



PREMI JOAN MIRÓ 2009



PIPILOTTI RIST. Slip My Ocean, 1996. Cortesia de l'artista, Hauser & Wirth i Lühling Augustine, Nova York

PIPILOTTI RIST

Partit amistós – sentiments electrònics

8/7/2010 – 1/11/2010

Fundació Joan Miró Barcelona

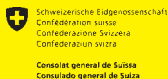


Amb el patrocini de:



Amb el suport de:

Amb la col·laboració de:



fundación suiza para la cultura
prochelveta



Han Nefkens

PIPILOTTI RIST

Friendly Game – Electronic Feelings

Fundació Joan Miró
8 July – 1 November 2010

Centre Cultural Caixa Girona – Fontana d'Or
9 July – 7 November 2010



Pipilotti Rist Friendly Game - Electronic Feelings

The Fundació Joan Miró and the Fundació Caixa Girona present ***Friendly Game – Electronic Feelings***, an exhibition by Swiss artist, Pipilotti Rist, winner of the 2009 Joan Miró Prize. The show is organised by the Fundació Joan Miró and sponsored by the Fundació Caixa Girona with the support of writer and art collector Han Nefkens.

Pipilotti Rist was awarded the **2009 Joan Miró Prize** for her wide-ranging creative curiosity and her outstanding contribution to the current art scene. The jury's unanimous decision was based on the fact that «over the last twenty years Pipilotti Rist has never ceased to surprise and provoke us with her artistic explorations that delve into psychic and aesthetic landscapes, while penetrating the deepest strata of both the personal and collective consciousness, often straddling them both in a forceful and elusive manner.»

Friendly Game – Electronic Feelings is the artist's most extensive exhibition ever presented in Spain. The show comprises thirteen installations—ten at the Fundació Joan Miró and three at the Centre Cultural de Caixa Girona—presenting a broad view of Pipilotti Rist's artistic trajectory to date.

Two of Rist's works presented at the Fundació, *Doble llum* <Double Light>, and *Temps lliure* <Free Time>, were created especially for this exhibition. The first offers a dialogue between Rist and Joan Miró through a video projection on Miró's sculpture, *Femme*, dating from 1968 and a part of the Fundació's permanent collection. This piece is Han Nefkens' first donation of an artwork to Spain and will become part of the Fundació Miró's collection. *Temps lliure*, the other work created for this exhibition, is a forest of words that, in the artist's words, «...tries to clean the visitor's brain.» Because Rist always names her works in the language of the country in which they are first shown, both pieces are titled in Catalan.

Pipilotti Rist (Grabs, Switzerland, 1962) has shown her works in museums around the world, including the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the MoMA in New York and Rotterdam's Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum. Rist's first feature-length film, *Pepperminta*, was premiered in September 2009. Included among the artist's forthcoming works is a ceiling piece for Jean Nouvel's building in Vienna (Praterstrasse 1), scheduled to open in October 2010.

Accompanying the exhibition is a book also titled ***Friendly Game – Electronic Feelings***, produced by Han Nefkens and designed by Thomas Rhyner of the Atelier Rist. The book includes photographs of the artist's works shown in both museum spaces together with poems by Pipilotti Rist and texts by Martina Millà, Han Nefkens and Karin Seinsoth.

Friendly gestures

Catalogue text by Martina Millà Bernad.

Take, metaphorically, Pipilotti Rist's open hand. Let her guide you through her kaleidoscope, under her microscope, and around her telescope. Listen to her favourite sounds and iterations. Try to grasp the elusive dimensions she serves up, as in a feast. Savour and relish her saturated palette and fluctuating rhythms. At some point, take a break in her playground and surf over your own disconcerted, bubbly reactions. Most scary of all, dare to look, unabashedly, at the beauty you can find there if you choose to benefit from its company.

Take, for instance, the sequence of *Open My Glade* (2000) in which a young woman's face is trying to work through the invisible barrier of a camera lens in a gesture of awkward intimacy with the optical device filming her. What we see, ant-like and adoring, from Times Square is that close-up scene of contact: face and lens touching each other, getting to know each other, as it were. The image might also seem like a struggle against an oppressive medium, but it can be equally read as the scene of an unusual encounter, a challenging but perhaps also friendly encounter, laden with what might turn out to be tremendous potential. After all, what do we know? What might happen if we extended an open, friendly hand to a scrutinizing piece of machinery? Why not give it a try?

Stand, sit or lie for a while in front of *Sip My Ocean* (1996), a large double-screen projection that lets us briefly imagine a fish-like experience in what is otherwise a forbidding medium for us, lunged creatures. Could human beings be happy in such an unfriendly environment? Ask the ocean, Rist seems to suggest, and find out, put the fear of drowning and suffocation aside and meet the salty water on other terms, on friendly terms. Care to try?

Even gravity, one of the most destabilizing conditions when it comes to maintaining our enduring fantasies of eternal life and domination, is asked to be a pal in *Gravity Be My Friend* (2007), an open door to a different vision and experience of what, in Rist's world, turns out to be a pleasurable, harmonious dimension.

Not to mention her recent feature film *Pepperminta* (2009), a tale of friendship with a splendid soundtrack that includes a song in praise of mistakes (*Wir machen Fehler und das tut gut!*) listing a series of synesthetic errors that are raised to the status of the coolest friends one could ever have. Why not befriend our endearing mistakes? Do we dare embrace perceived faults and imperfections? Why not try and find out? We may end up discovering hidden treasures, unexpected beauty, even an underlying world of odd perfection.

It's the same world—one in which feelings of shame and notions of sin are nowhere to be found, where skies are bright blue and perceived realities exist in a state of permanent spring—that we find in *Homo Sapiens Sapiens* (2005). Were we not the most beloved creatures, after all? Did we really ever stop being that or did we just get a bit sidetracked? Time to look again, and find new friends?

Rist's extraordinary pieces seem to deploy one invitation after another of this special, friendly kind: numberless invitations to shift impressions and to look with different eyes. Her videos are full of reversals of perception and unlikely encounters, the kind that are usually discouraged or considered unthinkable, when not downright impossible. Impossible? What if we one day discovered they were not impossible after all, that they in fact opened up new perspectives, wider, deeper, more beautiful perspectives on things?

Not too long ago, I came across a little jewel of a word: pronoia, the opposite of paranoia. It is a liberating concept based on a friendly, unafraid approach to things. Its basic recommendation: reach out, find out, go beyond appearances and untested assumptions. See what you discover. Rist's world seems imbued with that spirit, and if we decide to wear special pronoia glasses to look at her work, we will see it as a confirmation of the endless wealth of possibilities we humans could enjoy, if only we were open to unorthodox combinations and couplings, to unusual kinds of friendships. That is what we find now in *Doble llum (Double Light)*, the new hybrid piece especially developed for *Friendly game – Electronic feelings*, an encounter between Rist's projected images and *Femme*, a sixties bronze by that fearless parachutist, generous soul, and inexhaustible visionary, Joan Miró. Pipilotti and Joan—kindred spirits—holding hands, joining their distinct visual codes, playing together, and having tremendous fun.

Then return to your rain-or-shine, gravity prone life, and wonder if such experiences may or may not be more than a reflection of an amplifying dream.

Will you turn down such a welcoming invitation?



Press presentation: 7 July, at 12:00h.
Opening: 7 July, at 20:30h

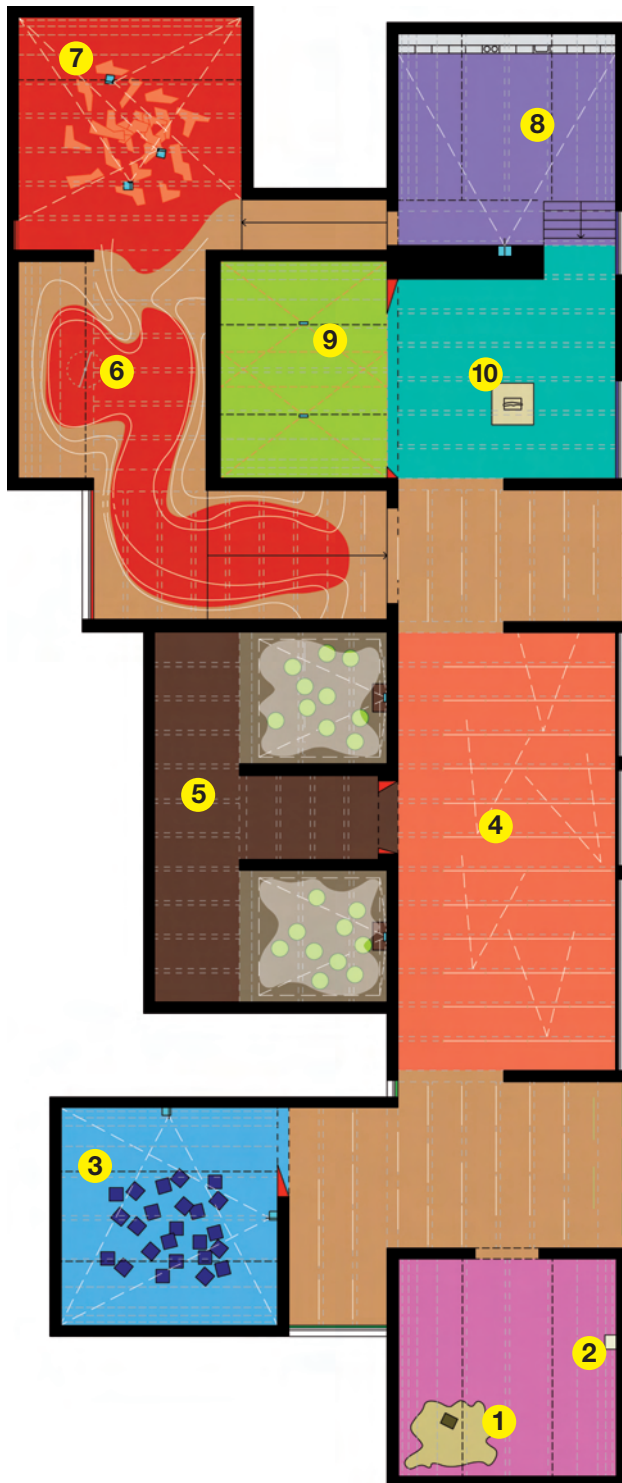
8 July – 1 November 2010

Opening hours:

Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 – 19:00h. (October – June)
Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 – 20:00h. (July – September)
Thursdays 10:00 – 21:30h.
Sundays 10:00 – 14:30h.

