made that body of work 1999, right before Y2K of American and looking at America and what the American road trip and photography means. And I thought a really beautiful portfolio would be 2020. And so think about from 1999 to 2020 as a body of work. So going and photographing where the monuments have really been taken down or graffiti, I pulled out of my library at school Lee Friedlander's American Monument book to take a look at that. And as I always like to have conversations with different artists, I'm looking at Friedlander's American Monument right now and thinking about that. And then I was going to end up at the March of Washington on the 28th in DC to bear witness to that March and photograph it. But with the rise of COVID, we're still doing the road trip, but it's not going to be as ambitious. I don't think it's going to be safe for me to spend a month and a half on the road.

Daniel Strong:

Right.

Catherine Opie:

I don't. So I finally, we went up to a beautiful kind of weird utopic community in Northern California called Sea Ranch that has unbelievable modernist houses. We spent the weekend there. And I spent the week staring at the ocean and asking myself, how important is 2020 and making this body of work in relationship to actually what's happening in all of these states? So I think instead of a month and a half on the road, maybe it'll be three weeks on the road and whatever I wander upon, I'll still react to with my camera, but it's not as an ambitious of a body of work of what I wanted to make.

Daniel Strong:

So you're going to drive Oliver to Tulane?

Catherine Opie:

Yeah. We're going to drive him.

Greg Manuel:

It sounds like a good road trip. I mean, even-

Catherine Opie:

Yeah. I mean, I have so many things you wouldn't believe and it's like, I've got the [inaudible 00:51:22]. I have a cub of things. I have UVC ones that I bought off Amazon to disinfect any place that we go into with a passing of ultraviolet light wand and I have gloves. I have everything you can possibly imagine to try to stay safe. So we'll see, we'll knock on wood again. It's hard to be a photographer that likes to react and look at the world and be asked to stay in doors right now. That's a very difficult thing.

Greg Manuel:

When you're ... I mean, The 2020 sounds like it was a very conscious decided project. When you work on a project like this on this drive, will you be able to step into that role of artist and photographer and out of the role of mother? Do you find they're different roles or different places?

Catherine Opie:

I don't know. I've never taken Oliver on ... I mean, Oliver, the only body of work that encompassed really my personal life is what went along with 1999, where I paired those bodies of work together in the end is a show at the Aldrich Museum and a book called 1999/In and Around Home. So Oliver was two and a half when I made that body of work. And that's the only body of work that was really like where my family was very aware of me at all times when the camera in the house. And otherwise I've tried really hard to give them their personal space and private space. I think that's about ... So I don't know if they're, it'll be interesting to see how Julie and Oliver react to me wanting to stop the car and make an image because those are my rules. So it's like, if I see something, I get to stop the car and we'll see how much that, that's okay with them. I have no idea.

Greg Manuel:

But the pictures are not going to be of them?

Catherine Opie:

No. I think there'll be a few of Oliver. How can you not take pictures when you're having to say goodbye to your son and send him off to college? I mean, that's been the greatest joy of Julie and I is to be able to raise this person in our family and see him off. And I'm going to get teary eyed now, but it's pretty intense [crosstalk 00:54:03].

Daniel Strong:

Well, what a situation, to send off a kid to college? I mean, it's like unprecedented-

Catherine Opie:

No, and Tulane University is doing it. I mean, they decided to do in session. And even though the numbers are going up in Louisiana and I'm looking at that map of red, I'm also very aware that Los Angeles is one of the worst places to be as well. And maybe Tulane, because they are actually a big medical school that deals with figuring out a vaccine of the virus, and they're not so big like UCLA, I feel like they've got a pretty darn good plan in place, but it is hard. I'm nervous, but he'll come home before Thanksgiving hopefully and then they don't go back until mid January.



Daniel Strong:

Yeah. We're figuring out how things are going to work here. Because Iowa is becoming a hotspot. It's becoming [crosstalk 00:55:03]. We're at Grinnell, is we're equidistant between Des Moines and Iowa City and Des Moines and Iowa City are the two red counties in Iowa and we're in the middle. But also we have a lot of people driving back and forth between them. So there's going to be a lot of people going from a hotspot into our little campus and then going home again to their hotspot.

