

Englische Untertitel Jürg Hassler „Josephsohn. Stein des Anstosses“ (1977)

0:02 JOSEPHSOHN
 solitary provocation

0:22 Things lying around everywhere...

0:24 Pills I should take...

0:28 This must be some souvenir...

1:00 I always have to water
 these rags.

1:07 They are old and dry
 out so fast.

1:15 Here is a real marvel.

 Everything is in motion - see?

 Just right for new creation.

 Discovery of a naïve artist...

1:49 You know I was a primitive?

 Look, that's worthless.

 I wouldn't loose anything...

 ...by destroying it, would I?

1:59 That gives me a free block.

 Shit, some clay fell into the mud.

 I have no ideas right now.

 Perhaps I can do variations...

 ...on an old one from memory...

 ...and see how it looks on film.

2:31 We're still in conflict over this.

 You think it's important...

 ...while I have my doubts...

...about such a demonstration.

At the moment I have no ideas...

...and when I have one...

I want to carry it out right away.

All these reliefs are sketches.

2:50 They are all made
spontaneously.

That people take part...

...in this act of creation...

I doubt that that's possible.

It's like filming a couple...

...making love...

I don't mean in a porno film.

Where they do it a 1000 times.

...but two people...

...who really love each other.

3:17 I doubt very much that they...

...would let you do it...

...if they are really in love.

And while I work...

...you want me to explain
why...

...as if I were standing...

...next to myself...

...but that's impossible.

3:49 Things must be shown
indirectly.

I think that is also the case.
...with my work.

4:01 If somebody asks me:
...why the sculptures have
no faces.
I can only say:
...because I don't know how!
I don't know how to make...
...a more individual face.
I work as long as it
corresponds...
...to my imagination...
...and then I just stop.

4:53 Where did I put my matches?
I'm always searching for
something.
Somehow I am not
a real sculptor.
Many of them have a passion...
...for their tools - to keep
them...
...clean and in good condition...
...while I just drop everything.

5:17 I'm glad if something improves.
I can't clean up.
I'm much too tired...
...and just want to go home.

5:31 And if the work is bad...

...and gets you angry
and depressed...

...you clean up even less.

The discipline of these sculptors...

...can only find its explanation...

...in the steadiness...

...of their work process...

...they maintain at the same
level.

5:48 How about your work process?

Well, I run after an image.

When I work I get all worked up...

...and when the tension
calms down...

...I have to stop.

6:04 If it goes well,
the excitement...

...starts again while I work.

If not...I just fiddle around.

Okay, let's look at some...

...masterpieces for the museum...

6:32 Why are you filming
this bullshit.

You're crazy - that's too crude.

That face will only shock
people.

I made it quickly in one minute.

What I like about this one:

In the middle this big mass..

...that seems to continue...

6:56 Very beautiful,
 with the big head.

 I wonder what I imagined here.

 Definitely nothing intelligent.

7:09 The proportions should impress...

 ...not the details.

 Look, here are two directions...

 ...one this way and one
 that way.

 If you add a little here...

 ...it looks better.

7:29 This small piece reminds me
 of that.

 Don't clean the patina away!

7:55 I think the corners were dusty.

 They catch the dust easily.

 But if we shouldn't...

 ...then we won't do anything.

 We only do what we have to.

8:09 There are many things here...

 ...that make me wonder:

 Who might buy them?

 We don't buy them...

 ...because they don't fit
 our homes...

 ...and so we don't think...

...much about them.

If we were here...

...when they explained
these things...

...we would know more
about them.

8:31 Critic: ...formless, massive...

...dropping heavily, as if dug...

...out of a muddy diluvial
swamp...

...a scarcely human figure...

...only in its main traits...

...the arms joined to the body...

...the legs often a solid bloc...

...at first the figures seem...

...to be dumb beings...

...stuck in their own
material...

...sinking into the ground
because...

...of the weight of
their substance...

...touching in their
helplessness.

9:12 At a closer look one realises...

...that subtly calculated
powers...

...push and pull their weight...

...in these figures...

...like ancient landscapes...

...and that these heavy heads...

...are full of life.

9:29 The material becomes body...

...the body becomes an individual.

The artist is only medium...

...in this process of sublimation.

9:40 All we can see are heads.

But their signification...

What did the artist think here?

Did he have a model...

...with tow different eyes?

What's that...an old man?

9:59 It's an old worker.

But the tool is missing.

That's why I didn't see it.

Come-on, it's not a photo album.

Sculptures are not snapshots.

10:12 I don't say to Josephsohn:

Comrade, he should hold a tool...