Closed: Mondays (except public holidays)
1 January, 25 and 26 December

Fundació Joan Miró
Parc de Montjuïc, s/n
08038 Barcelona
Tel. 934 439 470
Fax 933 298 609
info@fundaciomiro-bcn.org
www.fundaciomiro-bcn.org



- 1 *Grabstein für RW*, 2004
- 2 *Porqué te vas? (nass)*, 2003
- 3 *Sip My Ocean*, 1996
- 4 *Temps lliure*, 2010
- 5 *Tyngdkraft, var min vän*, 2007
- 6 *Ginas Mobile*, 2007
- 7 *Lungenflügel*, 2009
- 8 *Regenfrau (I Am Called A Plant)*, 1999
- 9 *A la belle étoile*, 2007
- 10 *Doble llum*, 2010

Friendly Game – Electronic Feelings

- 1 Tombstone for RW, 2004**
Video installation with 1 LCD monitor embedded in a serpentine stone, half a glass ball, 1 player, leaves, silent, 19'.
What film do you want to appear in your future tombstone? Rote Wolken (Red Clouds) is the name of the person buried under this black stone. The video deals with two states of being: the ghostly and the corporeal.
- 2 Why Are You Going? (Wet), 2003**
Video installation with 1 peeled LCD monitor, 1 player, 1 miniature clothes drying rack, 1 wooden base to hang on the wall, blue linoleum top, silent, 33".
The work attempts to represent the fragility of our skeletal apparatus and refers to civilization and its economic structure, which primarily exist to make up for the physical limitations of our bodies.
- 3 Sip My Ocean, 1996**
Audio video installation with 2 projections reflected in a corner, 1 player, 1 audio system, 20 round pillows, blue walls and carpet. Sound based on "Wicked Game" by Chris Isaak, interpreted and performed by Anders Guggisberg and Pipilotti Rist, 10'.
This work speaks about our deep lifelong wish to understand each other completely and our nearly impossible desire to be synchronic.
- 4 Free Time, 2010**
Video installation with 5 projections on and through translucent curtains, 5 players, silent, 1'.
Temps lliure, a work created for this exhibition, is a forest of words with which the artist "tries to clean the visitor's brain."
- 5 Gravity, Be My Friend, 2007**
Audio video installation with 2 projections on 2 amorphous ceiling panels, 3 players, 1 sound system, 20 pillows, brown-carpeted lying area. Sound by A. Guggisberg and P. Rist, 11' and 12'.
This work is an invitation to reflect on the force of gravity while we lie back and watch the projections on two amorphous ceiling panels. Do we see and hear differently when our muscles are relaxed?
- 6 Gina's Mobile, 2007**
Video installation with 1 projection, 1 player, 1 copper sphere, 1 plexiglass drop, 1 wooden branch and translucent cables, curtains structure and pink-red carpet, silent, 5'.
A mobile with a projection of close-up travelling shots over vulvas, deprived of their usual connotations and made to look like jewelery. The work gently questions fears and taboos, and the ease with which we get out of balance.
- 7 Lobe of the Lung, 2009**
Audio video installation with 3 projections on a triptych screen, 3 synchronized players, 20 big wild shaped pillows and pink-red carpet. Sound by Anders Guggisberg, 10'.
The footage of this installation is a visual poem derived from the artist's first feature film, *Pepperminta*, which addresses our daily self-censorship. The shots show Pepperminta (played by Ewelina Guzik) interacting with nature in a search for analogies and contradictions of human and animal life.
- 8 Rain Woman (I Am Called A Plant), 1999**
Audio video installation with 1 kitchen unit with repeating cupboard elements reaching the ceiling, 1 projection, 1 player, 1 audio system, 3'.
This work addresses the subject of communion with nature. In this case the artist contrasts organic life, represented by a naked vulnerable body lying on the street in the rain, with the domesticity and sterility of an immense kitchen, onto which the video is projected.
- 9 Under the Sky, 2007**
Audio video installation with 1 projection down to the floor, 1 player, 1 sound system. Sound of *Homo Sapiens Sapiens*, 2005, by A. Guggisberg and P. Rist, 7'.
This installation, meant to be walked on, moves from the microscopic to the macro in order to open up new perspectives on complex issues, such as our origins from amniotic fluid, the hypothesis of a purgatory and the "black boxes" of our economic system.
- 10 Double Light, 2010**
Video installation with 2 projections onto the bronze sculpture *Femme* by Joan Miró (1968), 2 players, silent. Gift of Han Nefkens to the Fundació Joan Miró. *Femme*: Fundació Joan Miró Collection, Barcelona, 3' and 5'.
This special work offers a dialogue between Rist and Joan Miró through two video projections on Miró's sculpture, *Femme*, a bronze piece dating from 1968. The production of Rist's work is a gift from Han Nefkens to the Fundació Joan Miró. *Doble llum* will be added to the museum's permanent holdings.

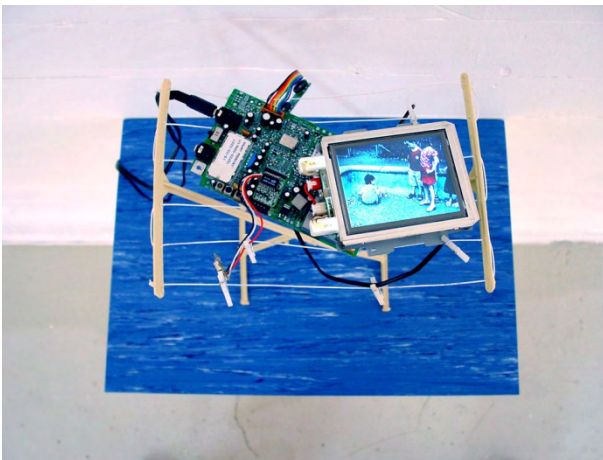
1



Grabstein für RW, 2004
Tombstone for RW

Image:
Installation view at Museum Bellerive, Zürich, Switzerland
Photo: Käthe Walser
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

2



Porqué te vas? (nass), 2003
Why are you going? (Wet)

Image:
Installation view at International Art Festival 2004, Lofoten, Norway
Photo: Käthe Walser
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

3



Sip My Ocean, 1996

Image:

Installation view at Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, Canada

Photo: B. Merret

Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

4

Temps Iliure, 2010

Free Time

5



Tyngdkraft, var min vän, 2007

Gravity, Be My Friend

Image:

Installation view at FACT, Liverpool, United Kingdom

Photo: Johan Warden

Courtesy the artist, Hauser & Wirth and Luhring Augustine, New York

6



Gina's Mobile, 2007
Gina's Mobile

Image:
Photo: Stefan Altenburger Photography Zürich
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

7



Lungenflügel, 2009
Lobe Of The Lung

Image:
Installation view at Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam
Photo: Ernst Moritz
Courtesy the artist, Hauser & Wirth and Luhring Augustine, New York

8



Regenfrau (I Am Called A Plant), 1999
Rain Woman (I Am Called A Plant)

Image:

Installation view at Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France

Photo: Marc Damage

Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

9



À la belle étoile, 2007
Under The Sky

Image:

Installation view at Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

Photo: Georges Meguerditchian

Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth



Pipilotti Rist / Joan Miró
Doble llum, 2010
Double light

Femme: Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona Collection

Doble llum is a gift from Han Nefkens to the Fundació Joan Miró and will be added to the museum's permanent holdings.

[\(press release about Han Nefkens donation\)](#)



Fundació Caixa Girona

Opening: 8 July, at 20:00h

9 July – 7 November 2010

Opening hours:

Monday to Friday: 11:00 – 14:00h.

17:00 – 21:00h.

Saturdays: 11:00 – 21:00h.

Sundays & public holidays: closed (July – August)

11:00 – 14:00h. (September – June)

Centre Cultural de Caixa Girona Fontana d'Or

Ciutadans, 19

17004 Girona

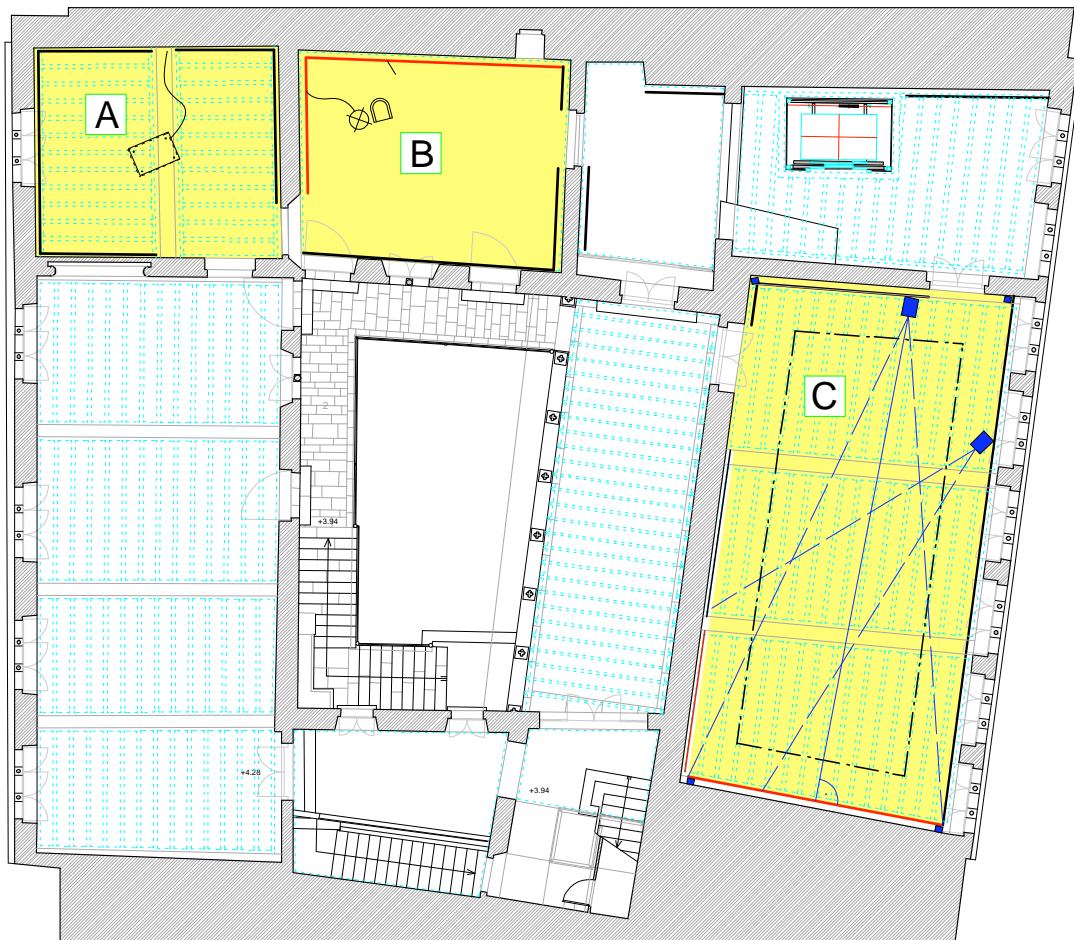
Tel. 972 209 836

Fax 972 209 414

info@fundaciocaixadegirona.org

www.fundaciocaixadegirona.org

- A Deine Raumkapsel, 2006
- B Lap Lamp, 2006
- C Ever Is Over All, 1997



A



Deine Raumkapsel, 2006

Your Space Capsule

Audio video installation with 1 wooden box, 1 turning video projection, 1 player, 2 speakers, wallpapers, the moon and miniature objects.

