

Carolee Schneemann Oral History Interview: Anthony McCall

Anthony McCall is a UK-born visual artist based in New York City. He is best known for blending aspects of cinema, drawing, and sculpture in his Solid Light installations, which have been featured in exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, Serpentine Gallery, and Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, among others. McCall was Schneemann's partner from 1971 to 1976. Their domestic life is at the heart of the film *Kitch's Last Meal* (1973–78) and their separation informs the artist's book *ABC—We Print Anything—In the Cards* (1976). McCall also documented Schneemann's iconic performance of *Interior Scroll at Women Here and Now* (1975) and an early iteration of *Up to and Including Her Limits* (1973).

Interview conducted by Lotte Johnson
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Lotte Johnson: Anthony, thank you so much for being part of this oral history project focusing on Carolee Schneemann's life and work. I think we can just dive straight in.

Anthony McCall: Yes, I think so.

LJ: I'm going to start with quite an obvious first question, but I'd love to hear your memories of when you first met Carolee Schneemann, which I understand was in London, at an opening of your own work?

AM: No, it wasn't. It was an opening at the Lisson Gallery. It wasn't my work, I'm pretty sure. But I've looked at the list of shows that were on then, and I don't recognize any of them. ... It's probably '70 and '71.

LJ: You've done your own archaeological research.

AM: Well, I just went to the Lisson Gallery. They produced an enormous, thick book of their shows a year or two ago. We just went and looked through that.

LJ: According to Carolee's memory, it was quite early in 1971. She recalls that she was about to air this interview on the BBC ["Four Women Filmmakers," an episode of the *Film Night* series, aired January 10, 1971, on BBC2]. ... So maybe you met—because that was about to be aired in January 1971—maybe you met in January or even in late 1970?

AM: So what shows?

LJ: Let's see. Late 1970. So there was a John Latham show from November to December 1970, and then an exhibition called *War Show* from December to January, December 1970 to January 1971. So it could have potentially been either of those.

AM: Could be one of those. But my memory only allows me to be in a very crowded opening and see Carolee across the room, you know. Classic. And we got talking.

LJ: Had you had any knowledge or awareness of her work before that moment? When you say you saw her across the crowded room, did you know who she was?

AM: No. Not at the time. I was very struck but I didn't know who she was.

LJ: Maybe you can tell me a little bit about your first impressions.

AM: Well, she's very dynamic, very beautiful, and social. She was talking and laughing with people. And she looked stunning. I made my way across the room gradually. Eventually we met. And then I left. I had—my girlfriend at the time was ill. So I left quite quickly and went back home.

LJ: Carolee has written about that as well.

AM: Yeah, she's written about it.

LJ: But it's interesting, because we were just talking before I started recording about different perspectives and multiple versions of memory.

AM: It's sort of perfect with an opening that you remember the feeling of the crowd rather than the work, since you can barely see the work.

LJ: That's true. Schneemann recalled in an interview that you'd actually spoken before that opening and that you had invited her to come and see an exhibition. So it's interesting, this different slippage of stories and memories.

AM: I'm absolutely certain, definitely, that it wasn't my show.

LJ: So you met that night, and I assume that you exchanged details and continued?

AM: Well, no, that's the thing, the whole elaborate story, which I see you've got from Carolee. There was some business about her sending out—she sent out a mailing. ... This was the postcard.

LJ: Yeah, it's such a brilliant postcard. ...

AM: And she sent that to me, apparently.

LJ: For the sake of the recording, I'll just say that this was a postcard advertising a screening of an interview with Carolee on the BBC.

AM: Which she drew up, and printed, and then sent out, which she was accustomed to doing.

LJ: Do you think she sent that to you after you'd met at that opening?

AM: Yes. I'm absolutely sure that's the case. But it took a while to get to me, I think.

LJ: Well, she thought she sent it to you, but it actually went to a man called Anthony White.

AM: Tony White, yeah. He's a man that I did some work with earlier.

LJ: I think he ended up contacting you and said, "Oh, I think this is for you."

AM: Yes. And then he forwarded it to me, right. And there was a phone number on the back, and I called it, as one will.

LJ: You were intrigued.

AM: Yeah.

LJ: And do you remember watching that screening in January 1971?

AM: No. I probably didn't have a television.

LJ: That's a good point. So from then, I assume that you met up and got to know each other.

AM: We met up. I think we sort of, as they say, had a date. I can't remember exactly what was proposed, but we did meet.

LJ: I think Carolee remembers you bringing her some yellow roses.

AM: God, I was a fast worker. I suspect there was some time elapsed and various things happened. I certainly would have brought a yellow rose in at some point. Definitely.

LJ: Maybe we'll fast forward a bit to when you were together.

AM: Yeah. We could go back; we can go in circles.

LJ: Schneemann recalls in quite a lot of detail her time living in this basement flat in Belsize Park, but also spending a lot of time with you in West London, at Egerton Gardens. But she says that mainly she stayed with you in your flat.

AM: Yes. Gradually, we sort of moved down there. But before that, we were commuting in two directions.

LJ: Right.

AM: And I had a spare room in my flat. So it was possible for both of us to have studios.

LJ: Did she set up a studio in your flat?

AM: Yes.

LJ: Rather than hers, or maybe as well as hers.

AM: Yes. She took over one of the rooms. And in fact, I'm sure that's in here. Yes, there was her flat, her room in 43 Egerton Gardens.

LJ: Amazing. Here she is with Kitch in the background.

AM: Kitch in the background. She's got her Lettera 22 typewriter she's hammering away on.

LJ: Brilliant.

AM: The room is about, let's see, probably had a ceiling height like this [about ten feet]. And it was probably a tiny bit bigger than this room, but not by much. It's also where we did the set up and shoots for the ice-skating piece and also the Christmas card.

LJ: Amazing.

AM: That was the window against which we did the Christmas card.

LJ: Oh, brilliant.

AM: So we're shooting from here. And the goat and everything was over here.

LJ: It's great. You've got a kind of spatial memory of where things happened.

AM: Well, yeah, you do if you've lived there.

LJ: Absolutely.

AM: And then you came out of this room. There's a small hallway, the front door, and the stairs going upstairs. And then there's another room parallel to this one, same size, which appears in a lot of my work. So I could hear her hammering away at the time.

LJ: Was [she] writing a lot during this time? I mean, we know that from her notebooks.

AM: She was an avid correspondent. She was mostly writing letters in which, as you know from reading many of them, I'm sure she was always arguing a point with a friend or a colleague about aesthetics, politics, whatever. And there's a description in the eulogy [referring to McCall's eulogy of Schneemann delivered at the 2019 memorial at Judson Church] of this pile of airmail envelopes mounting up in the hallway waiting to be posted.

LJ: The volume of her correspondence is incredible. And it does seem like this moment in London was particularly intense, perhaps, because she was going through a lot of emotional and psychological turmoil, having moved from New York to London. I wonder if you have any memories of that kind of transition that she was going through. She probably spoke to you about that.

AM: She did. And by the way, can we enter into the record the eulogy? Because it covers so many of the points that you want to talk about...

LJ: Absolutely. Yeah, definitely.

AM: ... And her state of mind, I quoted her here saying, “She had a small flat in Camden Town and by her own account was, ‘quite incapable of functioning normally.’” And so I think a lot of her correspondence had to do with her state of mind. In fact, she was isolated, adrift from her tribe, so to speak. She was in London. But she was also very social, and she seemed to know an awful lot of people in London.

LJ: ... What was Schneemann’s social circle in London and what was your shared social circle? Who were you hanging out with and going to shows with?

AM: I was only a couple of years from leaving home and didn’t know nearly so many people as she did at that time. But I did try to jot down a list of names as I was trying to think, who were the people that were—Susan Hiller [artist] certainly was a friend of mine and with whom I worked later. John Lifton was a previous boyfriend of Carolee’s and he’s an artist, but he was also technically very adept, and he and she collaborated on a couple of installations, including one for the show *Happening & Fluxus* in Cologne [1970 exhibition at Kölnischer Kunstverein featuring *Meat System I: Electronic Activation Room*].

LJ: Yes, exactly. And *Thames Crawling* in London.

AM: John probably built—I think they called their joint enterprise *Meat Systems*. Richard Hamilton, she certainly knew quite well. So here’s my list and it’s miscellaneous, believe me, and I could be wrong, mistaken about some of them. The thing is, London was very much an interport for lots of artists from Europe. It was a little back and forth. Less so with America, more so with Europe. So for instance, quite early on, we used to see Christian Boltanski and Anne Messager [artists]. Sometimes we’d go over to Paris and we’d have dinner with them. Valie Export [performance artist and filmmaker] she certainly knew quite well. And in fact, she and I were both present at a show that Valie Export did at the London Filmmakers’ Co-op, which was mesmerizing. It consisted of rows of seats and the front part of the space, which is the performance space, and it was strewn with shattered glass.

LJ: Wow.

AM: And everyone’s waiting there and talking to each other and then we realize she’s entered the room, she’s come in the back of the room, she walks forward to the front. I can’t remember if she was already naked or she dropped a robe or something, but she laid down on the shattered glass and rolled across the room naked. And then she got up and she left. It was absolutely mesmerizing.

LJ: That sounds extraordinary.

AM: And dangerous.

LJ: Yeah.

AM: The little bits of glass and blood.

LJ: The vulnerability. I imagine that work would have spoken to Schneemann quite viscerally as well.

AM: Yes, and I think they were friends at that point and collaborated, in a way. I mean, they had similar politics, for instance.

LJ: Definitely, yeah.

AM: So I'm just going to go down the list because they're coming all from different places. Mike Kustow was someone she knew very well, who ran the ICA at the time. A name came into my mind, I can't swear it's true, but a filmmaker called Midge Mackenzie, who died a few years ago. Germaine Greer [writer], certainly.

LJ: Oh wow, I didn't know that.

AM: Susan Hiller, and David Coxhead, her partner, who was a writer. Ann Lauterbach, the American poet, who lived in London at the same time as we were there together. Ann Lauterbach lived around the corner from Belsize Park Gardens, which is where Carolee's flat was. Leopoldo Maler [artist], South American. He was an Argentinian, I think, artist. He lived around the corner too. In those days, that Belsize Park area, there were a lot of artists and art-related people.

LJ: It sounds like it was quite a hub of activity.

AM: For instance, Jasia Reichardt lived there. She was a curator.

LJ: I think she still lives there, actually.

AM: Important curator. Is she still with us?

LJ: She is, yeah.

AM: She must be really quite old. Because she did those great shows at the ICA, like *Cybernetic Serendipity* [1968 exhibition of artists working with technology]. She was a very interesting figure. ... Liliane Lijn, sculptor. She was living in London and they knew each other.

LJ: I didn't realize that they knew each other.

AM: I don't think they were close friends, but sometimes we'd find ourselves round a dinner table somewhere with them. And John Lifton, I mentioned. Pamela Zoline, who became John Lifton's partner, she was a painter and a writer.

