

Occupying UCI: Chris Burden's *Five Day Locker Piece* as Institutional Critique

Matthew Teti

Volume 43, Number 1, 2018

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1050819ar>
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1050819ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

UAAC-AAUC (University Art Association of Canada | Association d'art des universités du Canada)

ISSN

0315-9906 (print)
1918-4778 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Teti, M. (2018). Occupying UCI: Chris Burden's *Five Day Locker Piece* as Institutional Critique. *RACAR : Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, 43(1), 39–52. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1050819ar>

Article abstract

Le lundi matin du 26 avril 1971, Chris Burden grimpe dans un casier de 60 × 60 × 90 centimètres dans un atelier de l'Université de Californie à Irvine (UCI), où il a la semaine pour présenter son projet de maîtrise : la performance d'endurance *Five Day Locker Piece*, durant laquelle il s'enferme 105 heures. Même si la référence n'est nullement explicite, le geste de Burden est semblable aux occupations protestataires de la fin des années 1960 qui paralysèrent les campus universitaires à travers les États-Unis. Cet article a pour but de réexaminer *Five Day Locker Piece* comme une critique institutionnelle dans laquelle l'artiste occupe un espace de l'école d'art, afin de perturber le flux des activités habituelles. À l'aide d'interviews et de documents archivistiques disponibles depuis peu, il réévalue une des oeuvres fondatrices de la performance des années 1970, au regard de sa place dans le canon de la critique institutionnelle.

Occupying UCI: Chris Burden's *Five Day Locker Piece* as Institutional Critique

Matthew Teti

Le lundi matin du 26 avril 1971, Chris Burden grimpe dans un casier de 60 × 60 × 90 centimètres dans un atelier de l'Université de Californie à Irvine (UCI), où il a la semaine pour présenter son projet de maîtrise: la performance d'endurance *Five Day Locker Piece*, durant laquelle il s'enferme 105 heures. Même si la référence n'est nullement explicite, le geste de Burden est semblable aux occupations protestataires de la fin des années 1960 qui paralysèrent les campus universitaires à travers les États-Unis. Cet article a pour but de réexaminer *Five Day Locker Piece* comme une critique institutionnelle dans laquelle l'artiste occupe un espace de l'école d'art, afin de perturber le flux des activités habituelles. À l'aide d'interviews et de documents archivistiques disponibles depuis peu, il réévalue une des œuvres fondatrices de la performance des années 1970, au regard de sa place dans le canon de la critique institutionnelle.

Matthew Teti is currently finishing his doctoral dissertation, "From Minimalism to Performance Art: Chris Burden, 1967–1971," at Columbia University.
—met2158@columbia.edu

1. Chris Burden, *Chris Burden* 71–73 (Los Angeles: Chris Burden, 1974), 4–5.

2. According to Johanna Burton, Burden's work "is rarely invoked in discussions of institutional critique." See Johanna Burton, "I Guess You'll Buy A Gun/You'll Buy It Secondhand," in *Chris Burden: Extreme Measures*, ed. Lisa Phillips (New York: New Museum, 2013), 137. Exceptions that discuss Burden's work as institutional critique

Five Day Locker Piece

University of California, Irvine, April 26–30, 1971

I was locked in locker number 5 for five consecutive days and did not leave the locker during this time. The locker measured two feet high, two feet wide, and three feet deep. I stopped eating several days prior to entry. The locker directly above me contained five gallons of bottled water; the locker below me contained an empty five gallon bottle.¹

Chris Burden

From his early performances to his mature sculptural installations, Chris Burden's work has persistently challenged the institutions of art. Nonetheless, he is not normally associated with the practice of institutional critique, even though he began working contemporaneously with Daniel Buren, Hans Haacke, and Michael Asher, the first generation of artists who, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, critically exposed the logic and inner workings of art museums and galleries.² Take, for instance, *Working Artist* and *Natural Habitat*, two pieces from late 1975 and early 1976, in which Burden—the latter piece in tandem with his partner at the time, fellow UC Irvine graduate Alexis Smith (BA 1970)—brought the artist's studio into the gallery, where he lived and worked over a period of several days. Or *Samson* (1985), a 100-ton jack apparatus connected to a turnstile that pushed against the load-bearing walls of the museum in direct, but infinitesimal proportion to the number of visitors who entered the gallery, thus threatening to topple the museum with a blockbust-er exhibition. Or *Exposing the Foundation of the Museum* (1986), wherein Burden excavated an area underneath the Frank Gehry-designed Temporary Contemporary at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, thereby creating a space in which the participant-viewer interacts in an investigation of the museum's literal moorings. In the latter piece, Burden railed against the construction of new museum projects designed by star architects, which overshadowed the art they were constructed to house.

Burden's absence from the canon of institutional critique is puzzling, but not altogether surprising given the marginalization of Los Angeles-based artists within major postwar movements, such as minimalism and conceptual art. In an essay on the canonization of institutional critique, Julia Bryan-Wilson argues, "A certain set of established influences and standard artists—the reiteration of familiar names ... has begun to harden into cliché—threatens to obscure other precursors."³ Fortunately, the contribution of artists living and working in LA has recently been given more opportunities to prove its place in the canon, partially thanks to the Getty Foundation's ongoing



Figure 1. Chris Burden, *Five Day Locker Piece*, April 26–30, 1971. Performance/sculpture, University of California, Irvine. Photo: Diana Zlotnik. © 2017 Chris Burden; licensed by the Chris Burden Estate and Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

include Kristine Stiles, “Burden of Light,” in *Chris Burden*, ed. Fred Hoffman (Newcastle upon Tyne: Locust+, 2007), 29, 31; Jenny Moore’s short essay “Power Play,” in *Chris Burden: Extreme Measures, 195–196*; and Chris Burden and Jarrett Earnest, “Applying Pressure,” *The Brooklyn Rail* (November 5, 2013), <https://brooklynrail.org/2013/11/art/applying-pressurechris-burden-with-jarrett-earnest>.

3. Julia Bryan-Wilson, “A Curriculum for Institutional Critique, or the Professionalization of Conceptual Art,” in *New Institutionalism*, ed. Jonas Ekeberg (Oslo: Office for Contemporary Art Norway, 2006), 92–93.

4. One of Fraser’s most well-known institutional performances, *Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk*, was presented at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1989; see Andrea Fraser, “Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk,” in *Museum Highlights: The Writings of Andrea Fraser*, ed. Alexander Alberro (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005), 95–114.

