



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with Tatyana Grosman,  
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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Tatyana Grosman on March 31, 1970. The interview took place in Tatyana Grosman's home and was conducted by Paul Cummings for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose. This is a rough transcription that may include typographical errors.

## Interview

PAUL CUMMINGS: This is March 31, 1970 - Paul Cummings talking to Tatyana Grosman in your house - right?

TATYANA GROSMAN: Yes. Thank you for coming.

MR. CUMMINGS: You were just about to say that you were born - where?

MS. GROSMAN: I was born in Russia.

MR. CUMMINGS: Whereabouts?

MS. GROSMAN: In the Ural Mountains. That is actually in Siberia. The town was called Tziranbook and now it's called Svetslask. My father was the newspaper publisher in this town. You asked me previously how I became interested in printing. I would say it probably began at home since there were always books and newspapers - especially papers were always a great concern of my father's. I think that was it. So when the moment came in 1955 or 1956, when my husband became ill, that I had to do something there was no time to learn so I fell back on this heritage.

MR. CUMMINGS: What kind of schools did you go to in Russia?

MS. GROSMAN: I went to a gymnasium - I don't know how it compares with the public schools here - it's very hard to say. And I went to Sacre Coeur in Tokyo for one year. Then I finished the Lyceum in Germany. And then I went to an arts and crafts academy in Dresden, Germany where I finished my schooling. That was actually my education. At the arts and crafts academy I was mainly drawing flowers and nudes.

MR. CUMMINGS: At art school?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, at art school we spent much time drawing nudes and still-lives, mainly flowers, botanical gardens. So that was that. So then I met my husband, Maurice Grosman, who is a painter. We went to Paris and settled down.

MR. CUMMINGS: When was that about?

MS. GROSMAN: That was about 1930. But previous to that my family traveled very much. There's so much of art, of course, in Italy and everywhere where we traveled. Every year we went somewhere like Prague and Italy and Germany. And then my husband - of course I think that my education, my interests were not only central to an artist but also being in a group of artists of this time - Jacques Lipchitz and Ossip Zadkine and Soutine, all these people - somehow we saw each other every day at Montparnasse at the Café du Dome. And I think I learned very much just my approach to art in general at home from my father who was considered a creative person, a most voluble person, a person who had the sparkle of the gods (I try to translate now from the Russian), they have a saying that a person who creates has the sparkle of the gods. And then of course in France we met and lived among the bohemian artists where I developed great compassion for the artists. They live just on their own resources, they have no security, they have no future even; they have just complete dedication to their art. And so I love artists very much. For me they are really more or less the greatest people.

MR. CUMMINGS: At home was your family interested in music?

MS. GROSMAN: Not much. It was more the theatre. We were very close to the theatre: again through the newspaper life. The theatre was very important to us. And literature of course. Literature and the theatre. I must say I grew up with theatre. We went to the theatre at least two or three times a week. We went to all the premieres. And that continued later, during the time I lived in Germany. Also in Japan, to a degree. But then in France it was a completely different life, a bohemian life with the artists there. Of course there were always financial difficulties. It was completely different.

MR. CUMMINGS: You've seen a great deal of the world, haven't you?

MS. GROSMAN: Well, I feel I've lived always various lives.

MR. CUMMINGS: I see. Each country had its own life.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. Each period was so different. That is it.

MR. CUMMINGS: You were in Paris from - what? - about 1930 until -- ?

MS. GROSMAN: Actually we were in France until 1942. Paris was occupied by the Germans in 1940. Then we made the exodus to the south of France to Perpignan, and to Marseilles. We crossed the border into Spain in November 1942. We lived in Spain for about nine months or a year. And then we had a visa to come to the United States. We arrived here in 1943.

MR. CUMMINGS: Where did you arrive when you came here?

MS. GROSMAN: The boat arrived in Philadelphia. The same day we received tickets and came to New York.

MR. CUMMINGS: Who were some of the artists that you knew in Paris?

MS. GROSMAN: As I say, the artists we met right away here were: Jacques Lipchitz and Ossip Zadkine. Oh yes, and Mané Katz, the well-known Jewish artist at that time. We met them here. They were very kind to us and helped us.