My very close friend too, Anthony Howell, the poet, who also later founded the Theatre of Mistakes, a performance group involving a kind of collaborative form of choreography. Felipe Ehrenberg, who ran the Beau Geste Press [publisher of Schneemann's 1972 *Parts of a Body House Book*], mostly in Devon but back and forth a lot, and became quite entwined in our lives. Malcolm Le Grice, who was one of the key figures at the London Filmmakers Co-op, I think who helped her with the burning—they had an optical printer.

And I have a feeling that that's where she did [that] with his help and other people at the co-op.

LJ: The burning sequence for *Plumb Line* [1968–71].

AM: Co-op being a very cooperative place, everyone helped each other with their projects, with zero budgets. And the London Filmmakers Co-op was not grand. It was very damp, cold cement floors. It had been a dairy, and there were damp mattresses everyone sat on. So there were probably other people other than Malcolm, but he was one. There were a few others too. Then Victor Herbert, who came in and out of everyone's lives. You probably wouldn't remember, but there was a huge financial scandal around a company called IOS [Investors Overseas Services], based in Geneva, which was run by a charismatic character called Bernie Cornfeld. And they basically robbed widows and orphans. Some kind of insurance scam. But Victor Herbert was one of the officers, and they were all being investigated at this point, but Victor Herbert was very interested in the arts and he supported The Living Theatre, for instance. And we stayed in his flat in Paris quite often. [He was] very much around supporting the arts and being part of the various scenes.

Edna O'Brien, the writer, they knew each other. Gideon Backman, I'm not sure where he comes in. I think he was a journalist who wrote about film for the Times. They knew each other. Thom Keyes, he wrote one of the first pop bestsellers called *All Night Stand* [1966 novel].

LJ: Oh, I don't know him. I have to look him up.

AM: We went to stay with him and his friends. They had rented Bunny Garnett's—he's a Bloomsbury writer. They rented his house and we used to go and stay there sometimes. Gustav Metzger [artist and activist], who was around. He was ubiquitous.

LJ: I think there's a photograph of Schneemann with him in London.

AM: Oh, is there?

LJ: I think, if I'm remembering rightly, at the Dialectics of Liberation Congress.

AM: Yes, that would be right. That would be right because that brought in a lot of people. And I'm sure many of them were these sort of aesthetic friendships. They were very particular kinds of friendships.

There was a man called Derek Power who was around and about. I think he was, sort of, a kind of small-scale patron of experimental film. He helped with money, I think. Then there was John Brockman who became a literary agent for scientific projects. He had an office in Central Park West in New York, but he was in and out of our lives. As a kid, he was clipping tickets for the Anthology Film Archives, which then was called the Cinematheque, and it was opposite what is now the Public Theatre on Lafayette. John Cage was a friend of hers and he came to London a lot, so he was in and out of our lives a bit. David Medalla was a colorful character from the Philippines, an artist and a friend, and he was involved with Signals Gallery, and he was also one of the first artists to be squatting in an empty building in Covent Garden.

LJ: Amazing. And they were in *Microcosm* together, that exhibition.

AM: Were they? Yes, it's quite possible. I remember going to an opening of David Medalla's, I think it involved pythons, live pythons.

LJ: I think the advert or the graphic poster for *Microcosm* [group exhibition at Camden Arts Centre and Sigi Krauss gallery, 1971] includes a python or a snake.

AM: Oh, did it? I can remember a slithering snake.

LJ: Marketing material, so maybe that was it. Schneemann showed *Water Light / Water Needle* [1966], a projection of that performance as part of that exhibition.

AM: Oh, great. It's great to have these little back-up facts, I must say. And then George Brecht, the Fluxus artist. He was resident in France or Belgium, but he was in London quite a lot. ... He and Carolee knew each other. That's when I met him. I met him at an opening of the Gallery House run by Sigi Krauss. Which we'll probably come to at some point. ... That's what I could come up with just racking my brains, but of course, it's a fraction of the—

LJ: I'm sure, but that's a fantastic list.

AM: And Carolee was, as I said, very social. She was very good at maintaining friendships, and she loved a good party, loved dancing, and had very little time for people who didn't. At the same time, she was not always in great shape, she was a little tearful, and sort of upset, basically. I don't want to exaggerate, but it bubbled up every so often.

LJ: Yeah, well, she was seeing this—Oscar Kollerstrom.

AM: Oscar Kollerstrom. A marvelous gentleman. He was a Norwegian, I think [Kollerstrom was Schneemann's psychotherapist in London and was born in Australia to Swedish parents].

LJ: He was an analyst.

AM: And he practically looked like Sigmund Freud. I mean, he had a white beard.

LJ: A true disciple.

AM: Yeah, I think he had been trained by a student of Freud's [Georg Groddeck, German physician and practitioner of psychosomatic medicine]. I think it was a quite good connection. So, she was seeing him every week, and she was always on the telephone, and interested in what was going on, and eager to join. And herself, very active. I mean, she was doing all kinds of projects in London.

LJ: Looking at those years in London, she was incredibly prolific. ... But as you say, it seems as if she was also throwing herself into what the city and [what] the people there could offer her.

AM: Yeah. We had a good time together. I mean, we were both—one interesting thing is some of your questions about, "She was doing this," "Did you see any of that?" The truth is, we were both living for work, for our work, and we were working in our studios. And studio

visits weren't welcome, particularly. I mean, you didn't want to interrupt somebody in the middle of something. Quite often, each of us might produce something which the other knew nothing about, not because anything was being hidden, but just because we were involved in our own work and behind closed doors, really. And then we'd meet for someone to come, a visitor, or for lunch, or for something in the evening. And we'd often talk about work, but ... we were working independently and alongside one another.

LJ: In those rooms next door to each other.

AM: Yes.

LJ: There's one other person who I just wanted to ask about before we move on from the social scene, Derek Jarman [artist and filmmaker]. I know that there is some correspondence. ... I wondered if it was in London that she met him originally? [Do] you remember if he was around?

AM: It was news to me. And I mean, she did have a life in London before we knew each other. And she would have been—I'm sure she would have been introduced around quite quickly by certain people because she was a very colorful figure. By then, I think she'd done *Meat Joy* [1964] in Paris, which was a huge scandal and success. And then the *Dialectics of Liberation* at Roundhouse [1967], which was also before I knew her. It must have brought in a very interesting crowd because you would have had the Paris '68 revolutionary students who'd been involved in that. You had the Vietnam Vets Against the War organizing in London. And many of them, having dodged the draft, found themselves in Canada and then came to London from there. So there were a lot of Americans in London at that time.

And then there would have been—the experimental music scene was hugely active in London at that moment. ... So the experimental music scene would have been around the *Dialectics of Liberation*. Then all kinds of feminist politics, all shades of feminist politics, I'm sure.

LJ: That's interesting in terms of Schneemann's political—I'm not sure whether to call it activism at that point—but a lot of her works definitely were activist in their intention. And she was staunchly against the Vietnam War and made work explicitly against the atrocities.

AM: Yes, and made a beautiful film [*Viet-Flakes*, 1965].

LJ: Did you see her being politically active in London aside from her work or alongside her work?

AM: I'd like to say no, but also all the time. It was just in the air she was breathing. I mean, she would erupt in anger at all kinds of injustices. And as a feminist, she was extremely vocal and would think nothing of calling out friends for using the wrong personal pronoun.

LJ: Brilliant. She held people to account.

AM: And did call out people. In fact, I was quite surprised when my copy of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*—that she had gone through and corrected all the personal pronouns.

LJ: There are many books in her library with her crossing out “he” or “his” and replacing it with “she” and “her.”

AM: I was quite surprised that Virginia Woolf came in for the treatment.

LJ: ... She was such a Woolf fan, but even Woolf wasn't spared her mercy.

AM: No, no, no. But anyway, socially, she was a lot of fun to be with and was not a wilting wallflower. ... She liked to be out and about, and loved what she was doing, basically.

LJ: Do you remember places that you liked to hang out in London? You know, apart from the [London Filmmakers' Co-op] and more specific work centers

AM: You know, I can't really. There are other places, the Co-op, the ICA, Gallery House when it was running. That was all a very movable feast, the whole thing. I can't say for sure. I mean, there were small restaurants we'd end up in like everyone else. But I can't honestly say there was a place. It was not like New York where you could say, “Oh, it's Max's Kansas City.” There wasn't anything like that in London. London was far more spread out.

LJ: Yeah, it's a vast city. We touched on Schneemann's life before she met you in London. ... The screening of *Fuses* [1964–67] at Cannes in 1969, just before she came to London—I don't know if she spoke to you about this? It's very difficult to find specific records of that screening. Schneemann had described it as a sort of special sidebar program called Director's Fortnight, at which they invited her to screen the film. And this was the kind of infamous moment where men stood up in uproar at the film and apparently slashed the seats with razors because they were so outraged at what she'd shown. [Was] that story was retold to you by her?

AM: Yes, probably some of it was. I didn't have any direct knowledge of it other than what she told me. I do know that the pre-story for Cannes is that she had apparently suffered something like a real nervous breakdown before she came to Europe, to France, and that she had dinner with two poets. Clayton Eshleman was one of them. And ... Paul Blackburn, who founded Poetry Project. He was a friend. I think it was those two. There were certainly a couple of poets. They had dinner on Greenwich Avenue, some Chinese restaurant or something.

And she was in tears in a mess apparently, by her own account. And they said, “Look, you've got nothing to lose. You've got this invitation to go to Cannes. Why don't you go to Cannes?” ... They may have even helped her with a ticket. I don't know. But there was certainly [an attitude of], “You can't just sit around here and be miserable.” And this presumably is the aftermath of the recent breakup with Tom Molholm [Schneemann's lover appearing in her film *Plumb Line*, 1968–71].

LJ: And perhaps the lingering aftermath of her breakup with James Tenney [composer, Schneemann's partner from 1955–68] as well?

AM: I think that's true. She had an intense love affair with Tom, probably before she'd quite assimilated the catastrophic loss of her marriage. She was obviously very close and went back a long way with Jim Tenney.

LJ: That coupled with what was happening in Vietnam.

AM: She was probably a mess. And anyway, she did go to France. Evidently, there had been some kind of invitation. I don't think I had all the slashing of seats reaction business, but I gathered from her that it had been kind of scandalous. And eventually, she made her way to London with Kitch in a basket. The details of the journey, I don't know. And I don't know exactly when she arrived in London. But it must have been a good year before we met. She had settled into this basement apartment, which she liked very much. It was a small apartment. You've got photographs of her. I think she took you all out there.

LJ: Unfortunately, I never met her in person.

AM: Oh, you never did?

LJ: No, we were passing ships. I started working on her retrospective [*Body Politics*, Barbican Centre, London, 2022–23], in the months leading up to her death. So we never crossed paths. But I've seen wonderful photos of her posing outside her old flat in London.

AM: I took a couple of pictures when I went up there ... about 10 years ago.

LJ: Can tell me a bit about your memories of [her flat in Belsize Park]?

AM: Yes, I'd be happy to. ... It was a small flat that had a main room that looked out onto some trees and grass. It was pretty close to the street. And there was a—you could call it a walk-in closet, or you could call it a small room, or you could call it I don't know what, but there was alongside the sitting room, the main room, which was also the bedroom, there was a room about so wide and about 15 feet deep, which had all her film equipment in it. It had lots of reels pinned to the wall, a Moviola for looking at the film footage, and various cans, lots of piles of cans. That's where she worked.