...he shouldn't bend over so much.

You could have found...

...a more positive looking one.

Workers don't stay young

forever.

10:28 They too get older and bent over.

It's not idealisation,...

...it's realisme,
one of these people.

Maybe the sculptures
are beautiful...

...but I miss a positive
attitude...

...clearly favorable to the class.

10:50 In China they praise this...

...as a masterpiece...

...called "the Tenant Farm" ...

...because it shows very
clearly...

...to all who know the situation...

...-to the Chinese farmers-...

...the exploitation of
the farmers...

...by the land-owners.

11:07 You aren't talking with
a critic...

...but with a socialist
who's trying...

...to understand art,
to help it...

...become a tool in
the process...

...of increasing worker
awareness...

...and finally to create...

...a classless society.

11:30 Art must satisfy...

...the needs of the people.

It must create needs...

...but also satisfy other
real needs.

12:11 Pop art simply elevated.

...the bourgeois aesthetic
of goods...

...the aesthetics of alienation...

...to become art.

12:41 The artists make art...

...and the workers work...

...and their surplus value
helps...

...the artists to make
their art.

13:00 In the work of Josephsohn...

...everything that is
essential...

...is pure sculpture,
nothing else.

Things like a beautiful woman,...

...a beautiful man,...

...an interesting pose...
don't exist.

There is simply a basic
situation...

...where there is nothing else...

...but the purely artistic.

13:43 What about taking a little
off here?

You see a volume,
not a hole?

I see it as a volume.

I don't mind the hole.

Better a good fragment...

...than a smooth but dead
sculpture.

14:06 Art can't be understood
merely...

...by the intellect but
by feelings...

...as the density of
emotion grows.

The artist must educate
himself...

...towards the people in
his art...

...and not the people towards
his art.

14:32 Then why did Karl Marx
not write...

...The Capital in a more
popular way?

Every Marxist has to sweat...

...to understand it if
he is not...

...extremely intelligent,
doesn't he?

14:45 When we come to the opening...

...we won't look like
cleaning-women...

...we'll look like ladies!

Elegant, simply elegant.

Nobody would guess what
we are...

15:02

On a procession,...

...a political procession...

...you can paint beautiful
banners...

...with pictures and text...

...for what you call the people...

...and these can really
correspond...

...to their needs.

But you can't aim something...

...as complex as a sculpture...

...at the people so directly.

15:25

But what are the mexican murals?

Are they grafics or art?

If the artist...

...wants to make art
for the people...

...without losing
his own identity...

...he has to get in touch...

...with the people not only
in his art...

...but also personally...

...through practical political involvement.

16:09

Even if I wanted to be a militant...

...I wouldn't know whom to join:

The Social Democrats?

The Anarchists? The Stalinists?

The Trotskyists? The Maoists...?

...and that's not all.

Where are the fascists?

16:39

It would be crazy for me...

...to work in a factory...

...or live with the workers.

That's too theoretical.

I'm not a worker...
where the hell...

...does he get that idea from?

Should I go work in the coalmines?

Yes, like Van Gogh!

Okay, but do the workers come...

...to see the pictures of Van Gogh?

17:05

And why the hell don't the workers...

...come to visit the artists' studios?

The problem is that people can't...

...identify with their work

anymore.

You get hired...

...to carry out a specific job...

...never relate to
the entire process...

...and all these people keep
busy...

...by watching TV every nite...

...to see the film about
Josephsohn...

...yes, if they are lucky...

18:44 People think they'll be happier.

... with a swimming-pool
in their flat.

I mean the garden.

That's the belief...

...in our consumer's society.

They can't imagine that
somebody...

...makes sculptures all his life...

...out of passion or whatever.

If they would see...

...that passion is the only reason...

...there would be only
2 consequences:

Either they must look at me...

...as a complete fool...

...or it is such a provocation...

...for their own life...

...that they would have
to kill me...

...to be consequential...

...because it proves their needs
wrong.

19:22 This had preoccupied me
all my life...

...but I can't see any solution...

...neither theoretical
nor practical.

I had to leave that
to time...

...and do my own thing
I have to do.

In our time and personal
life...

...most things don't fit
together anyway.

19:45 Imagine: In the Middle Ages...

...there was still identity.

People were not only able...

...to see and read their beliefs...

...sculptured into
the cathedrals...

...but also little things
like themselves...

20:09 ...sowing seeds, harvesting crops...

...or in some other occupation.

Today innocence has
disappeared.

Artists can't mature...

...in a slow long process
anymore.

20:22 What Josephsohn's work does...

...for his own emancipation...

...is far from being helpfull...

