

## **Perception and Imagination: Masters of the Senses**

**November 16, 2007**

**7:00 PM**

**The Philoctetes Center**

**Levy: Francis Levy**  
**Nersessian: Edward Nersessian**  
**Calbi: Greg Calbi**  
**Grojsman: Sophia Grojsman**  
**Mitton: Mark Mitton**  
**Noren: Nils Noren**  
**Pearlstein: Philip Pearlstein**  
**Wilson: Frank Wilson**  
**A: Speaker from audience**

Levy: Good evening, and welcome to Perception and Imagination: Masters of the Senses, who stand before you here tonight. I am now pleased to introduce Mark Mitton. Mark Mitton started doing magic tricks when he was nine years old and never stopped. He was the apprentice to legendary sleight-of-hand master and vaudevillian Slydini, and studied Commedia dell'Arte in Italy, physical comedy with David Shiner, and ancient street performing arts in Japan. Mark is fascinated by using magic and crafts as a way to better understand how we all see the world. As a professional sleight-of-hand artist, he has performed for Benoit Mandelbrot, Roald Hoffmann, Salman Rushdie, Greg Maddux, Sienna Miller, John Mayer, Lil' Kim, and many others. Maybe he can use his sleight of hand to—is Lil' Kim out of prison yet? At festivals in Europe and Asia, at the Olympic Games, in war-torn Liberia, and in hospital wards around New York City. This summer, he taught sleight-of-hand to Stanley Tucci and John Travolta for various film projects, and created magic for the Public Theater production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Central Park. Mark Mitton will moderate this evening's panel and introduce the other panelists. Thank you.

Mitton: Thank you, Francis.

Levy: Also, this is Frank Wilson's book, *The Hand*, which is on sale, and will be available after our panel tonight.

Mitton: Thanks, Francis. Thank you all for coming, and I have to thank all the panelists for being here. It's really exciting. So Francis and Ed and Ellen asked me to put together a panel on perception, and after we discussed this and I had this idea of having various people come, I was working suddenly on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and there's a great quote from Bottom in that, when he wakes up from his dream. He's kind of contemplating how we see the world, and he's so excited, but at the same time he realizes that nobody will understand. If he tries to tell somebody that he fell in love with the Queen of the Fairies, he'd really sound like an ass—which he was. So, anyway, now he says—he misquotes the Bible—"The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen. Man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue not to conceive, nor his heart to report what my dream was." The play's so amazing because, of course, he contemplates

these people that work—from the mechanicals to the royals and the fairies—and he shows the kind of special knowledge that people have who are really connected. The people that we have here have connected to the way we see the world in incredible ways, and each of them has a special relationship with one of the senses, but of course they're all artists and craftsmen, so they use everything.

So, without further ado, I'd like to introduce you to our panel one by one. The general format tonight is they're going to give a five-minute explanation of themselves and what they do, and then we're going to have a discussion, and then afterwards we'll have a question and answer period. Ladies first. We're very, very proud—she is known as a phenomenal nose. Is that a polite word?

Grojsman: Let's think about it.

Mitton: But you do have a lifetime achievement award for very special things. But, without further ado, this is Sophia Grojsman. Please welcome her.

Grojsman: Thank you. I am amazed and amused and surprised that I am here among a very well known group of people, and also very happy to be here. The only thing I can say, for me to be among you and to accomplish what I accomplished, it only could happen in the United States of America, to begin with. Let's face it. I am a Jewish girl, born after the war—World War II, just in case—in Belarus. My parents—my father was an enormous hero during the war, and saved a lot of people from the ghetto. People who he saved basically ended up in the United States and brought us to the United States in 1966. There is still Russian in me, and I am not ashamed of it, because the pure Russians are very nice, good people. The government—everything that is happening right now and was happening after the war—is awful, of course. But I think being an implanted American citizen, I am very proud of being here. I'm very happy to be here, and when I hear somebody complaining about the president or the country, I could kill somebody for that. But you know what? You have to remember one thing: America is the best country in the world, and only in this place could somebody, a little Jew, a small little girl from nowhere, Belarus, a little town that is not even on the map, could get into the industry that is so difficult, basically French, and accomplish something and give something from me, love and affection for other people.

Having said that, a nose is a strange thing. The people who are creating fragrances are called noses. Of course, nose has something to do with it, but it's not the key to being a creator of fragrances. And somebody asked me the other day, "Are you familiar with 2000 ingredients?" I said, "Two thousand ingredients? I never even count ingredients. I don't even know how many ingredients I remember in general." It is an art of connecting or combining something that you smell at the moment. When I walk out from the office and after five or six hours of smelling things and connecting and putting together, I think if somebody passes by, unless it's really something very strong, I will not even be aware of anything. And at one point my ex-husband said to me, "What kind of perfumer are you? Something is burning on the second floor in the kitchen." I will never forget this statement. And I said, "Well, if it's burning and you smell it, go ahead and close this."

But I think the brain has kind of a function that after you walk out from the office it disconnects itself from the smell. And many times I have smelled something on people and I would say to myself, "Oh, what a beautiful fragrance. I have to find out what it is." So I'm running and asking for the name of the fragrance, and it turns out to be one of mine. But what is funny is that after you work in that for so long and you are now doing the next thing, you don't remember it anymore, per se. So that's the other thing about being a nose. Yes, there are people probably who know many more ingredients than I do. And they remember them. But for me the most interesting thing is that you give me what's available, you put it on the shelves, and let me come up with an answer. That's how I work. Or, if I see a movie or I see a special person or I want to give somebody a gift, like I did for my son and my daughter-in-law for their wedding, I created a little something called Petalia. It's kind of a bouquet, a wedding bouquet, and I worked very hard on that. I'm still not finished with it, actually. People have received a sample of it, but I'm still not happy with what I accomplished and I'm going to continue until I feel that I'm done with this. So this is a part of what I am doing. Is there anything else I have to say?

Mitton: I'm sure there is. And we'll come back to that. But thank you very much. The next member of our panel I'd like to introduce you to is Nils Noren, and he's Vice President of the French Culinary Institute. I'm very glad to have you here.

Noren: Thank you for having me. I really appreciate it. It's great to be here. It's great to be here with this group, because all our senses, I think, play an important part in what we do. I mean, food is not only about flavor and taste, even though it's the main thing. But, I mean smell is a huge part of it. Sound is a great part of it. If it doesn't sound right when you bite into food, it's not right. If the carrot doesn't have the crunch, it won't taste as good as you want. So I think all of the senses really play an important part in what we do.

But, anyway, talking about my background a little bit, I was obviously not born here, either. I was born in Sweden, grew up there. But I've cooked in several places around the world, from China to Australia. I've been in Singapore and Europe, of course, a lot. I've been cooking for 20-something years, which probably in normal years would be something like 40 years, because, as most of you know, chefs are kind of crazy. We can't stop what we're doing. A 12-hour day is not enough for us. It's got to be somewhere around 16. That's how we go. So I have worked a lot with food for a long time. Most recently, before I joined the French Culinary Institute, I was executive chef at the restaurant Aquavit here in New York. But I wanted to take a step where I could get a little more intellectual approach to food, where I could share all my experience from cooking food for quite a while, and for so many different regions of the world. First of all, what I started off with a year ago when I got there was to make sure that what we teach today is relevant to what people eat today, because the way we eat always changes. The way we eat today is different from the way we ate only five years ago, and definitely the way we ate ten years ago. So it's important for me, because I always was very opinionated about culinary schools, so it was a perfect gig for me to be able to do something about it. But we need our students to be current or relevant, otherwise they're not going to succeed coming out in the industry today.

So a lot of what I do is I work with new technology, and new technology not in terms of how I can make special effects, how I can make big bubbles with smoke in it or things like that. I'm not interested in that at all. But I'm always interested in how I can take a new technology and make a

more consistent and a better product for the customer. That's what it's all about. If I can find a way to cook that steak better for you as a customer, I'm kind of obliged to go out and find out. So I work a lot with new technology.

I work a lot with new flavors. Another thing that I work with, which kind of goes together, is I work with a lot of cocktails as well, which, first of all, interests me personally. Most cocktails, if you go to a bookstore and you look at cocktail books, they've all been written by bartenders, which is great. I think it's a fantastic profession, don't get me wrong. But I'm trying to work with cocktails from the perspective of a chef, because we think a little differently about flavor than a bartender. If I create a cocktail, for example, I'll never start with a spirit. I'd never say, "I have this great gin, let's create something." I start with, "Okay, I have fennel and I have lemon. What spirit would go best with that?" So it's a little different. Also, since I work with technology, I'm a little crazy. I like all my drinks clear. So I have to figure out a way to make—you know, I would never buy store bought apple juice, for example, and make a cocktail with it. I have nothing against apple juice in the morning, but in my cocktail—

Nersessian: So you don't have cocktails in the morning?

Noren: No, I don't. Even though Swedes are known for it. No, what I do is I fresh press my apples in a juicer, and usually it comes out being a bright green juice, which is lovely. You know, use a little vitamin C in it so it won't turn. But the problem is it's not clear. So I have to go out and find a way to do it, so I go and find out what they use commercially to get their apple juice clear, and I found an enzyme and so on. That's kind of saying what we work with a little bit. And, by the way, I can make a fantastic, clear cocktail that's crystal clear like water, which has apple and bourbon in it. Because a lot of people don't like bourbon because it's brown and it has those oak notes. I can take that away and make it good. We'll talk about it later. Anyway, I don't know why I got into cocktails, but—

Mitton: That sounds great.

Noren: Yeah. But what we're trying to do is, first of all, push the boundaries, find ways to make food better, and also teach our students to build up their flavor library, because that's something you need as a chef. You need to taste things. Real quick, like when you taste something as someone who doesn't work with food, you go, "This is great, this is a fantastic dish." As a chef or a cook, you can't do that. You have to taste it and say, "Oh, this is good, but why is it good? What makes it good?" And that's the difference. And that's what I'm trying to teach the students.