5. Adrian Piper’s 1983 essay “Power Relations Within Existing Art Institutions” is a trenchant critique of the art school’s process of “aesthetic acculturation,” or the indoctrination of otherwise autonomous individuals into the “ranks of art practitioners,” a process founded upon a host of unacknowledged ideologies, which cut to the core of the very notion of free and equal

Pacific Standard Time initiative, a broad-based partnership with institutions throughout Southern California devoted to documenting and archiving postwar art in the region. One reason Burden has never been considered under the banner of institutional critique is because his early and still most-recognized work was in performance art, which was not really included in the canon until Andrea Fraser entered the field in the late 1980s.⁴ Furthermore, works such as Burden’s *Five Day Locker Piece* have not been considered institutional critique, because the canon is defined primarily as a practice of confrontation with and within museums and art galleries. Very little scholarship treats institutional critique within the context of educational institutions, in particular those bastions of higher learning that educate fine-art professionals.⁵

Among the many important contributions Pacific Standard Time made to the study of postwar art in Southern California was to reinforce the longstanding belief that colleges, universities, and art schools were the crux of the LA art world at mid-century, when a relatively small community of museums and galleries were unable to support the region’s copious talent.⁶ In the late 1960s and early 1970s, brand new schools in Southern California, including the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) and the University of California (UC) campuses at San Diego and Irvine, became sites for radical pedagogy, which was purveyed by an all-star cast of artist-professors. UC Irvine’s studio art faculty included several veteran LA artists, including Robert Irwin, Larry Bell, Tony DeLaP, Ken Price, Craig Kauffman, John Mason, Ed Moses, John Paul Jones, Ed Bernal, and Vija Celmins, and it was chaired off and on by the co-founder and editor of *Artforum* magazine, John Coplans, who also served as the director (1965–1967) and curator (1970–1972) of the UC1 art gallery. Coplans and his *Artforum* partner, Phil Leider, who also taught periodically at Irvine, moved the magazine to Los Angeles for two years, where it served as a significant

access in a democratic society. However, Piper's piece is more of a manifesto and does not treat any particular strategies for intervention within the education system; reprinted in Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, eds., *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009), 246–274.

6. Pacific Standard Time projects that emphasized the importance of educational institutions include Rebecca McGrew, ed., *It happened at Pomona: Art at the Edge of Los Angeles 1969–1973* (Claremont, CA: Pomona College Museum of Art, 2011); Grace Kook-Anderson, ed., *Best Kept Secret: uci and the Development of Contemporary Art in Southern California 1964–1971* (Laguna Beach: Laguna Art Museum, 2011); Meg Linton, Sue Maberry, and Elizabeth Pulsinelli, eds., *Doin' It in Public: Feminism and Art at the Woman's Building* (Los Angeles: Ben Maltz Gallery, Otis College of Art and Design, 2011); and Sondra Hale and Terry Wolverton, eds., *From Site to Vision: The Woman's Building in Contemporary Culture* (Los Angeles: Ben Maltz Gallery, Otis College of Art and Design, 2011).

7. Connie Glenn, oral history interview by Grace Kook-Anderson, n.d. (ca. 2010–2011), Laguna Art Museum. On the early history of *Artforum* magazine, see Amy Newman, *Challenging Art: Artforum 1962–1974* (New York: Soho, 2000).

8. The Farm subsequently housed an experimental primary and secondary school that opened in 1970. See Samuel Clyde McCulloch, ed., *Instant University: The Hist-*

recruiting tool for uci into the early 1970s.⁷ Through *Artforum* and his connections in New York, Coplans opened the door to top visiting artists and lecturers at the university, including sculptor Robert Morris, critic Barbara Rose, curator Alan Solomon, and art historian Moira Roth. As a graduate student at Irvine, Burden studied with Bell, DeLap, Kauffman, Mason, and Morris, and Robert Irwin oversaw his MFA project.

Although the uci faculty was stacked with so-called “finish fetish” sculptors, who were adamant about process and materials, the brand new university did not initially have much in the way of equipment or studios. | **fig. 2** | Before Burden and the first MFA class arrived (Fall 1969), undergraduate artists kept studios in an area distant from the main campus called The Farm, which was in fact a working farm left over from the Irvine Ranch and used by the university for educational purposes.⁸ The ceramic studio and a sculpture workshop with few tools were also initially located in outbuildings on the periphery of the campus. However, The Farm closed in 1969, and the Fine Arts Village—a cluster of buildings that housed the School of the Arts—did not open until the fall of 1970. While the new facilities were more accommodating, the graduate students were still not provided with studios on campus, and instead they had to find their own space in the surrounding cities of Orange County. The lack of space and equipment at uci resulted in a general de-emphasis of craft in lieu of conceptual, performance-based, and site-specific methods. Rather than holding traditional studio classes, Robert Irwin, Larry Bell, and other Irvine faculty members visited the students' off-campus workspaces and met with them individually.⁹ When the graduate students did gather together for classes, the latter usually took the form of a discussion or critique. | **fig. 3** | In addition to organizing field trips to museums and galleries, Tony DeLap took the students around to visit fabricators and supply shops, showing them the types of businesses and materials that were available in the region, should they want to work in the mediums of their professors and take advantage of Southern California's renowned access to goods and services.¹⁰ Robert Morris and other

Figure 2. Aerial view of the Fine Arts Building at the University of California, Irvine, ca. 1967.

University Communications Photographs (AS-061). University of California, Irvine Libraries. Special Collections and Archives. Courtesy of the University of California, Irvine.



ory of the University of California, Irvine, 1957–93 (Irvine: University of California, Irvine, 1996), 135; Robert J. Kett and Anna Kryczka, *Learning By Doing at The Farm: Craft, Science, and Counterculture in Modern California* (Chicago: Soberscove, 2014).

9. Chris Burden and Jan Butterfield, "Chris Burden: Through the Night Softly," *Arts Magazine* 49, 7 (March 1975), 68; Melinda Wertz, *University of California Irvine, 1965–1975* (La Jolla: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1975), 8–9, 79; Elizabeth Perlmutter, "A hotbed of advanced art," *ArtNews* 75, 1 (January 1976), 44; Chris Burden, quoted in Zan Dubin, "UCI Artists' Reflections," *Los Angeles Times* (November 11, 1997); Kook-Anderson, *Best Kept Secret*, xiv.

10. Tony DeLap, John Mason, and Hal Glicksman, oral history interview, February 2, 2016, UCI Libraries, Department of Special Collections; Barbara T. Smith, personal communication, October 26, 2016. Access to materials and fabricators was a catalyst for LA's strong showing in sculpture in the 1960s and has been widely cited by artists as a beneficial difference between working in Southern California, as opposed to New York.

11. Marcia Hafif, oral history interview by Grace Kook-Anderson, August 27, 2010, Laguna Art Museum; DeLap, Mason, and Glicksman, interview; Barbara T. Smith, personal communication.