Image:

Installation view at Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall

Photo: Johan Warden

Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Deine Raumkapsel <Your Space Capsule> (2006) is a work that looks like a shipping box from outside. But within it is a miniature bedroom, seemingly recently abandoned, with a star-filled sky and an emerging moon on the walls. A video projection moves over the walls showing slow-motion sequences of people of all ages interacting with each other, against the background sounds of wind and sacred music.

B



Lap Lamp, 2006

Video installation for a lap with 1 chair, 1 standing lamp, LED lights, 1 projector, 1 player, silent.

Image:

Photo: Andrea Rist

Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Lap Lamp (2006) is a video installation using a standing lamp that projects a tree-filled field, broken wood and nettles onto the visitor's lap, caressing her/him. The work is a face-off between the rigidity of physical confinement and the desire for psychological freedom.

C



Ever Is Over All, 1997

Audio video installation with 2 overlapping projections, 2 players, 1 audio system. Sound by Anders Guggisberg and Pipilotti Rist.

Image:

Installation view at National Museum for Foreign Art, Sofia, Bulgaria

Photo: Angel Tzvetanov

Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Two overlapping projections that show a field of red flowers and, respectively, a woman happily walking down the street. She is brandishing one of the flowers and with it breaks the windows of cars parked along the sidewalk as though that were a normal, everyday activity. The installation addresses stereotypical ideas of property and rules of behaviour. The cars stand for obstacles that are all too seldom questioned.



PREMI **JOAN MIRÓ** 2009
www.fundaciomiro-bcn.org/premij Joan Miro.php



JOAN MIRÓ PRIZE 2009 SECOND EDITION

WINNER: PIPILOTTI RIST

DECISION OF THE JURY

Why Pipilotti Rist? A word from the jury of the 2009 Joan Miró Prize

For the second edition of the prize, the jury has unanimously resolved that the artist most deserving of the award is Pipilotti Rist, of whose work the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona and the Fontana d'Or in Girona will be privileged to host two complementary exhibitions in the summer of 2010.

For the last twenty years, Pipilotti Rist has continued to surprise and challenge us all with her artistic probings into psychic and aesthetic landscapes that dig ever so deeply into layers of personal and collective consciousness, most often straddling the two in powerful, yet elusive ways. Rist opens a window into a strange world which ranges from colorful, sensuous fluidity as in her audio video installation *Sip My Ocean* (1996) to her enveloping interactions with architectural spaces, as in her audio video installation *Homo Sapiens Sapiens* projected on the ceiling of the San Stae church in Venice (2005). Her work, however, can also be arresting and bold when presenting her own body as an expressive medium to create powerful statements on representations and perceptions of femininity, as in her celebrated early video *I'm Not The Girl Who Misses Much* (1986) or in her 2000 Times Square loop *Open My Glade*.

In view of such an ever expansive range of creative endeavors, the jury of the Joan Miró Prize is very pleased to award this year's prize to an extraordinary artist: Pipilotti Rist.

Barcelona, March 2009



JOAN MIRÓ PRIZE 2009 SECOND EDITION

WINNER: PIPILOTTI RIST

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Deep from the bottom of my heart I thank all the people involved in the Joan Miró Prize and of course the jury members who showed me their trust. With this prize from heaven they prove me that my work has touched and renewed them. In my search for the new human this prize gives me much energy to go on. I'm running into the forest and shout out my joy! The birds helped me to sing.

When I saw the breathtaking exhibition "Joan Miró: Painting and Anti-Painting 1927-1937" at the Museum of Modern Art in NY (where the hell is that?) last November it became clear to me how important Miró was for all us coming after him. It is really a special honour to get a prize with his appreciated name. I'm thankful to him and many artists before me who didn't give up and shaped and enlarged my view to the world. I thank my teachers, my family and all the collaborators I had, and still have, the chance to work together. I go on to be proud, passionate and friendly. I dedicate this prize to all the people who take care of others for free, to all the good teachers and to the people who give smiles to strangers on the street and in the trains.

Pipilotti Rist, 18 March 2009

Catalogue texts

Full circle, by Han Nefkens

[Download text](#)

Electronic Feelings, by Karin Seinsoth

[Download text](#)

More information about Pipilotti Rist

www.pipilottirist.net

<http://www.youtube.com/user/AtelierRist>

Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. "Pipilotti Rist. Gravity, Be My Friend"

February 10 – June 17 2007

<http://www.magasin3.com/v1/exhibitions/pipilotti.html>

Conversation between Pipilotti Rist and Richard Julin, curator of the Magasin 3 exhibition, published in "Pipilotti Rist – Congratulations!" Lars Müller Publishers, Baden, 2006

[Download text](#)

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum. "Pipilotti Rist: Grabstein für RW"

May 1 – October 2, 2005

www.aldrichart.org/exhibitions/past/rist.php

NYTimes Magazine. "The Fantastic, Trippy, Playful, Uncomfortably Intimate Art of Pipilotti Rist", by Randy Kennedy

15 November 2009

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/15/magazine/15rist-t.html?_r=1&ref=magazine

Museum Boijmans van Beuningen. "Pipilotti Rist: Elixir. Elixir: het video-organisme van Pipilotti Rist"

March 7 – May 10 2009

<http://www.boijmans.nl/en/161/exhibition/exhibition/124/elixir-the-video-organism-of-pipilotti-rist/15/>

Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma. "Elixir – Pipilotti Rist"
September 5 – December 6 2009
<http://www.kiasma.net/index.php?id=2246&L=1>

Afterimage. "Fantasy And Distraction: An Interview With Pipilotti Rist by Christine Ross"
November 2000
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2479/is_3_28/ai_68660257/?tag=content;col1

Centre Pompidou. "À la belle étoile. Pipilotti Rist"
January 30 – February 26 2007
<http://www.centrepompidou.fr/Pompidou/Manifs.nsf/AllExpositions/A1EFB3B69B3674A0C125726E00357805?OpenDocument&sessionM=2.10&L=1>

Centro andaluz de arte contemporáneo de Sevilla. "Máquinas de mirar. O cómo se originan las imágenes"
September 17 2009 – January 10 2010
<http://www.blickmaschinen.de/artist.php?id=77>

Frieze Magazine. "Pipilotti Rist", by Katie Kitamura
21 January 2008
http://www.frieze.com/shows/review/pipilotti_rist/

Folha de São Paulo. "Corpo é trampolin para Pipilotti Rist, que expõe no Brasil em outubro", de Fernanda Ezabella
23 September 2009
<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/ilustrada/ult90u627893.shtml>

Catalogue texts

Full Circle

Han Nefkens

Paris, 1999 – Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. A naked woman crawls in the rain over kitchen cabinets; pinkish-red clouds drift across a lampshade. I just happened to be passing the museum that afternoon and saw an announcement for this exhibition. I didn't recognise the artist's name, but the title, *Remake of a Weekend*, appealed to me.

I had only recently become interested in contemporary art and didn't know much about it. Like so many other people, I sometimes visited museums and occasionally bought something to hang above the sofa. I had the feeling that there must be more, only I didn't yet know what it was.

The exhibition was laid out like a domestic interior in which videos were being shown. Larger-than-life-size images were being projected onto the chairs, the bed, the table and the lamps. I was swallowed up in the world of Pipilotti Rist. A naked woman was rolling in moss and I could smell the damp earth and the scent of the sun on her bare arms. I smelled the flowers and tasted the juice spurting from the ripe fruits she stepped on. I felt the rainwater on my skin and let myself be seduced by the languid music that fills the air.

Two hours later I was standing outside, and I knew.

I wanted other people to be touched by art just as much as I had been by the images of Pipilotti Rist. I wanted them to be able to see the art that spoke to me, so I could share the feelings it aroused, even when I wasn't there.

It wasn't complicated or pompous; it was like reading a book and then giving it to someone else as a present. You don't do that because you want to discuss its contents, but because you want to share the feelings it arouses. Because sharing gives you so much more pleasure than enjoying something alone.

Basel, 2000 – Art Basel. I was with Sjarel Ex, the director of the Centraal Museum in Utrecht. I very much wanted to exhibit the works that I enjoy, and to do it in his museum. He was certainly interested in the idea. To see whether we had similar tastes, we had agreed to wander around the fair separately for two hours and then to show each other what had caught our attention.

Walking through Art Unlimited's enormous space I heard vaguely familiar music: the melodious and dreamy sound of a woman singing. Suddenly I was standing in front of two large video screens. On one screen was a naked man running down an empty motorway, on the other a young woman with her face pressed against the window of an apartment, so hard that her entire face was distorted. Her red lipstick left streaks on the glass. These were the two repeating dreams I had frequently had: running but getting nowhere, and being shut off behind glass while the world calls to me from outside.

The title of this work by Pipilotti Rist is *Cinquante/Fifty*. I stood in front of the screens for a long time, hoping the man would eventually reach his desired destination and that one of the windows would spring open so the woman could let her hair down, like Rapunzel. But like my dreams, the video was on a loop, endlessly repeating the same images.

Later in the afternoon Sjarel showed me what he had seen. Again I heard that now-familiar music; the man was still running down the motorway and the woman was still trapped behind glass. *Cinquante/Fifty* was the work that Sjarel wanted to show in his museum.

Ten minutes later I had purchased my first work of art.

Utrecht, 2001 – Centraal Museum. The man running on the motorway was small now. He could be seen on a screen the size of a television, just like the woman pressing her face against the glass. But I recognised them immediately. For the first time, a work to which I had committed myself was being shown publicly. It was also the first time I have seen it since buying it. What struck me was not a sense of possession, or the idea that it was mine. Because there in the museum, amid Pipilotti's other works, I understood that you can never own a work of art, even if you've bought it. It belongs to the world, just like the tree in your garden is part of a greater whole. I was the work's guardian. The pride I felt came from the thought that I had sought this work out. It gave me satisfaction to watch as other people scrutinising the work and asking themselves out loud where the man was running to and whether the woman behind the glass was looking for him.