Mitton: Fantastic. Well, thank you very much. Our next panelist is Frank Wilson. There's two guys that kind of introduced me to magic in a whole new context, and the first guy to do that is this man right here, and another guy, Pete Hunt, who's right there, and he's the reason that we're here, because he introduced me to everybody. Thank you, Pete. The first is Frank Wilson, who wrote a book on the hand, and I'll let you tell everybody about yourself.

Wilson: I want to join the chorus of the panelists in thanking you for having us, and also the society for having us here. And all of you people who risked a nice Friday evening coming to this strange assemblage. But I think we could adjourn and go to your place. Very briefly, Mark

and I chatted a bit about what might happen, and he said, “I want you to maybe think about talking about when it was you thought about your own hands.” And it was a very strange thing for me, because I don’t really think of myself as being particularly the sort of hand-oriented person in my own accomplishments. In fact, I was listening to what Sophia and Nils were saying, and realizing that one of the things that probably connects this group is that we are people who connect things. It seems to me that that is probably going to emerge as a theme. We don’t see ourselves as specialists or technicians so much as whatever we got hijacked by early in life that sort of led us down a certain path never moved us away from the thought or the impulse to connect other things. I think that’s probably true of me.

I’m a neurologist, and fairly early in my career, largely because of our daughter, I became interested in music, and I became interested in musical skill. I was watching her get ready for a recital, and she was getting ready to play the Chopin Fantasie-Impromptu, and I’d listened to her for a long time—she’s about 12—and I looked at her hands and I couldn’t see her fingers, and I said, “How the hell does she do that? How does she make her fingers go so fast?” That really was a question that hooked me. And it hooked me pretty much for life. I got stuck with that, and I became interested in music. I became interested in musical skill.

Well, that’s another story, and if you’re interested in it, you can read the book. But I’m going to try to answer the question Mark asked me to think about, which was what about my hands and what’s my connection. Actually, my father was a general practitioner and he kind of liked magic tricks. He wasn’t a real magician. He was the kind of a guy who would buy a trick cigar or something like that and get a few laughs out of that, and it was at that level. I never got above that level.

I got into medicine at some point because I couldn’t think of anything else to do. My first years in medicine actually were in an emergency room. I actually ran an emergency room for several years and, to my amazement, because I was actually terrified of the place. I was really frightened. I think maybe I chose going into an emergency room just to see how long I would last before they dragged me away or I fell apart. But I actually fell in love with it, and the thing that I fell in love with was sewing people up. There must be a seamstress in me somewhere, but sewing people up was really wonderful. When I became a neurologist later, and I don’t want to freak anybody out, but the thing that I found that I loved to do was spinal taps. But let me tell you, and this was a big surprise to me, there was something phenomenal about the act of placing a small needle deep within the body, and you have absolutely nothing to go by except touch. You know when you are right at exactly the right point because of a little funny thing that happens. There’s a sensation that you get. And I was just awfully good at that. I just hoped that there would be opportunities for me to do that. I’m sorry, but that’s the truth.

Now, later on I got interested in music, and then I thought a little bit more about the hand as this remarkable organ, and I got interested in what it is that drives people to spend hours and hours and hours a day trying to gain control over this instrument in order to express something that is deep within them. The first book that I wrote was called *Tone Deaf and All Thumbs*, and it was about how I drove everyone in my family crazy by me, as a 40-year-old, taking piano lessons. I tried to drive everybody out of the house, and I pretty much succeeded. But I did learn something about music at that point, and I came to appreciate that there was something you could do

making a musical sound. I remember playing “The Sunken Cathedral” a little bit, but there was a chord that I heard that made me feel that I was in the room with someone who had thought up that sound, and I bet you that that’s something that happens to you once in a while: you think you’re in the room with somebody who thought up a sound. That’s a great thing.

The last thing in my connection with hands is that I then took care of musicians a lot and I really became very, very interested in what the hand has to do with human life. My last book, *The Hand*, is about what the hand has to do with how people build and construct their lives. I first thought it was about musicians and then I discovered that, but for the school system, it would be everybody. That’s another story.

The last part—sort of the third phase of my life—was when I was working on that book and I met a guy who was a professional hand reader, a palmist. And I had made it my practice when I was getting ready for that book to interview anybody if someone said you should go talk to that person because he’s a good this that or the other. So I met this guy and we talked for a little bit and he said, “Do you mind if I look at your hand?” And I said, “Why not?” And I showed him my hand, and then he said a few things, and then I picked myself up off the floor and I said, “How did you do that?” Anyway, I ended up taking a course from him, and I became—as far as I know, I’m the only neurologist in the country who is a certified hand reader.

Now, it’s very interesting that my last three years of practice I was at Stanford, and I was using hand reading in my practice, and people were sending me patients. I’ll tell you what you should know about this, and they knew this 500 years ago, that if you take someone’s hand and you hold the person’s hand and you say, “This line is about your heart,” they will tell you things that they would never tell you if you asked them if they were having any problems with their sex life. So as a bedside inducement to share feelings and experiences that are closely held and about which the person feels very vulnerable, there’s absolutely nothing like it. That’s a little introduction to me and to the hand.

Mitton: Thank you. Our next panelist is a legend in the music industry, but that’s not how we met. We have mutual friends, Judy Newman and Jeff McGregor, who have an annual holiday party. I’m a gigging magician, and I do all kinds of events, and so I came out to this party a few years ago. Then I got a call from this man who’d been watching me at that party to do their Christmas party. That’s when I found out about Sterling Sound, and that’s when I found out about Greg’s amazing reputation within the industry. Without further ado: Greg Calbi.

Calbi: Thank you. When I met Mark and we discussed what I do, he expressed a tremendous amount of interest. Most people in this room probably don’t know what an unbelievable magician he is, but I’ve seen him keep a room full of people spellbound for an hour, hour and a half, doing magic tricks six inches from your nose and you have no idea what he’s doing, he’s just so incredibly talented. I told him what I do on a day-to-day basis, what I’ve been doing basically my whole adult life, and he’s like, “Wow, that’s really interesting!” I said, “What the hell’s so interesting about it?” That’s what I do at work, you know? It just didn’t seem all that fascinating to me that it would be interesting to someone outside of my business, because what I do, basically, is I’m a recording engineer. I’m a specific type of recording engineer called a mastering engineer. So my clients are other recording engineers and other producers and artists.

I'm kind of the intermediary between the artist—the artist, meaning the performer—and the technician or the engineer, and the audience, all you folks who listen to music out in the world.

Unfortunately I'm not as adept at speaking to a group as the other panelists have been so far, so I've prepared a little something I'd like to read to you guys that will describe what I do, and excuse me for having to read it, but I couldn't rehearse.

One of the most interesting challenges I've had in my 35-year career as an audio engineer has been to look inward and try to put into words just what it is I do, or rather, what my ears and my brain and my imagination do as I listen to master recordings and try to figure out how to enhance them. I work with what is called the master, the last thing that the creative group can do before it gets to the audience. So that's how I make my living. People come to our studio from every part of the globe so that we can tell them how they have failed. And we present them a better version of their work than they could have done. I'm at one level a judge of a recording. Has it reached its potential? Does it have any glaring weaknesses? Remember that when I listen to a recording, the performance is done, and the mix, which includes all the effects, has been completed. As I sit and savor that recording in my studio, a simple judgment is made: good or bad. At that point I instantly inherit responsibility for its quality. For I, with the approval of my client, will determine how it will sound for the rest of the world.

On the next level I must develop a technical strategy using my ears and my gear to take this recording to the next level. So you all never really hear what they do prior to when it gets to a mastering engineer, and this is why we have people come from all over the world, because it is so difficult to get a really, truly great representation of sound because of the technical factors—the financial pressures, the temperament of artists, the communication between all the creative elements. Ninety-five percent of the recordings that we get really do need some help. And it's a very strange thing that there are probably ten guys in the country who've been doing the job for most of the records that have come out in the last 30 years. A lot of times, young people come up to me and say, "How can I break into your business?" I say, "You have to wait till somebody dies." I mean, it's a very peculiar little part of the music business—mastering engineer—and because I work on basically one project a day, I get to do like 200 records a year. I've done almost 7,000 records. So my name gets on these records. People work for a year on a record, they get one little name on it. I work for a day on it, and I get my name on it. So it's a little bit unfair, but I'll accept it. It works for me.

So, how did I come to this? I neither write nor perform music, nor do I create any of the dazzling special effects found in modern recording. I simply take all those elements and recreate them in a more flattering, exciting, and beautiful form. In effect, I re-imagine them. I can only try to theorize as to why I'm suited for this job in terms of my perceptual apparatus. I grew up in an Italian family in which many of the conversations were in a language I did not understand. It was only the sounds which conveyed any meaning to me in a most abstract way. To this day I find soothing comfort in hearing that language spoken, and I'm still trying to learn it, how to speak it, after studying it for 35 years.

As a former alter boy, the many hours spent in Latin mass in the 50s and early 60s had the same abstract emotional power. These sounds, however, instilled more fear than delight, as any

Catholics in the room will remember. At the age of ten, I was taken by a friend's parents to the Leonard Bernstein Young People's Concert, and although I don't remember the theater where it was held, or the program that was performed that day, what I do remember changed my life forever. It was the sound of the orchestra that was pure magic: the size, the depth, and the majesty of it. I can actually still feel its reverberations in my brain. I believe that it gave me the ability to imagine what I beautiful sound could be. I really do believe that if I didn't go to that concert that particular day, I wouldn't have developed this emotional draw to beautiful sound.

How do I transpose recorded sound into a better version of itself? My ears work with the following elements: balance—does the recording have a tone which matches the intent of the music? Does the music project from the speaker in full frequency range? Are the lows and the highs enough? Is it wide enough? Is it deep enough? I also deal in the shape of the sound. As it comes out from the speakers, it's almost like creating a sculpture. Now, you probably don't think of it as a sculpture, except if you sit with headphones every once in a while—headphones now are destroying the ears of an entire generation or two—but in those headphones you do hear a little extra depth and width and everything. Well, I try to create that same feeling just from two speakers. And it's something that most of the guys in my trade don't really think of that way, but I always think of it as a sculptural kind of a building, and a way to kind of make the music separate—to me, the more it separates and the more you can hear the individual qualities of the instruments, the more each of those musicians has an emotional impact on you. So it's an abstraction in a way, but, again, it has to be transformed—because we're dealing with electronic equipment.