MR. CUMMINGS: So a lot of the people you knew in Paris were here already, when you arrived?

MS. GROSMAN: Well, some, not all; but a few. And they helped us. Zadkine rented a studio for my husband. Mané Katz brought an easel and helped with various recommendations. They were very helpful. We had a studio on Eighth Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. Actually it was a big room; that was it.

MR. CUMMINGS: Who were some of the artists in Paris in the 1930s that were close friends that you got to know very well and saw frequently?

MS. GROSMAN: Well, they were my husband's friends actually. They were Kraming, Piradus, Kekoing; and Berman who is an American artist here. And Soutine, whom my husband knew better than I did. That was the group that I remember. The sculptor Uchansky and Indenbaum. They were mostly Russian, Polish, Jewish artists that were called the Montparnasse School.

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you continue painting and drawing and things at this point?

MS. GROSMAN: No, I did not. I was just an observer, an admirer; just the devoted wife of an artist. Very traditional. I was just making tea for friends, or something like that.

MR. CUMMINGS: What was it like then to come to this country? - because traveling around in Europe is one thing but to come here is a whole new thing.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, a completely new world. Well, actually the first feeling I remember was a great feeling of gratitude for being brought to the United States. The attitude of the people. And then it was a great kind of feeling that one has a mission and the feeling that one has a responsibility toward other people who perhaps didn't survive, a feeling of mission that one has to transmit something which was given us and that we should not disappoint all those people who gave us faith and love and, well, saved us. They endangered themselves doing it. So I had the feeling that we had to accomplish something very important. That was the first feeling I had on coming here.

MR. CUMMINGS: What did you do for the first few years then?

MS. GROSMAN: My husband is a painter and he started to paint here. And then he did some teaching.

MR. CUMMINGS: Where did he teach?

MS. GROSMAN: Just privately in his studio. Friends recommended him to their friends and so he had students. And the students purchased paintings. It was a very humble, modest life. We were not too spoiled from Europe so we were happy with what we had. I think my husband was quite happy. So that was it.

MR. CUMMINGS: How long did you live on Eighth Street then?

MS. GROSMAN: We lived there from 1943 exactly until 1955. But we had already started to come out here to this

little house I think it was in 1944 or 1945. I would have to check on that to be sure exactly. The house then was only from here to the next room. It was a gardener's cottage on a big estate. Accidentally we were invited to stay here to our good fortune. Everything happened by miracle.

MR. CUMMINGS: Who was the person who provided the accident for you?

