

Naomi (N), Leo (L)

N: (looks around) We need, a bench.
L: To look at art?
N: To sit on.
L: Is that all?
N: (BEAT) I believe so.
L: So what should this bench look like?
N: Like it could take some weight.
L: Is that the only criteria, some weight?
N: I don't know. It depends.
L: And what would it depend on?
N: Well, it should seat some people.
L: Like the two of us. (turns to address Naomi)
N: You mean two interns?
L: Perhaps, but that'd be too self-conscious.
N: (BEAT) Two is good. I'd have some space between the two of us.
L: (turns to look at Naomi, slightly offended) Is that preferable?
N: You could say so.
L: Would you not like to sit besides me?
N: I've never liked sitting beside anyone. Besides, I doubt we'd ever find ourselves sitting beside each other on said bench.
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L: (BEAT) So we'd have a four-foot bench.
N: Make that five.
L: That's too long.
N: Five-foot seems just about right. (motions for space)
L: A five-foot bench means too much sitting around.
N: Not having a bench means no sitting around.
L: How about a four-foot bench. It's perfect for two paintings.
N: What kind of paintings?
L: The kind that we always show.
N: We hardly show paintings.
L: But we should.
N: Name one painter that we should show.
L: (name one)
N: Now you know he wouldn't show here.
L: Now it'd be great if he does though.
N: That's a big *if*.
L: And so is this bench.
N: Which bench?
L: The non-bench.
N: I like the five-foot bench.
L: I like this no-foot bench. (Gestures to the ground)
N: Would be nice to sit on it though.
L: No rest for the wicked. You'll have more time for paintings after paintings after paintings to look at.
N: But paintings don't show here.
L: Then this non-bench is perfect then.
N: I'd like a five-foot bench.
L: (BEAT) Now that passed the time.
N: (Annoyed) It would have passed anyway.
L: Not so quickly.
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N: (Gathers pace) You know how some art just comes and goes and just as well leave you behind. You walk into a room and you see it. You exchange glances. It touches you, time stops and you lose touch with the world then...

L: (interrupts) A rupture!
N: ... and there and when you snap right out of it you realise... you're alone.
L: Abandoned
N: As by a lover (dramatically) and having to deal with all the consequences.
L: Like a fleet of motorcycles had just driven through the caverns of your still-beating heart?
N: Exactly.
L: I've seen that before, by the way.
N: What about it?
L: That's rough.
N: That's *magic*.
L: And then what do you do?
N: You're weak... You lie down... as only a five-foot bench would allow you to. (feints a faint)
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L: Have you ever given some thought about the relationship between benches and exhibitions?
N: They're not dating each another I hope.
L: No, but they do make funny bedfellows. What do you do when you see an artwork?
N: I approach it. I walk towards it.
L: Do *you* walk towards it or does it draw you to it?
N: (BEAT) I don't know. It calls out to me as much as I yearn to come close to it. Either one wouldn't make much sense.
L: Dan Flavin said that the movements in space generated by artworks are more important than the object themselves. That peculiar dance of audiences in the space between them.
N: Does that explain his light sculptures?
L: What do you mean?
N: It sounds like he ran a dance club.
L: Do you have nothing else to say?
N: He's quite ahead of his time.
N: (annoyed) Why I pray that I have something to say. Give me something to say that makes sense so that I can make sense.
L: I think the bigger the bench, the harder the dance.
N: I don't think so.
L: That's unfortunate. I hope you change your mind.
N: That's likely. Unlike art, we all change.
L: Because we won't stay contemporary?
N: (glances at herself and Leo) Not by the looks of it. Not even if we work at a museum.
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L: You seem to be putting up quite the show here nonetheless.
N: What kind of show?
L: (ponders) A constellation of relations.
N: Are we saying the same thing as tautology?
L: Have you seen the same show in two spaces?
N: No. Never.
L: I've seen the same film twice in two different cinemas.
N: What was the film?
L: It began just as a bar was about to close. The protagonist had his fellow patrons clear the premise for space and placed his friend at the very centre. He was the sun, arms lifted, fingers twinkling right by his face, resplendent and eternal. Then came a second patron, the earth who spun around the sun. Pirouette upon its own axis, nourished by the embrace of the sun. Lastly, the third patron, the moon who went about in circles around our earth, keeping its stony gaze upon us just as it kept its dark side shies away.
N: Did the same person sit beside you?
L: (confused) No...

N: Then it was not the same show.
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N: Once I saw a work. I don't remember its maker.
L: How could you not?
N: But neither did the artwork.
L: So what about it?
N: It was huge... (disapprovingly) monumental. Warmly-tinged, you walk within its sculpted curves. Inescapably, you feel its sheer scale impose its will upon you, just as even light inevitably succumb to bend around objects of immense gravity. You were the space-time that its gargantuan mass warped.
L: Was it by Zaha Hadid.
N: (BEAT) No, it was Richard Serra you buffoon.
L: So artworks are to you defined by its gravity.
N: But also its ability to defy it.
L: (Ponders) Now how many feet was the bench at the centre of the artwork?
N: I don't know.
L: Was it four or was it five?
N: What's the difference?
L: Just a one-foot bench.
N: Well, I never made it to the centre, to be honest...
L: That doesn't make sense.