12. Constance Glenn, oral history interview, March 16, 1990, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; Paula Sweet, oral history interview, April 1, 2011, Laguna Art Museum.

13. Thomas Crow, "Mind-Body Problem: Chris Burden's Performances," in *Chris Burden: Extreme Measures*, 53. This idea was expressed earlier by Grace Kook-Anderson in her introduction to the exhibition catalogue *Best Kept Secret*, xiii.

14. Maurice Stein and Larry Miller, *Blueprint for Counter Education* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), available online at <http://blueprint-forcountereducation.com>. See also "California Institute of the Arts: Prologue to a Community," special issue, *Arts in Society* 7, 3 (Fall/Winter 1970); Judith E. Adler, *Artists in Offices: An Ethnography of an Academic Art Scene* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1979); Paul Brach, "Cal Arts: The Early Years," *Art Journal* 42, 1 (Spring 1982), 27–29.

15. Peter Frank, "Context, Attitude, Community: The Early Years of the UCI Art Department," in Kook-Anderson, *Best Kept Secret*, 23–24, 27. For accounts of various Irvine professors' approaches to

visiting faculty members came to town for whirlwind, three-week stints and conducted seminars in which they assigned a broad spectrum of reading in philosophy, psychology, religion, and culture, instead of teaching studio classes.¹¹ Barbara Rose's art history courses—in contrast to the formal lectures of Coplans and Leider, who presented slideshows in a large, darkened hall—were informal affairs, conducted in her office, where students came barefoot, brought their dogs, and sat around on whatever furniture was available.¹²

Thomas Crow has argued that uci's recent foundation in a relatively untouched corner of the mythic frontier of the American West provided an ideal setting to question the pretences of art education.¹³ The uc campuses, here and at San Diego and Santa Cruz, emerged in the mid-1960s during a fervent period in American higher education, when students began to agitate for more control over their education and the administration of universities and colleges. Some administrators, such as the legendary uc president Clark Kerr (1957–1967), were receptive to the changing tides and granted the new universities wide latitude to pursue experimental pedagogical methods. Under Kerr, the reputation of the uc system soared, and their campuses attracted the best minds of the era. In addition to their illustrious Studio Art Faculty, Irvine hired top scientists and was an all-around competitive institution, right out of the gate. The draw that the school had for elite, art-world figures from New York is a testament to a concerted interest in new forms of pedagogy that were being pioneered in the Los Angeles area, primarily at uci and CalArts. Initially the brainchild of Walt Disney, the latter was formed when the Chouinard Art Institute merged with the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music, which opened in 1970. At the same time the innovators at uci were setting out a new fine-art curriculum, CalArts Dean Maurice Stein arrived to implement his *Blueprint for Counter Education* (1970), which espoused a collaborative, interdisciplinary model of learning similar to that being employed by think-tanks, such as the RAND Corporation and the nearby California Institute of Technology.¹⁴ The early faculty of CalArts was also flush with well-known artists from New York, such as Allan Kaprow, Nam June Paik, and Alison Knowles, and it was also home to the radical pedagogical experiment of Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro's Feminist Art Program and the Woman's Building. In this context, art students were encouraged to work with performance, installation, and other expanded notions of traditional fine-art mediums, just as they were at uci.

In the fine arts, the MFA degree was rapidly becoming the standard terminal degree for a new class of professional artists, who were ordained to teach as well as practice. In the classroom, strict disciplinary boundaries (painting, sculpture, etc.), foundational exercises (such as life drawing), and hierarchical relationships between students and faculty were rejected in favour of a conservatory-style apprenticeship under the tutelage of actual working artists, rather than career educators. At uci, technical training in the fine arts was largely foregone in favour of a much more informal method of exchange that involved students and faculty in shared experiences of thinking, discussing, and problem-solving.¹⁵ The uci course catalogue for 1969–1970 described the new graduate program thusly:

The emerging sophistication ... necessitates training artists in an intellectual environment, an environment which provides stimulation beyond technical facility. The artist



Figure 3. Promotional photo for the University of California, Irvine, showing students in art class—one of whom appears to be meditating—using their meager studio equipment as furniture to hold a discussion. University Communications Photographs (AS-061). University of California, Irvine Libraries. Special Collections and Archives. Courtesy of the University of California, Irvine.

cannot work in a vacuum: he is dependent upon a community for concepts, conversation, and communication. The atmosphere of the university provides the developing artist an ideal opportunity to live sensitively in the midst of accessible resources in a climate that is constantly vibrating with life and challenging our sensibilities.¹⁶

On a personal level, the Studio Art Faculty at uci almost uniformly treated the graduate students as equals and relied on strong dialog and interpersonal relationships in order to mitigate the lack of structure in the program that partly resulted from the university's dearth of facilities. By his own admission, Larry Bell did not "teach" or evaluate student work at all, but focused on cultivating what Tony DeLap called the "artist in society."¹⁷ Many of the graduate students in uci's first MFA class fondly remember Robert Irwin's visits to their studios, and the transformational, one-on-one meetings that characterized his teaching style.¹⁸ Burden said,

I took most of my courses from Irwin. ... [He] was a lot cooler—he would just come to the studio about once every two months and spend whole days at a time. It was really good, because it was on a one-to-one basis. He would come by for a whole week, and sort of do a total head blitz and then leave. You had to sign up for classes, but I just signed up for about three or four with Irwin; that just kind of took care of school.¹⁹

DeLap summarized the ethos nicely when he said, "This atmosphere of mutual respect breaks down the student-teacher barriers, and can ideally result in situations where two or more artists simply work out their problems together."²⁰ Needless to say, the newly founded uc campus at Irvine was not the dusty, moribund institution against which student activists raged in the late 1960s and early 1970s. uci's Studio Art Department was a progressive, permissive environment in which Burden and his colleagues were given the utmost freedom and respect for which a student could hope.

In the spring of 1971, uci graduated its first class of MFA students, who were each given a studio-classroom in the Fine Arts Building to exhibit their final projects for internal critique. Nancy Buchanan said that the space was "not usable for much of the work being created," because the light could not be controlled and various institutional features, such as "a huge industrial

teaching, see Wortz, *University of California Irvine*; and Kook-Anderson, *Best Kept Secret*, xii–xv.

16. *uci General Catalogue 1969–70* (Irvine: The University of California, Irvine, 1969), 44.

17. Larry Bell and Tony DeLap, quoted in Wortz, *University of California Irvine*, 82. Marcia Hafif, one of the graduate students in the first MFA class at uci, corroborates that Bell did not do very much teaching at all and was only "vaguely there"; see Hafif, interview by Kook-Anderson.