LJ: Brilliant. It's a kind of ... ad hoc editing suite.

AM: Yes, not to be too grand about it. I was interested in film at the time, and she was interested by the fact that I was interested in it. I remember that. And then as you went out, or came in, there was a kitchen and a bathroom. And I think there might have even been access to a lawn at the back, but I'm not quite sure. But she licked her wounds and lived there, and she did a lot of her letter writing there. She was always in correspondence with people. And she had a cat, of course. So that's where she lived when I first met her.

LJ: It's great hearing you describe that room with all the reels of film, because there's a photograph of her editing *Plumb Line*, which I wonder, now that you're describing that room, I wonder if that photo is taken in that room?

AM: ... I suppose she must have been working on *Plumb Line* when ...

LJ: The film was screened at the London Filmmakers' Co-op in 1972, and I think that was the first screening after she'd finished it. ... You didn't see that?

AM: I didn't see that, no. She and I shared a program together, which I have a date on, which I showed all four *Cone* films. So that was after '74. And she showed, I think it was her first version of *Up To and Including Her Limits* [1973–76], because it included two separate

images, one above the other and it included her hanging from a rope. I dated that differently from her date.

LJ: I think that was in 1974. You came back to the UK together that summer, and that's when she performed at Arts Meeting Place and the London Filmmakers' Co-op for *Up To and Including Her Limits*.

AM: That would have been, how about June the 12th, 1974?

LJ: That sounds ... right. So that was the date that you had as the event that you were part of as well.

AM: I have my ways of figuring out what happened way back, because I kept meticulous notes as to what I was working on. I didn't do it forever, but I did in the '70s. '74, '73, color-coded.

LJ: For the purposes of the recording, we're looking at what looks a bit like a diary or a kind of annotated calendar of your work from the '70s.

AM: And everything in red was when we were traveling.

LJ: This is incredible to have.

AM: So let's see, '74. 8th of May to 23rd of June, Paris, London. And then I've got my showings here, because I did something at the Royal College Gallery, at MoMA in Oxford. I was showing the four films, *Cone Films*. London Filmmakers' Co-op, the four films shared a program with Carolee, June the 12th.

LJ: There we are, June the 12th. That's so interesting to know that *Up To and Including Her Limits* was staged in dialogue with your work.

AM: Yeah, and Annabel Nicolson, who was a key member of the Co-op also, marvelous filmmaker, Scottish, she said, "Oh, this is the best program we've ever done." Seeing as it was very long, because Carolee's piece was at least an hour, maybe longer. And then we had an hour of mine. But it was a wonderful double program, because they were completely complementary and completely different from one another. So that would be my date for that event.

LJ: Clarified by your calendar.

AM: Clarified by my calendar, which, after all, was being kept as things were going on. So it wasn't retrospective.

LJ: Well, actually talking about synchronicity between your work. I wondered if we could talk about *Reel Time*, which was, as Carolee describes it, a mutual film diary that you were making together.

AM: Yes. In retrospect, it was a doomed and mad project. But a good idea. It was very complicated by the fact that I met Carolee when I was still living with Sue and she was

dying. And within a month, there's an ambiguous period where I'm falling in love with someone and I'm mourning somebody at the same time.

LJ: It must have been incredibly tough.

AM: Yeah. And the idea of the film was that we would be filming the coming into being of our relationship as it was happening. Now, it's a pretty foolhardy project to try and do a film about yourself that you're directing. And yes, it was called *Reel Time*. We had another title for it, which I can't dig out yet, but I will be able to. We went to New York one summer. We began working on it, basically. We were always borrowing Bolexes from someone or cadging a tape recorder for a weekend or something like that, and we began shooting and we began recording, audio recording.

At the same time, we were trying to raise money for it as a project. Andy Warhol was distributed in London by a man called Jimmy Vaughan. Warhol had told Jimmy that he should help Carolee. She was interesting and he should support what she was doing. We had a couple of meetings with him in which we talked about what the film would consist of. He was basically a porno film distributor. He wasn't interested in art. He was interested in how many penetrations a minute, basically. Not to put too fine a point on it, but that was pretty much his criteria. He offered to support it with equipment, but not much money. It was clear what his priorities were, which made it sort of completely antithetical to us. Even though that wasn't a problem for Carolee, of sex on film. It was harder for me, I think. And in the end, the footage got lost, such as it was. I mean, we only had raw footage.

LJ: You hadn't begun editing it together yet?

AM: Oh no, we hadn't even begun making the film. We were feeling our way, which is much more Carolee's style than mine. In my work, I would tend to work things out meticulously and then execute the thing as if I created a score for the production of the work. She would go headlong into something and work very intuitively. I mean, *Kitch's Last Meal* [1973–78] is a good example, which someone could be forgiven for knowing a film had even been in progress. Because she worked on it for over a couple of years. And it formed itself. I mean, the title formed the work, really—*Kitch's Last Meal*. That became her launchpad, that concept. ...

Then we came back to England. We had the footage there. We were probably shooting in England too, though in very informal ways. We were always borrowing equipment and going and buying a reel of film. Then we made the decision to move to New York. She felt separated from her tribe. Her friend had died in a plane crash. Ken Dewey [performance and theater artist].

LJ: And you had gone back to New York for the funeral for that?

AM: I didn't go, actually. ... And I think while she was away, she got pneumonia. She got quite sick. I remember we had sort of urgent telegrams and letters about it. But anyway, the thing is, we packed that life away and we moved to New York. And I think we put all the [film] cans in a tea chest and my brother volunteered to look after them. But he lived in the country and it ended up in a barn. I think somehow or another, the tea chest got lost.

LJ: Carolee remembers that as well. I think she remembers some of your luggage or the shipment that came with you on the boat back to New York being lost as well.

AM: Yes, well, we lost some of that too. That was another loss.

LJ: So a double loss.

AM: We found, through *Time Out*, an advertisement for someone who shipped goods to America. We went to see him with a big, huge chest full of everything. Saucepans, books, everything, you name it. He turned out to be incompetent and went bankrupt and somehow that got lost too. I think in the end, we got some of it back. But it was nothing valuable. It was just odds and sorts.

LJ: So *Reel Time* you think was with your brother and then got lost?

AM: But the *Reel Time* thing by then, that was a different route. ... I found notes describing—it was obviously written for someone who might have backed the film, so it's far more organized than I remember our attitude toward it being. But it does reveal a concept. And when you read it, you think, "Is it possible to make this film?" You might just take a look at it.

LJ: So this is you kind of pitching it?

AM: Yes. And this was glued into the back cover of one of my notebooks.

LJ: Oh, extraordinary. This document says that the film is, as you were saying, "The development of a relationship as it develops. They will be trying to assess themselves by probing into each other's previous affairs, which for both of them lasted two years." That's quite a daunting psychological process.

AM: [*Laughter.*] Yeah, that's easy then.

LJ: And then to document that. From this description, it sounds as if you were incredibly transparent with each other about the reality of your emotions and previous entanglements.

AM: Oh, as you'll probably gather from films that I did eventually make myself, this was quite far afield for me. But I completely trusted Carolee's judgments on—not her judgment, her approach—and was willing to go for it. And we did try and follow that. But I mean, that piece of writing is definitely not the way we were thinking. We needed to make a plausible case for something that sounded interesting. It was loosely what we were doing. But then written in those bold terms by the people who it's about ... you know what I mean?

LJ: It's exposing.

AM: Very complicated and exposing, yes.

LJ: I mean, at the end of this document, it says, "The results of surrendering this much privacy are unpredictable. And we should learn a great deal about the effects of putting people under constant surveillance. The film will be unique." I mean, it sounds like the film will be extraordinarily distinct ... if it had ever come to be.

AM: Yes. It's the clearest description of the project I can find. ... So this is new evidence, you might say. ... there were some photographs taken of us editing ... sound.

LJ: That must have been an amazing, very unnerving process listening back to yourselves together.

AM: Yes, and it was emotional content. I mean, I was still—I didn't know it, but I was in a state of shock and mourning. And not used to emotional outbursts, whereas Carolee was capable of thinking with two minds. She was capable of being a performer and also being the manipulator of the material. A good example would be ... in *Plumb Line*, there's a section where she's turned on the tape recorder in the middle of a breakdown and recorded her misery. That requires a certain kind of strength. It's admirable and shocking at the same time that someone can do both those things at once. She was much more adept at that than I was. ... I'm quite shy compared to her. So there was already a conflict.

LJ: But it sounds as if she didn't have to persuade you to make this work. As you said, you really trusted her approach.

AM: Oh, I know. It was an adventure. And it's also running off into the blue. I was leaving London for the first time, permanently, as it were. Going somewhere else and entering a whole new project, which became our traveling. I mean, that first trip to New York together, we were going around raising money, as much as anything.

LJ: It's amazing how at this time, it seems like Carolee and many other artists like yourselves, were acting as your own agents, your own salespeople. She was constantly pitching her own work, writing to people about books she was making.

AM: Well, it's a constant struggle making a film. It's expensive and it needs equipment. But I was wholeheartedly in. And so we were doing the same project.

LJ: I know we're jumping around a little bit, but *Reel Time* makes me think of *Exercise for Couples* and *Aggression for Couples* [1972], which is a work that Schneemann made about your relationship or about gender dynamics.

AM: I think gender dynamics were our relationship. ... My role there was to be a performer. I had nothing whatever to do with—that was one instance where she said, "Could you do this or could you do that?" She would shoot it. I was dressed in a suit, as I remember. ... I was playing a character, as she was. My role in much of her work was to be a very competent photographer. And she didn't really have to direct me because I was there ahead of her and I was fast. I had trained in photography and I knew my camera very well. I like to think that skill had quite a lot to do with the clarity of some of her projects. Like *Interior Scroll* [1975] and so on.

LJ: It's thanks to your photography that we understand the kind of real time of Schneemann's performances, particularly *Up to and Including Her Limits*, *Interior Scroll*—

AM: And then *Kitch's Last Meal*. It was an 8mm camera or it was stills. And I was often the one that picked up the camera and did the shots. And hanging from the tree, which we'll probably come to [referring to the 1973 study for *Up to and Including Her Limits*]. ... I'm sure she didn't say, "Oh, could you bring a camera?" Because I always had it with me. I would frame and shoot those pictures. So, she didn't really have to direct a lot of the time. But in the case of [*Exercise and Aggression for Couples*], that was a very unusual

relationship, where I was the actor, really. She was the actor and she was directing something.

LJ: And she had a specific idea about the sequences that she wanted to play out. I mean, that's evident in the work.

AM: She had a script in her mind.

LJ: That's very evident. It's like a stop frame.

AM: I trusted her. I was happy to do it, it's fine.

LJ: Maybe we can talk about a few other works that she was making at that time. You [said] she was constantly reacting to what was going on in London and reading the newspaper, and writing poetry, and writing letters. Schneemann made ... collages with British newspapers when she was living in the UK. I don't know if you remember her collaging? You made collage postcards together, but she also made some great postcards with fragments of newspapers and clippings.