...in the emancipation of
all people...

...and the older he gets...

...and the more society changes...

...the more he becomes
isolated...

...from daily life...

...and time and history pass
him by.

20:58 Damn it, all this must
disappear...

...it's getting out of hand.

21:28 If he works all alone...

...for so many years in his...

...completely closed-off area...

...without receiving new
impressions...

...it means that he feeds...

...upon a substance within
himself...

...an overwhelming experience...

21:51 Watch out, it's starting to rain.

...it's getting darker all the time.

22:02 Speech of Hitler's, Munich 1937:

The artist doesn't work...

...for the artist but for
the people...

...like everybody else and...

...we will see to it that
the people...

...will be again the judge
of his art.

This is the model of
our new era.

...my dear prehistoric
art-stutterer...

But what do you produce?

Mis-shapen cripples and
idiots,...

...horrifying females.

23:04

He was a Jew.
The times were heroic...

...and often he was avoided.

1936-37 I sat on
the same bench.

He on the left - I on the right.

Behind us sat the so-called...

...Unterbannführer who had
about...

...600 Hitler-youths under
his orders...

...mostly in uniform.

23:36

I was also Hitler-youth
leader...

...and on certain occasions...

...40 percent of the class
were in uniform.

It became fashionable...

...to join the Hitler-youth.

23:53 My music teacher said:
Josephsohn...

...recite: when the Jews' blood...

...splashes from the knife...

...things'll looking up.

When I refused, he grinned.

24:03 One can look at that time...

...in different ways.

But Germany was very poor...

...after a lost war.

Many were out of work...

...and in the city of Königsberg...

...you could see
a street-fighting...

...between the Socialists,...

...the Communists and
the Nazis...

...nearly every day in 1931.

24:32 It was the crisis...

...of the Weimar Republic.

Always riots and killings
and...

...my parents never allowed
me...

...to go into the street...

...where my father had
his shop.

It began as a middle-class
street...

...and ended in very miserable...

...working-class quarters.

I often dream of it even now:...

I walk to some crossing there...

In any case, Königsberg
was full...

...of very interesting things...

...which I never experienced...

...as a middle-class boy.

25:08 The crisis suddenly ended.

The German people hoped
that Hitler would put an end...

...to the misery of
the German people.

He had promised this.

His image was such, you see.

...no women, no booze, no wine...

...he ate only salads,
slept alot...

...he had no faults...

...and the people believed it...

...even Josephsohn, I think.

He did not imagine...

...that later he would become...

...an outcast.

25:49 I was a perfect little Prussian.

I did not read Karl May...

...but the herotic deeds
of the prussian armies.

On my way home from school...

...I hummed the
"Deutschlandlied".

The process of becoming
an outcast...

...took quite a while.

Even in 1936 we still
wondered...

...if we should volunteer...

...for the army or not as Jews!

Unbelievable!

26:17 As outcast from
the German community...

...we tried to find our
own identity.

We started to study Hebrew,...

...the Bible, the Chassidism...

...but we did all this...

...in a very German, even Nazi,
way:

...looking back at our heritage...

...the emphasis on hierarchy...

...we also said:
our "Führer"...

26:50 We took trips in shorts
at 10 ° C.

My career with this group
developed rapidly.

Soon I had the local
Jewish group...

...of 100 people under
my orders...

...and I was only
15 or 16 years old.

I invested all wishes and
passions...

...in this Jewish youth
movement.

27:09 The danger is always
that we judge...

...this time by what happened
later.

27:13 I remember a friend
of my father's...

...who had a small margarine
factory.

He said: Me emigrate? Why?

I never earned so much
as under Hitler.

27:22 And your father?

My father was not
a factory-owner.

He was a little dealer
of guts.

All he could do...

...was to sell and buy
a little.

My parents were quite old.

They belonged to
a generation...

...that could not cope
at all...

...with the political situation.

They couldn't give me
the security...

...I needed in those difficult
times.

27:48 The people didn't think
much...

...about what was happening.

The German people woke up
one morning...

...and the shops were
all destroyed...

...you understand?

27:59 The Gestapo dissolved
our group.

I was not allowed to take
my final exams.

I had to wait another
semester...

...first because I wasn't...

...a good pupil and
secondly...

...I did not have to become
an officer...

...as all the other graduates
would.

This hurt me so much
that I was...

...completely thrown back
upon myself.

28:27 I had to find something...

...to defend myself with.

Sculpture started
to interest me again.

I had always worked
with clay...

...while I was growing up...

...from cactuses and
elephants...

...to Frederick the Great...

...and his soldiers and
finally...