The other thing I do is I look at the recording almost as the recording engineer would, and I'm listening to the vocalist, and I have to find something in the timber of that vocalist that kind of matches what the song is trying to do. So there's a musical element there, where as you listen to the music, if the singer—K.D. Lang, for example, has a very kind of baritone, resonant voice. If she wasn't recorded in the best possible way, I have to find that frequency in K.D. Lang's voice which brings out the emotion that she actually sings with. We've all heard recordings of Sinatra. Sometimes you hear Sinatra live, later in his career, and the phrasing is the same, the song is the same, but it's all raspy and you don't have that thing. But you get Sinatra in the early '60s and late '50s, where you hear his chest, you hear the depth of his chest, and all of a sudden, those emotions in those beautiful songs—*In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning*—all of a sudden it has a completely different meaning. It's all about getting that nuance. So I have to kind of listen to that music, figure out what they were trying to do, and then see if there's something that I can do that they haven't done before they brought it to me.

The greatest thing that can happen is if a really talented recording engineer calls me up and says, "It sounds so much better now. I don't know what you did." They always say the same thing: "I don't know what you did, but it sounds better." And that's basically what I'm out there doing. I'm taking professionals' work, trying to understand the intent of the music, and just moving it to the next direction. And it's not all peaches and cream. Not everybody is K.D. Lang, not every singer is Frank Sinatra. But you'd be surprised. A lot of times, if you can have an honest conversation with the client about what they were trying to do with their music, you do learn a little bit about what they were trying to do, and that's kind of the job I'm in. It's kind of taking the emotion and putting it into the technical part, and the funny thing is, after 35 years of doing



this, I know very little about electronics. My tech guys hate me, because I can't describe exactly what's wrong, but something's wrong. But people have told me that because I don't know about the theory about the equipment, that I use my ears. And when I make excuses to people, they say, "Don't worry about it. You use your ears." My brain doesn't get in the way of my hearing. So I have a little bit more, but we have plenty of time to discuss afterwards. Thank you.

Mitton: Thank you. Great. So, everybody who moved to New York from somewhere else all have little angels that appear now and then to take care of you when you need it, and my angel is right over here, and her name is Julia Pearlstein. We actually met in Commedia dell'Arte school when I was trying to figure out a larger movement vocabulary to understand my magic teacher. But, at the time, I didn't know that she had an amazing father, and over the years we got to know each other, and his name is Philip Pearlstein, and he's an amazing painter.

Pearlstein: Thank you all for setting this up. This location is very odd to me, because when my wife and I were first married we lived about two blocks away from here, and I was in World War II and I had time on the GI Bill, and I found myself enrolled, about four blocks away from here, at NYU Institute of Fine Arts, to study art history. They don't do artwork. Art historians are concerned about the meaning of the art that's been done. At the time, the man who was the biggest person at the Institute of Fine Arts was named Erwin Panofsky, who had come to the United States early in the 1930s. He's the man who more or less set up modern art history. He gave a lecture, like in 1912, just before World War I, that defined the whole field, saying that you cannot understand a work of art unless you study the society that produced it. And, conversely, you cannot understand the society without studying the art. Which means you didn't even have to look at the art. You just had to know the subject. Well, it took me five years to get the MA. I was painting during that time, very influenced by the abstract expressionists, and I was also doing graphic design. I became part of a co-op gallery downtown, and everybody in the gallery was working in their own style, and the whole neighborhood was filled with young artists, old artists, and so forth. This was—the center was 10<sup>th</sup> Street, between Avenues Four and Three. They were tearing down the elevated train. What did you call it?

A: The El.

Pearlstein: The El, at the time. It was a very exciting world. Ideas dominated. The ideas had to do with style, how a work of art was done. In fact, abstract expressionism was nothing more than that. It was, when you looked at the painting, you read how the artist had created it. You saw all the brush marks, where they went, what overlapped, what had been scraped away and added. It was called 'action painting,' really, by the artists. And that's how I was working. But at the Institute I did my thesis on the work of an artist named Francis Picabia, who started Dada and played around with all kinds of symbols. He used machine shapes very often to look as if they were acting out something. What they were acting out was secret, but if you could interpret it, it would become funny. He had a very close friend, whose name was Marcel Duchamp. But the basic ideas came from Francis Picabia. Duchamp was a number of years younger and was Picabia's follower. But Duchamp did it better. And more elegantly.

At any rate, they were doing something that I recognized, as I studied it, belonged to an early part of the century and really had nothing to do with my life. The more I read about modern art,

which at that point, in 1951-52, was already about 70 years old, the more I realized it had nothing to do with me. I had adopted this action painting technique from other people, and I felt it didn't belong to me, either. I had grown up drawing realistically, and trying to figure out how to paint realistically, and I had gone through undergraduate school painting and drawing more or less realistically, until I got involved with abstraction. Then I realized all of it belonged to other people, but if I went back to realism and using my eyes, maybe I could come up with something—you know, realism had been abandoned at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Maybe I could find something new.

At the same time—well, not at the same time, but several years later—I got a job at *Life* magazine doing layouts. I played around with photographs all day long, and different sizes, and you would crop them in different ways. The stories kept getting rewritten with different emphasis, and the way you cropped the photographs and arranged them on the page all had different meanings. Somehow that fit into the Panofsky symbolist kind of idea. I was mostly interested in what got left off, what was thrown away from the photograph. At the time I was still doing abstraction and abstract expressionist kind of painting. But I had an eye exam as part of my—when they employed me they sent me for a complete physical. So I had my eyes examined for the first time, really, since I was a kid. I was now about 35 years old. You know, they change these lenses, and suddenly the doctor put in a pair of lenses and I could see clearly. So I said, “I’ll take those.” And I asked him, “How come all this time I’ve had my eyes looked at, including the time in the army—how come nobody ever gave me a good prescription?” He said, “Well doctors during the ‘20s, ‘30s and ‘40s under-prescribed. They thought their patients would be much happier not seeing so clearly.” I guess they were right. But, at any rate, it changed me. I couldn’t stand looking at impressionist paintings anymore. I still have difficulty. I fell in love with realism, with using my eyes to see as clearly as I could. I became a realist painter. But I had to make up the manner in which I worked. It developed in a totally unconventional way. I’ll stop there.

Mitton: Thank you very much. So I asked a bunch of my artist and craftsman friends for questions for all of you to discuss, and one that kept coming up was a really simple question: when do you know it’s right? There’s also a connection in that moment of inspiration, so that’s really amazing, the moment that you saw with the new prescription and the moment that you heard with that orchestra.

Calbi: To me, in hearing, it’s never right. In my home environment I have a stereo system which we kind of call mid-fi, which is like they’re good but they’re not great, and you can listen to the music and enjoy it and not break it down into its parts. But in my studio, where I can really try to draw something forward, it’s never right. It’s almost like I have a fantasy of what it should sound like when I hear it, and I keep trying to push it to that fantasy sound, and I push it and push it and do everything I can, and at some point the bell rings and I just don’t have enough time, and it’s just never—you know, sometimes I think that that’s what makes me able to do the job. If any of you were to come and watch me work—I mean I’ve brought so many people to the studio, and after like five minutes they’re like, “Oh my God, this is so boring. Is anybody singing here? Is there a drummer?” No, it’s just me listening over and over again to the same thing. But what I’m trying to do, it never does get there. I don’t know if anybody has a similar—maybe in the food thing, you always want it to be just a little bit better.

Noren: It is, and for me when I work with food, you know, when you start off with food, yes, you have to taste things to be able to figure out what's going to work together. But as I mentioned before, you build your flavor library, so when I create dishes, I create them in my head, and usually I wake up in the middle of the night and it's like, "Oh, this is what I have to do." And then you go back to the kitchen and try to recreate it, because I know up here exactly how I want it to taste—

Mitton: And you do that in the middle of the night sometimes?

Noren: Yeah, in the middle of the night. Or it can be I sit down and I watch TV, which rarely happens, but it's like, "Oh, this is what I want to do, and these are the flavors." And up here I know exactly what they're going to taste like, but to be able to recreate that in the kitchen is very hard. You can get very close, but it's almost impossible to get exactly there.

Calbi: Now, do you ever have a situation where you think it's great, but then one of your other guys who do what you do is there, and then you get this feeling, if you're being judged at the same time by a peer, that maybe it's not quite as good as you thought it was?

Noren: Yeah, I don't really care about that, actually. No, to be honest, I really don't. But obviously sometimes I'm not always right, either. You know, I think about flavor combinations and they don't work as well as I thought they would. But most of the time it's like the more I do this, the more accurate I become.

Mitton: And you're nodding a lot.

Grojsman: I'm listening to all this and seeing a lot of things that happen to me also. As you are looking for perfect chords in music, I think basically what I am doing is very connected to the kind of perfect combination of chemicals. And, yes, I get up in the middle of the night because I have an idea and I wrote it on a piece of paper, and I thought I was the only crazy one.

Noren: You're not.

Grojsman: I also understand that you are not satisfied with certain things. I understand that feeling also. The reason for that is that the day that you're going to feel that you're perfect and you've done all you can, you might as well stop doing it, because I think only the satisfaction or the sense of becoming perfect, for a fragrance or a flavor or whatever it is, becoming perfect is what keeps you going and keeps you discovering newer accords and newer things. Also, when you were talking about being minimalistic in paintings and stuff like that, what made me angry when I went and saw Picasso's paintings—I mean in the beginning when he was doing realistic work, it was wonderful. Then I had seen a lot of other things, and then I got annoyed with him when he started—when he is in love with the woman, even if she looks like a stone, it's a better looking stone. But then a little bit later, two, three years later it becomes an ugly, ugly stone, and I said, "This guy is terrible." As a female, and as a perfumer who does feminine fragrances, obviously, which I try always to perfect, I want a woman, when she puts on the fragrance, to feel, "I am wonderful. I am a woman. I am feminine, and I can do it. I can do anything." Right?