AM: Right. Well, she was a painter and she loved doing all that kind of stuff. ... She did it almost without thinking. No, that's absolutely unfair. She did it all the time. She was always working on something.

LJ: And what about this lovely Christmas card that you've made together? A great postcard with you both standing—your flat in front of the window.

AM: That was in my flat. In her room, in her studio. And we used the window as the backdrop, and we had two chairs, and we had two cats. I had a cat, she had a cat.

LJ: You had Kitch and was it Bathsheba?

AM: Bathsheba, who stayed with my parents when we moved to New York. ... Kitch wasn't terribly tolerant of another, she was the number one cat.

LJ: I can only imagine.

AM: I can't remember exactly how we did it, but we did it in a spirit of fun and did all the tropes that we both were familiar with. That meant we were naked and the idea of jumping and then the cats and it developed really spontaneously. I was teaching photography at the time and one of my students, Byron Newman, had offered his services as a photographer.

LJ: So you had someone else behind the camera?

AM: Yes.

LJ: It looks like you were having a lot—it's incredible, joyful, exuberant.

AM: ... I think there are some pictures of us sitting on the chairs and laughing about it. Then we put it together again. Don't forget, I was a skilled graphic designer.

LJ: Because you trained in graphic design.

AM: I prepared a lot of the material. So that was a collaboration between her knowledge of collage and mine of printing production.

LJ: Great, yeah. There's another little postcard that I think you made together as well that's advertising some work in progress.

AM: Yes, that was *Reel Time*. And that's another thing that I learned from. ... She was very good at informing people of what was going on. Everything she did, she would send out a flyer. And that was no exception. I mean, we didn't exactly have a film at that point. We had a few bits of footage, and some tape recordings, and a lot of plans.

LJ: [A] screening took place? You did screen bits of the footage? It does say "film in progress." I'd assumed looking at it that it was going to be for an event, but actually you were just telling people that you were working on this.

AM: And appropriately, the photograph which I set up was the two of us inter-mirrored so to speak, which actually seemed to be a very good summary of what the film was about.

LJ: Absolutely, you looking at yourselves. ... Picking up on that idea of you looking at yourselves ... could [you] talk a bit about *Circulation Figures*, one of your works that Carolee took part in May 1972? There are lovely photographs of all of the participants, but also Carolee.

AM: Yes. And there's one in particular of the two of us in the center of the picture, holding our cameras.

LJ: I was curious about your shared interest in mirrors, and in these refracted reflections, and thinking about space and time and how mirrors could be useful.

AM: I can't speak for her, but I didn't have any particular idea about mirrors, other than it fitting in with this slightly mad project where photographers and cinematographers—about a dozen of them—I invited them to a prepared space to shoot one another's presence. And these were massive mirrors, eight-foot mirrors, which I, talking very fast, managed to borrow from a manufacturer of mirrors. I set it up through another friend who was a student at London Film School, which was on Oxford Street, and he got me access to the studio for a day. The mirrors were delivered, I set them up, we screwed up the newspapers, tore up newspapers, and so on. In retrospect, the project for me was a sort of meditation on the reality of photography as something in between the real and the perceived.

LJ: Perhaps for Schneemann, photography or the use of mirrors meant something else?

AM: Yes, I think that's very true. In retrospect, I think that *Circulation Figures* is a sort of Valentine to her, really. She had done a newspaper piece [*Newspaper Event*, Judson Dance Theater, 1963]. Which I only knew, by the way, through photographs in magazines or books. When you fall in love with someone and you're living with them, you look at their books too. Get to know their work. I do see it as that now, even though it was nothing like her thinking, but certainly having found the aesthetic key to newspapers, that was certainly an idea which came from her, I think. ... My thought processes were very different from what hers

would have been. You do find mirrors, I suppose you're right, in those sessions she set up in her loft.

LJ: Yeah, in *Eye Body*. They feature a lot—there's fragments in her box constructions. She was constantly using them to fracture herself.

AM: For her part, she entered joyfully into [*Circulation Figures*] and was absolutely available for it, got the point of it. All the participants had to do was to photograph one another, which at the time was quite an extreme thing and quite perverse. Now it's almost normal, with selfies and so on.

LJ: Yes, I see what you mean. It's become second nature now.

AM: Yes, and technically underpinned by the smartphone. So I considered the project a success. It was just meant to be a performance, but after the performance, the photographers and cinematographers gave me their footage or their pictures. They sat there for a long time with me feeling slightly that I hadn't finished the project. And then, of course, I got involved in not making art and making a living designing and editing art publications. It was years later, as I reawakened myself to my own work, that I realized this was something that was still hanging there with a dot, dot, dot after it. And Chrissie Iles [curator] wanted to show the piece in her [2011] show *Off the Wall* in Serralves [Museum of Contemporary Art] in Spain. And I said, "Yes, yes, yes." She kept reminding me and I said, "All right, all right. I'll think about it." I eventually thought through how I would present this project. I wasn't particularly interested in just setting it up again. What I did decide to do was to set it up again and make it an installation.

LJ: So you kind of restaged it?

AM: Remaking it, actually, because as an installation, it's quite different from the original. For one thing, it includes all the film footage at the very center of the piece. I successfully, I think, completed the piece 40 years after it was made.

LJ: Amazing. It's kind of lying in wait.

AM: And ever since, I've always thought that one's early work is a legitimate source of new ideas. I certainly find so in my notebooks. I have 160 notebooks in there. Now I have digitized them all. I have a complete archive, which I can review and get through very fast if I'm looking for something. I'm very often now finding—being amazed that I had already been making certain kinds of pieces in 1972 or whatever, when I thought I'd only thought of them in 2019. The notebooks, for me, have become a very productive sort of memory bank.

LJ: I think that's very true of Schneemann's work as well, that she's not only going back to previous ideas from the '60s and '70s, when she's working in the '80s, '90s, but also, like you, those ideas haven't lost significance or resonance in her life. These things are constantly circulating and cycling.

AM: Yes. And they say you only have one good idea in your life. ... Recycling isn't quite the word, but that ability to keep everything floating ... and available if you need it. After all you've earned the trademark, so to speak.

LJ: ... What about *Americana / Ching Apple Pie*? This is a performance that Schneemann performed in her own kitchen in Belsize Park in January 1972. Were you there when she staged that?

AM: No, I wasn't. But in your notes, you refer to her thinking that it had been filmed by Richard Trench. She's got it slightly wrong. It was Richard Chase. Richard Chase was a film producer who I was working with, or had begun to work with, on a film about Northern Ireland. I believe he did shoot. I remember him renting equipment to make a film which would involve the three of us, the third one being Ann Lauterbach [poet], who at the time he was going out with.

LJ: Right, so he was there.

AM: I assume that he [was], I believe he may very well have shot it. But nothing happened to that footage. It was part of a romance with Ann, which didn't, in the end, fan out, I don't think. So probably it just got dumped.

LJ: I think Schneemann said that she never saw that footage again.

AM: Yes. She probably never saw the footage. It may not have even been developed. In any case, she did the same piece again at Anthology Film Archives.

LJ: She restaged it several times.

AM: About '74, would it have been? '75?

LJ: Yeah, and then also many times in New York at different venues.

AM: I remember her talking about the crushing. If you wonder why you're wearing an apron, it's because—something about crushing the garlic under the heel of your foot. I don't know what the line was.

LJ: I can't remember the exact line now, but exactly, it's crushing the garlic underneath the heel of your shoe while you're thinking about why you're in the kitchen.

AM: I don't know if it was recorded, but she certainly performed it.

LJ: Richard Chase, maybe we can talk about him ... [and] his film *No Go* from 1972.

AM: Well, this is complicated. I was sharing my flat with a friend called Priscilla Trench and I had more of the flat than she did. I had the two downstairs rooms and an upstairs bedroom. She was in the other upstairs room. She had a brother, Richard Trench, who was a journalist and a correspondent for *7 Days* [weekly New Left paper published in the UK from 1971–72], which was a left-wing political magazine. He studied politics. He was Catholic and he was very interested in the conflict in Northern Ireland. He'd stay with his sister and we'd talk. I became increasingly interested in the enormous gap that existed between his account of what was going on in the conflict and the account going on in the newspapers. It was like two different wars.

I thought to myself, out of no experience at all, that it sounds like it would make a great subject for a film, to find those two perspectives. But of course, I didn't actually know

how to make a proper film. And it so happened I met this man at a party, ... Richard Chase, who was working for Warner Brothers selling for Hollywood, relatively experimental films, to German television and other markets in Europe. He was over selling a film called *Dusty and Sweets McGee* [1971 film written and directed by Floyd Mutrux], which was a feature-length film about two heroin addicts. I told him about this idea I had and he said, "That sounds like a great project, but [we'll] never raise money for it." He said "It's just not going to be—not going to wash." So he went off to Europe with his film and came back a month later rather excited and said, "You'd never believe it, but there's huge interest in that project. I think I could produce it." All this time, I'm assuming I'm the director, of course.

He actually began to raise the money. He got one third of the budget, it was low budget, but it was going to be a feature-length documentary at that point. That's how it seemed. ... And he raised a third of the money from Island Records in exchange for an album of revolutionary songs.

LJ: We're looking at the album right now, *NO GO!* [film soundtrack released by Island Records in 1973 featuring live recordings of political folk music from Northern Ireland]. So the sales of this record then went back into the—

AM: Well, Island Records believed they would make money, yes. So they put in a third of the money. He got [another] third of the money from a friend of his who was a rich actor who wanted a job. So he [gave] the money on the basis that he'd have a part in the film. Now you can feel the documentary part beginning to get whittled away. I can't remember where the other third came from, but he got the money. Dates were picked. Richard Trench and I would go over to Northern Ireland, talk to the IRA command staff and get their okay about the film, which we got. We got dates, equipment was rented, and we flew over to—with the record in mind, they hired the upstairs room in the Bogside Inn [historic pub in Derry, Northern Ireland] and set up a 12-track recording studio. The producer of the album was a Canadian trumpeter who was there with the project. It turned out that half of these people had wonderful voices. And he made a beautiful album, actually. On the first day of shooting, it became evident that I wasn't the director.

LJ: You found out on day one.

AM: Richard Chase was, and I was really the writer. I mean by that: research. Research and writing. But what happened was that the project got turned into something entirely different. It was a sort of half fiction. It had some suggested backstory about gun running. Anyway, it ended up as an absolutely dreadful film, but it was finished. So it was this Richard Chase that—

LJ: Both Richards were involved, Trench and Chase. Was Carolee on the periphery? Was she involved in any way?

AM: In the Northern Ireland thing? No. We were together and she was quite concerned. I mean, there was a war going on. The bullets were flying.

LJ: Yeah. Well, I think she has this story about being in St. Tropez [France] and this kind of surveillance [referring to anecdote Schneemann shares in the interview anthology *Carolee Schneemann: From Then and Beyond*, edited by Oliver Kiehmayer and Lara Pan, 2022].