I hummed along softly to the soundtrack and stood near the work to observe the visitors' reactions. A lady with long earrings squinted to get a better view; a thin young man moved his hand to the rhythm of the music; a girl nudged her girlfriend: 'This you've got to see.' I was a fly on the wall; a fly on Pipilotti's wall.

I went to art fairs and galleries and bought works, which I immediately give on loan to museums in the Netherlands, Germany, France and Iceland. Several touring exhibitions of my collection were arranged. I could spend hours in the galleries staring at a photograph or a painting, and whenever I did, a dialogue would take place in my head: a dialogue with myself. What do I see? What do I feel? What does it mean? Does it mean anything?

Because the works I buy are immediately lent to museums, I can only see my works when they are on display. But of course they are not 'my' works. They are the work of the artists who have placed them in my care. Their work is a vision of the world, meant for the world.

But I wanted more. I didn't just want to buy what's there, I wanted to make it possible for things to exist that wouldn't have existed otherwise. So I would give artists the

opportunity to produce something, and give museums the chance to show something that had never been seen before and that often would be made especially for their particular space. And – perhaps even more importantly – I would become involved in the creative process: the collector as midwife.

I began by giving commissions to artists via H+F Patronage, a collaborative effort with Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam and Fashion on the Edge, a project that explores the boundary between fashion and art. I also established ArtAids, a foundation that commissions artists to make works inspired by HIV/AIDS. I wanted to show that HIV has not gone away, that people should take precautions, but also that people living with HIV – people like me – should not be excluded.

The artists we select propose a project and a budget and we decide whether or not to take it on. The results are rarely disappointing and are always surprising.

Rotterdam, 2009 – Museum Boijmans van Beuningen. I was lying in a net above the entrance to the museum and watching the video that Pipilotti had made especially to round up H+F Patronage: violet sky, a forest, a running woman, water, flowers. This permanent work, *Let Your Hair Down*, is part of her solo exhibition *Elixir*.

Before the work was completed I had been shown drawings, photographs and descriptions, so I had a rough idea of what to expect. But I could never have anticipated the intense pleasure that I had now, hanging in this net and using a jukebox to make a selection from eight videos, one of which Pipilotti had made especially for this project.

Barcelona, 2009 – Fundació Joan Miró. During the presentation of the Joan Miró Prize, which Pipilotti was unable to attend due to illness, one of her collaborators asked those invited to join hands with their neighbours and to say in unison: '*No estas solo*', you are not alone. These words reflect my philosophy precisely. By doing something that I can share with others, I am part of the world. Sharing is the most effective antidote to loneliness. When you share, you are not alone.

In conjunction with the solo exhibition that Pipilotti would mount at the Fundació Miró, I had been asked to commission her to produce a work that would be exhibited permanently. Of course I agreed. I would be happy to enable the artist who is so close to my heart to make a work especially for the city I had been in love with for so many years. The work by Pipilotti is my dowry to Barcelona.

Once again I was shown drawings, photographs and descriptions. But I knew that what she would eventually create would exceed my wildest dreams.

Barcelona, 2009 – La Mina. Red streaks, bright green letters, a naked man and a naked woman, condoms. Pipilotti joined me in looking at the drawings and paintings that the children in this socially deprived neighbourhood had made as part of an ArtAids project. As Pipilotti leaned over to inspect a purple and green drawing, I was

reminded of Paris almost ten years earlier, when I was first moved by her work. Now she was looking at a work that would not have existed had I not been inspired by her exhibition back then.

My journey had come full circle, but it was far from over.

Electronic Feelings Interactions and Contradictions on the Road to Reconciliation

Karin Seinsorth

Pure and simple enthusiasm reigns in the Rist team as the next 'recce' of Museum X in one of the world's countries draws near. The excited anticipation of the upcoming trip together is tangible, whether it concerns our beloved Japan, America, Brazil or the current destination, Catalonia, in Spain. The site visit is indeed a decisive moment in the realization process of new audio-video installations and presentation concepts by Pipilotti Rist. It is the first step in moving towards a venue, the actual commencement of a thought process. For Rist, this is an attempt to approach the environment with open arms, to perceive its nature and to become involved with the history of the location. It begins with sensory perception that precedes rational analysis. For the artist, the starting point for her concrete work in the museum is always the space and its features, whether this involves the habitual white rooms of a museum or such history-charged structures as the San Stae church in Venice.¹

During the subsequent preparatory phase, architectural plans are established, photos are studied, specialised literature perused, and materials and ideas collected. Precise models of the exhibition rooms facilitate spatial planning and visualization. The artist and her team are in constant dialogue throughout this process. The objective is to incorporate individually functioning works in a single cohesive overall concept. After all, today the artist increasingly functions as a curator, actively involved in the choice and form of presentation of her works. Next, the intensive phase of production begins. Cost estimates are obtained; budgets, schedules and travel plans prepared; material samples requested; and video takes and project tests organised, always in close interaction with the host institution. And then it is time: the starting shot sounds for the actual construction, marking perhaps the most physically strenuous moment.

The effort is worth it. The Fundació Joan Miró displays some of what Pipilotti Rist herself calls her 'blockbusters,' such as *Sip My Ocean* (1996) or *Gravity, Be My Friend* (2007), here in a new version with separate carpet islands, in combination with less familiar, rather sculptural works such as *Porque Te Vas (Nass)* (2003) and *Grabstein für RW* (2004). There are also new installations specifically developed for this location such as *Doble llum* (2010),² a careful and loving rapprochement to the work of Joan Miró, one of art history's father figures who, after all, is at home in this venue. With gentle hands Rist strokes the rough skin of the bronze sculpture *Femme* from 1968 with moving images, linking it with the instrument of her speech to the environment without making structural changes. Thus *Doble llum* flows cautiously into the museum's collection. It embodies

¹ As a Swiss contribution to the 51st Biennial of Venice in 2005, Rist showed the audio-video installation *Homo Sapiens Sapiens* in the late-Baroque Church of San Stae.

² *Doble llum* is the Catalan title, *Doble luz* the Spanish title and *Double Light* the English title of the work. The work is a gift from Han Nefkens to the Fundació Joan Miró collection.

admiration, respect and, at the same time, a certain impotence vis-à-vis Miró's work.

Rist's works have developed from the earlier single channel videos, more and more into the space in which they are contained, approaching the viewer and indeed extending beyond the museum. They have become audiovisual installations metamorphosing their environment and thus creating their own new worlds. With great sensitivity, the artist and her team find ways to become involved in the existing space without detracting from its character, striking a sensitive balance and repeatedly accepting a challenge that is taken on with full commitment. This non-linear process led to the exhibition and the 'total body of art' *Elixir*³ in the Boijmans van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam (2009), an idea that was built upon in Barcelona.

As a museum the Fundació Joan Miró offers, on one hand, what the art world terms as 'white cube space,' however the rooms built by Catalan architect Josep Lluís Sert in the 1970s are, in fact, anything but neutral. Virtually castle-like, the white, glowing hilltop building offers a breathtaking view of the pulsating city below. Inside, the rooms are rather small-scale, almost boxy. Originally conceived as worthy showcases for Miró's sculptures, paintings and sketches, they vary in dimension, height and form. Rist's flexible 'architectures' of moveable drapes and soft carpets blend into the existing building structure. The ceiling arrangement harking back to Catalan tradition is reflected in the rhythm of the undulating draperies. The drapes and carpets serve practical functions as projection surfaces, as in the new work *Temps lliure* (2010), while simultaneously absorbing noise and shadowing space. For the video sculpture *Gina's Mobile* (2007) they assume an organic form, creating an intimate room. This, in turn, leads us to the *Lungenflügel* (2009) area in which we are surrounded by projections on three walls. In the connecting rooms, skylights and openings are sources of colourful light flowing in from outside. Thus materials and colours create a link between the individual works.

Each corner contains a small, separate universe with its stars, planets and black holes asking to be discovered. Viewed in this manner, one might see the part of the exhibition showing at the Caixa de Girona Foundation as a type of parallel universe or a satellite moving in an expanded orbit, enveloping visitors in a different atmosphere. Rather than on a hill we find ourselves in a medieval, or more precisely, Romanesque and Gothic mansion dating back to the 11th century and located in the old town of Girona. Here we encounter *Deine Raumkapsel* (2008), an audiovisual installation in miniature form, securely stored in a shipping crate; *Lap Lamp* (2006), an on-the-lap projection for the home; and, as a crowning touch, *Ever Is Over All* (1997), an absolute Rist classic.

The three-dimensionality of Rist's cognition is fascinating. Projections, moved and moving images, are seen on walls, ceilings, floors and a wide variety of other objects and surfaces. In *Regenfrau (I Am Called A Plant)* (1999) a kitchen floor was granted the honour. The concept of adaptation to a room is a central principle in Pipilotti Rist's work and works. 'The way we think and feel is not just flat and

³ See exhibition catalogue *Elixir: the video organism of Pipilotti Rist*, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, 2009.

rectangular. I try to take this factor into account when I make works in space.’⁴ The wondrous effect of this merger is that it retains a small part of the place that remains behind even long after the exhibition is dismantled, for example in the poetic work and exhibition titles that Rist consistently translates into the local native language. One could consider this an exchange of elementary components. It is, after all, a pleasant thought that Rist’s work is also leaving traces behind here in Barcelona.

The stated three-dimensionality is to be understood not only spatially and physically but also, quite deliberately, on a conceptual and creative level and indeed in all directions. This is lateral thinking, establishing extraordinary connections such as those between the human body and machinery⁵ or among different media: video, film, installation, sound. Rist’s works are similarly interwoven.⁶ Variations, facets and repetition oppose the concept of the finished work, from which our understanding of art is unable to completely disengage, still to the present day.

And so her world is permeated with fields of tension. Rather than being shut out, ambivalence and contradiction become a conscious component of her work, on a quest for reconciliation between wild and gentle, inside and outside, fiction and reality, birth and death, body and soul. Thus, the journey into the electronic universe leads us back to ourselves.

⁴ In: *20 Years of Parkett, Part II - (Im)material?*, Parkett, Zürich/New York, No. 71, 2004, p. 8.

