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Gary Lee

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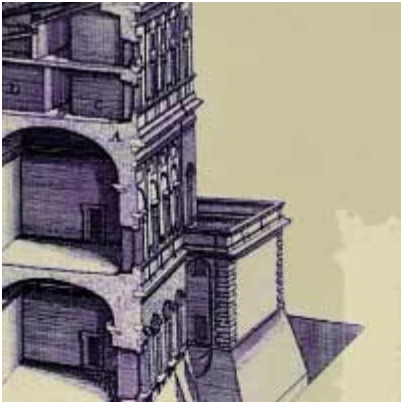
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## Interview Lee MingWei: The First Human Male Pregnancy Interview

Gary Lee on Jun 14 2000

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In your dinner project, how did you get the idea of inviting people to have dinner with you?

The origination of this project began when I was in New Haven. Being a new arrival at the Yale Campus, I didn't know anyone. I thought a way to get connected and understand the city, would be through meeting people. Therefore, I posted hundreds of posters all over the campus asking people who are interested in introspective conversation and food sharing to contact me. Thus, the dining project begins.

Why do you think people are interested in you or your dinner?

I think most of the participants are truly curious about me and about the project. It's also a challenge that they've set out for themselves.

Could you give some examples of people's opinions?

One person thought that it must've been a female artist's project. Another person wanted to use this project to deal with her eating disorder. Someone thought it was an interesting way of creating art.

In your living room project, why did you choose the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum to build a living room in or in which to do this project?

This project came out of my residency at Gardner Museum during June of 1999. In this project I wanted to emphasize and discuss the two concepts: hospitality and collection.

Do you think "living room" has a different meaning between eastern and western cultures?

For the most part, "living room" has a similar function and meaning in most cultures.

In your letter project, why do people want to write the forgiveness letter in public and share with other people?

Some people feel the need to share their most intimate thoughts with the public in order to feel a sense of relief and acknowledgment.

How is it different with the diary?

With a diary, the author writes with the understanding that it's not going to be shared with anyone. Where as with the letter writing project participants, some wrote the letters with the intention of sharing them with others.

In your money project, do you intend any end result or are you thinking about how valuable art is? (between living and having)

Art is the first thing that gets sacrificed when things go wrong. The value of art is relative to the circumstance, the context and the situation.

Which one of your projects do you think is the most interactive experience? Why?

The Letter Writing is the most interactive piece due to it's format and concept.

Your projects have been presented throughout the world, what are some of the different reactions to the interactive effects?  
(Time, people, and place were different)

So far, the interpretation of the works are very similar. Mainly because most of my works deal with the most fundamental aspect of humanity.

We had talked about your project's process and result, which one is more important in your project? Why?

I think the process is much more important for me as an artist. Maybe the participant would have a different take on this question. Process is such an organic part of the project that I've very little control over it. In many ways, the result really is just the residue which is something that has happened already.

In all your projects, you love to exchange experience with people and listen to people's opinions about your works, so how do you translate this?

Yes, I do create dialogue between my participants and myself. These conversations inevitably become a part of my memory and personal experience, therefore, change me in subtle but yet profound ways.

You were born in and grew up in Taiwan, but you have lived in the U.S. for almost 20 years. Do you think you are a western or eastern artist? Or something else?

I am neither East nor West but both. It's really difficult to draw boundaries, for anyone, when asked to place oneself in one or the other. Well, I am like a chameleon that changes "color" according to the circumstance and the context. I think it's due to the instinct of self-protection and knowing what is the best manifestation under certain conditions. We all do it all the time.

In your male-pregnancy project, what do you want to tell people? I watched some movies about it so I don't think the point is "is it possible?" Would you like to give birth to a baby?

For my male-pregnancy project, I would like to provide a safe and serious platform for

people to discuss not only the possibility of having a male being pregnant, but also the social and moral implications in humanity in general. I wouldn't mind being the first male to carry a healthy baby to term.

Last question - are you an artist?

I don't know, what do you think? I always believe that a child is a child because he doesn't know he's a child. Once the child gains the knowledge of his own circumstance, then the innocence is lost and so lost is the childlike quality. What do you think?



## ::CrossReference

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