18. Barbara Smith, quoted in Wortz, *University of California Irvine*, 79; in the same volume, uci student Bruce Richards said, "Irwin was the first instructor to truly function one-on-one" (84). See also Hafif, interview by Kook-Anderson; Frank, "Context, Attitude, Community," 23.

19. Burden and Butterfield, "Chris Burden," 68.

20. Tony DeLap, quoted in Wortz, *University of California Irvine*, 81.



Figure 4 (top). Chris Burden, *Announcement for Five Day Locker Piece, 1971*. Xerox, 35.5 × 21.5 cm. © 2017 Chris Burden; licensed by the Chris Burden Estate and Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Figure 5 (bottom). Archival photograph of Barbara Burden feeding Chris Burden juice through the louvers of the locker. Chris Burden Estate. © 2017 Chris Burden; licensed by the Chris Burden Estate and Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

clock and large lockers made it seem more appropriate for a gym.²¹ Since their classes took place mainly via ad-hoc meetings with their professors or informal lectures, the graduate students were not entirely familiar with the facilities in the Fine Arts Building. Burden describes visiting room 167 several times while he was trying to figure out how to mount his work. For reasons he has amply explained over the years, he fixated on the deep bank of luggage lockers situated in a passageway adjacent to the open floor of the large studio space. Unfamiliar with the classroom, and unaccustomed to exhibiting his work on campus, Burden alighted on the radical performance-cum-sculpture *Five Day Locker Piece*. At 8:00 am on Monday, April 26, 1971, he climbed into locker number five, where he remained interred until 5:00 pm Friday, April 30, the length of a standard workweek, plus nights and evenings (around 105 hours). The locker measured two feet square on its face and three feet deep, accommodating Burden, who was short of stature, curled up in a foetal position. He outfitted the locker above with a five-gallon jug of water and the locker below with an empty vessel of the same size, referring to himself as simply a filtration system for the water. Burden had begun fasting the week before, so that he would not have to eliminate any solid waste. He sent out an announcement for the exhibition that, as of Monday morning, had not reached its audience through the Postal Service, so his initial presence in the locker was a surprise to his professors and colleagues. | **fig. 4** | Burden's wife Barbara visited the locker to feed him juice and soup through a straw that she slid through the louvers of the locker door, | **fig. 5** | and, at some point, he was administered muscle relaxants to ease the cramping in his legs.²² Through the slats in the locker door, Burden was able to see a little of what was going on outside, and he was also easily able to talk to people standing in his vicinity.

Burden said that he thought the piece would isolate him, but it actually had the opposite effect.²³ A ninety-minute audio recording, which Burden made with a tape recorder enclosed with him inside the locker, captures some of the conversations he had on the first day of the piece.²⁴ Of course, he spoke a lot about the situation he was in: the water filtration system, his cramped legs, if he would be able to sleep or not. The majority of the conversations Burden recorded were with his fellow graduate students. They talked about their professors, upcoming exhibitions, museum and gallery openings, and future employment, much like we can imagine they would have on any normal day at school. Finally, Burden hosted his MFA class for the critique of his work, and he also held art-historical discourses with his colleagues, some of whom brought their undergraduate students to discuss the piece with the artist.²⁵

With several of his visitors, Burden conducted what I would call art-world business, which went above and beyond the semi-personal hallway chatter that made up many of the conversations he taped. Along with Barbara Smith, Nancy Buchanan, and other UCI MFA students, Burden was running a cooperative gallery called F Space, which they operated out of an industrial complex in nearby Santa Ana, two doors down from Burden's own studio. The need for the students to have a place to exhibit their work, experiment, and develop as a community of artists galvanized the creation of F Space, which was one of the most fruitful products of the early years at UCI. F Space has gone down in history as the site of several of Burden's early performances,



Figure 6. Chris Burden, *Bicycle Piece*, May 6–20, 1971. Performance, Art Gallery, University of California, Irvine. Photo: Judy Herzog. © 2017 Chris Burden; licensed by the Chris Burden Estate and Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

including *Shoot* (1971), and it was a radical DIY space that garnered significant, regional attention. What needed to be taken care of the week Burden was in the locker was the scheduling of gallery attendants for upcoming shows and, in particular, the creation of a better system and chain of responsibility for keeping the space open. They also discussed a change in the management of the building, rising rents, and the feasibility of staying there after they graduated. While Burden was in the locker, he also entertained a reporter from the *Los Angeles Times*, who interviewed him and his classmates for a feature article on F Space that ended up being as much about Burden and *Five Day Locker Piece* as it was about the gallery.²⁶

Secondly, Burden coordinated with professor John Mason in order to plan his contribution to the MFA thesis exhibition, which was upcoming in uci's art gallery. That work, called *Bicycle Piece*, was a durational occupation of the gallery space much in the same vein as *Five Day Locker Piece*. During the full run of the show, excluding the opening night, Burden careened through the gallery on his 10-speed, following a designated path laid out on the floor. | fig. 6 | In short, this necessitated the rearrangement of the gallery, and it required Mason to tailor the layout of the exhibition to Burden's needs. Mason, who had advised Burden as an undergraduate at Pomona College, as well as teaching him at uci, was remarkably accommodating of the artist's challenging requests, and worked with him to devise the best route through the gallery. Burden then took up the logistics of spending so much time on the piece with his wife Barbara, who, it seems, was often put out in her role as a collaborator in her husband's audacious work. At the same time, she dutifully fed him V8 and celery juice through a straw, and came to the locker several times a day to keep him company. Burden also asked her to alter her work hours in order to accommodate his schedule for *Bicycle Piece*. Presumably, she needed a ride home at 4:00 pm, while Burden was going to be busy until the gallery closed at 5:00 pm.

Andrea Fraser has said that some of institutional critique's canonical works take "artistic practice itself" as the object of critique.²⁷ *Five Day Locker Piece* is de facto a work about artistic practice, insofar as it, like other performance art, puts practice on display by making the artist's embodied creation of the work its subject. The conversations between Burden and his visitors add to the appreciation of this piece, because the discussions they held in and around the locker touched on all of the myriad things that are involved in being an artist: getting and paying for studio space, materials, and cars to haul everything around, exhibiting work, receiving feedback, going to openings, and securing teaching jobs. Artistic practice was foregrounded in all of Burden's dialogs through the sheer fact of the institution in which the work took place: the art school.