AM: Oh, yes. Carolee would never want to spoil a good story. I still to this day have no idea if it was all imagined in her mind—it was a coincidence that these planes flew over and these mysterious people turned up. Certainly, a project about the IRA could be termed a story of interest by MI5 [UK's domestic counter-intelligence agency], I suppose. But—

LJ: Hard to verify.

AM: Impossible to verify. It was a very long way round. So why did I just talk about Richard Chase?

LJ: Well, we had been talking about *Americana I Ching Apple Pie*, and that had led us to Richard Chase. And then I'd asked you about *NO GO!* because that had come up in relation to Carolee being very worried about IRA surveillance and feeling embroiled in that.

AM: And also about the fact that it was dangerous.

LJ: She was very concerned for you.

AM: And, in the scheme of things, not a terribly important thing for me other than that it was rather a dramatic thing to do. And an education, really. I was living in Derry for a month, something like that.

LJ: Maybe we can come back to London and talk about a couple of other works, in particular, *Ices Strip* [1972], which was part of ICES, the International Carnival of Experimental Sound, which took place in August 1972. You took photos of Schneemann's performance?

AM: I took all the photographs of her performance.

LJ: On the train from London to Edinburgh. And I think you also worked on the magazine, or contributed to the magazine that was being produced?

AM: It was a Gestetner [stencil-based duplicator similar to the mimeograph]. It was the Beau Geste Press with the mimeo machine. I think anyone on the train that was doing something contributed something to [the magazine]. First of all, my shooting of her piece—it was quite spontaneous. I'm sure she had an idea of what the arc of her piece was going to be. She was up on the table and there was no question of her directing the camera. I was just shooting ... documenting it. She subsequently made various works out of the pictures.

LJ: Yes.

AM: There was a German [commentary] at one point, she said.

LJ: It sounds like there was quite a lot of planning that went into it because she was reading passages from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* [*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 1922].

AM: Yes, but that would have come after she made the piece, I suspect.

LJ: I thought that was part of the performance that she recited.

AM: I think it was another performance. I'm not sure of the order. And I'm not quite sure what the relationship was between the performance on the train and the piece we're talking about, which was done in high German, apparently. And so, therefore, quite comic for the German people watching it. Be interesting to get the dates on that.

LJ: She printed the photographs and showed them as an installation also with—

AM: Which came much later.

LJ: Her reframing and thinking about how to document the work. Going back to the performance actually happening on the train, can you tell me a bit about that? I mean, it must have been quite an amazing sight and people must have reacted in interesting ways?

AM: Well, you must remember that the entire train was full of mad people. It was artists, and musicians, and photographers, and so on. We were the passengers on the train. We were on the way up to Edinburgh, which was the concluding event of ICES. Left from King's Cross and went hurtling up to Edinburgh, where we all spilled out and did performances when we got there. And then got back on the train and hurtled back to London. Most of the activity went on the way up. I think energy was flagging on the way down. The atmosphere was marvelous, very ebullient and everyone was up for anything. So I don't think it was some shocking, out of place event of hers. I think it was very much the right sort of event to have in that kind of context, where everyone was both participant and audience.

LJ: Were there not members of the public on the train as well?

AM: No, it was a private train.

LJ: Oh, wow. I assumed that they just hired one of the carriages.

AM: No, no, no. It was the whole train and we all bought tickets.

LJ: Brilliant.

AM: It was definitely an ICES event with, as far as I know, no general audience. But maybe it was possible for anyone to buy a ticket.

LJ: ... There might have been some unsuspecting members [of the public] who thought they were just going to Edinburgh.

AM: Hard to imagine. It was a memorable event. I was planning to do a fire piece when I got to Edinburgh. But when I got there, it turned out the fire brigade had not been informed. And they said, "No, no, no, no."

LJ: Health and safety.

AM: "You can't do that. This is a city. You can't have a fire piece." And so I ended up improvising a work called *Smoke Without Fire ...* when Ricky Demarco, who had a gallery [in Edinburgh], gave permission for his gallery. ... There was a lot of fuss and the fire brigade did have to show up because of reports of smoke pouring out of the basement. It was a smoke bomb.

LJ: They thought you'd gone ahead.

AM: They thought something had gone ahead that was dangerous. So Ricky Demarco famously gave a press briefing saying that if his artists wanted to burn down his gallery, that was alright with him.

LJ: Brilliant. It sounds like everyone definitely entered into the spirit of the festival.

AM: Yes, it was great. And I think Carolee's performance was received with some joy and pleasure.

LJ: In the photographs, there are points at which people in the carriage are obviously responding to her, but there are other points where it looks like they're almost ignoring her. She's [up] on the table or roller skating up and down the carriage.

AM: I can't quite remember now what the sequence was. There was some kind of striptease.

LJ: Yes. And she donned a pair of roller skates and went up and down the carriage.

AM: Yes, that's right.

LJ: And from her recollection, recited these passages of Wittgenstein. Maybe she just had the book with her? It sounds like a lot of planning went into it in terms of she brought those roller skates with her.

AM: Yes, she had to prepare all the props.

LJ: Yes. There was a plan.

AM: But I don't quite see how the Wittgenstein would come into it. It's quite a strenuous performance.

LJ: Well, I think the works often have been reframed, looking back at it, as she was invoking the goddess Isis and then reading out these passages of this very masculine logic-centered philosopher. So it was this kind of dichotomy or contrast between this masculine logic and this feminine expression.

AM: But it wouldn't have been unlike her to be working on something like that over a number of years with different manifestations of it. I have no idea.

LJ: But maybe we can talk about *Ice Naked Skating* [1972], which sort of relates to *Ices Strip* in some ways. The amazing photo shoot that you did at your flat in Egerton Gardens.

AM: It was in Carolee's studio in my flat.

LJ: How did that come about?

AM: I'm trying to think what it was for. Do you remember?

LJ: I'm not sure if it was for anything in particular, or if it was a kind of staged performance that she wanted you to document. I don't know.

AM: I can't quite remember what it was for, but it was for something. And important to remember that the goat is Picasso's goat, which she made for a performance at the Open Space Theatre in Tottenham Court Road. It was a performance, I think, of *Desire Caught by the Tail* [play written by Pablo Picasso and first staged in 1944]. ... Penny Slinger [artist and writer] was doing the sets, and [Carolee] was doing the goat. And she took a great deal of trouble with her goat. She was very fond of it. And how [did it get] joined up with skating?

LJ: Do you know what the connection was?

AM: I don't really remember. But I'm sure the two of us would have discussed it, and I would have put on my directorial hat, and we both would have started pinning up sheets. I would have moved the lights around. And then she'd go through a number of routines, which I'd shoot.

LJ: It seems like perhaps it is connected to *Ices Strip*, this idea of skating naked.

AM: Well, have we got dates?

LJ: They were both in summer 1972, I think. I don't know the exact date of those photographs. I'm sure we can find that out.

AM: Let's look at '72, see what was going on.

LJ: ICES definitely took place in August 1972. And then, like with many of Schneemann's images, she repurposed those images of *Ice Naked Skating* for various flyers.

AM: Yeah, there's no contradiction that we can't come up with. I can get [the date] from the ICES book [referring to McCall's copy of the magazine produced to accompany the ICES event]. This is what I was looking for earlier. This is the sort of level of Gestetner work that would go on in the train. ... I got this from an auction place, "produced on the London Edinburgh music train on Monday 21st of August."

LJ: So that was ICES, but I don't know the exact date of *Ice Naked Skating*, but presumably it was around that time. But maybe we could find that out.

AM: Oh, there was the piece I did.

LJ: "At a single point during the journey back to London after dark, all the lights of the train switched off for a period of three and a half minutes." Love that. So that was on the way back?

AM: Yes.

LJ: Great. Maybe everyone needed that.

AM: It turned out that there wasn't a way of turning all the lights off. You had to do it carriage by carriage. And as far as I know, I would do it carriage by carriage. But you know, my memory of what happened is now rather dim.

LJ: The logistics. Talking of the Gestetner, the copy machine, maybe we can talk a little bit about Beau Geste Press? That circle, the Ehrenbergs [artists' couple Felipe Ehrenberg and Martha Hellion, founders of the independent publisher Beau Geste Press alongside David Mayor], and your time spent at Beau Geste Press in Devon, which was so rich and stimulating for [Carolee]. I wondered if you could share some memories of going to stay in Cullompton and Schneemann working on *Parts of a Body House Book*?

AM: Yes. It was in a little village called Clithiden in Cullompton, in the middle of Devon farmland, and Felipe had found a farmhouse that he could rent. It was quite cheap. And he set up his printing press, well, his mimeo printing press. There was a big studio, huge table, and all the various simple equipment involved with printing like that. If you went there, you did something. I wasn't to know until later that we were one of the earliest projects there. But there's a book.

LJ: Oh, the brilliant Beau Geste Press book [edited by Alice Motard, 2020].

AM: I think Carolee and Felipe had discussed making a proper book, and she had *Parts of a Body House Book* in mind. Eventually, we made plexiglass covers for it, and it was a whole thing. She would work on that. I was either going to sit there reading, or I'd do something myself, so I ended up doing a little book of my own [*Wipes Fades Dissolves: Work in Progress*, 1972]. Very minor thing, but I mean, anyone that went there wanted to make something, because it was so production oriented. Felipe's then wife, Martha Hellion, was terrific, and she was sort of the emotional center of it all. It was a Mexican kitchen. We were always making tortillas and things like that. It became very much part of the process of working. And in ways that now would seem quite unacceptable, I would say.

LJ: What do you mean?

AM: Well, she ran the center of the house, which is to say she organized all the food.

LJ: Oh, I see. The kind of gendered role that she took on.

AM: Yes. She was an architect. There were two children who were being brought up, small children. But it appeared to be a happy household. I think a lot of artists went through Beau Geste.

LJ: It seems from your description [that] work and living were totally intertwined at Beau Geste.

AM: They were, and a lot of the people who came were refugees from something going on in Argentina or Chile or Mexico. Felipe and his family arrived in London after slipping out of town after the Olympic Game shootout, when the police murdered a lot of the protesters [referring to the Tlatelolco Massacre in which police fired on protesters at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico, killing hundreds]. And I think similar things were going on in Chile. I mean, Cecilia Vicuña [artist], she came down. So there was that sense of connection to the outside world.

LJ: It seems like it was quite a haven as a space.

AM: Yes. It was an arts community, and it gradually accumulated additional people. In the end, there were about four people. David Mayor was the sort of theorist of the group. He studied art history in Exeter, and he became very involved at Fluxus. And then there was a couple who were printers, and they came and lived there. It became a little more professional. But we were mostly working with them from the distance of New York. I remember showing *Line Describing a Cone* to the community. There were about 10 people there. Felipe groaning and saying, “Oh, this is going to be so bad for you.” Meaning, “This is good. And you’ll get big-headed.”

LJ: That’s very funny. It seems like you had a warm, enduring friendship with the Ehrenbergs.

AM: Yes, yes. He and Carolee went back a bit further, too. When we got married, they made a wedding cake which they brought up from Devon.

LJ: Brilliant. Maybe we can talk about when you got married, which was on the 14th of December, 1972, at Chelsea Registry Office. Schneemann described it as wild, ridiculous fun.