...to the first copies
of Maillol.

28:54 To become sculptor
I went to Berlin.

But the academy
was already inaccessible.

By chance somebody told me...

...that the academy in
Florence...

...was still open and
so I left...

29:16 Our flat had a big
translucent...

...glass door and the day
I left...

...I saw: Jews out!
Death to the Jews...

...written in big black letters

there.

My parents got a visa
for Shanghai in '38 '39.

But they preferred to die where
they had always lived.

29:44 I started a new life
in Florence.

The flowers were in bloom,
it was warm out...

In school I didn't
understand anything...

...because of the language
but also...

...because it was different
and new.

When I saw the Dome in
Florence...

...I had nothing to compare
it with...

...to realise how grandiose it was.

31:01 As I said, in school
I didn't learn anything.

The holidays started and then...

...a young sculptor suggested me...

...to stay with his relatives...

...in a village in the Appenines...

...and so began a chapter
of my life...

...that keeps a very special
place...

...in my memory and left an...

...enormous impression

in my mind...

...these three months in
that village...

31:25 I got there and I remember...

...having knocked at the door...

...in the rain and
desperately showing them...

...my little letter of
recommendation.

31:48 The people were very nice,
very human.

There was a spontaneous wave
of solidarity...

...and I would come much more
often...

...if I could speak Italien...

...but only to say:
"come stai" and...

..."cosa pensi" is of no
interest.

32:03 I'm different in Italy.

Without thinking...

...I made a spontaneous
mouvement...

...and put my arms around him
and kissed him...

...which I would never do here.

I feel an infusion of
power...

...everytime I go south.

Pathetically I could say:

I touched the earth again.

32:36 How handsome you've become!

Come to the mountains with me!

Tell the story about the girl.

We had thought to live
up there...

...in a stable and avoid
the war.

We imagined beautiful girls...

...to be our servants in love
and for food.

But his imagination
was much greater than mine...

It wasn't imagination,
it was hunger.

33:04 Remember that we had only
seven dried figs to eat...

No, I can't remember.

Yes, there was fog and
we lost our way.

We got very sad...

We were afraid.

33:24 I remember a girl
it was like in a dream...

...a real girl, blond,
her eyes and...

...the long neck exactly
like in a...

...painting by
S. Francesco of Arezzo.

She looked like my mother, Hans!

I remember moments like
in paradise...

...hearing the voices of
animals...

...when in the evenings
I lay in the vineyards and...

34:01 ...to my surprise the sky
got green...

...like in the paintings of
van Gogh.

I stored strength somehow...

...for all the later years
of concentrated work.

I really didn't do anything
for three months...

I can't explain how I could
spend these months...

...very happily without
doing anything...

...at the age of seventeen.

Then the regulations...

...against the Jews
appeared...

...and I came to Switzerland...

34:31 ...with nothing but
a little suitcase.

After a tunnel I remember
seeing a big swiss flag...

...and I felt secure between
the high mountains.

Then they closed the border
and...

...so I had to stay in

this country.

In 1939 he knocked at
my door...

...with a recommendation
in his hand...

35:00 ...and so I took him in.

He could start right away
and...

...ended up staying for
4 1/2 years.

He was free to do as he
pleased in my studio.

As long as I've known him...

...he has been a real artist.

He never tried to copy me.

35:29 I was impressed by
his independence...

...at his young age.

And later when he got a
studio of his own...

...I often went to see him...

...and I was always fascinated
by his work.

There was something extraordinarily
direct about it.

35:56 He came at the end of
august...

...and at the 2 sept. was
the general mobilisation...

...and I had to leave...

I was always in the army...

...and they took him away
into a camp.

I only know that it was
very hard there for him.

It was known that laws
concerning Jews existed...

36:37 ...and could put into practice...

...by the authorities anytime.

I'm sure about that.

There were the German
victories...

...and everybody thought,
that...

...these camps were nothing
but...

...the first step for
a new Dachau.

They even told us...

...to get used to it,
because one day...

...the Germans would take
over anyway...

...and then we would
already be...

...prepared to support
the hardships.

37:03 That was in Sattellegg in 1940.

They said that the captain...

...had chased around
the arabs...

...and blacks in
North-Africa before.

Josephsohn was a kind of...

...shakesperean fool
in the camp.

He had built a shell
around himself...

...and we felt that it was
better...

...to leave him alone.

37:30 My innocence protected me.

I remember that someone
told me:

I would never do anything
to you.

And that was a German
deserter...

...who possibly was
a Nazi agent...

...to take over the camp,
who knows.

I only remember that once...

