

That's America for Ya! : Conversation with Alisa Baremboym

(Cut)

Are they cut? (Alisa)

No. (Ei)

Do I have to cut them?

Yeah, there are several pieces that we have to cut during 30 minutes.

Then that doesn't make sense because in the Superbowl, they probably already had them cut.

Yeah, I only cut parts of them. Only circle parts for the stage and roof. But anything else we will cut.

How did you cut them?

Honestly I didn't cut them yet. This Friday I will cut at the sculpture building. You know, possibly we can not construct within 30 minutes, but that's fine too.

That's what I was thinking. I didn't think it's possible.

(laughter) We have to try our best, okay?

I mean if everything is cut in advance, then we will definitely construct it in 30 minutes.

No, it's very simple.

I think we can construct it in 30 minutes. The Superbowl stage was constructed in 5 minutes.

4 minutes. Not even 5.

We definitely can. I mean it's not that big. Are you going to dress up in drag?

No.

Why not?

I got a T-shirt yesterday for myself.

Are we going to be wearing the T-shirts?

No. You can wear whatever you want.

Ok. Can I be naked?

Sure. (laughter) That's so avant-garde.

Avant-garde. I'll be naked when building a stage.

Alisa is really different . . . (music)

Not only blond! (laughter)

(Cut)

Are you excited to go to Bard?

Actually I have a bigger concern than that right now. Bard will only support my visa for two months, so I'm not sure about the rest of a year.

Oh, yeah. How are you going to do that? You told me.

I think I'm going to a school uptown. National Academy of Design.

Do you have to pay them?

400 for a month.

National . . . where did you find this? It's so weird . . .

It's like next to the Guggenheim Museum. Very old school. Students are also uptown 80- year olds. You know like "art as hobby"?

So you're just going to pay them, and not going to classes?

Actually, I have to go. 15 hours a week. \$400 for a month.

So how much is it for a year?

If I go 9 months, about \$4000. I have to go 9 months. I can pay 400 a month, but I have to move out.

Yeah, you can't afford anymore. Where do you live?

Very far. The 8th station stop from Bedford. Now, I will live in someone's basement if I got in the National Academy.

You're going to live in someone's basement? Who's basement?

My friend.

Is it . . . That's not good. Can you stay here any other way?

Well, I'm thinking about a marriage too, but it takes time.

(Cut)

Anyway, you really want to pay that much money to the school?

Yeah . . .

That doesn't make sense. I think you should definitely stay here, and it's problematic with these stupid immigration laws.

I know.

We go to all other countries, and make others work for 2 cents per an hour.

Yeah.

Then they don't want to take you to live here. That's America for ya!

(Cut)

I want to leave New York.

Leave?

I'm sick of New York. It's not an ideal environment for me. In Berlin, for instance, there are a lot opportunities, government sponsors, money --

that go toward the artists. Here it's always who you know. Who you know is always necessarily the best person, to contact. Not necessarily the best person as a person. I'm sure it works in this way in other places, but I think it's very dirty, not based on an artistic principle, it's not based on ideas. It's bullshit. I always knew that it's about connections, and art work that I see here sometimes is just bad. That I've never seen the same kind of thing happen in London, I feel like London is a new center for ideas. Whatever New York is, it's just Pollock and expressionism. Whether we admit it or not. Even the whole phenomenon, using a projector to make a painting -- all of that. It's a great tool to use, but people are obsessed with it . . . it's awful. New York is about fashion.

How long were you in London?

6 months. Long enough to see that things working there aren't the same as here. It opened my eyes. If I don't go to grad school next year, I think I might stay here whether I like it or not. With New York you always want to leave, but you're always sucked in to stay because of so many great things about it. This city, is not necessarily **the** art world.

I hope things will be getting better for New York.

I hope so too. But not as long as we have this bullshit president.