Catherine Opie:

I mean, it's such a shame under this current administration because we have all the resources as a country to have done this correctly and to have it turn into basically this weird political ideological position around wearing masks and what sciences versus this other rhetoric. It's just such a shame because everybody is affected from the lack of responsibility and quite frankly, it's like, yeah, well there's government for a reason my friends.

Daniel Strong:

Exactly.

Catherine Opie:

Even though I might want to burn down the modernist houses in The Modernist, I don't really want to burn things down, to be honest, I want to reshape them and reconfigure things and the idea of what it is to be a kinder society and what humanity is. Those are my interests and that's what I tried to get to a little bit in the various bodies of work.

Daniel Strong:

Right. And you can't just tear something down and not replace it with something. And the whole point is to replace it with something better, you don't just tear it down and let it fall apart.

Catherine Opie:

So even this notion of defund the police, people don't understand what that means. They think that means we don't need police. It's like, no, maybe we don't need a militarized police force.

Daniel Strong:

Right. And we certainly don't need federal troops going in, unmarked federal troops, throwing people into unmarked vans and-

Catherine Opie:

As for me, watching those images of what's going on in Portland, and also literally hearing him say we're going to do that to other cities, in his Chris Wallace interview, was like, wow. I mean, what is it now? I think people are just counting down the days. It's 108 days to the election or 107 today to the election. And if people are watching this, I sure hope you vote. Or listening.

Daniel Strong:

Well, originally, this show was going to be on the walls this fall. And I wanted it to be on the walls when people went to the polls, but unfortunately, the pandemic, we had to delay it. So now it will be up for,

well, actually, it will be up shortly after inauguration. But we'll see how that goes. I mean, once you vote him out he's got to leave.

Catherine Opie:

Yeah, he does.

Daniel Strong:

Greg, do you want to-

Greg Manuel:

Oh, I was just going to say, I think, I mean, this has been amazing. I wondered if there's anything you wanted to address that we haven't asked or anything that-

Catherine Opie:

Yeah, I do actually. I think that one of the things I want to say, because this is an exhibition on a college campus, is I actually want to address the students directly in terms of making work and what it is to be an artist and to have the ability of longevity within your ideas and making your work. And I just want to talk about that kind of negative voice that exists within our heads sometimes as an artist about creating our own barriers and fear and making what you want to make.

Catherine Opie:

And when I made that earlier work in the 90s, I really felt like, okay, I'm doing this as an activist and as an artist. But this could lead to no teaching jobs for me. This could lead to X, X, and X. And so I just want to say to the students who are looking at this work, is to realize that the most important thing is actually to understand the larger issues of humanity and ideas around representation, and to kind of try to put your fear to the side and creating the dialogue that you want to have in relationship to the work that you're making. So I kind of want to end there.

Greg Manuel:

Thank you. That is perfect.

Daniel Strong:

Do you teach all four years at UCLA or do you teach-

Catherine Opie:

Yeah. Undergrad and grad. But by the time the undergrads gets to me, but I'm going to switch it because I was able to raise money to rebuild my dark rooms. And the facility was in a position with previous faculty that aren't as technically based as I am as a photographer, how they were designed wasn't the way that I like to teach beginning photography. So I am actually going to go back when ... I have a year of sabbatical this year, which is fantastic. I didn't even plan it in relationship to COVID. I planned it because it was Oliver's first year at college and I wanted to be able to just get to him if he needed me.

Daniel Strong:

Right.

Catherine Opie:

So I mainly got juniors and seniors the whole 20 years at UCLA. And I'm going to go ahead and teach beginning photography again because of my new facility.

Daniel Strong:

And I take it-

Catherine Opie:

And I'm going to start out with freshmen and sophomore again, a bit. And I think that I want the last part of the years of teaching to go back into that kind of physicality of what photography can do and kind of reemphasize the joy of what it is to be embedded within this medium that I've spent my entire life trying to explore.

