Important to the idea of arts analysis is the ability to differentiate between opinion and interpretation. One way of doing this is by learning how to purposefully advocate for a critical perspective that is not your own – to make up a perspective using your own creative resources to advance an understanding of the artwork. This exercise asks you to build two contradictory interpretations of the same artwork, using key terms from Nicolas Bourriaud’s text to help articulate the details of the interpretation.

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.

1. **Description.** As you have done with previous exercises, begin by articulating—as a group—the various elements and relationships within the artwork. What are the physical components that make up the piece? What are the relationships upon which the piece depends? Where possible, try to use terms and concepts from Bourriaud’s text to help you describe the work.

2. **Details and Nuances.** Select one element or relationship that seems particularly important to the work. Articulate as fully as possible the nuances and details that make this element or relationship important. Your interpretations will always be most convincing when they incorporate these details, which give strength and creativity to your perspective. Develop a list of the particularities of the element or relationship, in as comprehensive a way as possible. Record your list on the back of this page.

3. **Interpretation.** Based on the relationship or element you selected, discuss possible interpretations that you might come up with—articulations not only of the details of the work but of how those details begin to form a meaning. Be specific about how the details support your interpretation and be mindful not to over-generalize. Summarize your interpretation on the back of this page.

4. **Reversibility.** Discuss others ways in which the details you articulated could be interpreted. Does looking at the work from a different perspective, or highlighting different aspects of the piece, shift the meaning? Consider how the work might be interpreted by others, whether participants, those involved with the world of art, or a general public. See if you can find an interpretation that uses the same details to frame an opposite interpretation of the work. Record this interpretation on the back of this page.
Identify the members of your group in the space below.

Name of Artwork: ____________________________________________

Use this space to record the details and nuances of the relationship you’re exploring (question 2).

In the space below, record your first interpretation of the work (question 3):

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In the space below, articulate how the interpretation could be seen as its opposite (question 4):

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