1. **There has always been an element of "progress" to modernism (and modernity in general), whereby we "learn" from failures, grow and move on. Is it possible to let go of this idea of progress without also losing this relationship to failure? How do you have a relationship to history that isn't about progress?**

The absurd idea that we humans can master our destiny (and environment) and will eventually go beyond the limits that frame the lives of other animals, is precisely what has inhibited us from embracing failure in a creative way.
Yes, I think that we can let go of the modern myth of progress –the grandiose meta-narrative of humanity gradually marching towards a better world; "the progress of mankind"— and maintain a relationship to failure just as long as we don't understand failure in the same absolute terms. In other words, we can maintain a relationship to failure just as long as "failure" loses its negative connotations and is viewed as an integral (and inevitable) part of the process of being alive. So, in a way, I think that not only can we relate to failure by eliminating the myth of progress but I would argue that abandoning the idea of the progress of humankind is a prerequisite to establishing a more creative and organic relationship to failure (and history in general).

2. **Do you relate to utopianism in your art (e.g., the modernist city, the social state, the avant-garde, collectives and/or communes, techno cultural -utopianism, "counterculture", Socialism, ideologically driven revolution and social change)? If so, how?**

Well, being the son of a disillusioned generation (my father was part of the 60's student movement in Mexico), I have a complex relationship to utopianism in my life and art. I can definitely say that I do have a strong relationship to these traditions and in many ways was raised in them. But that doesn't mean that I fully embrace them. I guess that I'm still interested and believe in the possibility of affecting the world in ways I consider to be positive, but there are two big differences: One is that the power I believe to have as a person, and which I exercise through my art practice, is very, very limited in comparison to the scope of many of the utopian movements you mention. Secondly, I do not believe that, granting that we artists are actually capable of provoking changes, that those changes can be permanent. So, would that still be considered utopianism? I don't know. But going back to failure, I do not consider that these enormous limitations should be in any way considered a problem or a reason to stop striving for changes.
I think that a lecture by Vito Acconci I attended a few years back illustrates very well this generational difference with regards to utopianism. The auditorium was packed with people whose lives (like mine) had been changed, if at least a little (which is a lot), by Acconci's early work and who, by the end of the talk, were highly disappointed. Acconci did not speak about his early work, instead he focused in his more recent architectural work. An old man, who was as pissed off as I was, asked Acconci why had he decided to change fields. His reply was

that he was highly disillusioned with art's inability to reach the masses and therefore it wasn't worth it. In other words, in Acconci's mind, for one single individual to affect hundreds of people wasn't enough, he was still thinking in terms of "masses". It is the "all or nothing" mentality that I find problematic within utopianism.

3. **If you see yourself as part of a progressive or radical political position, do you feel that such position necessitates an experimental aesthetic practice?**

Even though I do not necessarily see myself as having a "progressive" nor a "radical" political position (because I find both terms to be highly problematic), it is very important for me to be sensitive to my context and environment while making my work. This process necessarily carries a political dimension and it is inherently experimental. Specific aesthetic solutions respond to specific circumstances and taking into account that both our circumstances and perceptions are in constant change, I think that art that is receptive to context necessarily requires an experimental approach.
I consider the term "progressive" inherently implies the possibility of a final or perfect state towards which we are slowly heading and I simply don't believe that to be the case. "Radical", to me also connotes a very arrogant position for which one claims to possess absolute and definite answers and I simply don't believe in that possibility.

4. **Do you relate at all to Brecht's statement that "Art is not a mirror to hold up to society, but a hammer by which to shape it"? Do you prefer a more didactic, or collaborative approach to your work?**

I don't think ideas or positions can be force-fed on anyone's thoughts. At the most, we can only hope for art to stimulate reflection and serve as a means for people to re-think their positions. Besides that, I don't think that anyone (artist or not) can claim to possess formulas with regards to how people or society should be shaped. That is why I'm not interested in didactic art, to me art-making is not about teaching lessons, rather it is about interaction and feedback, about throwing questions out there for them to bounce around in all directions and be collectively addressed.

5. **Contemporary art has a particular relationship to humanist philosophy (a philosophy which may or may not be succeeding within advancing capitalism). How do you relate to humanism in your art?**

I have mixed feelings about humanism but, mostly, I don't think humanism has proven to be very effective vis a vis capitalism or other irrational human behavior. Instead, I find humanism to be an integral part of capitalism: humanism as a philosophy which in many ways came to replace religion and has been used to justify some of the most atrocious aspects of capitalism. By placing us humans

“above” all other species –and above everything for that matter— humanism has increasingly alienated us from our environment to the degree that we are very close to destroying the very conditions that allow us to exist. Even though humanist philosophy has also served as a tool to counteract and partially contain some of the destructive forces of human civilization (for instance the notion of human rights as a way of preventing slavery which came into being as a direct result of civilization), when looking at the big picture, humanism has clearly failed because of its inability to understand the human condition as part of its natural environment (and not “Nature”—a human construction in and of itself—built to be subservient to humanity).
From this perspective, in my art I attempt to distance myself as much as possible from the anthropocentrism and arrogance of the humanist tradition while, paradoxically, at the same time, I rely heavily on the very structures that have been built within the humanist tradition (i.e. universities, museums, etc…).

6. **Do you know the public/audience that your art is communicating with? Do you feel that your art can be an effective agent of discourse, exchange, and/or communication amongst this public/audience? How does one go about defining effectivity?**

I don’t think that we can define audience is homogeneous terms, for instance the audience that goes to artist-run spaces is not necessarily the same that goes to museums and the audience that goes to a museum in Houston is not necessarily the same audience that goes to a museum in New York and so on. Nonetheless, within this huge diversity among audiences, there are also similarities: I am more interested in what we don’t know than in what we know, and it is within this state of unknowing or confusion I attempt to communicate with people. I guess that this “not-knowing” makes me feel I know my audience at least a bit.
Regarding the question of effectivity, of course it’s relative to the artist’s intention but within the context of this question (art’s ability to generate public discourse), I think that when an artist is able to stimulate the viewer into engaging in dialogue, we can already talk about a level of effectivity.
I think art is potentially effective at pointing out issues (be they political, existential, formal, etc) for, as artists, we have a captive audience, generally willing to pay more attention than usual, and this is something that can definitely be advantageous. This doesn’t mean that we can’t have highly revealing, aesthetic or life-changing experiences in our everyday lives, but art definitely provides a great space in which we are more willing than usual to stop our (generally mechanic) everyday behavior and take some distance from ourselves.

7. **Do you respond creatively more to past failures (either personal or historical), or successes?**

Generally speaking, I’m as interested in the process as I am in the result. In other words, they are often one of the same. From this perspective, it is very hard to distinguish failure from success. For instance, many of my works are highly performative and part of the premise is to let things acquire a life of their own, I’m not interested in fully predetermining end results. I’m interested in discovering

things along the way. With this kind of methodology, I can't really afford to resist failure, instead I need to embrace it as much as I embrace success. To me, success is a series of productive failures.