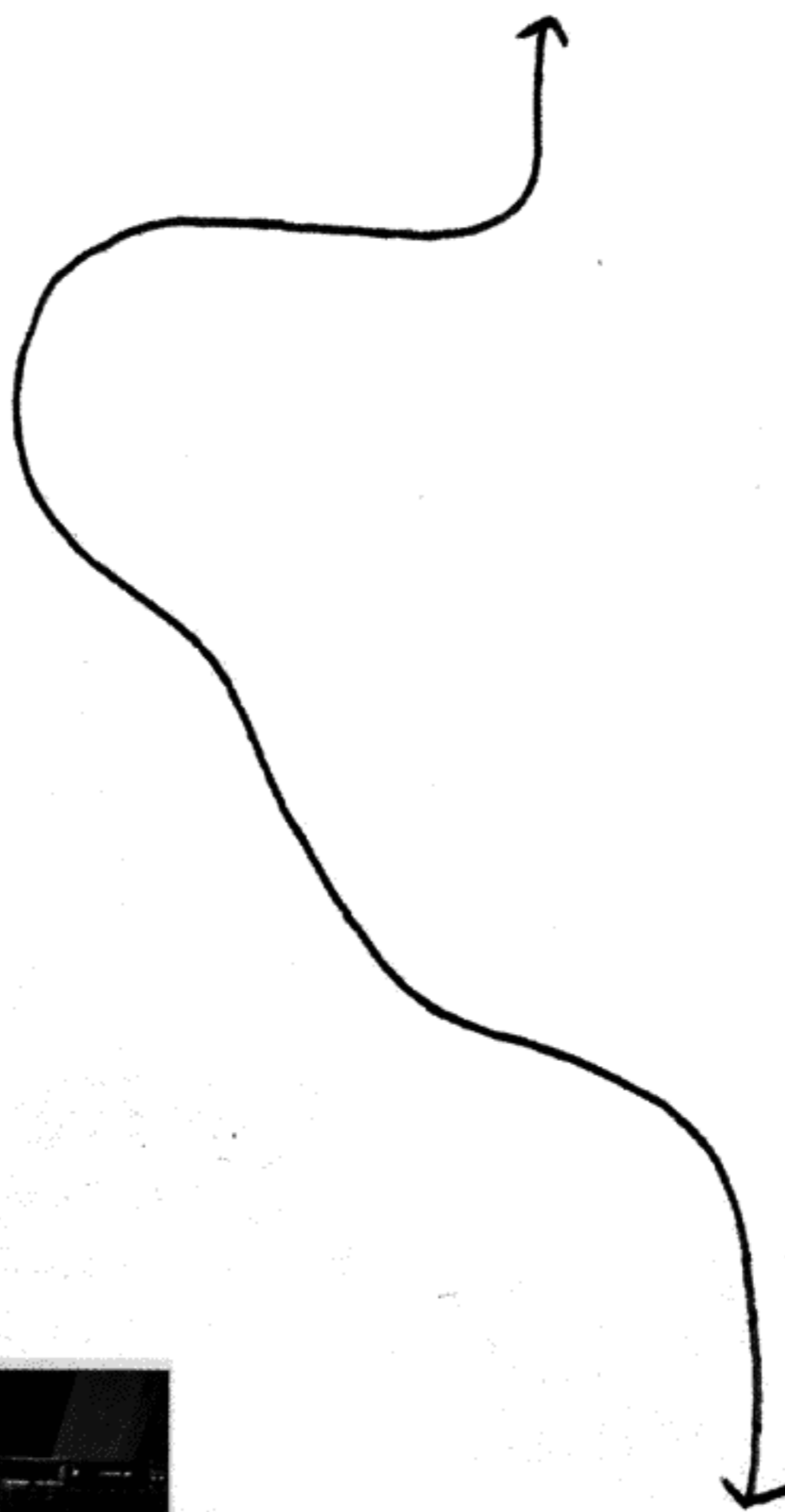


In 1997 Miguel Calderón and Yoshua Okon exhibited a stack of 120 stolen car stereos on the gallery floor of La Panaderia (Mexico City, Mexico) - 119 of these stereos were obtained in the second-hand 'stolen' goods market. On the wall behind the sculpture, a looped video projection showed how the artists obtained the 120th stereo by breaking into a car, smashing the window and pulling the stereo out from the dashboard.

Yoshua Okon



Miguel Calderón



**MIGUEL CALDERÓN, YOSHUA OKON**

A Propósito..., 1996

Videoprojection (1 min), 120 car stereos,  
Variable dimensions

Courtesy Miguel Calderón

## A PROPÓSITO

During the 80s and 90s, having the stereo stolen from your car in Mexico was a very common situation. When I was studying in the 7th and 8th grades, it was a rite of passage to steal one, not out of necessity, but as a way of being accepted by the high school gangs. After a period of dialogue, sparked in the creation of our own art space, La Panaderia, Yoshua talked to me about his interest in researching and documenting people that stole car stereos. In order to understand the driving force that motivated them, apart from the little money they obtained, I thought that it would be a good idea to experience the situation directly from their point of view, through being the perpetrator instead of the victim.

We set to steal the stereo in a rich Mexican neighborhood. In a first ironic attempt, and because of my lack of experience, I hit the glass with a hammer covered in a sock (to lessen the noise) and it bounced right back up at me, so I ran back into our car, where Yoshua was videotaping me. Determined, we spotted a car parked in an area where we would be able to drive away fast enough, and I smashed the glass and with a screwdriver pulled out the stereo in 26 seconds. The alarm was set off and Yoshua was shouting at me to hurry, luckily we didn't get caught. I had a big adrenalin rush, and in a way I did get to understand why people get such an addictive thrill. The second step was to show, along with the video, a wall of stolen car stereos.

While we were negotiating them in the black market, a guy pulled a gun on us - luckily we survived. Through this we understood how much stolen goods and piracy help to sustain Mexico's economy and how many people actually survive because of this illegal, but thriving, business.

Miguel Calderón