Daniel Strong:

Do you still do that? I mean, you don't print your own work, but do you still-

Catherine Opie:

Yeah. Everything's printed in studio. Heather prints it. I printed all my work up until the Icehouses. So every single photograph of mine up to the Icehouses. Well, actually 1999 was printed by [inaudible 01:01:24] because he was my student at Yale. And so he printed 1999 because I was pregnant and it wasn't safe for me to be around the chemicals.

Daniel Strong:

Right.

Catherine Opie:

And then the Icehouses were too hard for me to print. And things were starting to switch technically at that point in the digital realm. And so, basically every single body of work up until the 2000s, were printed by me. Then I went offsite for awhile. And then when the inks got really good and the apps and printers, and I felt like the blacks were a photographic black and certain things that I didn't like about the surface of the beginning of the print. Then I took over printing all the bodies of work again.

Catherine Opie:

Because I don't like how ... I mean, I'm particularly fond of the Dusseldorf School of Photography. I'm particularly fond of them, but what I'm not fond of is that they all use the same printer in Germany. So I find that their work, it has the same ... I really believe that there isn't like ... I have a deepness in my printing. I print deep and I have a very specific aesthetic of the way that I like prints to look. And when you lose control of that, then that's that.

Daniel Strong:

Right.

Greg Manuel:

It's interesting hearing you talk about dark room because I studied photography and I finished art school in 2003. And when I went in, I was trained in the ... Prior to that, I was a photographer and I was printing all my own stuff. And I came out of art school, went back to the studio that I worked at previously and everything had switched over to digital and I basically had to relearn everything and then kind of just made my way out of there because I didn't like it anymore. I miss dark rooms. So it's good to hear that you're bringing them back.

Catherine Opie:

Yeah, dark rooms are a great place. No, the lab that I'm rebuilding at UCLA is going to be really beautiful. It's a big group dark room again. It's going back to the black and white group dark room. And then there's three individual black and white dark rooms for people who want to be alone in their dark room. And I even designed, Greg, you'll geek out on this, I designed the sink, so that the venting is actually in the sink instead of the vent [inaudible 01:04:06]. So you don't leave the dark room feeling like you're chewing on fixer.

Greg Manuel:

I'm going to come visit.

Catherine Opie:

So that's all those old photography. This is the end of the conversation for people who are into photography. But then The Modernist, the black and white prints, even though it's shot digitally, when you look at the film and you look at the black and white prints, it's utterly talking about 70s photography in relationship to grain. So it's trying to encompass technically, that a certain period of when that architecture was done, the lighting and everything as even though it's contemporary in the time, the look is about kind of a very specific silver gelatin moment within 35 mm photography.

Greg Manuel:

I wondered how you would shot it because it does read that way. And it's interesting to me also that it is a film made of stills, very specifically and intentionally. This has been wonderful.

Catherine Opie:

Well, thank you.

Greg Manuel:

It's hopefully the beginning. We're hoping to have other opportunities to put artists in touch with each other because the show has now been moved online for a little bit for the first beginning part of it, we're hoping to continue these things. So we may reach out again. I know you're off on the road for the next little while, but-

Catherine Opie:

Yeah, I'm going to be on the road, on the road again, we will do what the road offers us. So hopefully there'll be some body of work called 2020, who knows it's going to look like, but I'm going to try to go forward with it.

Greg Manuel:

Thank you so much, Catherine.

Daniel Strong:

Well, be careful.

Catherine Opie:

Yeah, I will. All right. Thanks Daniel. Thanks Greg.

Greg Manuel:

Thank you so much.

Daniel Strong:

Thank you.

Greg Manuel:

We'll talk soon.

Catherine Opie:

Okay.

Greg Manuel:

Cheers.

Catherine Opie:

Bye.

Greg Manuel:

Bye-bye. Wonderful. Thank you for that. Good.

Daniel Strong:

Sorry, I hardly let you get a word in edgewise.

Greg Manuel:

Oh, it was great. That was totally perfect.

Daniel Strong:

I kept losing my train of thought.

Greg Manuel:

Well, I know me too.

Daniel Strong:

I'm getting to a point and then like, oh shit, what was the point I was going to make?