...he shouted "Heil Hitler"
when he was drunk.

That was the camp at
Gordola.

38:00 70 men in barracks.

3 bunks on top of each
other in the dormitory.

Each immigrant had a number.

Josephsohn's was 926.

All the time it was: group forward
to the left march,...

...to the right,

around march and so on...

That the thousand of
immigrants...

...could not be allowed
to walk around...

...for optical and also
sexual reasons...

38:39 ...one can understand.

But we did not feel
that our work...

...was of any help
to swiss economy...

...in face of the German threat,...

...by building roads or
draining land...

...but it was this endless obligatory
service without rights...

39:02 There wasn't a general duty
of help...

...for all the strangers...

...but only for those with
no money...

...and that was discrimination...

...here the distribution
of the mail.

39:28 There were terrible scenes...

...when some got first-hand
news...

...that all their relatives
had been liquidated...

The general belief was...

...that there was knowledge

of the prosecutions...

...in the concentration camps...

...only from 1943 on.

But I'm sure...

...that it was known already
in '41!

"The ship is full"...

39:58

These famous words were
completely ridiculous...

...compared with the help
actually given...

...17.000 civilian refugees equal
2/1000 of the population.

It was unthinkable...

...that the country would be
filled...

...with enormous camps...

...with hundreds of thousands...

...of Jews or refugees
in them...

Imagine, they even
expected me...

...to take up an insurance...

...when I was naturalised
as a Swiss citizen.

40:31

So that they would not
have to take any risks.

That these people would
have coped...

...with 500.000 refugees
is not thinkable.

...over 1 million immigrant

workers...

...equal 1/4 of the working
population.

How I became a Swiss?

Usually one member...

...of the naturalisation
commission...

...visits your home
without notice...

41:01 ...when you're taking a bath...

...or are in bed with your wife...

...or washing the kids.

He inspects the books
you read.

He sees if there is no dust...

...if your home is orderly...

...if you're assimilated...

...to the orderly mentality
of the country.

42:04 They also said:
you have learnt...

...how democracy works
in Switzerland.

Why don't you go back...

...and teach this to
the Germans!

When I refused to go back...

...to the country that had...

...killed my parents,
they said:

...we know that story already...

...but we want to know
why you...

...don't want to go back
to Germany.

42:29 So I said:
But I just told you...

...let's forget
this stupid story...

...about my swiss
citizenship.

Maybe it would have been
worse...

...I needed a lot of time
to develop.

I can't work fast or
skilfully.

I would have been lost...

...if I had to work at 20...

...and it was somehow a favorable
situation...

...that I was forbidden to work...

...and therefore was
completely...

...concentrated on my art.

43:04 I imagine myself
as a man without talent...

...who needed a lot of time...

...to develop into something.

Most of my work was
created...

...after I was 50,

that's very late!

44:33 What are you standing there
with the camera for...

 ...come here and help me
instead.

44:50 But now you're successful.

 Well, not really but it's good...

 ...that I succeeded in selling
a little at least.

 There are two sides to it.

 Its coming too late...

 ...it doesn't influence...

 ...my attitude towards life
anymore.

45:07 If you have success at 30
you can do a lot:

 ...long trips abroad
which I can't make...

 ...because I think I have
no time to loose,...

 ...I should stay in my studio...

 ...perhaps I would have had
another child...

 ...on the other hand I wasn't
distracted...

 ...and I'm insure that if
what you call fame...

45:35 ...had come 15 years earlier...

 ...that I would have been
immune...

 ...to possible temptations.

46:04 Here there is nothing
to see yet!

47:02 The relief is nearly finished.

 It's always like that.

 I think I have never
started badly.

 All my work was good
or very good...

 ...after 2-3 sessions.

 But then I still wasn't
satisfied...

 ...and continued working...

 -a kind of work ethic-...

 ...and so I ruined
everything again...

 ...afterwards I sometimes
got it back painfully...

 ...to the same state...

 ...or maybe further
- how can I judge.

47:33 I didn't have a photo
to compare with.

 I thought, I can't push it...

 ...any further, so I stopped.

 I would like to continue
working...

 ...on one of those big reliefs.

 Wait, I have a sketch
to look at.

47:58 The most difficult, I think,...

 ...is to make something look

completely natural...

...that has the power of life
itself.

But you never reach that
by copying nature.

Nature works in many ways.

...its form, its colour,...

...its impression,
its mouvement...

...its surroundings.

We have practically
nothing but the form.

Therefore we have...

...to do something with
the form...

...to reach the expression
of nature.

48:35 I'm very bad at theory,
ain't I!

Take for example the roman...