MS. GROSMAN: I'll try not to go into too much detail. We were invited to visit a friend on Fire Island. It was so peaceful and wonderful. The summer was very hot in New York and we thought we would look for a room with kitchen privileges somewhere in this area. So one day we decided that we would come out. On the train going to Bayshore, Long Island, we decided we'd get off at the station before Bayshore, which is Babylon. We bought the local newspaper and looked at the advertisements to see if perhaps there was anything we could rent there. But nothing interested us or was too expensive for us at that point. It was about ten o'clock in the morning. My husband said, "We can't do anything; let's go back to New York." We were standing on what I now know is Montauk Highway. I said, "Oh, no, no. This one day let us be in the country, this one day; even if nothing happens and we can't find anything at least this one day since we're here let's spend it in the country: let's go on to Bayshore. Perhaps we'll have some good luck." In the meantime the bus passed. We asked somebody why the bus didn't stop. He explained that you have to give a signal and then the bus will stop. So I said, all right, the next time we see a bus we'll make a signal. My husband again was very unhappy. He said, "No. It's so hot, let's go home." I said, "Listen, we'll walk on this road and when we're tired we'll sit down and we'll signal the next bus; please let us have this one day in the country." I had a feeling that I just had to walk on this road. I started to walk on Montauk Highway and my husband was in back of me grumbling unhappily. We had just taken a few steps when a beautiful limousine stopped and a very charming, gray-haired man opened the door and said, "Please come and take a seat. I can't stand to see people walking on the road." So we got into the car. Then he said, "Where can I take you?" I said, "To the next bus station, please." Then he asked various questions just to be polite. I told him that we were artists and that we were looking for a room with kitchen privileges. When he came to the next bus station he said, "Here you are." Oh! Before that we passed a big house - I don't know if you saw the big estate before you turn from the Montauk Highway - there's a big mansion there. As we passed it he said, "This is where I live." I said, "Please stop here." He said, "No, no, I'll take you to the bus station." Which he did. We got out and thanked him. He was just ready to turn back when he looked at us and said, "If you don't find anything by evening - you've seen where I live so come back and perhaps I can help you." He drove away. My husband didn't understand English and asked me what the man had said. I told him. The next bus came and we went to Bayshore. We went first to Islip and we didn't find anything. What we saw was so horrible, so terrible. So evening came and I said, "Now we'll go to see Mr. Derum." My husband said, "Now that you know that everything is so expensive there's no sense in doing that." I said, "No, please let's go and see Mr. Derum." So we took a bus back and arrived at this big mansion. It was about six o'clock in the evening and the heat was less oppressive. There was a lovely park. I knocked on the door. There was no answer. So we walked around the house and here was - I don't know what you call it - an arbor of roses that you pass through, an allée of roses. And there was Mr. Derum and another gentleman working with the roses. When Mr. Derum saw us he said, "You didn't find anything?" I said, "No." He said, "Wait a minute." He went into the house and came out again and said, "Please follow me." So we passed through the roses, we walked through a beautiful park and passed a lake with swans - it was very calm - and we came to this little house where we are now. There was a woods and that was actually the nun's park. It was not developed, as it is now. With difficulty he opened the door. We walked into the kitchen and then upstairs. We looked out the window. Everything was so peaceful. The birds were singing. It was a beautiful, peaceful evening. He said, "Do you like this house?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Here is the key of your kingdom." I didn't know what to say because I was wondering how much it would cost. He knew I was embarrassed. He said, "Let's go downstairs and I'll introduce you to my friend." The other gentleman was standing there picking daisies. Dr. Derum said to the other gentleman, "This is Mr. and Mrs. Grosman. Mr. Grosman is an artist. They would like to stay with us." I was still thinking what it would cost. The other gentleman said, "Would fifteen dollars a month be too much?" I said, "That I can afford." I remember exactly this was on a Thursday. We had an appointment to visit friends over the weekend. I said, "We'll come on Tuesday." He said, "Oh, why do you have to wait so long? Come right away." I said, "We can't come until Tuesday." And that was it. He brought us to the station and we went back to New York on the train. And, believe me, we were just speechless. We didn't say a word. It was so fantastically beautiful. Later we found that these two men were a Dominican father and a Dominican brother and the place belonged to the Dominicans. They inherited that place and they invited us to stay there. So we came here every summer. Then the estate was sold. They suggested and wanted very much to make it possible that we could buy this little house. Which we did. We bought it from the banker who purchased the complete estate. It was in 1949 that we bought it. We paid for it very humbly and very modestly but still we were able to do that. So that's the story of our house. It's a beautiful home. I always say it's a blessed house and it's given us much happiness. I must say we survived all our difficulties because of this house. And it's given much happiness to other people. Sometimes friends who were tired came here and rested and gained strength. It has something in it I don't know. Some places have something that gives you a very good feeling about them.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's marvelous. So initially you spent the summers here and the rest of the year in New York?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. The summers here more and more. And then in 1955 of course - -

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, how did it come about that you started the press? Was it because you were here?

MS. GROSMAN: In the summer my husband did some silkscreening here. He'd do two or three jobs in a summer. But actually, what started really serious work was that in 1955 unfortunately my husband was very, very ill. He had a heart attack and it was impossible for him to go back to the city studio to work. The doctor took me aside and said, "Mrs. Grosman, at this point in your life you will have to take over and provide for your husband and yourself because for months and months he will be incapable of working and anyhow he should live differently." Of course, my first idea was to bring him out here; I thought he could recuperate here better. And I would try to see what I could do out here, in this house, this blessed house.

