One aspect of interpretation involves the attempt to understand how ideas are effected by their contexts, whether artistic or theoretical—that is to understand how the meaning of an artwork shifts according to the critical framework we use to look at it. This exercise involves forming two different interpretations of an artwork, shifting the emphasis of meaning to accommodate different contexts and methods.

On the back of this page, write the names of your group members and the name of the artwork you are discussing. There is also space provided to summarize your interpretations of the work.

A. From Concrete to Concept

1. For your first interpretation, begin by defining concrete and definite parts of the artwork—things or objects that will become the building blocks of your interpretation. Describe key elements, along with possible associations or metaphors. Be as specific as possible in your discussion. By taking these building blocks and giving them symbolic meaning, it will be possible to interpret the work in a variety of creative ways.

2. If you had to reduce the artwork to 2 key elements, objects or ideas what would they be? Examine the details and nuances of these components, attempting to think through the ways in which your associations can be elaborated and contextualized by strategically foregrounding one component of the artwork over another.

3. As a group, synthesize your discussion, choosing one key way to frame and articulate the associations you have selected. Try to formulate a 1-2 sentence interpretation of the main ideas. Write your interpretation on the back of this page.

B. From Concept to Context

1. For your second interpretation, begin with concepts rather than objects—discussing the work in terms of main ideas from Nicolas Bourriaud’s book, *Relational Aesthetics* (relational art, transitivity, collaboration, contract, conviviality, etc.). Where do you see indications of these concepts in the work, and how are these relationships within the work anchored? What sorts of places or situations serve as the basis for these aspects of the artwork? Be as specific as possible about how you feel the work to be relational.

2. Choose one of the concepts that you discussed above and is particularly evident in the artwork. Does the artwork interact with, shift or change the concept, asking questions or provoking a different way of thinking about the idea? If so, how does the artwork do this? If the concept is a box, how is the artwork situated outside or within this box?

3. Using the relationship between the artwork and the concept as your basis, formulate a second interpretation of the piece. Write your interpretation in the space on the back of this page, the relationship in relational terms.
Identify the members of your group and their ideas in the space below. Feel free to use this space to take notes as well, as needed:

Name of Artwork: ________________________________________________________________

Make note of your interpretations here:

First Interpretation (From Concrete to Concept):
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Second Interpretation (From Concept to Context):
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