...or the indian sculptures.

They deal with the
impression...

...of nature much more freely.

They change the proportions
alot.

They make things that are..

...not possible in real life...

...and still produce even
more life.

That's completely a woman.

48:57 I've never seen a reel
woman...

...who looks so much a woman
for a man...

The artist somehow recreated...

...the creation of mankind,
didn't he?

The breasts have nipples,
right?

And they have their strong
effect...

...because of their
different colour.

I often tried to do it
but...

...it immediately became
naturalistic...

...while the Indians could do
it easily...

...well, I think it is so...

...because it corresponded...

...to little forms of the chain
or something else.

49:29 The most difficult thing to do...

...is certainly something
so natural...

...that you don't ask
any questions.

I don't mean today's youth...

...who would say:
that is feudalistic...

...because the woman is

exposed...

...as a subject of lust
for the man.

I think there are even women...

... who make a value judgement
about...

...being on the bottom...

...and the man on top...

To lie under somebody...

That's an image of war,
isn't it?

49:58 Just think, one of
the most vital...

...and simple things
between man...

...and woman have become
a problem.

We really live in
a very strange time.

And a woman that lies
on her back...

...and receives the man...

...with happiness or maybe
tenderness...

...is she any less than...

...the buffalo on top of her?

Where is that book
about the vagina.

50:28 Women let's make
revolution...

...with our vaginas.

Let's get rid of the belief
that...

...the woman-flower can only
flourish...

...if it is sprinkled by man.

Away with the perverse
publicity...

...of the male salt that seems...

...necessary for woman's
identity.

Those are the rotten flowers...

...in the glasshouse of
the capital.

We got robbed of our vagina...

...before we even knew that
it existed...

51:06 They want us to get
satisfaction...

...out of fanatical
submission...

...to never experience what
a vagina...

...can do besides being filled!

What can a vagina do,
besides...

...being filled,
what do they want?

Maybe masturbate...

I see - they are more
independent from man.

51:30 But how artificial!

Men are sometimes also

alone...

...and must masturbate
and say:...

Always this dependance
on the woman...

...the hole, the vagina
free yourselves, you men...

This is totally inhuman...

...because this short time...

...sets the trend for all of live.

51:56 A new form exists in China...

...where the relationship
between...

...man and woman is bedded...

...into something else...

...like building up the
country together.

All this can only be solved...

...within socialism,

...isolated actions
by women don't work...

52:46 ...today there is the tendency
to develop oneself.

For women who scarcely read.

...this means to be able
to read books.

They read something
superficially...

...and then they join...

...in the conversation and think...

...that they are better than before.

53:02 I think the joy taken in cooking is productive,...

...even cleaning up is productive:

There is a mess and then its gone...

There is a scale of values for human occupations:

...something at the bottom...

...and something at the top...

...and this I don't accept.

Everything that is done wholeheartedly...

...is equal before God.

Why do you have to talk about God?

53:29 I talk about God to tease you...

...and the people listening.

There is this famous story about the Chassidim:

They were all in the Synagoge to pray...

...when a very simple-minded farmer...

...came in who fell so much at one with everything...

...that he started to whistle...

...in the Synagogue!
Unbelievable.

But he was chosen by God...

...because in his simplicity...

54:02 ...he was ahead of the others...

...who were more complicated.

And the first principle
of St. Francis of Assisi...

...is to renounce everything
even knowledge.

Knowledge is something
that leads...

...away from the real way...

54:29 Once you liked these lying
women very much,...

...not very up to date!

I always remember a story...

...which perhaps gave me the
strongest impression of all:

Francis of Assisi
must have...

...insulted one of
his brothers...

...when suddenly he realised it...

...he let himself be dragged...

...and dressed only in a shirt.

...with a rope around his neck...

...through all of Assisi...

54:58 Accusing himself he goes
to church...

...to confess his fault...

...in normal life he would
have said:

...sorry - I made a mistake.

But the radical stance
he takes...

...simply overwhelms me,...

...the very strong relationship...

...he must have had to
other people...

...to be able to undertake...

...such an extreme action.

55:28 I was fascinated by
the demand...

...that life be a unity,...

...that once you understand
one thing well...

...you understand everything...

...that one should not be
vain...

...that complete concentration...

...will solve all the enigmas
of life...

...that one might even
understand...

...the voices of the animals...

...let's say that one finds
the way...

...back to the original state
of innocence.

55:56 Perhaps I'm so fascinated...

...because I have similar
tendencies...

...because I believe...

...that one must dare
the ultimate.

I detest all half-way measures.

I have often lain here
for hours...