Greg Manuel:

No, but also she ... It was great. It was like there was so much in the conversation that every time I had a question, she would already answer it. And then it was like, there were these moments where we both, I think were like, okay, I don't have another question, but it was great. I think that went really well.

Daniel Strong:

Did [inaudible 01:06:41] leave at some point or was she there the whole time?

Greg Manuel:

I don't know. I think she might've left, because she's certainly not here anymore, I don't think. She may have disappeared because of the way that I had it set up.

Daniel Strong:

Oh, okay.

Greg Manuel:

I don't know. Anyway, I think that was good.

Daniel Strong:

I'm beginning to think on some of these that, I don't know.

Greg Manuel:

Oh, wait, she's coming back in. She's coming back in.

Daniel Strong:

What?

Greg Manuel:

Catherine Opie is coming back in.

Daniel Strong:

Okay.

Catherine Opie:

I'm sorry, I clicked out. We're going to have a non recording banter. So I thought, oh, I better click back in to see if they're still there.

Greg Manuel:

That was good. This is great. We were just saying that I think that went really well. And thank you again. As I mentioned, we're hoping to have opportunities where we can, as the website becomes open and as things start to progress, there's lots of room now, we can do kind of whatever we want. It's not just images on a wall or a fixed artworks in a space, it's kind of fluid, like the term queer. So we can incorporate other things into it. So I do hope, because what we had originally planned was to have a symposium or a weekend where everybody would come together and that's probably not going happen.

Daniel Strong:

That probably won't happen.

Greg Manuel:

I think part of what would be great is to have artists in communication with each other, not just with us because we're kind of boring.

Catherine Opie:

I've been doing, just so you guys know, I've been doing a lot of Zoom panels and a lot of Zoom teaching and they work pretty well because what happens is if you start having a website get a real kind of clicks and people are looking at it, it is pretty awesome how people all over the world can kind of join in. I was on one conversation where it had 850 people.

Greg Manuel:

Oh wow.

Catherine Opie:

And they were from everywhere. It's an interesting thing and I'm totally open to that in the fall once I get back, to do some kind of a panel discussion through Zoom and it might be interesting for people.

Greg Manuel:

I think so. I mean, it's certainly something we've talked about and I'm glad to hear that you'd be into it because it's ... We've been talking about we don't know how everything's going to go. We don't know how ... This may be the only option we have for awhile, which is Zoom calls and stuff. And it actually does expose the work and the artists to a much ... It opens it up to everybody as opposed to just the students at school. So that's-

Daniel Strong:

And we don't know if we're opening yet. I mean, the campus is going to open, but we don't know if the museum is opening. And we do know that we're not going to allow the general public, the community, and it's just going to be for the campus population. We've been flooding our website, our existing website with virtual content because otherwise, what do we do? So we're hoping that they will expand this. We'll bring in some faculty members and other artists. And hopefully we can just kind of keep the dialogue going between these different communities. We hope. Yeah, it's great that you're willing to do that. And we'll be in touch.

Catherine Opie:

Oh, absolutely.

Daniel Strong:

In the meantime, I will get a written transcript of this conversation and I'll send that around so that we all have access to what we actually said.

Catherine Opie:

Okay. Nothing too incriminating.

Greg Manuel:

No, it's all good.

Daniel Strong:

We will put this, at least I think, Greg, we'll put the sound online and listen to it.

Greg Manuel:

Yeah. I mean, that's the hope or the plan right now, is to have the opportunity for people to listen to the audio recording, obviously the transcript will be there as well. And I don't know how exactly that's going to work if it's subtitled [crosstalk 01:11:01].

Catherine Opie:

I think just podcast style. Podcast style of this and connected to the show with certain kinds of visuals that you can get into.

Greg Manuel:

Yeah. And we've got your picks from the stills from The Modernist, which we'll put up. And I don't know, Dan, were you hoping to or were you hoping to include the "O" Portfolio on the website? I don't know if we talked about that-

Daniel Strong:

Because we can reproduce limitless virtually, I mean, there may just be a section on each artist page of other works or certainly the works that we've talked about in this conversation, we can [crosstalk 01:11:41] so people get a ... Now, whether we edit this conversation, so that there's a video, I mean, I don't know how to do that, but somebody may know how to do that. If somebody does it-

Greg Manuel:

Somebody knows how to do that, I can promise you.