AM: When did she describe it that way?

LJ: I can’t remember if that’s in the interviews in *From Then and Beyond*, which is a book that’s recently been published.

AM: It sounds perfectly reasonable.

LJ: Maybe it was when she was looking back on it. Are you able to share any stories from that day and why you both decided to get married?

AM: I think it was part of that sort of recognition of some sort of commitment. And we were about to leave for New York. For how long, we had no idea. I had a grant. She wanted to be back in New York, and I had a traveling fellowship to go there. And I was what, 26? I wasn’t looking over my shoulder. I just went forward. It seemed like the right thing to do, a fun thing to do. The only hiccup was when she had to go to the British Embassy to get some sort of—or was it the American Embassy? I forget which, but she had to go to one of the embassies to get her papers stamped, and they didn’t like the look of her passport because she had attempted to change her date of birth. Knock a few years off by rubbing it in the mud. They obviously looked at me and said, “This is a bit fishy.” And they said her papers would have to be better than these. I suppose she would have had to apply for a new passport. I can’t remember what happened. It must have happened quite quickly. I don’t remember that much, I just remember the circumstances. And also her calling Felipe and saying, “What am I going to do?” He called me and said, “Anthony, people are not just a bundle of years.” He was trying to smooth the waters. I was more amused than outraged.

LJ: Carolee wrote on the wedding [announcement] that her name was Carolee Mushka.

AM: Did she? ... That’s news to me.

LJ: In *The Daily Telegraph* announcement, it said “Carolee Mushka was to be married to Anthony McCall.” I was wondering if that was a kind of private joke between you two.

AM: It’s a private joke between herself and herself because I didn’t know about it. Why would she have taken out an announcement in *The Daily Telegraph*?

LJ: I was very curious about that.

AM: I mean, *The Daily Telegraph* was read by people from the Shires. It was a very conservative paper.

LJ: Maybe it was a joke?

AM: Maybe it was a joke, yes.

LJ: That’s funny that you weren’t aware of that. Well, you were telling me about how Martha [Hellion of Beau Geste Press] made the cake. Do you have any other stories of that day?

AM: It was a great big cake with two people fucking on it in icing sugar. My mother saw it and went, “Oh!” It was big because they thought there’d be 50 people there and actually there weren’t 50 people. It was a very good cake.

LJ: And what about... I know we were going to talk a bit about Gallery House. You were both in the exhibition, *A Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain* in 1972. You both showed work alongside Stuart Brisley, Malcolm Le Grice, Herman Nitsch, and Tony Morgan.

AM: Here’s the catalog.

LJ: Oh, fantastic. I think Schneemann showed *Plumb Line*.

AM: She did. And I think it’ll be in here. There were three sections. Section one was 18th of August to the 8th of September. This was the more conceptual stuff, I think. Stephen Willats, David Medalla, John Dugger, Graham Stevens, Bill Lundberg, Stuart Brisley, and some others.

LJ: So that was part one.

AM: That’s part one. Part two was September the 12th to the 30th. And that was John Latham and Andrew Dipper, Jeffrey Shaw, *Structure and Events*. As far as I know, that was all—oh, no, it’s got *Circulation Figures* in it, and it’s got some of my ... I guess it’s got me too.

LJ: Yes, here’s some photographs.

AM: That’s *Circulation Figures*, and there’s *Road Work*, and there’s *Maud Heath’s Monument*, which was a picnic performance. Yes, because I was in two sections. So the second section was performance, and I had my own room [where I] showed my ... carousel slide work. And a lot of photographic pieces. Then the third section was 18th of August to the 8th of September. This was the film section, as I remember rightly.

LJ: So this was the section that Schneemann was in.

AM: It had a big section. John Latham, Peter Gidal, Steve Dwoskin, John Du Cane. All the London Co-op people, Mike Leggett, Stuart Pound, Bill Lundberg, Ian Breakwell, Darcy Lange, Anthony McCall. I showed *Landscape for Fire*. Carolee Schneemann showed *Plumb Line*. Graham Stevens. Yes, so there's a lot of films.

LJ: Gallery House seems like it was quite an important venue for giving a platform to ...

AM: It was the alternative venue to a big official show called *The New Art* at the Hayward Gallery, which had Gilbert and George, artists like that, Richard Long. They were mostly artists who showed at Lisson or Nigel Greenwood, and it was very official and very important. And this was a scrappy, seat-of-the-pants kind of event, but very important. And Sigi Krauss, the German curator, had persuaded Goethe Institute to let him use the house next door that they weren't going to develop for a couple of years ... and that became Gallery House. It was just a great big empty house.

LJ: Amazing.

AM: And in many ways, it was the avant-garde version of the more official—the Hayward Gallery show was beautifully mounted and probably an accurate reflection of who was showing at the time in the galleries. This was much more international, much more conceptual.

LJ: Yes, it seems like it. And in the catalog that we're looking at here in Volume 3, you and Schneemann are shown, documented, opposite each other on a double-page spread. ... You've got *Landscape for Fire*, a still from that, and she's got a still from *Plumb Line*, in dialogue.

AM: Yes, we often got involved in shows together, although separately. I don't know if you've got this one in your list, which is the expanded cinema show at the ICA [*Festival of Expanded Cinema*, ICA, London, January 4–11, 1976], which was a very important show.

LJ: ... I was going to ask about this idea of expanded cinema. Obviously, this was something that was crucial to your practice, as well as Carolee's, and whether you discussed this concept together?

AM: ... Yes, as far as I can tell, the term expanded cinema appeared in the mid-'70s sometime.

LJ: I think it was Gene Youngblood, who published that book *Expanded Cinema* [1970].

AM: Gene Youngblood popularized the term. But it appeared earlier at the Cinematheque in New York, when John Brockman and Jonas Mekas curated a show of a certain kind of work. He included Carolee's Vietnam film.

LJ: *Viet-Flakes*.

AM: Yes, *Viet-Flakes*. Which is a beautiful piece of hers.

LJ: It seems like, in this exhibition, Schneemann restaged or staged an iteration of *Up to and Including Her Limits*. It was a multi-projection performance. ... So you both had a kind of relationship to expanded cinema in different ways.

AM: We did, in completely different ways. First of all, she was earlier than me. By that time, she was working with technology, and she was working with projection, and she was working with sound and performance. Whereas my [solid light films] were much more reductive. And that difference between our aesthetics and our interests were very important. In some ways, they made it possible to be a working couple. There was no difficulty in distinguishing who did what. Her aesthetic was messy and inclusive, and mine was theorized and exclusive.

LJ: What [was it] like being two artists in a relationship, because there must have been great differences. Joy in sharing your practices and process, but also occasionally, perhaps, friction. It seems like, from what you're saying, because your practices were so distinct—perhaps that was useful.

AM: There's some moments of tension. If one person's invited to something, the other isn't. But that was completely normal. I can't remember any sort of upset about that. But money was always an issue. We had a pretty regular life, in that we would tend to go to the country on the weekends, and in the summer, we'd spend the whole summer upstate [in New York].

LJ: ... Can we go back to that moment when you just got married, and then you went back to New York in January 1973 and you got on the SS Canberra, the ship? Carolee [recalled] that you got this special deal to travel from London to New York. ...

AM: Yes, it was the P&O line, SS Canberra was a cruise ship, and it had originally been built to go from Australia to England. But then it became a cruise liner doing cruises from Southampton down the African coast. And that had not been successful for them. They decided that they would move their ship over to New York and try and do a Caribbean cruise. But labor laws demanded that they travel with a full crew ... [which] meant a thousand crew members.

LJ: Wow.

AM: And there were only 900 passengers. In order to defray the costs of this trip—no one took voyages in January across the Atlantic, which could be rough—to defray the costs of the trip, they offered a special rate, which was cheaper than the cheapest charter plane. And it meant you could carry all the luggage you could carry. And so we jumped at it. It turned out to be a unique kind of ship—full of people. Quite a lot of artists and writers were on it. David Bowie was on it. And every day the clocks would change by one hour. It was a five-day voyage.

LJ: What a weird sense of time.

AM: And funny, going back, it's like a mirroring of Felipe [Ehrenberg]'s Mimeo printer on the train. The P&O line had a Mimeo newspaper that was published and put under the door of every cabin every morning. There were some dope smokers who wanted to smoke dope, but didn't want to cause trouble. So they went to the captain and asked him if there's a

room they could have. And he gave them a bar. I think the Alice Springs Bar became the—all the bars were named after places in Australia. And we passed the time very pleasantly. We had the drama over Kitch being rumbled.

LJ: They found out that Kitch was on the boat.

AM: Luckily, Carolee had a lawyer's letter that stated that Kitch was his client. And she was a trained, performing animal. [The captain] relented and said she didn't have to be thrown overboard after all.

LJ: A crucial collaborator. ... So then you got back to New York and Carolee discovered that the house on Springtown Road had been ransacked.

AM: It had been smashed up. There had been a sort of paranoid commune there beforehand. They stole her letters, like an extortionate amount of her letters. Extended correspondence with Brakhage.

LJ: That must have been devastating.

AM: Yeah, she was cut up about it. And then the loft, her loft had leaks in the roof, several places. So we've got pots everywhere taking water. We stabilized that situation, then went upstate to find the house was a wreck. We spent the next two months fixing everything up.

LJ: I'd love to hear about your memories of Springtown Road in general.

AM: Well, Springtown Road, it's a beautiful old house, a little ramshackle, two-story. The upper story was wood, added in the Victorian times. The lower story was built out of stone in the [1750s], I think, by the Huguenots, a history that Carolee was very keenly interested in. The walls were this thick [stone], except upstairs with no wood. It's in the Shawangunk Valley, very beautiful. I had a studio upstairs in one wing of the house. And so in the summer, we would just work there all day, every day.

AM: You've been there, right?

LJ: I have, yeah. And even now it still is an incredible setting. To make work, to live and work together.

AM: And the house needed a lot of work. We did the minimum, usually. We patched the roof. And really, much of the carpentry for it hasn't changed since she and Jim were there.

LJ: He did a lot of work on the house.

AM: She lived and died in the same room, basically.

LJ: That's extraordinary in some ways, her relationship with that house.

AM: It looks just the same as it did when we were together.

LJ: You get some [sense] of this in *Kitch's Last Meal*, that you had shared life in that house. ... Your domestic life is really present in that film.

AM: It is. And she enjoyed a domestic life. Like any couple, we cooked and did things. Did maintenance and cleaned up and worked. Worked mostly.

LJ: It looks like there was an incredible garden there, a kitchen garden.

AM: Yes, it was a kitchen garden for a while. Of course, we were in a valley surrounded by farmers who used toxic chemicals. So all the insects that were being attacked by toxic chemicals moved into our garden, because we had a natural garden. A haven for them. Always getting beetles off things.

LJ: You had a studio in the house as well? You took up one of the upstairs rooms?

AM: There's a pair of upstairs rooms right in the middle of the house. Carolee's studio was up the stairs and in the corner to the right. And the width, the depth of the house, I think. Mine was around the corner and I had a long, long room. And I cut *Long Film for Four Projectors* there completely. I had rented a synchronizer and reels and everything.