⁵ Pipilotti Rist repeatedly established certain analogies between the human body and the equipment that she uses, such as projectors, computers, players, monitors, speakers and cables, speaking of a ‘subconscious’ of machinery. ‘Every machine has a character of its own and different colour temperatures.’ ‘They are my bought friends, my instant temples, my intelligent instruments, the extension of our senses.’ (in: *20 Years of Parkett, Part II - (Im)material?*, Parkett, Zürich/New York, No. 71, 2004, p. 11)

⁶ Anne Söll analysed the ‘anti-hierarchic, non-static’ structure of Rist’s system of work in which ‘the reciprocal interweaving of the works amongst themselves’ and the ‘different aggregate conditions of liquefaction and consolidation’ are constituting principles. (in: Söll, Anne, *Arbeit am Körper. Videos und Videoinstallationen von Pipilotti Rist*, Verlag Silke Schreiber, München, 2004, p. 180/181)

Additional texts



The video-installation *Double Light* – a dialogue between Pipilotti Rist and Joan Miró – will be added to the Foundation's collection as a result of a donation by writer and art collector Han Nefkens.

This gift is the first by Nefkens to an art museum in Spain.

Han Nefkens (Rotterdam, 1954) purchases international contemporary art with the express aim of giving it on long-term loan to museums. "For me," he says, "it's about much, much more than owning a work of art: it's about sharing a vision with other people."

In line with this philosophy, Nefkens has provided support for the production of one of the new works that Swiss video artist Pipilotti Rist is preparing for her forthcoming show at the Foundation, "**Pipilotti Rist. Friendly Game – Electronic Feelings**", which will run from 8 July to 1 November 2010. When the exhibition ends, the piece will be included in the Foundation's collection as a gift from Han Nefkens. He says, "I would be happy to enable the artist who is so close to my heart to make a work especially for the city I have been in love with for so many years. The work by Pipilotti is my dowry to Barcelona."

Winner of the Joan Miró Prize in 2009, Pipilotti Rist has expressed her admiration for Miró on several occasions, in particular the bold use of colour that she also employs in her art.

Rist articulates this admiration and respect in ***Double Light***, a dialogue with Joan Miró achieved through the projection of a video on to ***Woman*** (1968), one of Miró's sculptures owned by the Foundation. It is an encounter between the two artists that combines their various visual codes.

The first work of art that Nefkens purchased, in 2001, was precisely a video-installation by Rist, which formed the start of the H+F Collection, named after Nefkens and his Mexican partner Felipe. This collection of contemporary art is made up of photographs, videos, installations and paintings by artists of such renown as Jeff Wall, Sam Taylor-Wood, Bill Viola, Shirin Neshat, Felix González-Torres and others. Nefkens has decided to leave the works on long-term loan to museums in the Netherlands and elsewhere, such as the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, Stichting de Pont in Tilburg, Huis Marseille in Amsterdam and FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais in Dunkirk, which currently has about 50 of Nefkens works on loan.

Since 2005, Nefkens has mainly bought and commissioned works for specific exhibitions and other projects, either himself or through the ArtAids Foundation and the H+F Collection.

Double Light will remain at the Joan Miró Foundation thanks to the generosity of Han Nefkens, who considers that "Giving is one of the most underrated values in society. By setting up something that I can share with others, I become part of the world. Sharing is the antidote to loneliness. When you share, you are not alone."

Conversation between Pipilotti Rist and Richard Julin

published in "Pipilotti Rist - Congratulations!" Lars Müller Publishers, Baden, 2006 (exh. cat.)

In early September 2006 Pipilotti Rist and Richard Julin, Chief curator at Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, met for a day in Zurich to discuss preparations for Rist's solo exhibition *Gravity, Be My Friend* at Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Held in German, the conversation began in the afternoon at the artist's studio in the Zypressenstrasse and carried on into the evening back at her home, while they cooked and ate dinner together.

Richard Julin: For me this conversation with you is like tracing clues. But rather than first focusing on your works, which I believe speak for themselves, I'd prefer to talk about you and how you personally relate to your art in order to get a better idea of what inspires you and your work process.

Pipilotti Rist: Yes, art should really speak for itself, but the curator also plays an important role. The fact that you are, as it were, challenging me like this is just as important. Otherwise I wouldn't be here. In fact I have this dream that my work could function without telling stories. But then I also catch myself being receptive to any extra bit of information about a work of art I can get hold of.

Richard: I hope people who feel that talking about art ruins it will stop reading here... [laughs]

Pipilotti: Exactly! [laughs] The image of the artist that I myself forge in connection with what I'm viewing is part of artistic reception. Ideally, though, we would forget the artist while we're looking at, hearing or feeling the art. Similarly, the way you as a viewer become immersed in a work of art differs according to your personal notions about the period or the country where the art comes from. This might be helpful, but it can also be distracting and distorting, and get in the way of identification. I have even considered producing new work under a different name. Just to test whether it would still function the same way. How much do I rely on my name, and what is the true worth of my work for other people?

Richard: Would you then carry on working exactly as you did before or would you invent a character who produces a different kind of art?

Pipilotti: No, I would continue working as ever but simply assume a different name... [laughs] I'd call myself Konrad Schnabnowski. In fact I really am a man who lives as a woman.

Richard: I'd like to mention something about your behaviour that strikes me every time we meet. It's a kind of emphatic respect you show towards everyone around you. It's in the way you speak but also in the way you act. For instance, you hold the door open for everyone! I believe this respectful behaviour towards others is also echoed in your art. Does what I'm saying feel like a fair description of you?

Pipilotti: For me the question of ethics and motivation is of burning interest as I am currently in a phase of upheaval and change. There is a political stance that affects my work, and a personal one. The moment one talks about certain things they can lose their innocence – like when someone says you are so spontaneous, you are so warm-hearted, or you are so attentive... For me this is about morality or an ethics of behaviour, something you don't talk about. It reflects the way you see people. Then there is your political attitude. Somewhere in between all kinds of errors in the system light up. I had to learn that there's no such thing as the *right* ideology. I'm suspicious of people who lump together morality and their vision of an ideal world into a single, hermetic ideology or a religious hypothesis. Yet at the same time I'm curious about the 'new subject'. As for opening doors... Well, you just met my mother Anna down on the street. She brought us children up to be polite and to look after others. A part of that comes down to the values you adopt as a child. It is important to me that people pay attention to one another and that we take each other seriously. These are theoretical ideas that suit who I am, and at the same time I feel as though I lost quite a number of years due to the narrow perspective of left-wing ideology and the fear of divine punishment. I want to hold the door open out of my own free will. At the moment I find all this quite confusing.

Richard: Do you allow yourself to doubt?

Pipilotti: People often ask me if my art is feminist. I am a feminist, that's a point of honour and logical, so long as society's horizons are not equally accessible for everyone. But there are thousands of other insights that shape my inquiries. Even though I have a positive view of humanity, there is room for ambivalence in my work; accepting this should foster a certain mildness towards oneself. This is what I strive for in my work. When viewers experience my works I hope they will stop being quite so hard on themselves. Maybe this is what you are detecting. Of course, I am not actually where my works are. As a human being I can't fully achieve the same nonchalance or power that I to some extent explicitly look for or distil in my works. As an individual I am not identical to my works. Sometimes I view myself as neurotic and anxious. But I made a conscious decision not to directly transfer such feelings into my work, even if I don't deny them either.

Richard: Do you make a lot of conscious decisions while you are working – concerning your current way of thinking or issues you're preoccupied with?

Pipilotti: I have a programmatic agenda that I definitely want to include. And yet I can't actually find words to express most of my decisions since they come intuitively and reflect my experience. Cause and effect, accident and karma are all beyond words, are like the fairytale *Bremen Town Musicians* or spiritual sisters. Why I select certain scenes as opposed to the overwhelming rest is hard to explain. In my experience, radical intuition and honesty help you achieve a mirror of yourself. What certainly is true is that I exaggerate what takes my interest and I approve of, and ignore what I consider bad. These are choices I make consciously.

Richard: How do you proceed thematically with your ideas?

Pipilotti: As an atheist I think about the shared rituals we need and those we should

not allow to disappear. I'm interested in bodily presence and try to increase the manifold possibilities of movement of my objects and living beings. For me it is paramount that the camera and the object are both on the same level of power. Where is the camera? What function is assumed by the eye? How can I be modest without becoming depressive? When you observe the world's development on a bigger scale – like how many millions of years it took us to evolve from mud to what we are today – you see just how minute we are. How can we judge ourselves with modesty, without becoming nihilistic? However much I might wish to remove myself from my own time, I'm completely rooted in it. As artists it is our task and duty to heed our dreams and the subconscious. It is our job to examine more closely everything that usually gets swept aside for the sake of productivity. To create a distance.

Richard: You mean a distance from what one might call 'everyday life'? Art as a haven, a zone in which distance gives us space to contemplate, maybe room to feel?

Pipilotti: Exactly – and in doing so we also heighten our sensitivity in everyday life. It's almost as if this were a kind of deal between the people and culture. What we offer are dreams and distanced reflection in a concentrated temporal and sensual form. I can tolerate living like this, bordering on schizophrenia. Sometimes misunderstandings arise, like the idea that because artists are allowed to materialise fantasies and dreams, they automatically live in a dream world. For which they have to bear the penalty of being poor. I think there are still so many clichés about artists.

Richard: Do you feel you can make use of this clichéd image?

Pipilotti: When someone ventures into the world of art you of course hope that the cliché about the irrational and uncommercial nature of art might also have other functions. Art feels more innocent or less calculated and makes it easier for people to think about themselves and to put their personal problems into perspective. Everyone actually thinks his or her own problems are the greatest. Even if you've only got a small problem you still blow it up to fill out your entire life. That's why we have friends, so we can tell one another: Hey, you've got a warped view of that problem! That's a friend's task, but also the job of culture. The perspective offered by a work of art can open up new dimensions. Especially when you're working in a medium capable of reproduction – like I do with video – there are also whole power structures simultaneously involved. Television with its viewing figures and advertising. And even if you don't address them as an issue, these factors still always accompany you. As an artist I feel I belong on the side of the consumer. Sure, I use the same techniques as the relatively big power structures do, but I don't have the same bosses.

Richard: How do you view the correspondence between the general accessibility of your work, on the one hand, and the simple fact that your art requires big financial resources to be produced?

Pipilotti: Up till now most of my works were so large that they exceeded the means of private space. I am interested in spaces where people can circulate and spend time together, without them actually owning the work. My works were not produced on a large scale for strategic reasons, nor did my gallery ever force me to make smaller ones which would be easier to sell. But of course there's a big discrepancy between

original and massproduced work, and as yet I've not come up with a solution to this. I'm interested in the democratic aspect of art and yet I live off its fetishization. It's a contradiction I've not resolved and something that makes me a bit sad. But this is made up for by the debate on genetics and memetics. It's about the idea that cultural insights can implant themselves in us and contribute to evolution, that there is such a thing as cultural evolution that is rooted in our flesh. For me this is very motivating. But the whole discussion is also very confusing. For a long while I used to hold pretty clear political ideas. That's probably what is called wisdom – when you no longer believe you have such clear answers to everything...