Daniel Strong:

But it can also, I mean, I'm not a time-based person. I mean, I like to actually flip through things and read things, whereas other people just want to watch-

Catherine Opie:

Are those books behind you? You mean you have books?

Daniel Strong:

I do. [inaudible 01:12:12] books next to the bar.

Catherine Opie:

Exactly, I like that. I'm like, I think somebody likes to mix up a good martini. You got a choice of gin. Hendrick's is great as a gin.



Greg Manuel:

It's the best.

Catherine Opie:

I've been doing a lot of gin and tonic this summer.

Daniel Strong:

In fact, it's mostly decorative. I don't drink hard liquor at home because it'd be too dangerous. Of course, there's no cocktail parties nowadays.

Catherine Opie:

No, you even have your Moscow mule copper cups up there, so we're mixing some good Moscow mules.

Daniel Strong:

No, actually the hanging bars, that was a Christmas present.

Greg Manuel:

We are going to have to try to get out to Grinnell everybody. We're going to make this happen. And we're going to have a cocktail party in your house, Dan, whether you like it or not.

Daniel Strong:

Yes, we should.

Greg Manuel:

Get some use for that [crosstalk 01:12:54].

Daniel Strong:

I'm sorry, there's a mosquito in here.

Catherine Opie:

Oh, a mosquito. Oh, no.

Greg Manuel:

Run away.

Daniel Strong:

Yeah. So we'll stay in touch.

Greg Manuel:

Okay.

Daniel Strong:

And as far as images, we can flood the website with past bodies of work, whatever you want to do, we can-

Greg Manuel:

We'll be in touch about ... Before anything goes live, there will obviously be, everyone will see it and be able to say yes or no and change this, et cetera. So we'll be in touch. We'll stay connect.

Catherine Opie:

That sounds good.

Greg Manuel:

Thank you so much again, Catherine.

Catherine Opie:

Okay. Thanks guys.

Daniel Strong:

Bye-bye.

Greg Manuel:

Cheers.

Catherine Opie:

Bye.

Daniel Strong:

Yeah. I will get the transcript and we'll have it in two days.

Greg Manuel:

Yeah. They're super quick. I like that. And I'll-

Daniel Strong:

Greg, so you'll put this up on Dropbox and then I'll send it to-

Greg Manuel:

That's right.

Daniel Strong:

[inaudible 01:13:48].

Greg Manuel:

I'll do that.

Daniel Strong:

But I mean, there's no rush, obviously.

Greg Manuel:

Well, it'll download as soon as the conversation ends and then we can ... And then I'll send ... I didn't yesterday, but I will send the link to Kenny and get started on that and see what's needed.

Daniel Strong:

[inaudible 01:14:11] I'm sweating like a pig. Of course my house is all closed up because-

Greg Manuel:

Noise.

Daniel Strong:

Somebody out there is cutting a tree down. So I had to close all my windows and [crosstalk 01:14:20].

Greg Manuel:

That's exactly what was happening to me yesterday. I was on a call at 1:00 with, again, four different people and somebody was cutting the tree in the yard behind me and they were sawing every five minutes to build the deck. And so I put myself on mute until I needed to talk. But yeah, good.

Daniel Strong:

But anyway, yeah, I think that went pretty good.

Greg Manuel:

We may want to do some editing to the, I don't know, the order of the thing, she says, I'd like to finish there, who knows? We'll see what happens, but I do like that little part of hers to talk to the students. And I think because of that, it will probably be something. I feel like she'd be interested in doing that again with students. Maybe there's a Zoom student [crosstalk 01:15:13].

Daniel Strong:

Yeah. I had to mention that, but that would be a good ... I mean, Grinnell students aren't the most talkative and we don't teach photography here, so it's not like she could ... Well, actually the students have a dark room. There is a dark room on campus that students just use as like a hobby. There's no formal training in it, but we could get the students involved. And obviously, the queer students would get something out of it. So that would be a good thing. What was I going to say? I just lost my train of thought again. Something about, well, anyway, I'm excited.