MR. CUMMINGS: Had you made prints before?

MS. GROSMAN: No. But previously I was thinking about doing some books, publishing books, but I didn't know enough. I wasn't aware enough of what was going on in the literary world. I was thinking of inviting an artist to work. The artist should select a poet or writer to illustrate and I would create an original book from cover to cover that would express the content; and if I could create four or five books, by the distribution of these original books in a very limited edition, hopefully I would be able to afford to print a commercial edition and so I would be a publisher, a different kind of publisher. So that was my idea. I went to Larry Rivers with this idea. How in 1950 we had gone to France for a visit. We went on a kind of student boat; there were many young people on it. Larry Rivers was one of the passengers. Somehow I picked up Larry and we became friends. Our studio in Paris still existed. It was completely empty of furniture but it was still there. We walked in after ten years and so many things having happened. It was fantastic suddenly to look out the same window and to see the leaves on the same trees. It was a great shock; it was like going backwards. We stayed in our studio for about three months I think. Larry painted in our studio. We were friendly. When we returned to New York I saw Larry's exhibitions. So when my husband became so ill and the moment came when I had to do something and right away, and there was no time to learn any craft, I asked myself: what can I do? I decided that I would put all of myself and all my heritage and all that I knew and everything into this love I had for images and words and books and bring them together in book form; and that will be it. So I told Larry Rivers about my idea. I asked Larry if he would select a poet and I would bring him plates or stones or something and that he should work on this one surface. Actually, I was thinking of asking somebody in the city to do the printing. But what I saw at that time in the studios which existed, well, I just had the feeling that I wouldn't know exactly what would happen and how it would turn out. By accident again I learned that one of our neighbors in the next village here had a little press which I bought for \$15. It was my first press. Then one of the neighbors paved his driveway, or walkway, and he dug out the stones; I picked up one of those. That was my very first stone. It just happened that all this venture cost twenty dollars. People always ask me, "How did you happen to make lithography?" You'd think it was some kind of study that I did. It just happened that way. If it had been an etching press that the neighbor had for sale it would have been etching. But it was a lithography press. And the stones were here. Of course later I started to look for more stones. We found stones in people's basements in New York. An early stone came from a bullet factory. They had stones in the basement that they didn't know about. Somebody saw it there and told me about it and the owner was happy to sell them for two dollars apiece. They were glad to get rid of them. The lithography started by chance. So here in this living room we had the little press. And then Robert Blackburn the printer came from New York each time that I had enough money to pay him. I believe he still has his studio on 17th Street; I suppose it's called Studio Blackburn.

There was no paper which was purchased here commercially that was good enough for Larry and Frank O'Hara the poet, working together. So, first of all Blackburn asked that I look very hard for paper. Finally I ordered paper especially made. Again by chance - what's his name? - I've forgotten -

MR. CUMMINGS: Douglas Howell?

MS. GROSMAN: Douglas Howell, yes. He lives in Westbury. He started manufacturing paper. He could do only thirty sheets a week. So that's why the editing is I think twenty or twenty-five - because of those thirty sheets. So when the thirty sheets of paper were ready I invited Blackburn to come and the printing of the page was done. So somehow we came about this. The stones I brought to Larry in East Hampton. Then he moved to Second Avenue and back to East Hampton. But we did it, and that was it. And then, of course, I started to invite other artists to work.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, Larry has made prints here every year or so, hasn't he?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes - well, I wouldn't say every year but he's continued working here. You're doing some etchings and some lithographs, Terry Southern wrote a fairy tale and now we're printing this fairy tale on two sheets only, I mean it's the complete fairy tale but only two sheets were printed from each page. Larry can look at that and can make a collage of these types and add his lithography and then start printing it. So that will be a

book.

MR. CUMMINGS: Who else has done printing for you besides Bob Blackburn?

MS. GROSMAN: After Blackburn it was Zigmunds Priede. Ben Berns. Just major printers. Then Don Steward who did lithography but now he is doing etchings. The gentleman you met here. For a short time Fred Ginnes was here. And now Frank Akers. And in between Zigmunds Priede, who is teaching at the University of Minneapolis, comes here summers with some of his students. I love to work with him. He's always very much interested in reaching out for something new and in investigating things. He likes this experimentation and we like it too. So he usually comes in the summers.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's interesting. You've made prints here with so many of Castelli's people. How did that come about?