Richard: What convictions did you used to hold?

Pipilotti: I used to be much more strongly committed to left-wing ideas. I believed that everything we are is conditioned by our education, religion and social context. People tried to sweep the issues of genetic conditioning under the carpet. I still haven't found any definitive answers in the discussion about science and educational theory. Maybe it's simply time to accept that I'll never find any clear-cut answers as long as I live – which is no excuse for giving up searching for them though.

Richard: Have these deliberations had a big impact on your recent work?

Pipilotti: Parallel to *Tyngdkraft, var min vän (Gravity, Be My Friend)* for Magasin 3, I am busy working on a feature film. The ideas I am pre-occupied with just now have of course had a big influence on the screenplay. The film starts with the main figure inheriting an assignment from her grandmother. Her task is to free herself and the world of all unnecessary fears, those that are not required for our survival, such as the fear of being cast out, ridiculed or rejected. The protagonist tries to be fearless in the small things in everyday life, in ways that I myself never succeed in being. Unfortunately I can't turn every situation – my table, my clothes, everything – fundamentally on its head. And I'm astonished at how I try to keep my child in line the whole time to prevent him getting flak from other people. The screenplay makes suggestions about which rules of behaviour and rituals could be different. I'm trying to demonstrate effusive, joyful alternatives to our humdrum habits, to propose positive and humorous hypotheses of fearlessness and hence foster hope. Let me give an example: Drinking together, we clink glasses. Originally, this was to make sure the other person wouldn't poison us. Glasses were raised and clinked, causing the wine to slop over and become mixed in both glasses. This then became a matter of course and turned into an everyday ritual. Since so many conventions are crumbling it's high time to start inventing new rituals and not to leave this to the calculating professional slime of advertising. There are so many things whose origins we no longer know and with which we have to some extent lost touch. Most of them are related to our bodies, our biological nature or our fight for survival, aggression or power struggle. All of them are in fact extremely instinctual, very animal. Of course there are also a lot that have to do with hygiene. The idea of menstrual blood being impure was once widespread. Back then people just didn't have the hygienic facilities we have today – blood decayed quickly and hygienic precautions were turned into rules. We then adopt them, first because we can't possibly question everything and second because we don't take the time to question things. If we did, we'd have to find alternatives. Most of the rules exist to prevent us from being rejected by the group, to render us acceptable. Why is it so important for us to make a good impression, even on people

we don't know? For me, art is also the place where one can actually think about such things. It's also astonishing how quickly we get used to things. The entire process of industrialisation took just 250 years and, in an evolutionary sense, our bodies have had no chance to adapt in any way to this change. In this short time, for instance, our ears have not developed any further or adapted. Swiss national costumes were introduced just 150 years ago. Each canton was allotted its own costumes – one for Sunday and one for workdays – and to us they now feel as if they'd been around forever. For me old traditions like that are absolutely fine, but they bear no relation to how fast someone can be excluded from a group. Just how quickly you are out if you get one detail wrong in the way you dress or move. Groups always claim a monopoly on truth. I am immensely interested in the methods by which you can undermine this kind of arrogance.

Richard: Rituals and group mentality always seemed to me to be a central theme in your work. This quickly prompts questions of taste relating to rules and conformity – the idea that most people have a preference for what they already know.

Pipilotti: True – but on the other hand, one could also ask how people are supposed to discover something different if they are always offered exactly the same thing.

Richard: On the question of taste, which artists do you respect and who inspires you most?

Pipilotti: I am very impressed by Barbara Kruger. By her profound knowledge and how radically she pursues her line of approach. But she's also open to other realms – she knows all about film, she knows all about architecture. That's amazing! The new piece she showed in Basel this summer was really exciting. I also like Aernout Mik and the respect he has for objects without ever depicting them heroically. I like Martin Parr, who's English. I like his social realist photography, how he treats people without denigrating them. In fact there are plenty of artists I appreciate. Marijke van Warmerdam is terrific. Lutz/Guggisberg and Fischli/Weiss are great, of course. What an astonishing level of concentration. They work so intensely on one piece that they don't even answer their emails. And then they come up again with something so ingenious. I've also witnessed how they finish a piece. Talk about nitpickers! – Anal retentive you might say. I've noticed how in all languages precision is somehow described in anal terms. 'Korinthenkacker' in German, 'crapping currants', or 'Tüpfli-scheissen' we say in Swiss-German, crapping dots over the *i*... So anyway, I like artists who make me think they are fanatical. I like Marjetica Potrc, Cristina García Rodero, Dominique Gonzales-Foerster, Jenny Holzer, Guillermo Kuitca, Miwa Yanagi, Katharina Fritsch, Gillian Wearing, Käthe Walser, Edit Oderbolz, John Bock, Miriam Cahn, Silvia Bächli, Monika Dillier, Roni Horn, Yayoi Kusama, AK Dolven, Christine Hill, Isa Genzken, Erika Streit and Jessica Stockholder. I also think Katharina Grosse is great. The book you did was brilliant!

Richard: Thank you! Do you look a lot at art? Is it important for you?

Pipilotti: I've resolved to go out and look at art more often, rather than continually just hanging around my own stuff. To me it feels a bit like incest always stewing in my own juice. But I don't differentiate much between the various disciplines: for me a good music video is also a work of art. The context says nothing about quality. Like

our bodies, our souls also have to keep choosing what is good for the digestion, what is nourishing and what needs to be flushed out. For me the consumption and digestion of impressions and ideas is closely related to food. That's why it was such a great idea of yours that we cook together.

Richard: Since we're talking about other art forms, how do you relate to music? I always had the feeling that in your works sound is just as important as the actual images. And you even played in a band, Les Reines Prochaines.

Pipilotti: Yes, I try hard to treat music as an equal half of a piece. In film or video art I often think sound is treated badly. Giving it ample space is one of my principles. But I also constantly have to remind myself of the need to invest a lot of time in it from the very outset, and to begin working on it early enough. The sound for *Tyngdkraft, var min vän* will be mixed in situ in Stockholm to ensure that the outcome is perfectly suited to the space. Apart from that, beyond my own work, I have always chosen to leave music up to my men.

Richard: In what sense?

Pipilotti: I once made a list of all the people I had kissed. Some were just kisses, others turned into more serious stuff. I can still recall all of them, know who each one was. Altogether, over all the years, there are thirty-three. It turns out that fifty percent of the people I kissed were musicians, while the others had fantastic music collections. Balz has the best, so I had a baby with him. [laughs] I've never collected music, but I collected men who collect music. So why? What kinds of fetishes do women have? Women have very few clearly definable fetishes. I once went to a Chippendales strip show and it struck me that nearly all the symbolic imagery there stemmed from the gay world. The sailor, the biker, the construction worker. There was only one thing that could have come from women themselves: a man writing a letter with a rose. My particular fetish is a man's hands rummaging through a stack of records. Conversely, for men it could be articles of clothing, like high heels. Or did women perhaps invent them so they could get closer to heaven? Why are there so few fetishes women have about men? Maybe women work less with such images, or maybe we have no need for this kind of distancing, objectifying gaze. Of all the music collectors I know, 95% are men and only 5% are women. Is it any different among your friends?

Richard: I've come across the same thing and have often wondered why. Personally, I've always made compilation tapes, now more CDs, as gifts for friends. For me, being a curator has a lot to do with this.

Pipilotti: Yes, I fully understand. You get all fired up – you've got to hear this, you've got to see that! It can be the same with books too – read this, it's amazing! It's a certain kind of fanaticism you need in order to get things done. Without this fanaticism you wouldn't be a good curator. Suddenly the word 'solace' springs to mind. Listening to music, playing it or actually making it is, I reckon, a bit like consoling one another. Because we can't properly comprehend ourselves, because our brains are not sufficiently developed. So we fill up this vast hole of incomprehension, fear or sadness with music. That's where it feels most striking. Of course it's quite similar with art too. It is said that one reason for working in the

cultural sphere is to escape one's own loneliness and the isolation of one's body and to enter into a shared mental bubble with others. For a fleeting moment, when other people are mirrored in it, you cease to be alone. Music directly spawns illusions. It is a hundred times more laborious and difficult to create interior spaces by visual means than it is with sound. We spend our entire lives in such close proximity to our bodies. Imagine how blood is rushing through us in this very instant. To me music often seems like an attempt to understand the inside of our body. This also strikes me when I'm dancing, when people move in these formations. It's actually a desire to turn yourself inside out, to behave as if you were one of your own blood corpuscles.

Richard: How do you work concretely with image and sound in a space?

Pipilotti: Over the last ten years we've been producing the sound here in the studio up on the first floor. Sometimes we do it at Anders Guggisberg's place. He lives in my old flat. It's like a cockpit, you have a view over the entire town from the 15th floor. I am not an intuitive musician myself. I found that out already in Les Reines Prochaines. I played our songs in a mathematical way... and as time passed I envisaged things in my mind as shapes: d-d-e, g-g-g-e, d-d-e...

Richard: You frequently evolve the music for your works in collaboration with Anders Guggisberg. How do you talk about sound while you're working?

Pipilotti: In abstract and poetic terms, what it should be, what kinds of mood it should trigger. Then Anders makes suggestions for sounds and tunes. The musical arrangement has to be kept transparent. Usually we start off by making something that is too dense and then strip a lot of stuff away again. But a text or some raw image material might also serve as a basis.

Richard: How do you then relate to your exhibitions once they are finished?

Pipilotti: I mill in among the crowd and pretend to be a visitor. Sometimes I start talking to people, say things like: *Well I reckon it could be a bit louder here...* Sometimes I make practical objections and listen to their response. At the 2002 Shanghai Biennial I installed a work in a conference room. On the day it opened there was a huge queue. Hundreds of people were waiting to get into the museum. Once inside, they examined the pictures inch by inch. From a distance, from close to, they spent ages in front of them. It made me so happy I cried. You invest your entire energy and your life in something and have a deep need to show it to other people. The interest of the Chinese was extremely touching. But at the same time it of course shows up the deficit we suffer from – the feeling that people often just rush past works of art. But anyway, with video you are in a privileged situation. You are more secure because it is quite authoritarian. The viewer has to spend a certain amount of time with it before deciding whether to stay or to move on. But because of that I also think that as an artist you have to treat time with care. That's why I appreciate works which are concentrated, and when the length of a work is stated, so you know what to expect. This is of course about artistic strategy. There is also the approach of utterly disregarding the viewer and deliberately being awkward.

Richard: Being *difficult* as a strategy?