...angry with all sorts
of things...

...and suddenly I realised...

...that the emptiness got
filled up...

...more and more with new
imagination.

That the fact of being
closed-in...

...or closed-off
created something...

56:32 It's very difficult to say.

In the Middle Ages...

...these were probably called
mystical experiences...

...or something close to it:

That you are alone and...

...completely fulfilled...

...and get a high degree of
concentration...

...or a feeling of happiness.

56:57 That happiness don't have to be...

...togetherness with other people.

But we lack appropriate words.

I mean the mystics wrote
down their stutterings...

...and I make sculptures...

...and still another walks
around...

...and everybody looks at him.

This has happened to me...

-who is not very attractive-

...that I caught the smile
of women...

...that there was a certain
magnetism...

...by the mere fact...

...that I was completely
concentrated.

57:33 Now I'm suddenly very tired.

I have to lie down for a while...

...well, these sculptures he made...

...already in his first studio...

...he has never been
non-figurative...

...where the form stood
for itself...

...he has always worked...

...by imagining something
real.

57:59 These forms up there
like birds...

...were flying machines
or real birds...

...and the forms lying at

the bottom...

...were figures...

That is a dead man...

...and the other two are
on the run.

But any such formulation
is banal.

There was the crisis
of the korean war...

...and I remember...

58:31

...that I made them
under this impression.

I had only these reduced signs
at my disposition...

...because to show it more real.

...than a sign...

...seemed to me sacrilegious...

There was a sculpture
competition...

...for Auschwitz.

I refused to take part,
because...

...there is something like
lack of respect...

59:02

...for atrocity, for death.

This anonymous mass
murder...

...cannot be represented...

...by any work of art,
of sculpture.

To explain the non-figurative...

...or reduced works,...

59:29 I think I must have lost
the natural,...

...uncomplicated relationship..

...with life and its optical
impressions...

...and therefore tried...

...to create
a world independent...

...of these impressions,
a symbol.

I remember that the first
thing...

...was a sitting figure.

It was a very simple form...

...and slowly this world became...

...richer and more
complicated...

...but the beginning was a base...

...and a bit higher
a simple...

...reduced form of
a sitting figure.

1:00:07 And with the standing
figures it was the same:

...when I saw a model
that was slim, beautiful...

...I had the irresistible need...

...to reduce it more and more...

...so that in the end...

...only the essential core
was left...

...and the people call that
a stele.

1:00:29 I didn't make one consciously.

I just wanted to get...

...to the essential and
not get caught...

...in superficial impressions.

I was only able...

...to free myself slowly.

I could never jump...

...through the world with
big leaps...

...because the truth I had found...

...could not be exchanged
suddenly for another truth.

1:01:02 I could only push the truth
I had found...

...a bit forward or break it open...

...for something else to develop.

I remember that in the end
of this period...

...a simple thing bothered me:

That things in the street...

...that caught my interest...

...could never be shown...

...with these means...

1:01:38 ...that tried to reduce
everything...

...to the essential substance.

Perhaps my provision of
symbols...

...was simply exhausted and so...

...I opened my eyes again...

...to register the world.

1:02:00 It was then that I made...

...the workers - I saw this one...

...walk-by with clothes to wash...

...and asked him to model
for me.

Once he said:
If Baumann dies...

...- that was his name -...

...something will be still
left of him.

That is maybe the most
important...

...sense of it all, of art...

I worked on at his statue...

...which looks so fragmentary...

...for at least 6 years.

1:02:30 At certain times I had the nose,...

...the mouth of course,
but then...

...I changed everything again...

...and suddenly it was right
as a whole...

...it fits, doesn't it?

And then I didn't dare
to continue.

These holes broke through
during the work,...

...here you can still see
the iron of the frame.

1:02:56 All that didn't bother me...

...because optically it was right.

I think there is nothing here...

...without a mistake somewhere.

I look and after a while...

...it loses its firmness...

...it gets soft and indefinite.

And I don't know if
I get tired...

...or if I discover the faults...

...by looking long enough.

But this happens
every day.

1:03:29 Yesterday I couldn't bare it
and run away.

And when I came back
to ask you...

...I thought that it
doesn't look...

...too bad after all.

His sculptures are not
final as an eggshell.

You have to remake them
somehow...

...by looking at them
intensely.

1:03:59 All these are variations
of a first impression.

But I can realise...

...this elementary impression...

...only by all sorts of
sidetracks.

1:04:08 I have often wondered
if I'm not...

...completely unable to create
what I see...

...a sculptor should not
talk about...

...what he would like to make...

...but about what's really
there...

I often think about
the relation...