MS. GROSMAN: Again accidentally. I started with Jasper Johns. Frankly I wrote to Jasper. I love his work and I was debating with myself: should I ask Rauschenberg first or Jasper? But I was really frightened of Rauschenberg so I asked Jasper first. And then through these artists I met Leo Castelli. We coincide in our interests. That's really how it came about. The artists whom I love Castelli loves and we love each other. He is a marvelous person. I'm just very happy that he was always very encouraging.

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you meet Jasper Johns through somebody else?

MS. GROSMAN: No. I just wrote him that I liked his work very much or something like that and that I would like him to work with me. It was very funny, in my letter I said, "I think I saw you at Larry Rivers'?" Then I received a card from him, I think it was from South Carolina, saying that he would come to see me as soon as he returned to New York. Then one day he called me and said he was coming to see me. I remember I was sitting in this other room and it was about the time that I expected Jasper to arrive. Suddenly a young man came in and introduced himself as Jasper Johns. I expected him to look completely different. In my mind I had pictured him very differently: I was thinking of somebody I had met at Larry's who I thought perhaps was Jasper. No, of the artists who've worked here Larry was the only one I'd known before. I didn't know any of the others, until later. But I must say I was passionately interested in working with all of them. I don't know what would happen to me if the response wouldn't be there. Everything had to be each time.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, Jasper hadn't made prints before, had he?

MS. GROSMAN: Jasper? No. It was his first experience to work here. And it's interesting what happened here. It was my very good fortune that some very interesting, very talented and big people started making prints here. And all their discoveries, all their revelations, everything that happened with the stones were my revelations. That was unexpected for me. Everything was a big miracle. Like with Jasper, we did this one stone. Then he said, "Perhaps there could be a background." Zigmunds said, "Of course. Make another stone." And of course it was absolutely incredible that another stone could be added to the first stone, or that the first stone could be added to the second stone. What interested me tremendously with Jasper was his playing with things: if an artist is doing a painting and if he adds something to it the previous image is already gone and you cannot go back to it; and the same thing if he takes something away. But here with the stone you have your image and then you add the second stone and the third stone. But then you can play around with them: you can print first, second, third; or you can print second, third, first; or you can print opaque; and so on. You can play around with it. And this gives a completely, completely different feeling, completely different ideas in a completely different way. And that is what is so terrifically interesting. Like, for instance, with Jasper we did *False Start I* and *False Start II*; that is eleven stones and fourteen colors, sometimes on one stone two colors. And there is such a luminous print; it's vibrant. There are fourteen colors in it.

MR. CUMMINGS: Which print is that?

MS. GROSMAN: *False Start*. *False Start I*. And we saved *False Start I*. We did it simultaneously in black, gray and white. But there are about fourteen shade of black, gray and white. And you can imagine this first which is a very exuberant one and the next one the same stone has such a different serenity in color. That's what you can do with lithography.

MR. CUMMINGS: It's going to be interesting to see his show in Philadelphia, isn't it? - the prints.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. Lithography is a very fascinating thing. Of course, every artist's work takes on something different. But you asked about Jasper - I think that's what interests him so very much.

MR. CUMMINGS: The things he can do, yes.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. For myself, I'm not so much interested in the production. But I always expect something to

happen - the revelations of things, the discoveries and the unexpected things that happen.

MR. CUMMINGS: He got very interested in printmaking through working here then, didn't he?

MS. GROSMAN: I hope so. He didn't work anywhere else before he came here. But then of course he and Rauschenberg went to Gemini at Los Angeles, which is probably more - I don't think I should speak for Gemini - but, they both produced a great deal there. That's probably a different road by various ways.

MR. CUMMINGS: Did Jasper introduce you to Rauschenberg?