Pipilotti: Yes, to set yourself apart from commercialism, by making a work as inaccessible as possible so as to utterly exclude the risk of being ingratiating or accommodating. Going completely against the grain. And that can be just as opportunist. There was a time when not understanding or not wanting to be understood was considered a hallmark of independence and radicalism. That's never been my thinking. I was always clear about this, but was never seriously punished for it. For years I expected my popularity would be held against me, but it never happened. Only occasionally was I accused of ambivalence in the feminist debate, for not putting out an unmistakably clear message in this. I could accept that. It is part of my message to encourage mildness towards oneself. Besides that I also detect a decline in utopian beliefs. The question still remains whether we can envisage non-totalitarian utopias, whether utopias always have to be bound to narrow ideologies.

Richard: I would like to discuss your new piece, *Tyngdkraft, var min vän*. Having seen the model, it is now clear that it is related to the pieces you made in the last two years, *Homo Sapiens Sapiens* in Venice and *A Liberty Statue For Lördön* in London.

Pipilotti: Yes, all three works offer the viewer or the listener a reclining position. I have always been interested in how the body moves in the room in relation to the work of art. The viewing ritual and physical posture appear almost to be given facts. I analyse movement towards art. The way to and then within the institution is a ritual, just like, say, how people in Stockholm go down to the harbour and into the warehouse where Magasin 3 is. It's a small journey of its own. One takes some time off – comparable to what a church visit used to be – and spends ostensibly unproductive time in order to compose oneself and to think. I want to emphasize this meditative dimension by trying to get the installation to suspend gravity for a while and reduce muscle tension. It's easier to relax one's muscles when lying down. Most of the time, muscular activity means far more than simply performing the need to walk or keeping our skeleton in an upright position. All our thoughts, everything we see, everything we're afraid of, is reflected in our muscle tone. This can also be approached the other way round. Your ability to relax your muscles will have an effect on your thinking. It is what's called 'somatopsychic'. To make *Tyngdkraft, var min vän* I went under water again. In fact it is the sister piece of *Sip My Ocean*. I was talking to someone about this last week: we should really call our planet *Water* rather than *Earth*. In purely practical, technical terms, I've now learned to shoot underwater HD. We worked with two different cameras. Now I know how I'd like to work underwater. In the Venice piece, Pepperminta (who was played by Ewelina Guzik) was in a time before the Fall, before Original Sin, with her sister Edna. Beyond all social classes or temporal references. In the London piece, she returns to civilization. In Stockholm she is seen – simply speaking – transcending gravity and the seasons of the year together with another androgynous person. She flies away from the world. My nephew David, who played the second character, came to the shoot on the third day with his hair cut. [laughs] It was a massive shock! He's my sister Ursula's fifteen-year-old son. We spent two days filming on the Old Rhine. Then one night in an open-air swimming pool, where he suddenly turned up without his long hair. He hadn't realised that he was playing the role of an androgynous figure. I should have made that explicit to him as a lay actor. *Tyngdkraft, var min vän* describes the fantasy of living beyond gender difference and simulates our dissolution into water, air and atoms.

Richard: I suggest we take a break here. How about us going back to your place and starting to cook? I can prepare a starter while we talk about some of your earlier works.

[Hours later around the table, after Yuji has knocked off a piece of his tooth and Richard has finished making the traditional seaman's starter, *gubbröra* – egg and anchovy salad – and Balz has prepared the main course of Alpine Roast with plums.]

Richard: It's interesting you calling *Sip My Ocean* the sister piece of *Tyngdkraft, var min vän*.

Pipilotti: Yes, especially because of the element of water. In terms of sound, *Sip My Ocean* works with this brilliant piece by Chris Isaak. It is an incantation about the impossible wish to never fall in love again. But also about the yearning to enter into symbiotic union with another person. In lots of songs about love, but suffering too, you find this motif of wishing to be wholly synchronized with someone else. That's also one of the fascinating aspects in *Sip My Ocean*. This hyper-synchronicity is a simple pattern that you'll find echoed inside the body. On the outside we are more or less symmetrically built. We find this desire for symmetry not only in static manifestations of beauty but also in dance, where we try to make the same movements together so as to reach an immeasurable understanding of each other. Here, the element of water also alludes to Chris Isaak's own music video, like when he is sitting in water singing with his lips pressed to her neck. It's idyllic. In my installation concept, water stands as the reinforcing symbol for unboundedness, for being together inside the same thought bubble and for submersion. It also reflects the deeper longing to be suspended inside a mother's body, a place where one was once truly synchronised. If she made a movement, you followed. This gives us some inkling of what it is like when we really do sway together. We try to accomplish that again and again. But the song also speaks of incapacity and hysteria, of the opposite, of splitting off from wholeness, from a symmetrical entity. For me it is important to depict hysteria in a positive light. It's nothing to be ashamed of. It harbours something ritualistic and explosive.

Richard: I recently listened to your music for *Sip My Ocean* on the record *Soundtracks de las video instalaciones de Pipilotti Rist*. I fell about laughing when I heard the song, when the voice screams I DON'T WANT TO FALL IN LOVE...!

Pipilotti: Do you think it has a cathartic, liberating effect on the listener?

Richard: Certainly, if you laugh like that...

Pipilotti: Cleansing, isn't it?

Richard: Yes, and then I put it onto repeat. After a few times it began to feel very sad. It sounded more like despair.

Pipilotti: Yeah, um... should one perhaps offer some help...? [laughs]

Richard: How do you now feel about *Sip My Ocean*?

Pipilotti: In fact it took three steps for *Sip My Ocean* to become *Sip My Ocean*. I afford myself this freedom in my work. To start with, it was a different installation. I placed a mirror in the centre as wide as a human body, which reflected a projection from opposite showing my sisters in St. Gallen's Sunday costume, mixed with footage of a Brazilian dancer I had filmed here in the woods. In detail the costumes look astonishingly alike: the Swiss dress has gold and silver hats and the Brazilian dance costume is blue and silver, covered in sequins and threads. Both highlight the head, and hence the mind. I blended Brazil into Switzerland. In my third variation of the installation I left this projection out because in fact the two underwater projections now mirrored in the corner functioned better and more clearly by themselves. Many of my works would continue to mutate if at one point I didn't say stop, done! And afterwards, the way you view completed pieces changes all the time. Sometimes there were moments when I thought, apart from *I'm Not The Girl Who Misses Much*, everything else was crap. And other times I can recognize their qualities too... Käthe Walser, who usually installs my older works, and I have evolved a personal rating system to assess each of my works and its adaptation to each room.

Richard: When I first saw *Sip My Ocean*, it was in the same space as *Das Zimmer* (*The Room*). That was in the London Chisenhale Gallery in 1996. Visitors were able to sit on oversized furniture and use a remote control to select channels on a normal-sized screen.

Pipilotti: For me *Das Zimmer* has numerous connotations. On the one hand, reality vanishes, it shrinks while you're watching TV. So by switching the dimensions, I inverted things. I impose physical reality on the viewer. The other meaning has to do with how I see the museum as a public living room and thus emphasise this conviction. I want the viewers to have the feeling of being at home. Did you see *Stadtlounge* (*City Lounge*) that I did in St. Gallen together with Carlos Martinez? As a symbolic intervention it is similar – creating the illusion of private space within public space. For me St. Gallen is also the place where I presented my first variations of *Sip My Ocean* and *Das Zimmer* at my first ever solo exhibition at the Kunstmuseum in 1994. Back then *Sip My Ocean* was still called *Grossmut begatte mich* (*Magnanimity Copulate With Me*). There was another title in between, *Searchwolken, Suchclouds...*

Richard: The setting in *Das Zimmer* acts a bit like a retrospective of your single channel works.

Pipilotti: That's true, we can use it to show a program of my videos, but also add a few specials that would only occur within this installation. My video *Pickelporno* (*Pimple Porno*) attempts to trace a journey just in front of and just behind our eyelids. *You Called Me Jacky* depicts a survival situation in playback. (*Entlastungen*) *Pipilottis Fehler* ((*Absolutions*)*Pipilotti's Mistakes*) deals with the flaws in the machines that dance with my character flaws. It examines the parallels between psychosomatic disturbances, character deficiencies and technical faults in machines. *Sexy Sad I* is a portrait of the struggle with the opposite sex and tells of the ambivalent fragility of male domination. *I'm Not The Girl Who Misses Much* is an exorcist tape about survival, which invokes a positive form of hysteria. The piece *I'm A Victim Of This Song* is an audiovisual poem, which is in fact how I would describe all my single

channel works. But above all, it was recorded in the marvellous Café Prückel in Vienna, where people go to play cards and read books. The soundtrack is identical to my later two-channel audiovisual installation *Sip My Ocean* I did in 1996. Then there is also *Als der Bruder meiner Mutter geboren wurde, duftete es nach wilden Birnenblüten vor dem braungebrannten Sims* (*When My Mother's Brother Was Born It Smelled Like Wild Pear Blossom In Front Of The Brown-burnt Sill*). This video shows a childbirth in the mountains. Around the corner from that we are showing *Apple Tree Innocent On Diamond Hill*, which I reckon could also have been made by a Russian artist, given how infinitely sad it feels. But proud too. And the work *Nothing* is one I consider to be Japanese because it alludes to the Buddhist qualities of desirable emptiness. I made *Apple Tree Innocent On Diamond Hill* after my time off.

Richard: You were in Los Angeles during your break.

Pipilotti: That's right. In the middle of my break I made an exception. Ten months after my son was born I travelled to Shanghai. There, as I mentioned before, the museum director's conferenceroom was put at my disposal, and in it were incredibly soft chairs with beautiful, large patterns. I had nothing with me except a camera, a laptop for editing and a case with a part of my collection that I'd started in 1985 – unprinted, transparent plastic packaging material and white paper or cardboard – *The Innocent Collection, 1985–approx. 2032*. I'd already started experimenting with this and the projector in the children's nursery in Venice Beach in L.A. I also call the piece *Instant Diamonds*. When light is shone through them the materials take on a different guise and look quite majestic. They reflect jellyfish up onto the walls, extremely beautiful shapes that constantly wander around the room. This creates three different levels: sharply contoured shadows from the half-tone projection, the projection itself and the hovering jellyfish. I am interested in how we manage to ignore surfaces. We'll put up with any bad situation just so we can pursue the narrative content. I'm being provocative when I make the viewer switch focus between these various levels so that they end up thinking, huh, what's going on? That's plastic made of oil and those are beams of light coming from it! The difference to the sharp outlines of the shadows make the pixels of the projection stand out. The branch functions as yet another level. The work is a sad poem that helps you detect a diamond in among the most disgusting rubbish.

Richard: Proving you can see beauty everywhere!