But I realized when I saw “Guernica,” it was unbelievable. I mean it left an enormous kind of feeling on me of pain and sorrow and God knows what. And it was very, very simple but yet expressive.

So that made me think that everything can be made simple, but also leave a big, big memory in your brain. When I came back I said, “I am going to show you.” Yes, he painted the bull as is, and then when he minimized the bull all you could see are two elements, and everybody knows what I’m talking about. As a lady I’m not going to repeat it. But then I said when I back into the office, I said, “I’m going to make something wonderful,” and I started a note called “Cleavage.” I started putting the ingredients in such a way that they would be feminine, skin-like, somewhat soft and, in a way, maybe wet. I was trying to make that accord in a specific way. After I made that, and I think I personally showed it to a couple of people and everybody criticized. If you show someone unfinished product, they can’t figure that out, so it doesn’t matter. So this one is saying, “This is wrong,” and that one is saying, “That is wrong.” They don’t know what I am doing anyway. I’m out to make a cleavage smell, period. So I was listening, but I wasn’t listening. I don’t listen too much. I hear somebody saying to me, “This does smell terrible,” and I will ask, “What specifically are you talking about? If you think it’s terrible, you should know what it is that is bothering you. If you can’t describe it, then you don’t know what you’re smelling.” Basically, that’s how I react to that. But, I do take it into consideration. I cannot have anybody controlling me until I make something that I feel I have to make. Then it doesn’t matter anymore. You love it? Fine. You don’t love it? That’s fine, too. I make it for me. So with the Cleavage, it ended up being an accord that I used in two, probably most well known of my perfumes. One of them was Eternity, and the other one became Tresor. And the cleavage is there.

Mitton: Always popular.

Grojsman: But they were asking me, how did you make it, what’s important, what is not important? And when do you become satisfied? Like I said once before, sometimes when I’m finishing something, and I have a euphoria feeling when I smell it, and I think, “Oh my God, this is it.” But with Eternity I had an unbelievable story—this is a little bit comical, but also it really left kind of an unbelievable memory for me. I was in the office until nine in the evening. Macy’s has sales until eleven, so I never have time to walk out, and I wanted to pick up a couple of gifts I needed. As I’m walking around there is a black woman near me and I said to myself, “My God, she smells like heaven on earth: feminine, beautiful. What is it?” And I’m running around trying to catch her and ask her what she was wearing. She disappeared somewhere. She probably went into the dressing room and I could never find her. And then I go a floor down and I bump into her, and I said, “It’s wonderful that I caught you again.” I said, “You have the most fabulous fragrance. What is it that you’re wearing?” She said, “I’m wearing nothing. It’s you who smells.” I stood there, and I had forgotten that during all this stuff during the day, as I’m making final samples, I usually put it on the skin, because it’s not the same on the blotter—we call them blotters, the papers—as it is on the skin. So what had happened to me is that one of the experiments was all the way up here, and obviously I smelled it. And I said, “Where do you smell it?” And she says to me, “Let me see. It’s right here.” I almost passed out. Now I said I have to get quickly home and tomorrow morning I better get in the office and find this sample, because it was one of these 15 or 20 experiments that I had on both arms. I have a tendency—I’m very sloppy that way. I’m sloppy meaning I put a bottle here or I put a label on

the wrong bottle. Especially when I was there like at nine in the evening and I'm trying to finish it myself.

By the way, I have an assistant who is always compounding it, but just like you I have to stand up and the last drops have to be made by my hands. People are telling me, "Oh, they are doing perfume combinations on the computer." I don't believe in that. I can put a formula on the computer after it's done, but thinking and feeling it on the computer, this is baloney. I mean that's not for me an artist. This is a b.s. artist, who takes the piece of one formula, says they can now analyze the formulas very easily and get 90% of it. So they have a piece of the formula, let's say, of one perfume and a piece of the other. They may pull them together and call the concoction something, whatever. This is for me the perfumery by numbers. If you are an artist and you have to make it from inside and put your soul into it, it's a different story.

So I run into the office at seven in the morning. I never was at the office at seven in the morning. And everybody was questioning, "What are you doing so early?" I said, "I have to find something." I went through all the experiments, and needless to say I found the experiment. You won't believe how happy I was that I found it. And obviously now I had to go and find my nose, because I write this way and that way. You can never figure it out, except my assistant sometimes, or me. I had to find this exact formula, where Cleavage was of course there and everything was there. Finally I picked up the phone and I said to someone, "You know, I think I have something." And they usually don't hear it from me until I'm very, very sure. The reason I was so sure and happy about it is because, not knowing that it was something I did, I was so in love with it immediately, so affected by it, that I couldn't do anything wrong with it. So I'm running there, I picked up the sample, I found the formula, I put the formula on the machine and I am picking up the phone and I am saying to people who are involved—we have 1,000 people controlling what you're doing anyway, to begin with—and I said, "I think I've got it. I've got it and I'm not touching it anymore. I'm not touching it anymore." "What do you mean you're not touching it? We didn't smell it yet." I said, "Listen to me. Take this sample. That's it."

So we made the sample the scent, and we got a fantastic response to that. We were waiting a little bit until Calvin Klein called back. Then we sit down, and Calvin Klein was talking to me about this and that, and he wasn't sure, and he wanted to do something else. And I said, "Maybe I'm going to get fired or maybe you're never going to take it, but I'll tell you, I have a piece of gold in my hands. Whether you're going to go with this or not, this is how I feel." And I said to myself, as I'm walking out and there is one of the sales representatives from the company, "By the time I get to the company I'll probably be fired." But nothing happened. It took about two weeks until they finally gave an approval. It came in at about seven in the evening, I think, the day before Christmas, that they announced it, and I was running around like a chicken without a head. I said, "I finally got it right!" It's euphoria, euphoria that I can't explain.

Mitton: That's a great example.

Grojsman: That's right. And it made a lot of money. I think he told me when they introduced it, first scent strips, and then when they were introducing the fragrance officially he said, "I can't believe this. From scent strips in two weeks we made \$250,000." What do I know about that? I didn't even pay attention to that. I didn't even know how much money the fragrances were making.

Mitton: Wow.

Grojsman: Until recently, about a couple of years ago, I didn't even know.

Mitton: Yes?

Wilson: Everybody knows who Oliver Sacks is, and there's another neurologist who's very interested in sort of unusual phenomenology of the nervous system whose name is Ramachandran. He's sort of the extroverted Oliver. He wrote a paper that pertains to this discussion I think in a very interesting way, in which he described a mysterious disorder that psychiatrists know a lot about called the Capgras Syndrome. The Capgras Syndrome, simply stated, is when someone encounters a person who's very close to them and with whom they have a strong emotional connection, and judge the person to be an imposter. The usual circumstance is in the hospital after a head injury or something like that. So this lady comes in and she spends time with a person, and the family's around, and then the family leaves and the patient says to the doctor, "That woman who was wearing my mother's clothing, who was she?" And the doctor says, "Well, that was your mother." And he says, "No, no. She's wearing my mother's clothing and she talks like my mother, but that's not my mother." There have been a lot of theories about this, and Ramachandran explored an idea that there was a fundamental judgment that had to be made after one was confronted with a series of, let's say, perceptions, and that judgment was: this is real, this is authentic, this is the real item. And Ramachandran thinks that there might be a reason why someone would have all the essential data but would fail to trigger the reaction that it was really the authentic thing.

Now, no reason to go into all of the neurology, but I want to connect this to the discussion by saying I was telling this story to a friend of mine who teaches at Julliard, and she has many students who are highly talented, and she said, "The imposter thing, it's really interesting. Let me tell you a version of that with some of our most talented students. They come, they can play anything, and we see something that isn't quite right, and we'll correct them. And we'll say, 'Look, this is not exactly the way that the accepted interpretation is.' And the students, of course, are very fast. They learn how to do it and they get it right." And she says, "Then they never play it again." And the reason they don't play it again is because, "It's not me."

Now, the point I want to make that I think connects to this discussion is that in talking about when you know it's right, I think the essential journey that every artist is on is one by which they discover who they personally are. We use language like "the soul," we use language like there's "something ineffable" about it, and I believe that what we're really discussing is that a lifetime of working at something which you are drawn to, for reasons that you can never explain, but leads you to the experience in which you say, "I got it," is in some way tied up with how an identity is created, in the sense that one is working with materials that one enjoys, one is developing skills that challenge one, and then somehow or other one finds that this is who he or she is. This is the moment at which a painter signs the painting and says, "It's now ready for the world." I'm sort of saying this now because—I made a little jab at the educational system a little bit earlier—but I believe that one of the things that is desperately needed in educational experiences for young children is some experience in which consistently they are allowed to

apply their own judgment to their own work. We have now a highly antithetical, anti-child system that is constantly imposing on them someone else's judgment, so they never learn how to make that statement, "It's right." But I think every kid has the opportunity to declare themselves their own artistic sensibility, and it isn't just that I make these objects, but I am making myself in the process, this is really who I am.

Pearlstein: Well, in the visual, in painting, in sculpture, unfinished has become a style. From Michelangelo's unfinished carvings of slaves and so on, it becomes very valid. Rodin takes up the whole unfinished business. And in New York City we have Willem De Kooning as the great example of someone who never finished a painting when he was really a master. But that was part of the style, the unfinished. Nothing could be finished. There was this discussion group of all these artists that met every Friday night, for years, and they discussed how they worked and so forth, and all sorts of philosophic things. And existentialism at that time, in the 1950s, was the great philosophic thing. And Giacometti came to town, or was in some show at the Museum of Modern Art, and he was declared the master of the visual equivalent of existential thinking. Well, for me the interesting thing was that when De Kooning got Alzheimer's disease relatively late in life, he did these great big paintings with this very positive line just moving around, very much like these squiggles. But they're finished, they're positive. There's no hesitation. But his mind was gone.