LJ: I think that room then became Carolee's studio later on.

AM: Yes, and she opened [it] up, she took out some walls too. She had that for a long time. I don't know if it was there when you were there, a piece she'd been working on to do with atrocities in Yugoslavia [referring to photographs in Schneemann's studio from Syria], I think.

LJ: ... We've been talking a little bit about your day-to-day life, but I imagine that you had lots of visitors who came up from the city to see you?

AM: Not very many. Carolee was fierce about privacy and quiet and distraction, and she didn't enjoy house visitors very much. We had some. For instance, Daryl Chin [artist and film critic] and Larry Qualls [art critic and archivist] came up a couple of times. ... There were a few others. On the whole, though, she would hiss like a cat at the thought of having more people staying. She didn't like it.

LJ: So it was a very special, private, intimate space for you both.

AM: For her it was, yes. I would have been tolerant of more people, but of course, if you have people, you're suddenly the host. And so it's work. And I don't think she liked—She was as domestic as I was, so we ate well and all that, but she didn't want to [be] putting out fresh soap and towels everywhere, that kind of thing. She really wanted to be private. And that's partly also because she must've felt a loss from being away [from her home while in London], so it wasn't a place where we entertain people.

LJ: But a place of great productivity and generative.

AM: We had a social life. It would be outside. ... She had a lot of friends at Bard [College], for instance. We'd go out and meet them. And we had local friends who we'd travel up from New York [with] in their car, Paul Glickler, a filmmaker.

LJ: He had a house nearby?

AM: He had a house in Krumville, which was about 10 miles away. We'd often drive up with him [from NYC] when he went up. In those days we had deep winters with thick snow. We never got stuck there, but it was deep and quiet. In the spring, it was amazing because you get the snow melt and then it would freeze, and then you'd have a whole sheet of where the water had been, the water sinking underneath. And so then it would begin breaking and there'd be [sounds] like gun retorts going off all the time from the ice cracking. She loved all that winter life.

LJ: She writes beautifully about her love for snow and that season.

AM: And that peace and quiet. Of course her dear cat thoroughly enjoyed being up there. Went off hunting.

LJ: ... We've talked a bit about *Kitch's Last Meal* already, but the process of making that film—you've said that you were actually often behind the camera as well as her.

AM: [The] process of making the film was just that there were things that she wanted in particular, the train passing the house repeatedly, the seasons changing, and it was all around Kitch too, who she was aware was on this earth for a limited amount of time. The funny thing is that as far as I can remember, we were never actually "in production," just that she had a camera, we had cameras, and that they needed using, and we recorded things that had to do with daily life. As long as you had daily life and you had a camera, you pretty much had everything you needed. She didn't worry it. She just kept shooting until Kitch was dead. And then there was the editing.

LJ: It's quite a kind of persistence or a continual process.

AM: It's a huge process, extensive process is the word, which went along with the extensiveness of life itself. And it's only when it was necessarily finished, because Kitch had died, that it began to be something that she had to edit and structure. I mean, the structure was a given. The metronome was the train, I would say, not [Kitch's] eating.

LJ: The passing of time was marked in many different ways.

AM: In many different ways. I was just as likely to be near the camera as she was. You just pick it up and shoot it. Nothing's lost.

LJ: And then the editing process was also incredibly intensive from Schneemann's recollection. There are many versions, as with all of Schneemann's films, really, but many iterations and versions that she went through.

AM: I'm sure that's right. I wasn't witness to her actually editing it. I presume she did it in her studio. And she had viewing machines and things. She was a very careful editor, actually, for people thinking that she had some sloppy technique. In fact, I think she was highly disciplined when it came to things like editing.

LJ: Absolutely. I think actually that applies to her whole output. That often there was this veneer or people felt like there was chaos and kind of lack of direction.

AM: But then you look at a film like *Viet-Flakes*, one of her best, I think. ... It's just stunning and it's very carefully measured.

LJ: Definitely. She was a rigorous planner, and her performances all reveal ... copious notes and scoring and very specific plans for the timing, lights, costumes.

AM: It's true. Although she was extremely tolerant of chance and accidents. ... Things going wrong. ... She was tolerant of disorder and found it useful. I remember ... we were in Sweden at Fylkingen, she was doing *Cooking With Apes* [1973]. ... I was there too. I was doing *Landscape for Fire* ... and *Line Describing a Cone*. ... She said something like, "So unfair, things don't go wrong in your production, but they always go wrong in mine." And she said that with humor. She considered during the rehearsals for *Cooking With Apes*, nothing was going right, for her, in her opinion. And it did seem to the outsider quite disordered, but in the end, it seemed exactly right. Her tolerance for that kind of disorder in progress, I would have found hard, but she was really good at it.

LJ: ... What was your life like here in New York, in the city? You were living at 29th Street together.

AM: On 29th Street. Now there, we would have parties and [have] people over. But there's a lot of going out and a lot of ending up at Max's Kansas City. Which was [an] amazing center really. I'd never seen anything like it ever. A bar with art everywhere. Andy Warhol's group in the back. You always bumped into people and then everyone exchanged news and, "Oh, we've just started this magazine. It's called *Avalanche*. It's the first issue. What do you think?" ... It was the seventies, which was in retrospect, such a great period because it was off the commercial radar basically. She was well connected to poets and musicians as well as visual artists. ... I tried to remember some names for you. So some of them may be misremembered, but anyway, here they are. Lionel Rogerson, he was a publisher. Max Neuhaus [composer and musician], who had been a part of Tone Roads [Chamber Ensemble], [with] Jim Tenney. That's at the time [Max] had a boat studio. He lived in a boat on 79th street on the Hudson. And his studio was—I measured—two foot six by one foot six. ... He was making music by making little integrated circuits. So they were little electronic things.

LJ: Wow. Perfectly proportioned.

AM: So it was a big enough studio. Peter Moore, the photographer. Very important character.

LJ: Of course. He documented so many of Schneemann's performances.

AM: He documented so many things, including mine. Jonathan Cott, who was a *Rolling Stone* editor and a poet. Philip Glass [composer], Paul Glickler, our neighbor. John Brockman, who became an intellectual publisher, particularly for science related projects. Mary Kaplan, she was a well-to-do patron. Olga Klüver, married to Billy Klüver who founded Experiments in Art and Technology. Stan and Joanne VanDerBeek. He had the Movie-Drome. Very important filmmaker. [John] Cage, Claes Oldenburg, Max Neuhaus. I'm repeating them, sorry. They all had the artist community in Stony Point [NY] where Cage collected all his mushrooms.

LJ: Did you go out to Stony Point with them?

AM: We went out a couple of times. And that's when I saw Stan VanDerBeek's Movie-Drome. Frederic Rzewski, the composer. Annette Michelson, writer and theorist. Then the people at Millennium Film Workshop and the people at the Collective of Living Cinema. Paul Blackburn, poet. Jerome Rothenberg, poet. Ann Waldman, poet. [These names] came off the end of my pencil. It's [a] rough idea of people we were around.

LJ: Many of those people remained friends of Carolee's until the end of her life.

AM: Yes. Yes. Yes. Friendships were very deep, partly because they were all pleased to be artists in the same place at the same time.

LJ: And you all go to see each other's work and, or reading each other's writing.

AM: And there's correspondence. Carolee kept up a correspondence for instance with Clayton Eshleman. They were always exchanging opposing opinions about poetry.

LJ: Their letters are published in *Correspondence Course* [*An Epistolary History of Carolee Schneemann and her Circle*, edited by Kristine Styles, 2010].

AM: Oh, are they?

LJ: Well, a lot of them are published in that book and they're incredibly revealing about both Schneemann and Clayton.

AM: Incredibly revealing to me too when I discovered that she'd been pregnant. I didn't know. I only remember her asking, "Are you sure you don't want a baby?" Yeah, quite sure.

LJ: Wow. So you didn't know. So you only found that out through reading her [letters]?

AM: After the book was published. I didn't know. I mean, the answer would have been the same actually. I wasn't ready to be a father. And she certainly wasn't capable of being a mother. She wouldn't have, she would have hated it.

LJ: She wrote very lucidly about the kind of friction that she felt the two positions of artist and mother were. ...

AM: A friend of mine, a woman painter I know, said her advice to young women painters was to get birth control.

LJ: I think that was a very hostile environment to women at that time.

AM: It's very difficult. I mean, Jesus, you can't be left holding the baby as they say.

LJ: Going back to Springtown, you mentioned the Huguenot history of the house and Schneemann's interest in the Native American history that preceded that. ... She seems to have a lot of books in her library about [that]. I wondered if that was something that you had talked about together?

AM: No, but I knew she was emotionally attached to the house and its history and the importance of it not being destroyed. We had a very tense meeting once with the local farmer who was beginning to play fast and loose with the ecology. And she was aware of herself as a sort of guardian of something.

LJ: ... Can [we] talk about those photographs that you took of Schneemann swinging from the tree [for *Up to and Including Her Limits*, 1973–76].

AM: Oh yes. You want to know where the tree was, don't you? ... It wasn't very far from the house. ... I'm pretty sure it was this tree.

LJ: For the purposes of the recording, we're looking at Anthony's beautiful photograph of the landscape in front of the house covered in snow. And there's a large tree just to the right in the photograph. ... In front of the house at the end of the driveway.

AM: It was quite close.

LJ: ... Quite low hanging branches. ... So the story goes that Schneemann saw her neighbor pruning his trees in his tree surgeon's harness. ... Did she take the harness to the tree on her land or was he already pruning those trees outside the house? Can you remember?

AM: ... Carolee is wonderfully capable of turning a dull story into a really good one. She's a very good storyteller and she always elaborates. But in that case, I'd say it's pretty accurate. There was a tree surgeon who ... looked after some of the trees on the street, on the road, and he did indeed go off to lunch and left his harness there.

LJ: So in that tree?

AM: That's a good question. I don't know if he was working on that tree. Maybe he was, and that would be why it was there. I don't remember that part, but I do remember taking the pictures of her swinging from it. And she did, she took the opportunity and probably hissed quickly and came running out with my camera.

LJ: There's such a sense of abandon and release in those photographs. ... Before those photographs were taken, she had done what she described as a kind of earlier iteration of *Up to and Including Her Limits*, called *Trackings* in London.

AM: Where she was hanging from a rope and she was drawing on the ground.

LJ: Exactly. But I think she, according to her own chronology, staged this early experiment at the London Film Co-op in 1970.

AM: ... But it wasn't 1970. ... She wasn't working on *Trackings* until '73 at least, because I can remember when she started doing it. She did something at The Kitchen.

LJ: And also at Grand Central in the train carriage [for the tenth annual Avant-Garde Festival, 1973].

AM: Right, which was [’73]. Yes, exactly, in Grand Central. I think she’s got her dates a little bit wrong, unless there’s something I don’t know about.

LJ: It seems there was [an] initial working out of a performance in London and then *Trackings* was developed further in New York?

AM: It’s possible because I wasn’t around in 1970. But I don’t remember it as a trope, the business of hanging from the rope and doing drawing. I remember that as something she’d discovered while we were together.