The rise of the art school in Southern California produced opportunities for a new professional class of career artist-educators. Such positions sustained even the region's most commercially successful artists, of which the faculty at uci is proof. The stated aim of most of Irvine's Studio Art Faculty was to train professional artists, understood as those who could teach as well as exhibit their work, or what Paul Karlstrom called the "strategic art-career professional."²⁸ However, during *Five Day Locker Piece*, Burden talked with more than one of his colleagues about their inability to find teaching jobs, in part because

21. Nancy Buchanan, "A Few Snapshots from F Space Gallery, 1514 E. Edinger, Santa Ana," in *In the Canyon, Revise the Canon: Utopian Knowledge, Radical Pedagogy, and Artist-Run Community Art Space in Southern California* (Annecy, France: ESAAA Editions, 2015), 50; Nancy Buchanan, personal communication, December 22, 2017.

22. Thomas Garver, personal communication, November 3, 2016.

23. Willoughby Sharp and Liza Béar, "Chris Burden: The Church of Human Energy," *Avalanche 8* (Summer/Fall 1973), 54; Chris Burden, artist talk, Rhode Island School of Design, November 12, 1974.

24. The audio of *Five Day Locker Piece* is courtesy of the Chris Burden Estate.

25. Visits by classes are not recorded on the tape and must have taken place later in the week. By Robert Walker's account, they took place at Burden's request. See Burden and Butterfield, "Chris Burden," 69; Chris Burden, oral history interview by Grace Kook-Anderson, April 14, 2011, Laguna Art Museum; Robert Walker, oral history interview by Grace Kook-Anderson, November 9, 2010, Laguna Art Museum.

26. Marjie Driscoll, "Zany Gallery Offers Art Without Price Tags," *Los Angeles Times* (June 2, 1971).

of the unorthodox training they received at uci. While the higher-education system was changing in pace with progressive schools like Irvine, the university's MFA graduates did not fit the traditional model of the art educator. Helen Molesworth has argued that the shift in emphasis from craft to communication in MFA programs resulted in "a generation of college-educated artists whose skills were no longer manual and visual but largely theoretical and verbal," thus making them unfit candidates for jobs at most schools.²⁹ Indeed, one discussion that took place around the locker concerned how Burden's confrontational, non-object-based, conceptual-art practice would undoubtedly hurt him on the job market. In a later interview, Burden said that in his final year at uci he "applied to every junior college in the state of California," but only got one interview. When the unnamed school learned that Burden was made in the mould of his professors—an artist who teaches rather than a teacher of art—he was withdrawn from consideration.³⁰

Burden was fond of saying that the first class of MFA students at Irvine were orally guaranteed that they could do anything they wanted for two years and still receive a degree, indicating that acceptance into the program essentially constituted its completion.³¹ The theory looming behind this cynical interpretation of the MFA was that you could not teach someone to become an artist; they had to want it and work to achieve it of their own volition.

What the people at Irvine were saying—and they were all practicing artists—was that your MFA is basically worth diddly-squat. It's a breathing space for you to become an artist. So you're either going to become an artist and want to make art, or you're not.³²

In a review of an exhibition celebrating uci's tenth anniversary, which featured the work of professors and students from the Studio Art Department, a reviewer suggested that the MFA degree was only as good as the paper it was printed on, a comment which reflects the general sentiment at the time Burden started at Irvine.³³ The purpose of the newly conceived, professional MFA was to give artists something to fall back on in case they did not make it in the creative sector. In characterizing his beloved professor, John Mason, Burden observed that the taciturn manner with which the former slumped through the workday at Pomona and Irvine actually bore a very valuable lesson about what it means to be an artist: teaching was an inevitable necessity for artists to make a living and have the freedom to work in untraditional and non-commercial formats.³⁴ Therefore, the degree granting the credentials required to teach at the university level was like any other tool the artist required to earn a living.³⁵

The shift from the artist as a solitary denizen of the studio to the artist as an academic administrator was part and parcel of the post-studio turn in the late 1960s and early 1970s, of which *Five Day Locker Piece* is a seminal example. Longtime CalArts professor and foundational figure in post-studio practice, John Baldessari, once referred to himself as a "nine-to-five artist," reflecting his daily routine of going to the studio.³⁶ In the conception and titling of *Five Day Locker Piece*, Burden made a blatant reference to the work of such professional artists by referring to the length of the standard workweek, which he further indicated through the piece's endpoints: 8:00 am Monday to 5:00 pm Friday.³⁷ It is as if Burden were suggesting that being a working artist involves simply coming into the office or studio, week in and week out, and holding dialogs

27. Andrea Fraser, "From the Critique of Institutions to the Institution of Critique," in *Andrea Fraser*, ed. Sabine Breitwieser (Salzburg: Museum der Moderne, 2015), 53–54.

28. Paul Karlstrom, "Art School Sketches: Notes on the Central Role of Schools in California Art and Culture," in *Reading California: Art, Image, and Identity, 1900–2000*, eds. Stephanie Barron, Sheri Bernstein, and Ilene Susan Fort (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 98. See also Adler, *Artists in Offices*; and Howard Singerman, *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

29. Helen Molesworth, "Work Ethic," in *Work Ethic*, exh. cat. (Baltimore: The Baltimore Museum of Art, 2003), 33.

30. Burden, interview by Kook-Anderson.

31. Chris Burden interview with Glenn Phillips, May 7, 2007, California Video Screening Series, Getty Research Institute; Chris Burden oral history interview with Suzanne Muchnic, September 28, 2010, Getty Research Institute, Institutional Archives; Burden, interview by Kook-Anderson; Akers, "Chris Burden," 48.

32. George Melrod, "Interview: Chris Burden," *Art Ltd.* (September/October 2012), 51.

33. Sandy Ballatore, "Irvine Graduates," *Artweek* 6, 35 (October 18, 1975), 3. See also Adler, *Artists in Offices*, 1–3.

34. "Chris Burden Interviewed by Glenn Phillips," in McGrew, *It happened at Pomona*, 272.

35. Adler, *Artists in Offices*, 10.

36. Marcia Tucker, "John Baldessari: Pursuing the Unpredictable," in *John Baldessari*, exh. cat. (New York: The New Museum, 1981), 15; as quoted in Molesworth, "Work Ethic."

37. Burden later said, "The locker piece needed to be a working week, that's the premise of it. It started on Monday morning and it ended on Friday at five." See Melrod, "Interview: Chris Burden," 51.

on the topic of artistic practice with anyone willing to listen, which is a perfect characterization of the pedagogical atmosphere at uci.