Anyway, in my own work in the 1950s when I developed into realism, it partly was a rejection of the idea of the unfinished. I wanted to finish everything. But back then you were regarded with distrust if you finished everything. You had to have doubt. If the painting looked too finished, the rule was you destroy it, start over. There was a TV program on the artist Phillip Guston done during the 1950s at the height of all this, and he does this very elaborate abstract expressionist but very beautiful painting, and then he says it's too perfect, and he scrapes it all off and starts over. It was a perfect demonstration of this idea of existentialism. You cannot be right. If you are, you're being phony. But it became a style.

Mitton: So where do you think your desire to complete things came from?

Pearlstein: Well, partly from rebelling against that idea. At one point I announced that existentialism is dead. And I gave it a date.

Grojsman: I want to pick up something, because I'm a perfumer, and I came up with a certain fragrance—I called it, let's say, La Femme, which means 'the female.' Looking at what is going on today, that most of the fragrances are, you know, fresh, fresh, fresh, some are smell like toilet bowl cleaners. Some are awful, and sometimes it is true, because like you were saying, the theory is you have to make something different. Fresh, fresh, fresh, I mean fresh what? Fresh what? What do you call fresh? Anyway, so I did make something and showed it. Each time I show to the new generation, the young people say: old-fashioned, too rosy, old-fashioned, too rosy. We're talking about two years ago. All of the sudden, a couple of days ago I get a call: "We want to have one of your fragrances that is on the market already 25 years, we want to have a rose added." I said, "A year ago it was old-fashioned. What's going on here?" "Oh, well, we sat down and we looked at all the fragrances that last for 20, 25 years and even make money." Those so-called fresh and anti-bacterials, whatever I call it, they last on the market only one year. So

who is making money? Nobody. It's funny, I saw somebody torturing one of the things that they made by adding something like that, and I said, "I will never do that." You're not going to make me do it, period. I'll stand up to it, and whatever I can I'll do, but you will not tell me how to add this awful ingredient to my formula. And I refused. I really refused.

Now, today, a couple of days ago when I heard that statement—"Can you add a rose to one of your fragrances"—I looked at that and I said, "No." It was rosy a year and a half ago. What happened between a year and a half and today? "Well, we studied all the fragrances that are on the market for 15, 20 years, and we really learned something," because I mentioned it a couple of times. You know, I'm a big mouth to begin with. So I said, "If you really want to make money, why is it you came out with something yesterday, you let it sit there for two years, and the third year you're doing flankers? Why are you doing this? Why are you destroying your own piece, that didn't even have a chance to become anything yet? People are not familiar with that yet."

So somebody started thinking about it. They forget that you punch in the computer and look at the numbers. I'll tell you something interesting. If you look at the fashion today, paintings, everything else, we're coming back to give the artist the possibility to do something. When I have new students come in, the first thing I do for them is I give them ten ingredients, their favorite ingredients. I tell them, "Do something that you want to do?" "Well, I don't know." I say, "Don't look at me and don't be afraid of me. Whatever you make is going to be fine with me. The only thing I'm going to do, and you're going to tell me what you're trying to accomplish, and I might, just because I have experience, I might help you to get there faster. But I don't want you to take my formulas. I don't want you to take my things. I want you to have your own identity. Only then you're going to be happy with that." And you know what? They love me for that. Most of them, when they are going through the school and stuff like that, the last month or something when they're walking out from that school that we have, they all want to spend time with me. Because I let them be who they want to be. I think we always, with every piece of art, let people be who they want to be. Let's try to find the perfection. We'll never find perfection. We're always going to be looking for it. But people who are dedicated to that, let's teach our young people to do what they like to do. Let's give them a chance.

Mitton: Well this brings up a great area, You've just made this big shift to teaching, from being at Aquavit most recently, and then joining the French Culinary Institute. So what did you want to do with your students there?

Noren: First of all, why did I want to go into teaching? As I said, I've been very opinionated. I'm always opinionated, I think. But also, when you work in one kitchen you maybe have 30 cooks coming through in a year. Here I have an opportunity to touch 1200 students. But what you want to do is, first of all, you've got to give them the right tools to be successful to create something, and that's where it starts. As I said, when you start off a culinary career, it's very hard starting off being creative. Yes, you might be able to create some flavors, but the meat is probably going to be really overcooked and the sauce is going to be too reduced and it's not going to have the right texture. There are so many elements that go into food; it's not only the flavor. Yes, the flavor is the most important thing, but the second most important thing, I think, is texture. Then you've got to play with temperatures and, much as you said, when we create it's also like sculpting. You've got to start off with one flavor that hits you first. Then there's another flavor



that comes after. Then you've got to do the balance between the sweetness, the sourness, the saltiness. You've got to add umami, which is something that we recently discovered that we actually have receptors on our tongue to actually perceive. So there are so many things that go in, but, again, what do you want to start with? Give them the right tools, make sure that you keep them interested and curious and wanting to learn more, and that's how we start.

Grojsman: The same way, you're giving the ingredients and telling them to try to do what they want to do.

Noren: Yeah. But also, as I said, I need to give them the tools. There's so much involved in cooking, like with heat, how is that going to affect your ingredients? You know, you put something in an oven and there is heat transferred through the air, which is very different than if you put something in a liquid, because the heat transfer in a liquid is much better. You know, it's like you said, you can put your hand into a 500-degree oven without burning it. If you could get water to 500 degrees your skin would be gone right away. So it's like understanding what the heat transfer will do, the pressure, if you do something in pressure or not. It's really complex. So you have to give them that tool even to be able to start being creative.

Mitton: We just call it the rules. We have to, because I guess these are all very technical games that people are involved with. Which reminds me, Greg has brought some samples—is this a good time?

Calbi: Yeah, I just want to talk a little more. I just have a question for you. Taste is a very—I guess all these senses we learn from childhood. I mean, to me, there's a tremendous element of nostalgia with taste.

Noren: Yeah.

Calbi: And I'm sure what tastes good to maybe a Swede, to the Japanese wouldn't taste as good, or whatever. Do you find sometimes that you have to take this into account, or do you create for your own taste, or do you create for a market?

Noren: Both. I have to create it for my taste, because if I didn't like it, I couldn't do it. I couldn't serve something just because I think this is what my customers want. But then you adjust it, obviously. It's interestingly, actually, Swedish cuisine and Japanese cuisine are very similar in the way we build flavor. It's kind of very subtle, but we would use more sweetness than we would use here in America, for example. American flavor is bolder. You have to go a little further with your flavors. Like, for example, if I add fennel seeds to something, I probably have to add a little more here, whereas if I were cooking in Japan they would probably think, "Wow, this is too strong." So, yes, you have to adapt it to the customer, but also it has to be something that you feel good about, that you feel is right.

Calbi: Is there a food that you can't relate to at all, a restaurant that you would never go to, or a certain school of cuisine?

Noren: No, not really. I mean there is food that I don't like—that's more ingredients. Like, for example, I cannot stand bell peppers. Okay, I could eat the raw piece of bell pepper and it wouldn't be so terrible. But the problem is that's a flavor that will stay with you for the whole meal. So if I have an appetizer with bell pepper, my vanilla ice cream at the end is going to taste like bell pepper. And there are certain other ingredients that I have a hard time with in terms of texture. Like, for example, eggplant that is not cooked right, that is too raw, first of all has a little hay flavor, which I don't appreciate as much, but the texture is so wrong I can't get over it.

Wilson: Mark, how do you know when a trick really is working? Is it just because it's sleight-of-hand and you're making a person surprised? Is there some moment in which a trick becomes—

Mitton: Well, I mean this is—it's a direct feedback loop. As a kid, if you're doing tricks for people, then they'll be nice to you. But even then it's like, "Oh, I've got them by now," because actually with magic it just kicks people into a visceral response. So if you have a visceral response, it's probably like listening or seeing the right thing or smelling the right thing. If you get this emotional reaction, people are not in control. They just react. And then you know it's right. So it's kind of simple.

Wilson: So you're working off your audience all the time, where you're creating tricks, or the pacing for the trick. You're working with the reaction. If you practice by yourself, do you ever think you have something great, and then you do it in front of people and it's like you change the pacing?

Mitton: Completely. Like last night I was working in Chicago, and it was a marketing conference with very, very wonderful people, and I heard that there was going to be lots of mojitos around. And everyone was going to be really happy. But actually they really were. It was like a really amazing audience, and so the show kind of turned into a party. For a more conservative group it would have to be much more linear, much more presentational, maybe some historical information. But if it's just a raucous thing going on, then you can kind of join that rhythm. And, actually, if you ignore that rhythm, that's when the danger starts. So I guess for all of us, listening to your audience and understanding them is key.

Wilson: But are there tricks you find as base and phony, lesser tricks, tricks that are not of the high quality, lesser combinations of tricks where you would say, this is not real magic?

Mitton: Sure. Yeah. Because the things that I'm attracted to allow me to play with my audience. It's probably from studying *Commedia dell'Arte* and looking at the whole thing as kind of a music that's played interactively with your audience. So if there's like a presentational trick and you push a button and something happens, I'm not as attracted to it. Although that doesn't mean I'm not fascinated by it. Like we just went to L.A. last week to see an amazing trick from 1905 that was done over on Remsen Street in Brooklyn Heights, and 200 nerdy magicians from all over the world flew in just to see this one old trick, because it was famous for fooling magicians between around 1910 to 1934. And you could only see it once.

Wilson: What was the trick? What was the concept of the trick?

Mitton: It's called Dr. Hooker's Rising Cards, and it was a guy, he's the man who discovered the sugar beet, the beet sugar industry in America, an English chemist, and his hobby was magic. He saw it in Maskelyne's Egyptian Hall Theater in London when he was a kid, and he couldn't stop. He retired at like 52. And he and his master craftsman from his laboratory worked as his carriage house to create this impossible trick just to fool magicians. And it's great. Basically the trick is cards rise up out of a deck of cards. But, basically, you shuffle the cards, you give back the deck, they're put in a little holder—and it can be your deck, and you can sign the cards—and you ask for the card and it comes rising up out of the deck. And there's also a bear's head involved, and a bear's head floats around and starts talking. It's completely surreal. It's amazing. I sound crazy, right?