...between work and life...

1:04:31 ...or the problem that
you take away...

...so much strenght from
the life for the work...

...that perhaps
you haven't really lived.

To live means to me...

...to be completely present...

...to be identical to
everything in life.

To be identical...

...when you are together

with a woman...

...that you dare do things...

1:05:00 ...without knowing the results...

...that you don't have one foot...

...on another level...

...where the things are transformed...

...in my case into sculpture.

All the crisis of life...

...and all the footpaths into the woods,...

... ..when you don't know...

...how to get out again...

...all this has happened only in my studio.

1:05:29 For ex. in a moment of depression...

...when I had the feeling...

...that life just passes by.

I imagined all the loving couples.

I added them together in my head...

...which is wrong of course because...

...everybody has his own happiness...

...and the happy couple may have...

...a fight an hour later...

...but it really can get
you down...

...especially when you
get older...

...it can really destroy you...

1:06:00 ...that you will never...

...experience that again
like that.

The reason for the reliefs...

...may lie in the wish
to preserve...

...something perishable.

It's a basic wish to remake...

...something that you love.

It's also elementary to search...

...for this beloved being...

...on another level.

1:06:33 If you look at life,...

...the most elementary process
is to mate.

I reproached him once...

...for making individualist
subjective art.

But I think the challenge
of the reliefs...

...becomes so strong in the end...

1:07:01 ...that you risk finding things...

...you would never do in
real life...

It may even become

uncomfortable...

...to discover in a relief...

...-for instance in regards...

...to the relation between
a man and a woman-...

...a kind of relation that you...

...would not have dared...

1:07:29 ...in the barrenness of
daily life.

I always get the impression...

...that from the beginning
I never...

...really did accept life
as it is...

But this gave me great
strength...

...to put something else
in its place.

1:08:01 It's difficult to say what...

...maybe how things should be...

...or something...

...the philosophers call
"utopic".

I remember that I used...

...certain words with women...

...and had such expectations...

...that one should not have...

...of a woman who loves you...

...but only of a sister
or mother...

...maybe it also had
positive aspects...

...because I was propably
always...

...looking for this kind of
intimacy...

1:08:31 ...and I never regarded
women as enemies

You can also ask
differently:

...why do you have to do this?

In reality it's a great
process...

...of dissociation.

I always found it
a strange thing:

...normally you want to look...

...at a person you love...

...or you want to get
together...

...you don't stand
5 meters away...

1:09:03 ...and make a sculpture
of her.

This had occupied
my whole life...

...and can also be seen on
my reliefs...

...openly or in disguise,...

...that a man stands in front
of a woman...

...and does n't act but makes

a sculpture...

...and you will see on
many reliefs...

...that one figure is looking...

1:09:31 ...and one is acting...

...but basically you always
choose the sculpture?

Yes, I always choose
the sculpture.

Maybe as protection...

...against my own violence...

...a protection against...

...the catastrophe of coming
together...

...or a real catastrophe
of contact.

1:10:02 Maybe I have to assert
myself...

...against the fullness of life...

...which I cannot absorb...

...to which I have to give
an answer.

I admit - and that has
always been...

...my attitude towards life
and has...

...gotten me into enough
trouble.

I admit that I have always felt...

...the stable element most
strongly.

1:10:31 You know that at the moment...

 I'm in a quite hopeless
 situation...

 ...and I'm nearly incapable...

 ...of destracting myself,...

 ...even by reading or sitting
 in a cafe...

 ...to watch the life passing by...

 I just sit motionless in
 my room.

 There is nothing there but...

 ...the floor, the walls, the ceiling...

1:11:00 ...through which the room...

 ...becomes a place of security.

 Normally a room is furnished...

 ...with carpets, cupboards,
 chairs...

 ...tables and many other things...

 ...and the basic things are
 hidden.

 You can distract yourself...

 ...in many ways.

1:11:31 With me this possibility
 is very reduced.

 I keep staring...

 ...at these basic elements...

 ...and that's the best way...

 ...to become slightly lunatic.

 The main problem...

...is contact with the world.

That functions differently
for different people.

1:12:00 In my experience so far
it always...

...functions through a woman.

Through a woman I live with.

If this contact is
endangered...

...so that you stay isolated...

...then this spring of life...

...which is necessary for work
dries out.

You can't just make
sculptures...

...for themselves,
at least I cannot.

1:12:35 There is the danger of
drying out,...

...of the imagination getting
sterile...

...or repeating itself,...

...that it starts lacking...

...vitality and passion...

Maybe I will get into...

...great difficulties with
my work...

...when I get much older.