Furthermore, Frazer Ward rightly suggests that *Five Day Locker Piece* challenged the process of legitimization represented by the MFA degree, because Burden metaphorically withdrew from qualification, exhibiting no work in the traditional sense, and instead portraying himself as caged or bound within a minimalist-conceptualist idiom.³⁸ Such a critique is analogous to the healthy scepticism about the university's efficacy in training students for life beyond college, which was a cornerstone of pedagogical reform in the late 1960s, and a standard refrain for those concerned about the MFA program's ability to train successful working artists. Some, including the faculty members who opposed awarding Burden his degree in 1971, might argue that the artist's performance calls their profession, as well as the institution issuing the credentials to teach, into question.³⁹ If there is a dark humour to *Five Day Locker Piece*—a humour that, by Burden's own admission, is present in many of his early performances—it is surely this ironic double bind, which he and his peers faced upon graduation: they needed the university to support their immaterial practice, but were disqualified from the institution for being too avant-garde. As CalArts professor and post-studio pioneer Allan Kaprow proposed in his 1971 essay "The Education of the Un-Artist," "Artists of the world, drop out! You have nothing to lose but your professions!"⁴⁰

Another critique immanent in *Five Day Locker Piece* indicts "the institutional architecture of the art school," and particularly Irvine's lack of studio space for graduate students.⁴¹ Burden recently commented "that the sparse facilities at uci forced students to find their own studios and buy their own equipment," which "helped students mature professionally" by teaching them what it was like to be a professional artist on one's own.⁴² Certainly, this eventuality supported the aim of training students for the real world, but it had a correlative negative effect upon the sense of community amongst both students and faculty, who Melinda Wortz described as alienated, atomized, and fragmented as a result of both the architecture of the university and the loose structure of the MFA program.⁴³ Many of the Irvine graduate students have noted the profound isolation they experienced in school, but it was, conversely, a catalyst for F Space, while also generating camaraderie, at least amongst the first class of graduate students. By occupying a locker, which was potentially the only personal space the MFA students commanded on campus, Burden was making an implicit statement about how limiting the lack of studios could be to their development, both individually and as a group. Paul Brach, the original dean of the School of Art at CalArts, said that in designing his new program he was weary of "the depersonalized effect of multi-use classrooms" where "students live out of their lockers and remove their work from the studio after each session."⁴⁴ Arriving at a similar critique of the space in which he was supposed to exhibit, Burden indeed removed all his work from the classroom and entered his metaphorical studio—the locker—to live and to carry on working on his MFA exhibition, nine-to-five, Monday through Friday.

By treating the locker as his de facto studio, Burden enfolded the process of creation into the finished product, making the nine-to-five work of the artist the content of the piece. In a sense, Burden was exposing a reality of artists'

38. Frazer Ward, *No Innocent Bystanders: Performance Art and Audience* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2012), 49.

39. Where individual faculty members stood in terms of being for or against Burden receiving his MFA is largely unknown. Burden said, "The New York art historians on the faculty at the time," specifically Barbara Rose, were "staunchly opposed" to awarding him his degree; see Juan Augustin Mancebo, "Hacer arte es verdaderamente una actividad subversiva," *Sin título 3* (September 1996), 53; Chris Burden interview with Glenn Phillips; Burden, interview by Kook-Anderson. Tony DeLap confirmed that Rose was not a fan of *Five Day Locker Piece*; see DeLap, Mason, and Glicksman, oral history interview.

40. Allan Kaprow, "The Education of the Un-Artist, Part I" (1971), in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 109.

41. Ward, *No Innocent Bystanders*, 48.

42. Chris Burden, paraphrased in Akers, "Chris Burden," 48. See also Fran Preisman, "Irvine, 1965–75—A Sense of Communication," *Artweek 6*, 42 (December 6, 1975), 9; Kook-Anderson, *Best Kept Secret*, xiv; Frank, "Context, Attitude, Community," 24.

43. Wortz, *University of California Irvine*, 8–9.

44. Brach made this comparison in insisting on the availability of private studio space for the students at CalArts; see Brach, "Cal Arts," 29.

Figure 7. May Day protest on Gateway Plaza at the University of California, Irvine in 1969. University Communications Photographs (AS-061). University of California, Irvine Libraries. Special Collections and Archives. Courtesy of the University of California, Irvine.



lives at UCI, where he and other students used to sleep in the disused offices of their professors, appropriating them as multi-purpose spaces where they lived, worked, took classes, and even occasionally exhibited.⁴⁵ Richard Newton, who studied in the Studio Art Department at Irvine as an undergraduate and graduate student in the late 1960s and early 1970s, said that the offices of Vija Celmins, John Paul Jones, and John Mason “became a kind of mini studio” for him at a period of time in which he was periodically living out of his car and dumpster-diving for food.⁴⁶ Tony DeLap recalled coming into the office some mornings to be surprised by Burden, who would occasionally sleep under his desk as part of what we might call research or training for *Five Day Locker Piece*.⁴⁷ Despite, or perhaps because of, the university’s unwelcoming physical plant, graduate students in Studio Art at UCI made do in a liberal environment where they were permitted to commandeer school property for their own ends without anyone on the faculty raising an eyebrow.

Burden’s *Five Day Locker Piece* conflates the labour of the artist, working and sometimes living in the studio, with the labour of the artist-professor, with its associated offices, lockers, and classrooms, thus showing the two to be coextensive. As Helen Molesworth has written, “Many artists staged the tension of the changing definitions of labour by mimicking the logic of labour’s division into mental and manual realms.”⁴⁸ In this case, the mental work is that accomplished by the conceptual-art professor, whose mentoring comes in a purely dialogic form, something that Burden could comfortably do from inside the locker. The manual labour or studio work is encompassed by the physical ordeal to which Burden submits: the time, patience, and presence of mind it took to endure five days confined in a luggage locker. Molesworth continues, “By establishing a task and then performing it, these artists acted out the roles of both manager and worker,” thus effecting a power-play, whereby the subordinate student, taught as though they were a peer of their professors, turns the tables on the faculty and assumes responsibility for, and control over, their own education.

Perhaps *Five Day Locker Piece*’s most cogent allusion is to the student protest movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which crippled campuses across

45. Richard Newton, quoted in Wortz, *University of California Irvine*, 84; Charles Hill, oral history interview by Grace Kook-Anderson, n.d. (ca. 2010–2011), Laguna Art Museum.