Wilson: Mark, you and I have had some conversations about performance and the similarities between what we do. I have a younger sister who works in the theater business, and she once suggested to me that I should think about my exam room as being a performance space, and to think about what it was that was going on between me and my patients. And I'm thinking about what's happening in kitchens now, which is that the chef is now on stage, and, in fact, that raises a really, really interesting, provocative point, which is that while we're gathering information, the way we gather information communicates to people that we're interested in them, that we're showing them something, that there is a kind of confidence in what we're doing based upon the opportunity to sort of witness us at work.

Now, I had an opportunity to work with young medical students who come with PhDs in molecular biology and genetics and so forth, and one of the things that I've learned is that they can go in and examine a patient, take a history and come out in three minutes and they have the right answer. But they really have had no impact except to make the patient very angry that the time was wasted. I have people tell me that the doctor sits at the desk and he looks at a computer screen, and he types stuff in the keyboard. There's a lot of money paid in this country, and we have a lot of unhappy people because somehow or other the contact between the patient and the doctor seems somehow or other to be falling under the harrow of technology. And I think it's a very, very big problem. I've heard musicians talk about music being different because they've got equipment that does stuff, and I'm sure that the guys in kitchens don't worry that you've got an automatic machine that whips potatoes, but I do think that there is an issue here about the situation when you're gathering information, how you're communicating to another person about whom you're gathering information, and the significance that that has on what you actually achieve together.

That sounds like a speech, but it's really a question. I think that perhaps in sort of classic healing that the doctor's touch—everybody will be bored if you talk about the healing touch and contact, but I think there is something about touch specifically in medicine that's really very important. I remember a story I'll give very quickly about a veterinarian who was a patient of mine at Stanford who had Parkinson's disease. He said something to me that I thought was really quite profound, that in his work as a veterinarian, as soon as he became symptomatic with Parkinson's, which meant that his movements were slowed down, he lost the ability to read the emotional state of the animal that he was sitting with. He would have a dog, or some other animal, and even though he had no sensory deficit, he could no longer move with the animal and could no longer read actually what they were doing, and he felt that the loss of that physical contact with the

animal had made him unable any longer to function as a veterinarian. He said for the first time in his career he got bitten by a dog. I don't know what that means, but I really, I feel kind of hungry to get people talking a little bit about not just us as sort of experts, but rather how we stay connected with the people that we're dealing with, and with the materials and how that fulfills us. Because I also happen to think that these young doctors are going to be terribly miserable when they get older, when they have no stories to tell.

Grojsman: Well I've spent two and a half years now with my father in the hospital on a daily basis, and I learned one thing. Most of the times, for some reason I think anybody who is an artist, actually, needs to have a soul also. And I agree with you, if the doctor comes in and out, the patient is not getting better, no matter how many medicines they give them. I saw also in some cases where a doctor is more a human being, maybe not as knowledgeable, but accomplished a lot more. I saw a reaction in my father to that same thing. So when I was with him when he was there, if somebody was there by himself and not attended, I would go and talk and I would feed them and this and that. I became part of it. And you're absolutely right that it has to be a human soul in everyone who is doing something for another human being. I think the more soul you have inside, the more probably what you do will look better, or smell better, or sound better.

Calbi: You know, Frank, it's so interesting what you said before about the touch of the hand in talking about how's your love life, or as you mentioned—

Wilson: Right.

Calbi: I'm relating a little bit to a memory that I had when I was in Italy with my cousin who's passed away, a much older man. When you walk along after dinner in southern Italy with your friend, you're arm and arm. And there's something about the touch that transforms the nature of the conversation. I basically could barely understand his Italian or whatever, but there was the touch. I'm wondering if there's any type of therapy that uses touch, psychotherapy—I mean I've been to therapists many, many times in my life, and never even shake hands with my therapist. Or you shake hands and that's it. You're a doctor, maybe this seems like that would be a way to—

Wilson: Well, I think that's an old tradition. My dad was a GP. There wasn't a whole lot he could do, but this was before antibiotics, so he spent a lot of time with patients and he talked to them, and he was not in any way shy about just simply touching, and there's a lot of that in the physical examination that you do. You put a stethoscope on, you examine the abdomen. In my practice with musicians, I spend a lot of time examining hands, looking at hands. That was why it was really easy for me to get away with my kindergarten palmistry, because people had no idea what I was actually doing until later. But this actually brings up a point, which I think is a good question for me to ask you guys here. You all know there's a psychoanalyst Adam Philips, who's written some books. One was about tickling. This is a book called *Terrors and Experts*, and there was a sentence that I read that I thought I'm sure that I should bring this up and then you guys will tell me what the truth is. He's talking about psychoanalysis and where psychoanalysis is going, and then he has this really funny sentence. He says, "The psychoanalytic relationship itself is the perfect picture for this new enlightened masochism. The patient pays the doctor not

to touch him.” And I don’t believe that that’s really what goes on in psychoanalysis, but I do think that this is a real issue, that physical contact has been a part of medical tradition and, as I understand, psychoanalysis, at least a little bit—

A: It’s only one part of touching. You can do plenty of touching without using your hands. In fact, I would say the most important parts of touching in a relationship don’t have to do with physical touching. I’m not talking about anything sexual.

Grojsman: I think, yes, you probably can. The sick people I say, they become a little bit elevated when they see somebody come up and want to be a part of their existence. That’s true. But, yet, by the same token, I remember one who was feeling very badly, and for a man to ask me to pick up his, whatever, piece of clothing or something like that, he was shy, and I noticed that he wanted to do that. I said, “Don’t worry about it. I’ll pick it up. I’ll shut off the place, I’ll walk out, but I’ll give it to you. You don’t have to worry about it.” And he was so happy that I thought about it and I gave him what he needed and then I walked away. There was nothing wrong with that. It’s just—I think as long as a person senses that the other human being has something to offer, a small thing. I remember myself as a child, I always wanted my mother or father to pick me up, to hold me, and my sister right here with me. Our father was the greatest human being you could find. She was little, so she was on his neck here, sitting, and I was always hanging, one arm was for her and the other arm was for me. There was never—he never left us alone. And we felt so much love and affection, that even today being grown ups and just about to become grandmothers ourselves, I mean we miss him and feel—through our whole life we felt that.

Wilson: You asked this question about touch and it reminded me, earlier we had talked a little bit about Glenn Gould and his career. And one of the things about his early life was that he claimed that he almost had a vertiginous experience when he would put his hands on the ground as a boy and he could feel vibrations that other people did not experience. There’s a Scottish woman, a drummer, a professional drummer who does not hear, and who operates on the basis of vibration. So I do think that there is another aspect of this—there’s a kind of contact that is made on the basis of touch and hearing, and I think they’re probably really very, very close. Yeah?

Mitton: Speaking of another aspect, now we are at the time where we should move to questions, so it would be great if you could lead them through your presentation, and then you have a few slides. So at your indulgence, if you don’t mind, Greg, are we ready for that?

Calbi: Well, we really don’t have much time left, but I have an example of something which I think really shows what my trade can do to enhance a piece of music. It’s a recording of a thing that Bob Dylan did about 20 years ago. The album was called *Oh Mercy*, and there’s a song called “Ring Them Bells,” and it was a digital recording in the early days of digital. That sounds like a long time ago, but in the early ‘80s is when digital recording came into the studio—we went from the analog to the digital. Everyone was in love with the fact that it was quiet, there was no hiss, there was just the music. Unfortunately, the equipment in those days, the digital equipment turns out to be very primitive by today’s standards. So the album came out in the ‘80s, and this one song is a beautiful song. It’s produced by Daniel Lanois and Brian Eno, who’ve done U2 albums, and it’s just fantastic soundscape kind of stuff. It came out and existed in the marketplace for 20 years, and we just had an opportunity two summers ago to redo it. I did

about 16 of Bob Dylan's albums and put them out in a box with kind of the new technology. So I came into the room before trying to figure out whether this room was a good room to be able to hear this nuance—what I'd like to do is play you a minute or a minute and a half of the early one that was out in the '80s, and then another one that we just did, and just get a sense, through the instruments and through his voice, and get an emotional sense of what you feel between the two, and then you'll get an idea of what we do now. Obviously, like I said before, not everything I work on can have such an impact as you can with a piece of music like this Bob Dylan song.

[Music]

Okay. That's the 1980 version. And, again, what happened was in the interim we got away from this kind of sanctity to digital signal in the early '80s, which was if it's digital, don't touch it. Don't transform it, it's perfect the way it is. So myself and a couple of other engineers, always being in favor of analog sound and having kind of the old equipment and the old approach, during the late '90s it started to become a little more open as far as taking digital, transforming it to analog, doing a couple of different back and forths or whatever. I could tell you after we listen to this technically what I did, but let's, while the sound is fresh in our head, let's play the other one.

[MUSIC]

Calbi: So the left hand of the piano now, the deep tones of the piano came out. The deeper part of his vocal, you start to hear a little bit more of the emotion in the bottom of his voice. And the organ kind of separated and pulled away a little bit from the piano, so you have a little bit of a bigger feeling. You had a little bit more of an emotional feeling. And that bottom left hand of the piano filled up something that didn't exist for 20 years.

Now, that recording originally, when I got it in the early '80s, because I got a chance to work on it both times, didn't sound as good as it sounded the second time. It came from the studio, it sounded very close to what the people in the '80s heard, very similar to what the people in the studio created. But, again, with the evolution of the equipment and the evolution of an approach, we're able to take something from that and pull it forward. And if we were in a situation where we had a lot of time, I could play you pieces from maybe 10 or 12 of Bob Dylan's albums where we were not only able to enhance what we got, but we were able to select from tapes that existed from his earlier albums that were never used for production. There's so much that goes into this, and with an artist like Bob Dylan, there's plenty of budget to be able to spend time. I spent a whole summer on that project.