LJ: ... And that maybe was triggered by that tree surgeon or the swinging.

AM: Or not. Either one could trigger the other. I mean, she started doing drawings on the ground, hanging from a rope. And then she saw a man swinging from a tree [Making grinding gear sounds].

LJ: The connections. ... You saw the performance at The Kitchen? ... You must have seen quite a few different iterations of *Up to and Including Her Limits*.

AM: It was what she was doing. She’s exploring how it might work.

LJ: And often, as part of the installation, she would perform the work, but also project *Kitch’s Last Meal* and other works by her in the space. ... So your life was very much kind of projected as part of that performance in a way.

AM: I suppose, yes [*Laughter*].

LJ: Fast forwarding to 1974. You went back to the UK together, I think that summer. We were talking about that earlier a little bit. I wondered if you have any memories of that summer back in London?

AM: Well, as we read from the calendar, I was there to show the new series of *Cone* films. I did a five-minute drawing [at Art Meetings Place]. And then what was she doing there? She was, oh, she did the same thing. She did a five-minute performance too. And I think it was a hanging one.

LJ: So that was *Up to and Including Her Limits*. ... Could you talk about *Interior Scroll* [1975]? I think you were staying at a friend’s house, or a patron’s house in East Hampton, is that right?

AM: Yes, oh yes, that could have been Harold Witt, the banker. He and Carolee, I think, had met at a psychological, what do you call it, an encounter group or something, and became friends. He had a house in East Hampton [and] invited us out there. I remember the fireflies being absolutely mesmerizing in the summer, late at night. And yeah, she was doing this performance with this women’s group.

LJ: During this summer, there was [a] festival, “Women Artists Here and Now,” and I think they reached out to her and asked if she would like to perform something, and she recalls having the dream of the message, the scroll, again, while she was in East Hampton, and being compelled to perform the work. And she has written or described how she started

practicing for *Interior Scroll*, by folding up all these little strips of paper, and you were helping her to do that.

AM: I read that, I don't remember. ... I mean, quite possible.

LJ: What are your memories of *Interior Scroll*?

AM: I'm only [at one] performance. ... I didn't have to know very much of what she was going to do. I knew she would do some strikes and poses, and she would eventually pull out the scrolls, so to speak. [That's] all I needed to know as a photographer. There wasn't much planning on my side, other than to make sure I had film in the camera. And finding the place to shoot from, making sure the lighting was okay. I didn't have a lot of control over the mise-en-scene, so to speak. I just shot. And we were lucky, we managed to record everything that was important.

LJ: Your photographs are incredible. I don't even want to call them records, because they bring to life the performance.

AM: I'm pleased to think so. I'm rather proud of them, really. They are extraordinary. ... When you compare them to other photographs of the same piece, there's no comparing.

LJ: Do you remember the context of that room where you were taking the photographs? How many people were there watching the piece? Any reactions?

AM: I think it was quite a small audience. I can't say how many. I have no image of them. But if there had been more than 15 people, I'd have been surprised. But maybe there were. But this is ... out in the Hamptons. And I don't know how big their group was. It could have been more. ... I just don't remember the crowd. I was just looking at the ...

LJ: But you were working.

AM: I was working.

LJ: You had a different job to do.

AM: Don't bother me, yeah.

LJ: I also wanted to ask you about the beautiful photograph that you took of Carolee in 1976.

AM: Oh, in Tuscany.

LJ: Yes, I saw it pinned up on your wall over there.

AM: She's carrying this amazing bouquet of wildflowers.

LJ: I think you had recalled when we last met that you were staying at Joseph Kosuth's [artist] house.

AM: Yes, that was it. You can see it. The house is Joseph Kosuth's.

LJ: How did that trip come about?

AM: Well, he and Sarah Charlesworth [artist and photographer]. ... Sarah, Joseph and I had started working together in about '75. There was a political moment in the art world and there was a group called Artists Meeting for Cultural Change. That's where we all met. And we began working together as a small group called International Local. ... We were going to do something at the Venice Biennale, which would have been in the summer. So we went out and stayed at the house to develop the piece and to prepare. And so I think we were there for about a month. It was beautiful. ... It's farming, olive groves and herds of goats with bells around their necks. ... Beautiful wildflowers. She loved it out there.

LJ: Can fast forward even further to the moment where you and Carolee began to separate. And one [to the artwork] is *ABC* [*—We Print Anything—It's In The Cards*, 1976–77].

AM: Oh, yes, it's an extraordinary work. You have to take your hat off, she made a silk purse out of a sardine.

LJ: ... We were talking about *Reel Time* before and this idea of filming and documenting a relationship as it's developing. And then *ABC* in some ways is Schneemann's own counterpoint or counterpart to *Reel Time* in that she's documenting a relationship dissolving as a new one begins to form with the publisher Bruce McPherson. I wondered if you'd be able to share any memories of those moments as your relationship was changing?

AM: It's difficult territory. I mean, this is almost impossible to speculate about. But I think that there was a tension going on where she wanted to spend more and more time at the house. Privately, in a way, working, and at just the time when I suddenly realized I've been in New York for five years. "This is great." And I wanted to be in the city. That was a tension. And I began to meet new people. And meet somebody. Then the tensions began to—you know, these contradictions began to create problems. And at the same time, she was able to find a new relationship with Bruce. They'd been working on a book together. I think he did the first book.

LJ: He did, yeah. *More Than Meat Joy* [1979].

AM: ... Even at the height of the sort of misery, we were still talking and indeed cohabiting. It sort of worked itself out in the end. And then that gradually developed into a general friendship. And then there was the period when I was working, not making art. That was a fallow period for me. A bad period really. And we didn't have so much contact. I had a new marriage and so on.

LJ: Was this in the '80s?

AM: Yes, '88, something like that. And then we had a child. So there was a period of not being in touch much. And then in the last, I suppose the last 15 years, we began to talk a lot on the phone. I'd see her, she came to dinner quite a lot.

LJ: It seems like from her own writing and memories, she had incredible warmth and friendship with your partner as well.

AM: Yeah, she did. So she came around quite a bit. And she was sort of admirable because she was very silent about her afflictions ... didn't reveal very much. Although she began to talk about her alternative treatments and so on. ... In the last 15 years, I would say, we've been checking with each other much more often. Talking, having long conversations on the phone, complaining about how everyone asked for pictures and wanted them the next day, that kind of thing. ... And we used to go up, Annabel [McCall] and I used to go up and visit sometimes—this is later on—and we'd take big bags of food. She came to dinner with us quite often, so I was in touch quite a bit.

Of course, the fact that she was unwell was now becoming clear, and mortally so. Before that she basically was concealing her condition. You could read it in the show she had at the New Museum [*Up to and Including Her Limits*, 1996], you could read it in the title of some of the works, you could understand it was something serious afoot. ... And she remained, in terms of she and I, she remained very supportive and came to all the openings. I remember her going around in a wheelchair around the show at Pioneer Works. ... And very emphatic in [her] support. ... And then it's rather nice that she was able to die—she wanted to die at home, she was able to. It was snowing, [which] she loved. And she was buried in a cemetery just a mile up the road, which is a natural cemetery. She was very pleased about it.

LJ: Did you have any conversations with her about death or, I mean, obviously this was on her mind in terms of other people's lives, but also her own.

AM: Not specifically, but it was so much implicit. She would talk a bit about it, about her treatments. I mean, she tried 20 years earlier—she'd gone to alternative medicine, which I think was partly successful. And then it did stop working.

LJ: She made *Known/Unknown Plague Column* [1995] ... which is about her fight, as she called it, with breast cancer.

AM: Her fight.

LJ: Yeah, she framed it in that sense. And also it's about the framing of illness and disease by the medical profession, and particularly the kind of gendered dynamics that often play out in a doctor's surgery. Also about contending with your body changing and the vulnerability, the fragility of the body.

AM: Well, and also it helps to know her father was a doctor.

LJ: Yes. And she wasn't afraid of those physical, visceral aspects of life.

AM: Right. She told me a story about having been in a doctor's office. She was talking about 30, 40 years earlier. And she said she explained to him she had a pain in her uterus or something like that, and the doctor said, indignantly, "You can't feel anything there."

LJ: As if, presumably, he knew.

AM: I remember her being amused and furious about that kind of sexism.

LJ: ... I know we touched on *ABC—We Print Anything*. Maybe we could go back to ... could [we] talk a bit more about the making of it? I mean, it's difficult, because obviously it's

your life. You were intimately involved in that work. But from the outside, there's something wonderful and humorous, but also incredibly impressive about an ex-partner, or a soon-to-be ex-partner and a future partner sharing a U-Haul truck.

AM: I agree with you. And also the fact that so conveniently, [Anthony, Bruce, and Carolee are] *ABC*. How lucky can you get?

LJ: It was in the stars, as the whole piece is kind of about the tarot.

AM: ... Something impressive about her, sort of fighting back in a way, the re-establishing [of] things on her terms. And she indulgently forgave me for any crimes that I may have committed there, you know. She was very grown up in that way. ... I suppose that *ABC* work re-established her control over her own world, to some degree.

LJ: What do you mean?

AM: It was the retelling of the recent past in her terms.

LJ: I see. Her own narrative.

AM: Her own narrative, yes. Her experience. And as you said, sort of defiance, really.

LJ: I'm curious about the kind of behind-the-scenes process, because of course there was quite a lot of personal material aired through that work.

AM: She gave me a copy, by the way. I haven't gone through it bit by bit, but I mean, there is—legitimately so—quite a lot of editing has taken place. And things weren't said quite in that way. ... I'm just saying it's not a documentary work.

LJ: No, and I think it's quite deliberately blurry.

AM: That's what's so fine about it. ... Do you know what year that was?

LJ: ... Well, I guess it was made ...

AM: It was made in the heat of the moment.

LJ: In the heat of the moment. Very much so. ... '76 to '77. Do you remember any of the—there's amazing photographs of both you and Bruce and Carolee together as part of the deck of cards. Do you recall that kind of documentation?

AM: That's probably at a party, I think. Well, it shows what a good editor she is. ... Have I indeed even answered your question about the cards?

LJ: I think you have. I think we've been pretty extensive. ... Is there anything that you wanted to share that I haven't asked you about? Is there anything, any memories or points that come to mind that you feel might be pertinent to share?

AM: Well, only really that she was deadly serious about her work. The other thing is she was vocal in her political attitudes. And the third is that she was a lot of fun and that she was good with friendships and loved a good party. I think those would be the—

LJ: Highlights, top line.

AM: I suppose also I should add that within the period of our relationship, she was also suffering from something, some ailment. She was always taking vitamin pills, and she was irascible. It would sort of come over her, which was difficult. She would get angry, slightly perhaps out of the blue. All those things coexisted in her.

LJ: Yeah. The whole spectrum of human emotion.

AM: Yeah. I think that's about it.

LJ: Well, thank you, Anthony. It's been amazing to hear all your memories.

AM: Well, they seem all sort of slight. ... But as P. Adams Sitney [film historian] is fond of saying, "It looks like gossip now, but in 10 years, it'll be history."