46. Richard Newton and Tony Rouff, oral history interview by Grace Kook-Anderson, n.d. (2010–2011), Laguna Art Museum.

47. Tony DeLap, personal communication, October 7, 2015.

48. Molesworth, “Work Ethic,” 39.

49. McCulloch, *Instant University*, 128–130.

the country, but especially in California, where Irvine's fellow state university at Berkeley was arguably the movement's center. The May 15, 1969 invasion of a student-occupied parcel of the Berkeley campus dubbed People's Park, and the subsequent rally and riot that left one dead and over 100 injured, was met at uci with a week of unrest, which included faculty strikes, sit-ins, and a university-sanctioned teach-in.⁴⁹ | **fig. 7** | Protest on the uc Irvine campus peaked that year when students rallied, marched, occupied administration buildings, and boycotted classes for a five-day "live-in" to protest the firing of three popular English teachers.⁵⁰ "With the opening of the 1969–70 academic year," when Burden started at uci, "attention shifted toward Washington, D.C., the Vietnam War, and the rise of the New Left,"⁵¹ and protest came in the form of moratorium strikes that Irvine observed in solidarity with schools across the country. The most significant protest that Burden may have experienced while at uci happened in May 1970 in response to the US bombing of Cambodia and the lethal shooting of six American students at Jackson State and Kent State Universities. Irvine joined fellow campuses throughout California in closing for four days, during which time, according to Barbara Smith, the students "took over" the school.⁵² Both Smith and Nancy Buchanan participated in protests at uci, which were generally led by the university's SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) chapter, but like most schools where activism was prevalent, Irvine was host to various other protest organizations, including Black nationalists, feminists, and guerrilla theatre troupes.⁵³

In a well-known, early interview in which Burden reflected on his performance work from 1971–1973, the artist alluded to the People's Park riots in Berkeley as an example of the kind of violence that informed his work.⁵⁴ In *Five Day Locker Piece*, Burden borrowed the methodology of the occupational protest as what Rosalind Krauss would call the work's technical support.⁵⁵ Beginning in 1964, with the occupation of administration buildings at uc Berkeley by proponents of the Free Speech Movement, students used the tactic of occupying classrooms in order to sabotage the normal, day-to-day operations of the university. Students who struggled for control over their education and a voice within the dehumanizing collegiate atmosphere of Cold War America used occupational protest as a tool to both raise awareness and agitate for change. Mario Savio's famous provocation for direct action, occupation, and sabotage was the call to arms of the Free Speech Movement:

When the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part, you can't even tacitly take part, you've got to put your bodies upon the gears, and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop. And you've got to indicate to the people that run it, the people who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all.⁵⁶

One of the student movement's primary issues was the status of education and the social and political forces underlying institutions of higher learning in particular. The early speeches of SDS leaders and their declaration, "The Port Huron Statement," made pedagogical reform one of the movement's top priorities. During teach-ins and through workshops and other informal modes of education, students assumed teaching roles and demanded access to subjects they deemed pertinent. By interrupting the smooth functioning of the university, student protesters begged faculty, students, and administrators

50. Frank McGee, *uci: The First 25 Years* (The Regents of the University of California, 1992), 54; McCulloch, *Instant University*, 122–128, 148–149.

51. McCulloch, *Instant University*, 132.

52. *Ibid.*, 150; Barbara T. Smith, personal communication.

53. Nancy Buchanan, oral history interview, February–March 2010, Getty Research Institute, Institutional Archives. Buchanan protested as an undergraduate at uci with the SDS (1967–1969). They called themselves "fear leaders" and went by the acronym PHUCI; Buchanan, personal communication.

54. Sharp and Béar, "Chris Burden," 56.

55. On the technical support, see especially Rosalind E. Krauss, *Under Blue Cup* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2011).

56. Mario Savio, from an address to the Free Speech Movement rally at Sproul Plaza, University of California, Berkeley, December 2, 1964, quoted in Irwin Unger, *The Movement: A History of the American New Left 1959–1972* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 71–72.

57. Burden subsequently repeated the story with emphasis on the Dean's role in *Willoughby Sharp Videoviews Chris Burden* (New York: Electronic Arts Intermix, 1975), video, 27:45 min., b&w, sound; Burden and Butterfield, "Chris Burden," 68; Mancebo, "Hacer arte es verdaderamente una actividad subversiva," 53; Burden, interview by Kook-Anderson.

58. Clayton Garrison, oral history interview, July 18, 2011, Laguna Art Museum.

alike to self-reflexively examine the construction of knowledge and power upon which academic institutions were based. In employing the technique of occupying space within the university, Burden, too, threw his body on the gears of the educational institution and challenged not only the process of artistic legitimization, but also its very ideological foundations.

Burden was well aware of the implications of his piece. No less than five times in the conversations he recorded on the first day of *Five Day Locker Piece* does he invoke the Dean of the School of Fine Arts, Clayton Garrison, who he knew was going to find out about the unauthorized infiltration and occupation. On the tape, Burden seems to be seriously worried that Dean Garrison could disrupt the piece by forcibly removing him from the locker if the right person were to object, such as a regent or donor. He was especially concerned that the situation might turn violent, noting that if the university police were going to break into the locker and yank him out, he would go down kicking and screaming, no doubt causing a scene and attracting desirable attention to the work. Burden later recounted that it took until Thursday for Dean Garrison to hear about the piece via word of mouth, at which point there was allegedly talk of crowbars and the use of force.⁵⁷ However, it seems that Burden posited the Dean as an adversarial force from day one, thereby spreading some of the very rumours that would eventually make their way to the latter's office on the top floor of the Fine Arts Building, where they became self-fulfilling prophecies. Garrison recalled that Burden "sent word" through the grapevine regarding the piece, but the Dean said his first call was to the campus physician, not to the police, because he was concerned about the potential health risks Burden was facing.⁵⁸ Later, Burden suggested that the contentious relationship he posited with the Dean in *Five Day Locker Piece* was a kind of rhetorical device that was not based on any actual confrontation, but rather used for effect. In relation to Dean Garrison, Burden said, "Those authority figures are really important ... you need someone to push against.... So, they serve a function."⁵⁹ Andrea Fraser, who has written about the co-dependent relationship between institutions and institutional critique, which need and validate one another, said that in pieces of institutional critique "the institution of art is internalized, embodied, and performed by individuals."⁶⁰ In *Five Day Locker Piece*, Burden performed the institution's own objection to his work by provoking the Dean to rein him in and by insinuating that a standoff, not unlike the student strikes and sit-ins of the era, was afoot.