Levy: Was the analog/digital thing the key issue here?

Calbi: Yeah. Well I also ran it. I used analog tape. I took the digital signal and made an analog tape of the digital album when I did it two summers ago. So the analog/digital thing was very, very much a huge factor in how I was able to transform it, because if I would have tried that in the '80s everybody would have said, "You can't do that, no. It's digital. It's perfect."

Noren: You can compare it a little bit to food. It's actually interesting. When you listen to it side by side and listen to the newer version, it's almost like you add Umami, right? You get a bigger sound, a bigger feeling. It's like it fills your mouth in a different way, the same as this fills your ear in a different way. So it's really interesting. I got the connection right away. That's why you shouldn't be afraid of MSG. You can actually not be allergic to it. It actually makes your food better.

Mitton: Can we do the slides quickly?

Levy: Yeah, we're going to do the slides.

Pearlstein: Okay. I wanted to make a point about how artists choose the way they work. It's not that you're a dumb bunny working one way because that's the way you fell into it and think that that's the only way. Or that you work in the way your favorite teacher worked. So I just brought a few slides to make some points about style, because in the art world most of the discussion is always about style. And with style, you're always in a battle. There are people who want to kill you because they don't like the way you work. Your style is wrong, and it becomes almost like a religious thing. And artists are very intolerant of each other, to say nothing of the critics.

Grojsman: Well there are few artists and there are many, many, many critics.

Pearlstein: Right.

Grojsman: For each author you have probably 20,000 critics.

Pearlstein: Right. So I've just picked a few slides to show some differences. And what I learned from—oh, the focus—it should be as sharp as possible.

Mitton: This is before you were 35.

Pearlstein: Yeah.

Mitton: Before glasses.

Pearlstein: Anyway, that's a different style than the way it was painted in—the painting is seven feet wide, which means the figures are about one half life-sized in the painting. But they look life-sized when you look at it. Anyway, that's "Mr. and Mrs. Lewis." That's a painting I did about 15 years ago. Next. That's "Mr. Lewis." Next slide, please. And that's "Mrs. Lewis." I don't try to flatter them. I just take them as they are. I don't try to psych them out. That's just them, as best as I can do it, from looking. I don't construct in any traditional way; I know nothing about anatomy. All I do is measure things, visually, from side to side, distances between things, and I do the same with color, measuring tones and values against each other. It's all very empirical. And I just work at it until it works right. Okay, next.

This is a kind of painting I really got intrigued with when I was studying art history, in a class in classical Chinese painting of the Middle Ages, done somewhere around the 12- or 1300s. It's

Chan Buddhism. Chan is the Japanese version. Zen is the—I'm sorry, Chan is the Chinese version, and Zen is the Japanese version. But essentially it's done by monks. The monks would go into a trance and identify with some object in the space before them, and lose themselves in it. Then at the very end of the trance when they come out of it, they use the ink and the water and the brush and the paper at hand and put down their impression of what they experienced. This was someone looking at a branch of a tree with a couple of little birds. When I first studied the Chan Buddhist artists I wasn't at all interested in doing that myself. I was still working abstractly and expressionistically. But I joined a drawing group and did drawings like this, working as fast as possible, with a brush and watercolor. At the same time, as I studied Chan, which is about 10 years before this, before the previous drawing, I studied Cézanne, but mostly his drawings and watercolors. And I became aware of the fact that he probably did something very close to Chan, that he would study something in front of him, in this case a little plaster statue, which he drew over and over again, and each time he drew it he comes up with a totally different statement of it. And I decided that it's because he let himself get totally absorbed in each little area that he was drawing, not considering the whole thing, just making marks in approximate consideration. Next.

This is a self portrait. This was the approved way of working in the 1950s, if you were going to be a realist. De Kooning came out of this kind of drawing. Next. I'm sorry, this slide is very bad, but it's a painting of Cézanne that's in the Metropolitan Museum. But he never did a completed painting. I think the paintings are made up of these little individual sightings of specific spots in the landscape in which he let himself be dazzled by something out there, and just put a mark approximately in the position, but doing it in color and many layers, and it finally adds up to looking like this. This is one of his most complete paintings. Mostly they're left unfinished. Next.

Well, this is ancient Egypt from about 1150 BC, but it's a closed contour, a continuous line around the figure. This is what you were not supposed to do, and in many schools today, art schools today, you're still not supposed to do this. Okay, next. Oh, it's upside down. That's my fault. It's the same figure by Cézanne, but another take on looking and letting himself get lost in the process of looking. Next.

This is a more typical painting of mine, more recent, done by visual measurements, side to side, contour to contour, and doing the same with color. The painting is six feet high. Okay, next. I'm showing this because one of the most fascinating stories I've come across about looking and losing oneself in the process of looking was the story of Abbott Suger, spelled S-U-G-E-R, in the mid 1100s in Paris. He was the head of the church in Paris and he indulged himself by collecting precious stones. He accumulated so many that he had to defend himself finally. And he did that by saying that if he stared into the heart of a stone like an emerald or a diamond he would lose himself and find God. And he was acquitted. And to thank God he commissioned a chapel from his architect. They were rebuilding the cathedral anyway. He said to make the supports as narrow as possible and the windows as big as possible, and he commissioned painted glass, stained glass, to fill the windows, so it would give the effect of looking at jewels. And this is not the chapel he commissioned, but one done shortly after, Sainte-Chapelle on the island right near Notre Dame. I think that's the greatest story about looking and losing one's self in the process. Those are the only slides.



Mitton: Oh. Well thank you very much. So now we have time for a few questions. You're ready? Okay, that's good.

A: My question is directed to Mark. And I guess also to Frank Wilson. I see that you performed for Greg Maddux, and I think right away of his hands when he throws his change-up or he can make things happen to the ball—the ball will go one way, the ball will go the other way, and it's so accurate in what he does. He must have a tremendous feel, and he has tremendous intelligence. So he may be the most intelligent pitcher ever. Pedro Martinez, another one, with his fingers and hands. When Frank was talking I thought of how all these pitchers sometimes, they get a ball, they don't like it, they'll throw it back because they want another ball. They don't like the feel of the ball. There's a certain intelligence to it, and there's a certain feel that you have to it. The same with the hands, like with a hitter, where they like one bat and not another, and how they feel with the bat. And a lot of things with the hitting are not so much with your body as using your hands. If you use your body too much you're not going to hit it too well. And I've always been tremendously interested in hands, although I didn't get that far. They used to call me 'Hands.' I had great hands, like Rizutto, the manager. So did you talk with Greg Maddux about this at all?

Mitton: I can tell you two quick stories if you like.

A: Yeah, also because his father, I understand, worked in Las Vegas at the card table, one of those tables. He was practically some kind of sleight of hand person, and it probably had quite an effect on Maddux as to how he became what he became, which is one of the greatest pitchers that ever existed. Yeah, so you had a talk with him? I'd like to hear.

Mitton: Well, just quickly, because we don't have much time, but two quick stories. So Greg and his wife Kathy—his brother is also the pitching coach at Milwaukee, and, yeah, there is a family tradition of it. He is an amazing guy. He's phenomenally intelligent, and he married his high school sweetheart, Kathy, and it's an amazing story. They have a foundation that they have, and with Butch Herman, the golf coach, they put on a number of things for the Greg Maddux Foundation in Las Vegas. At one of those events, there was a baseball that he'd signed from some important game, and there was a little scuff on that baseball. And his eyes went right to that little scuff, and it was like, to me it was visceral. He said to the person who had purchased it—it was amazing, because he was just staring right at this little scratch, or scuff, and said, "Would you like me to describe how I would use that if that was actually in active play?" And then he went into an exact description of it, which I never understood. The aerodynamics involved in balls being thrown 90 miles an hour are kind of amazing.

The other story, it's a long story, but he did have me perform in the locker room at Shea Stadium when he was with the Braves, twice. And as a thank you the manager let me come back with the team on the bus when they came into the hotel here in town. Anyway, I sat next to 'Bulldog,' and he told me how he deceived batters. And, yeah, it's a long story, but basically he had a very meticulous, well thought out strategy that is very sophisticated from a standpoint of deception and perception.

A: Can you elaborate a little bit?

Mitton: I could, but then there would be—in short, he envisions a screen about 10 feet in front of the batter, and he makes a number of his pitches look exactly the same as they break that screen, because at that speed—you know, he throws a very consistent rate of speed, and then the ball does a lot of strange things between the 10 foot mark, the screen that he's breaking in his mind, and the batter. He thinks that that point is exactly where the batter has to make his decision if he's to have any success. He's done this since he was a little kid. Yeah, he's an amazing man. And what he's done for Las Vegas, because he's a long-time citizen of Las Vegas, he does amazing things for the people who are in need in that city. So, another question?

A: For Mr. Pearlstein, I wanted to know if you painted directly from life, or do you use photographs at all?

Pearlstein: No, I only work from life. And you can only do the kind of looking I do with somebody or something there in front of you. Working from photographs is an entirely different thing, and it may produce a wonderful thing for somebody to look at, you know, enhanced realism, but I don't do it.

Mitton: Could you briefly tell your story? It's a question from me about this story of your prizewinning painting from childhood of the carousel.

A: The merry-go-round painting.

Mitton: The merry-go-round, thank you.

Pearlstein: Well that was long before I ever thought, period. I mean I didn't think then. I just did it. And that was done from memory. It's a painting of a carousel, which actually existed in Pittsburgh and that I used to walk past. It was done when I was in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, in high school, but from memory. But everybody then worked in a realist way. I didn't know that people could use photographs to work from. Nobody ever mentioned it. And it came as a shock later when I grew up and learned that people like Degas worked from photographs. I was disillusioned.