Pipilotti: Right! And that every now and then you should also try to change your focus. If something is very painful you often just have to shift your focus onto something else. The tree has these veins, veins of blood. Branches and leaves shoot, fall off and grow back again, the same cycle for millions of years. Plastic is full of contradictions, but by accepting them I can find peace of mind. That I don't just get angry about plastic even though I know (and am ashamed of the fact) that in fifty or a hundred years time all the oil reserves will have been prematurely used up.

Richard: I would also like to talk about the work *Nichts* (*Nothing*).

Pipilotti: *Nothing* is a machine without video and, as I said, it could have been made by a Japanese artist. Actually, it is the by-product of some research I was doing. In 1999 we experimented with images projected onto smoke. My idea was to try and

hold smoke together inside a soap bubble. During the experiments I realized that the bubbles mirrored the entire surroundings and that their fragile, ephemeral form was very interesting. There was then no need for any video. One of the three machines is now installed in upstate New York. The collector wrote to me and said: *I'm happy that Nothing is working...* [laughs]

Richard: You yourself feature in many of your works, like *Kleines Vorstadthirn (Small Suburb Brain)* and *Blutraum (Blood Room)*, so one gets physically very close to you. Do you have a specific aim in mind, are you trying to transgress certain taboos?

Pipilotti: Yes, I'd like to shake up taboos which make people tense or afraid. It's OK if my pictures shock people, but this is not their primary purpose. Obviously, some taboos are necessary to protect us. The question is, which ones? What I like is when the camera moves in so close that it shows up the similarity between reptiles' skin and our own. In most cases, when we see skin in reproduction it has been retouched and made up. The urge to make people look as smooth as a Porsche usually means a lack of acceptance of the fact that we are transient and consist of a gloriously chaotic, constantly changing biological mass. The fact that I play these parts myself just emphasises my well-meaning purpose, as well as being able to demand a greater effort from myself. For instance, as I mentioned already, the taboo attached to menstrual blood has historical origins to do with hygiene, but it definitely has to be broken. In this I view myself as part of a healing artistic tradition. We have to bring this blood to the light and get used to the fact that blood is a token of the healthiness of our amazing flesh clocks and of creative energy – and not depict it merely in terms of injury and death.

Richard: While we were cooking at the stove and I saw the flames, I was reminded of your work *Selbstlos im Lavabad (Selfless In The Bath Of Lava)*...

Pipilotti: The message is this: Help this person get out of purgatory! The installation idea of the little hole in the ground is that the viewers are meant to feel all-powerful and gigantic and sense a desire to help the other person. Overall it is about the urge to forgive and help yourself and others, and particularly about the severity with which we sometimes treat ourselves and punish ourselves for our mistakes. The idea of Original Sin, the sense of profound guilt rooted in Christian-Judeo-Islamic culture has been imposed upon us, and it's something not even an atheist can shed. We try to teach children rules always in conjunction with guilt. Is there a possibility of washing one's hands of guilt? The Catholics go to purgatory first. It's a kind of stopping place en route. If they manage to improve themselves there they get another chance to go to heaven. For us Protestants there's less chance of grace. This work thrives on a sense of feeling enormous and functions well only as long as it appears to have erupted out of the ground just by accident, or as if it had been nibbled out by a mouse. Let me tell you how I filmed it in my studio. Completely on my own, as I did *I'm Not The Girl Who Misses Much* before, without any help. As I was fixing the camera up on a water pipe with Gaffer tape I fell down, backwards, onto my toolbox. That was one of my nastiest accidents ever, because all these metal objects rammed me in the back, I was covered all over in bruises.

Richard: But you still continued to shoot the film?

Pipilotti: ... continued to shoot, yeah. That oldfashioned idea that you have to suffer to be an artist is certainly true of this work.

Richard: And you managed that simply because you fell down...

Pipilotti: Yes! We discussed this issue at the outset – it's part of the same thing. This is the difference between art and anonymous cultural production such as advertising. In art the artist is ultimately required to stand next to his work and without words say: I went to a lot of trouble to choose and reduce this for you. He is baring his cheek to others. This always makes him vulnerable, open to criticism. I often wonder why art is so closely linked to individual names. We've already spoken about the negative aspects of this name cult. The reason is surely because there is then this one person who is responsible. This is also the moment when all artists get panic attacks, when they present a new work. You have to vouch for it with your own existence. There are various moments of panic in a production, almost every time, at least in my case. I question everything, get frightened about whether I've questioned enough. The idea of the martyr is part and parcel of the work process.

Richard: How do you come up with the ideas and themes for your work? I mean before you have panic attacks...

Pipilotti: The panic attacks always come. The problem is just that I get them with bad as well as good works... [laughs] Unfortunately it's no guarantee for quality. I often get an *idée fixe*, almost like a tick, that just won't go away. Sometimes, as I said, it is also a by-product generated while I'm developing a work. As with *Nothing*. There are also things that I record and don't use for ages, but then suddenly find I need them after all. The raw material for *I'm A Victim Of This Song* came about because I wanted to film the fifteen different types of lamps in Prückel, my favourite café in Vienna. Only later did I notice that there was one woman there reading a book and others playing cards. The poetic effect was so much stronger than if I'd filmed them directly and on purpose. My credo is: Every ounce of innocence lost has to be made up for with a pound of know-how.

Richard: Let's talk a bit more in detail about work processes. What's everyday life like in the Atelier Rist Sisters? Today we discussed *Tyngdkraft, var min vän* with the help of a large model of our space in Magasin 3.

Pipilotti: I've always made models of exhibition spaces, they've just become more professional over time. I used to construct them myself, but today I have a technician build them for me. My work environment used to be based more on friendships. My sister and my friends helped me. We all paid each other with work. It's a painful process when your best friends become professionals and you then lose them. But it's like you said, we still try to maintain a warm and easy-going environment here. The person I admire in this is Paul McCarthy and the way he works. With him everything happens around the kitchen table. His kitchen at home is where everything comes together.

Richard: How is your relationship to Paul McCarthy? I assume you had some kind of exchange during your time off in Los Angeles?

Pipilotti: Yes, we would often meet up. Balz also went snowboarding and skiing with him.

Richard: Was it Paul McCarthy who invited you to Los Angeles?

Pipilotti: That's right. Paul works with the same gallery as I do. He asked if I'd like to work as a visiting professor, and I thought that might be a good chance to move so far away from Switzerland that I wouldn't be able to go home at the weekends. So I was very happy to take the offer.

Richard: Had you already planned to take time off when this offer came?

Pipilotti: Yes, I wanted to take a break. In 2000 I had a huge crisis and a heavy depression; I couldn't do anything anymore. So I decided to take some time off. Then the invitation came. Balz had just finished a big project. Then in the period we were preparing our departure and closing the studio I became pregnant. We flew to California and lived in a cottage by the sea. I was teaching and found it very relaxing dealing with other kinds of problems.

Richard: Was that at UCLA?

Pipilotti: Yes. Graduate students could sign up with you and you would visit them in their studio. They were already working on their own projects and you'd become their poorly paid friend. Paul did that for fifteen years and recently stopped because he has so much to do. In Los Angeles being a professor means something quite different from what it does in Switzerland. You teach to be part of a community. There, universities are places where you meet like-minded people. You don't do it for the money. The city is so fragmented that you need physical places to meet where you can keep discussions going with other professionals.

Richard: So how was this break for you, then?

Pipilotti: For me it was excellent, and crucial for my survival: it was essential. I did no new works or exhibitions apart from the small piece in Shanghai after ten months. When I flew to China to do the installation it was the first time I'd spent a whole week without seeing my son Yuji. But I forgot to pack my breast pump, so I discovered how milk can be squeezed out by hand too. One toilet there was so filthy that I sprayed and cleaned it every two hours with my relatively strong jets of milk! [laughs] The museum was a monstrous building. It was extremely interesting to see how the Chinese hang pictures. At least twelve of them would gather in front of a picture and discuss it for a whole hour. Nothing would happen and then they would suddenly hang it within two minutes. It was impressive: once they have all come to an agreement, anything is possible.

Richard: When did you decide to leave Los Angeles and return to Switzerland?

Pipilotti: After one and a half years I needed my own studio again. Once you start buying new tools you've got two studios.

Richard: Did the wish to make art again arise in Los Angeles?

Pipilotti: Yes, it did. After a year I should have switched from this provisional way of life to a more stable one and, for instance, set up a studio. Then we had the practical problem that Balz couldn't get a work permit, so he took the decision for me. By then he had learned to fly and improved his cooking skills. But then he also wanted to start working again, he'd begun to get bored.

Richard: So you moved back to Switzerland and turned the studio into what it is today.

Pipilotti: Exactly! So we came back. I had kept the studio on and sublet some of it. At the outset I wanted to do everything by myself so I could have a very quiet studio and just work with outside assistants. But that was no good. Now my Atelier Rist Sisters has got three and a half employees again. I went looking and came across Markus Huber Recabarren. We call what he does here 3-D or architecture. He's our mainstay in physical production, everything to do with metal, plastic, wood and fabric. Thomas Rhyner is responsible for 2-D graphic design and Davide Legittimo is in charge of video technology and post-production. I used to work with Davide on a project basis, but then I reached a point when that ceased to be possible. Once a project is over there are so many things that need doing, like back-up copies for the archive, labelling all the cassettes, updating the databank and so on. Each project has its own complex afterbirth. Which is why I needed someone full-time for video, and Davide wanted to do that. When he informed his company he was going to join me they cried... [laughs] And I also needed someone to run the place for me here, which is how I found Rachele Giudici. She's my studio manager and keeps control of expenses and schedules.

Richard: How do you think your studio and your work will develop in the coming years?

Pipilotti: For me right now it's important to be able to carry out these two projects at the same time. This year I'm only doing the exhibition with you in Magasin 3 and the one in autumn at the Hara Museum in Tokyo. The second project is the journey I'll be trying to make with the feature film. At the same time I don't want to and won't stop making art. I'll try and keep my studio and my staff running parallel to the film. Structures and timeframes mean very different things in film and art. I want to move forward with my video work, but to do so I need a more complex filmic structure. To finance this structure I have to obey the rules of film. In plain words, a lowbudget production in the film world is considered extremely expensive in the art world. It's a simple contradiction. Video artists are somewhere in between. I certainly believe you can make good videos on a small budget, but what I'm seeking to do with this project can't be done with zero money. I have to work with quite a few professionals, and they cost a bit. Later on I can channel these films into my installations, but for the time being I'm making a detour through a different world in order to satisfy my more exacting needs. For myself. I just hope I have enough assertiveness, energy and nerves to do so.

Richard: So what are you making for dessert this evening?

Pipilotti: Nipplepimple salad from blackberries with fromage frais, as dark as the

night, and rice pudding with cinnamon.