On numerous occasions, Garrison stepped in to interfere with the students' work and Burden's paranoia, feigned or not, was not unfounded. Barbara Smith said there was a general perception amongst the students that the Dean wanted to shut down the department of Studio Art in favour of his own performing arts programs. In the spring of 1971, he intervened and threatened to expel Smith when she used a UC1 gallery for an overnight, participatory piece called *The Celebration of the Holy Squash*, which occasioned some shenanigans amongst fellow students who were participating in the work.⁶¹ Nancy Buchanan also recalls that Garrison "fought [the graduate students] every inch of the way, rejecting [their] every request."⁶² In particular, she remembers that he initially refused to allow Burden to ride his bike through the gallery for *Bicycle Piece* during the MFA thesis exhibition, which was scheduled to

59. Burden, interview by Kook-Anderson.

60. Fraser, "From the Critique of Institutions," 58.

61. Burden, interview by Kook-Anderson; Barbara T. Smith, personal communication. On *The Celebration of the Holy Squash*, see Rebecca McGrew and Jennie Klein, eds., *The 21st Century Odyssey Part II: The Performances of Barbara T. Smith* (Claremont, CA: Pomona College Museum of Art, 2005), 33, 35, 52–53; Moira Roth, ed., *The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance Art in America 1970–1980* (Los Angeles: Astro Artz, 1983), 138–139; Jennie Klein, "Feeding the Body: The Work of Barbara Smith," *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 21, 1 (1999), 28–29; Cole Akers, "Barbara T. Smith," in Kook-Anderson, *Best Kept Secret*, 94–95.

62. Nancy Buchanan, quoted in *Wertz, University of California Irvine*, 85.

63. Burden and Butterfield, "Chris Burden," 68; Robert Walker and Nancy Buchanan, interview by Grace Kook-Anderson; Nancy Buchanan, interview by Kook-Anderson, November 9, 2010, Laguna Art Museum; Hafif, oral history interview; Buchanan, "A Few Snapshots from F Space," 50.

64. Chris Burden, "Masterpieces of Modern Art," interview by Donald Carroll, n.d. (ca. 1974), Chris Burden Estate. Burden makes a similar remark in Sharp and Béar, "Chris Burden," 59.

open less than a week after Burden emerged from the locker. Buchanan and the other graduate students banded together in support of Burden, and threatened to boycott the thesis exhibition unless he was allowed to do his thing.⁶³ The confrontation between the graduate students and Dean Garrison over Burden's *Bicycle Piece* transpired just as the artist was entering the locker and must be seen as the background for his provocation of the Dean in *Five Day Locker Piece*. John Mason's visit to the locker to discuss the logistics of *Bicycle Piece* was, according to the audio recording, the first indication that Garrison was relenting.

For Burden, the crux of the situation was absolutely power: who had the power to determine the content of his work and the manner in which it was carried out. Adapting to what he learned through the dispute over *Bicycle Piece*, Burden said,

You don't ask, you just do it. You don't ask the Dean whether it's okay to do this, you do it, because if you ask them it gives them the power to say no. It's implying that they have the power to say yes or no, which they don't.⁶⁴

Frazer Ward has suggested that the threat posed by Dean Garrison brought to light the liminality of space within the university, which was ostensibly private and free to be used by artists in any way possible, yet authoritatively monitored and regulated by the administration; in the case of the graduate students at UCI, access to personal space on campus was simply denied.⁶⁵ In defining the practice of institutional critique, Alexander Alberro notes that one of its methods was to "[put] pressure on the disjuncture between the self-presentation of the art institution (as democratic and free of ... ideology) and the ... ideology that actually permeates it."⁶⁶ *Five Day Locker Piece* exemplifies this form of critique by opening up an egalitarian dialog between the artist and his interlocutors, while at the same time positioning its progenitor as a kind of prisoner of the educational institution, and thereby subject to its strictures and limitations regarding space. In her ethnographic study of CalArts in the 1970s, Judith Adler said that this tension was definitely felt at the time:

The contrast between the employed artist's dependency upon the organization owning the means of his production, and the older occupational image of the artist as a "free" ... professional—as a self-employed craftsman who could never be locked out of his own workshop through firing, graduation, or other unfortunate contingencies—made this wry metaphor of bondage a favoured bit of folk humour.⁶⁷

The bondage that Adler associates with satire is enacted by Burden as a biting parody that critiques the liberal assumption of creative license on which the hallowed space of the artist's studio, not to mention the modern education system, is founded. The genius of *Five Day Locker Piece* is that Burden brought the modus operandi of occupational protest to bear on his program and the wider art school by formulating the distrust of institutional power as a question equally faced in the aesthetic realm.

In spirit, the occupational protests of the various student movements of the late 1960s resembled workers' strikes, and it is therein that Burden's *Five Day Locker Piece* can be related to art-world protests from the same era, which make up the core of the canon of institutional critique.⁶⁸ Here the double meaning of the adjective "occupational"—related to both the occupation of space and to a profession or trade—is most operative, insofar as occupational

65. Ward, *No Innocent Bystanders*, 48.

66. Alexander Alberro, "Institutions, Critique, and Institutional Critique," in Alberro and Stimson, *Institutional Critique*, 12.

67. Adler, *Artists in Offices*, 6.

68. See, for instance, Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); and Alan W. Moore, *Art Gangs: Protest and Counterculture in New York City* (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2011).

69. Blake Stimson, "What was institutional critique?," in Alberro and Stimson, *Institutional Critique*, 20.

70. Christian Rattemeyer, "Musée-Museum," in *Marcel Broodthaers: A Retrospective*, eds. Manuel J. Borja-Villel and Christophe Cherix, exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2016), 166.

protests on college campuses in the late 1960s and early 1970s questioned the occupations held by university faculty and staff, not to mention the students' own future employability. Indeed, they were often referred to as "student strikes," which implies a disruption of the labour economy and all of the leftist political rhetoric and symbolism conjured by such an association. As Blake Stimson contends, the artistic practice of institutional critique was "a child of 1968" and the spirit of anti-institutionalism that it represented.⁶⁹ One of the discipline's most emblematic works, Marcel Broodthaers' *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles* (1968–1972), in fact derived from the May 1968 student protests in Europe. As a "reluctant leader" of the movement that occupied the Salle des Marbres at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, in solidarity with the concurrent student uprising, Broodthaers first thought to order empty art crates as furniture for people to sit on during a meeting of protestors in his apartment.⁷⁰ With his *Musée d'Art Moderne* project, Broodthaers created a counter institution that critiqued the museum through the performance of functions proper to it: exhibiting, moving and storing displays, labeling, and publicity. With a more comprehensive understanding of the background for Chris Burden's *Five Day Locker Piece* now available, we can see that the work was equally born from the student movement and translated agitation against the university into an artistic context in which issues of access to the art world and occupational training were paramount. ¶

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS I would like to thank, first and foremost, Nancy Rubins, Joshua Feigenbaum, and the Chris Burden Studio and Estate for making my work possible. I would also like to thank Kristen Carter at the University of British Columbia, and Grace Kook-Anderson and Dawn Minegar at the Laguna Art Museum. Last, but not least, I would like to thank my dissertation advisor, Branden Joseph, and the faculty of the Department of Art History and Archaeology of Columbia University, for supporting my project, as well as the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation, which has also generously provided funding for this work.