A: Hi, I'm Hallie Cohen. I'm the curator at the center, and I'd like to also ask Mr. Pearlstein about the frame in your work. You look closely at things, but you, of course, are known for your particular trope of cutting things at odd moments in the picture. And interestingly enough, your comment about the frame, the photographer using the frame, is an imposed cutting of the rest of reality. What do you think about when you're at the thing you're not looking at, when you decide to focus on what you're looking at?

Pearlstein: Well, I generally start in the middle of the picture, drawing from what's in front of me, and I think that's generally—I mean I start where things overlap in a very complicated way, and then just let it grow out. When it reaches the end of the canvas, it goes off. It's actually the opposite of cropping, where you would start with the big image and work your way in.

A: I have a question. Smell, fragrance strips in magazines, music in stores, fast food, I mean this discussion has really been, for me, a conversation about excellence that results from fully

engaging the senses to shape whatever you do, that multi-dimension of experience. Excellence. So how do you cope? How do you cope? I always used to feel sorry for people with perfect pitch making their way through the world, because we cheat ourselves every day. We just saw slides. Thank goodness for film compared to digital images that is a cheapening of the visual world we live in. So you all represent the deep dive and excellence, and I just, I want to know you're okay in this world. Really, for me it's magazines. I get a magazine, and the first thing I do is rip out half of it and throw it away before I take a deep breath. I think it insults my senses of smell. How do you go near a magazine stand?

Grojsman: I don't. I don't, not anymore. But, you know, it is prophetic. On one hand, computerizing everything helped a lot. On the other hand, it takes away from what human being's value in human nature. In other words, I have a funny feeling that the next generation after is going to be a bunch of robots. And they will not need perfumes. They will not need food. They will not need anything. This is what it looks like to me.

A: But we will still have Cleavage.

Grojsman: I don't know about that either!

A: Actually, there's a new resurgence of interest in craft among young people. I think we have great hope. The cool thing is 'the authentic' now, which I think is great.

Grojsman: Yes, that's what I was mentioning, that a year and a half ago they were telling me one thing, and all of the sudden I said, "What is the matter? Am I misunderstanding something? Am I reading something wrong with the message in the computer?"

Calbi: It actually is very interesting that you asked this question. The cover of *Billboard* next week, apparently—somebody emailed it to me today—is about the phenomenon where young kids are now turning back to vinyl records. So what's happening to the mp3, what we all listen to on our iPods, what we download from iTunes—you know, iTunes I think is like 80% of the market now. So, the generation is hearing a compressed, kind of a digitized—you know, it's like junk food, it's like the Olive Garden. I mean look at our culture, look at all the junk aspects of our culture. But there's still this niche. In music, what we're seeing is that kids have found, through the old albums, something that they like about vinyl. They like the visual image. There's a visual treat about an album. It's a 12-inch square, beautiful package. You open it up—my wife and I are currently working on a vinyl record label through my company, where we're going to re-release albums that have come out over the last 20 years that never got to vinyl. It's an ambitious project, but it's something which is growing, and I think what we have to realize—I mean everybody here is kind of on the mature side—this generation is being deluged with content. We're in love with the volume of content. At the point where the content becomes matter of fact, then the quality will be the next thing. It's human nature. And it's all going to happen. It's just going to take a little bit more time. We're in that period now where the kids are just like getting so much. But they're going to get to a point where, just like when we all started drinking wine as kids and it was like, "Oh, it's really good." By the time we were 30 it's like we were spending a little bit more. It's going to develop. And I think the senses are something we all have, and we all have to try to encourage people to use their senses to experience things a little

bit better. But in music, I would say look to the next few years, with increased hard drive capacities and portable devices, you'll see those mp3s kind of open up into full range things, you'll see the vinyl thing come back. There's some good things happening, but those perfume things in the magazine—

Grojsman: No, because we had the hippies, after the war, hippies were walking around smelling of patchouli. They all stank. They all stank, and they all had this long hair, and they all looked lousy at that time; that was my time. But things like that are happening. And they turn around, and right now we're going to go back to the classics again, whether it's clothing or whatever. We'll go and look and we'll find a little denominator from which we're going to build another brand new formula or brand new piece of clothing, or whatever it is. But it will have the beginning of the history overall. It's kind of an image of that history, but with the new technology, new everything. I hope so.

Mitton: And, Nils, did you have a reaction?

Noren: Yeah, I think the same thing. First of all, it's happening in food as well. For the longest time, especially in this country I would say, the only thing we cared about is how we make something last longer and how can we make it cheaper. That was the only thing we cared about. Now it's actually going back to where we care about where the food is coming from. You know, we actually don't think of broccoli as something you pick up on the frozen food section anymore. We actually care where it was grown and how it tastes. Also, to come back to the first question, actually, about junk food and food itself, the way I see it junk food is something separate that fills a different need that I don't work with. It fills a need where you need something in your stomach real quick, and you don't care about what it is. I don't deal with that food. That's not—I'm not interested in it. In a way it would be interesting to do fast food good, but still, there's a different need. It's a different need than the one I work with, because I work with more of an experience. It actually takes something—you need to put in something yourself as a guest when you eat the food, which you don't have to eating fast food.

A: I'm just curious about what rituals you have to start your day and begin to get into whatever mindset it is? Do you have a ritual?

Wilson: Coffee.

A: Me, too!

Noren: Mine is usually, I butcher fish. That's the first thing I do. I butcher fish. There's something Zen-like about it. Cutting fish, filleting fish. That's perfect to start off.

Grojsman: I feed my two cats.

Noren: Yeah, just to do it. You know, you take your fish, bring it in, you've got it, you take the filets off of them. Either you portion it or you slice it, something. It calms you down right away. I could do it for days.

A: My question is for you. When the music stays at an excellent level—and you mentioned Sinatra in the ‘60s and then later on in live recordings, and you just played Bob Dylan, and Bob Dylan in the ‘80s and still performing today—when the music stays at a very high level and the artist’s voice changes, and you’ve dealt with the same person over decades, how do you deal with that element, especially when presenting it back to the artist himself?

Calbi: I think your question is a good question. It begins at the stage where the artist is in the vocal group with the microphone, and by the time it gets to me I have to really accept the voice that he’s singing in and try to—I mean, if there’s been some glaring weaknesses, if somebody all of a sudden is wearing a plate and starts to like whistle and stuff. I mean it happens. I don’t know. I don’t want to mention the name of the singer, because it might be embarrassing, but there’s a singer that my wife and I have been big fans of, and she’s in her 40s now, and her voice really has lost its timber. It’s lost its richness and its timber. And a recording engineer would then go through a whole series of different microphones, and place the microphone in different positions. This is more of a recording thing, but it’s really an important thing for somebody with a long career, especially who has a relationship with a recordist. Again, it’s not my field, but to remember the voice that was and to try to recapture elements of that is an art, and somebody, as their career would go on, some voices, like Rosemary Clooney’s voice stayed solid all the way until she was in her 70s. Tony Bennett’s voice, although it strains a little bit more now than it used to, is remarkable for a man 80 years old. But there are some people who, because of either breathing or gaining weight or whatever, the physical thing is not happening anymore. And a technician has to be sensitive to that, or the vocalist would have to be sensitive to it. Some vocalists have the same microphone they bring in to a session for 20 or 30 years: “This is my microphone.” Well, maybe it was your microphone 30 years ago, honey, but right now we’ve got to take another approach.

A: How do you enhance your perceptions?

A: Do you take drugs?

Calbi: I know how I did it in 1972.

A: Well, I’m wearing hearing aids. It’s a great help.

Wilson: Where does the question come from? I think there are a lot of ways to answer your question, but what are you concerned about?

A: I’ve become dull and I don’t perceive the colors of the fall, the feeling of the temperature and the texture of life. I become dull, and I came here to search out what perception is and how to enhance my life. So I’m wondering, isn’t that what it’s about, to perceive at a stronger visceral level? Life.

Grojsman: Yeah, but you could do that. You could do that. I’m sure you could do that.

A: How do you do it?

Grojsman: For example, the only difference here becomes if a person doesn't smell well, the person is older and doesn't like the new things that are on the market. I strongly believe that the market shouldn't be equal for everyone. That's why we have different formulas and different changes of the formulas, okay? For example, if a person does have already a sense of smell not as good as before, then we go to old structures of perfumes and make it a little stronger for that reason. You can do it. You can do it the same way with the music. You can just make it a little louder. Or a little less if you want to make it a little less.

Noren: You can also go out of your comfort zone.

Grojsman: Yes!

Noren: You know, away from what you usually do.

Grojsman: With the food, it's the same.

Noren: It's more challenging, yeah.

Grojsman: Yeah. If I don't like pepper I'm not going to put pepper in the food that I'm cooking. That's all there is to it, generally speaking, right?

Wilson: I think this is a very, very interesting question, and I think that—

Grojsman: There is no formula—

Wilson: Well I think your perceptual self has to grow along with your age, okay? If you love music and you're not feeling the same thing and you're not hearing the same thing anymore, you need to kind of put the effort into finding some part of—I mean, you're hearing the music through technology. You need to use the technology to try to overcome a little bit more of what you're not getting in terms of your perception. Or it could be—I know there are things that I used to love to do 20 or 30 years ago that bore the hell out of me now. It's like the last thing I would possibly do. So what am I going to do, sit around saying, "I don't understand why I don't like going to the airport and watching the international arrivals guys come in anymore." It's not that much fun anymore. But I have to find new ways of entertaining myself. I think with your perception, with food particularly, in New York there's absolutely no excuse, but you need to have the money, you need to do the research. We have a lot of tools, but listen, you're a little bit older than I am, but I have the same thing. Every once in a while we'll go to a show, I'll walk out, I'll go like, "That was terrible. I mean what's wrong with me? Why can't I enjoy music anymore?" Well, I've heard probably 20,000 albums. I've seen hundreds and hundreds of performances. I can't just walk into some club and expect to enjoy it. I've got to do a little research. I've got to talk to people. What's good? What's not good? Make little notes. It just takes more of an effort, I think. And I think the same is true with food. You know, use a different sense.

Mitton: Well, thank you all very much for coming, to all our panelists, to all of you.