Greg Manuel:

Yeah, I think it's ... That was fun. She's so nice, she's so professional. Thank you, Daniel, oh, as Greg said earlier, and Daniel, as you were mentioning, it's that kind of polishness.

Daniel Strong:

And she's not intimidating, which-

Greg Manuel:

No.

Daniel Strong:

I kind of hoped to get into ... Actually, my first experience with dykedom was living with ... When I first got out of college, my first apartment, the summer I graduated, I was living with eight lesbians and two of them were big time old dykes.

Greg Manuel:

Yeah.

Daniel Strong:

And that was the first time that I ever ... I mean, I kind of got into that with her about this use of the word as an insult. It was the first time I realized that they called themselves that and that you could actually call them that. And they used to take me to a bar called Rosie's, which was the dyke bar in Rochester. And it was one of my first immersions in the queer world. And the only reason I could get away with going to Rosie's being a guy was because I was with them. Otherwise, they wouldn't let me in, or would've rolled me out, probably.

Greg Manuel:

It's like women in a gay bar. They're only there because ... But we'll get into that in the next conversation. We'll have a casual town hall about your first bar or something with all these people, whoever's interested.

Daniel Strong:

All right.

Greg Manuel:

Good. Well, I'll get this up or record it and I'll let you know when it gets sent off. And then I'll keep you posted about what I hear back from [inaudible 01:17:26] because as of yet, I have not heard a thing.

Daniel Strong:

Hopefully that hasn't fallen apart.

Greg Manuel:

Yeah. That would be nice if it wasn't.

Daniel Strong:

Yeah.

Greg Manuel:

It'd be nice if it all worked out because otherwise-

Daniel Strong:

Otherwise, it's, well, \$2,000, \$3,000.

Greg Manuel:

Yeah.

Daniel Strong:

All right. Let me go-

Greg Manuel:

Go open the windows. Go open your windows and I'm going to do the same.

Daniel Strong:

Well, now it's raining.

Greg Manuel:

Oh, okay. Well, it's beautiful here.

Daniel Strong:

Nice.

Greg Manuel:

We traded.

Daniel Strong:

All right.

Greg Manuel:

We'll talk.

Daniel Strong:

Anything else that we should ... I guess I should get in touch with [inaudible 01:18:13] again about-

Greg Manuel:

Yeah. He's been doing a lot of talks lately online. I know he's been quite busy or it seems to be, I actually haven't been able to catch any of them, but he was on a panel about Peter [inaudible 01:18:30] the other day. And here and there, I see him being part of larger panel discussion. I know he's around, I just don't know if he's booked until October or what, but it'd be nice to hear back from them either way.

Daniel Strong:

Yes. It'd be.

Greg Manuel:

Good.

Daniel Strong:

I'm exhausted right now.

Greg Manuel:

Well, go to sleep.

Daniel Strong:

No, I'm not that kind of exhausted, but I'm kind of drained.

Greg Manuel:

Yeah. We're not doing another one today. We learned our lesson with the two in one day once.

Daniel Strong:

Yeah. This one made me nervous in a way that the other ones did not.

Greg Manuel:

Well, I think-

Daniel Strong:

I think because she's more established, I don't want to make a fool of myself, which I probably did anyway.

Greg Manuel:

No, I think, I honestly think ... I mean, when we look back, I'm sure that 90% of that conversation was just her talking, which is how it should be and every now and then we said, Oh really, tell me more or whatever. So I think that was ideal. I'll get this recorded and I'll send it to you shortly.

Daniel Strong:

[inaudible 01:19:33].

Greg Manuel:

Thank you. We'll talk soon. I'm going to go research Three Rivers, I want to go there. I want to see what that is.

Daniel Strong:

Yeah, really.

Greg Manuel:

I'll send you pictures.

Daniel Strong:

Okay.

Greg Manuel:  
Okay. Talk soon.

Daniel Strong:  
All right. Bye.