MS. GROSMAN: No. I wrote to Rauschenberg and invited him. But again it's very funny: I saw Rauschenberg with Jasper. You see I took the first two stones to Jasper to the Front Street studio. I don't let them work here; they have to work - as I say, the first encounter with the stone should be done in their studios.

MR. CUMMINGS: In the studio where it's easy and they can - -

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, where the artist is alone and he can work when the proper time comes. So Jasper called me and said the two stones were ready and that I should pick them up at Castelli's. So I came to Castelli's. Those were Target and Zero, which about three years later became the 0 through 9 portfolio, but the idea was already here. So after we talked a bit and he explained what he had in mind he took one stone to carry it to my car. And another young man, a friend, picked up the other stone to carry it to the car. This other young man made some derogatory remarks about art being so heavy. Later I found out that this young man was Rauschenberg. And Rauschenberg has written in his notes - I don't know if you know his notes - "I started lithography reluctantly as I felt that to draw or to write or scribble on rocks in the twentieth century is not appropriate." Or something like that. After he'd been here twice he said, "Drawing on a rock is intimate in my hands. Painting has to be a board, the wall. Here I have stones and the press and a man to print; here I have to print." And he really brought printing into the art. He went to the New York Times and got plates and printer's mats and started to ink them up with tusche and pressed them on the stone. He went along with everything that happened. If an accident happened to the stone it was meant to be an accident. After a while the stone cracked in two and everybody gasped and was absolutely shaken. The printer, Robert Blackburn, left me because he couldn't take it anymore. But Rauschenberg said, "That's an accident." I said, "Yes, it's an accident, a terrible accident." He said, "Leave the cracked stone as it is and keep on printing." And the stone was printed with the crack as it was. And that lithograph won first prize at the Ljubljana Biennial in 1963. And actually it was the first prize in graphics that the United States ever got. And it was the result of an accident.

MR. CUMMINGS: - - which made everyone so nervous.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, so nervous. We all collapsed. Actually Rauschenberg worked for days and days and nights and nights. We just couldn't believe it. He'd work late and then we'd have dinner and already it would be six or seven o'clock and he'd go to the studio with his glass and his cigarettes. He was really nice. He was very kind. Maybe - I wouldn't say tense - but very meditating somehow. I would say that he lets his plates guide him somehow. He follows - it's very peculiar, I can't say it exactly - he sees how things fall into place; he collaborates with his material.

MR. CUMMINGS: You mentioned the newspaper mats. He brought all kinds of new material and things like that.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, that was the beginning. And with Rauschenberg each time he comes he reaches out for something different. With Rauschenberg I can say that each time was a different period of work. First it was the plates and printer's mats he brought from the New York Times. Then he got interested in printmaking so much that he introduced silkscreen on canvas. One day Lee Castelli called me and said, "Mrs. Grosman, come and see what's happening. Rauschenberg doesn't make his paintings anymore the way he did. He makes lithography on canvas." I said, "He can't make lithography on canvas. He doesn't have a press." So I went to Castelli's. I said, "Rauschenberg, what are you doing?" I saw that actually the silkscreen printing came into his canvas. Then he brought the silkscreens here and he silkscreened the stones, with tusche, and we etched it and started to print that. So the first period was the printer's mats from the New York Times and then it was silkscreens on stones. And then I brought from Philadelphia some old stones and there was graph paper on these stones which were drawn many, many years ago - maybe sixty or seventy years ago - of course it was not commercial paper - because photoengraving didn't exist then. He saw those stones and said, "Please say those are for me." And that was a group of stones on which he did *Visitation I* and *Visitation II* and then *Loan* and the graph paper the eye chart, the eye chart stone which was introduced in *Breakthrough II*. Anyhow, his next period was these Philadelphia stones with the graph paper. Then the next period was plexiglass. Once I said to him, "We've done a book with Jasper and one with Larry; now I'd like to do a book with you." He said, "All right, give me a stone. I'll make you a book." I said, "What paper will we use?" You know it takes so long to order paper and have it ready. He said, "First give me a stone." So I brought him a stone. Then again I said, "What kind of paper should I get?" He said, "Who cares that it should be paper? Perhaps we won't use paper at all." I said, "How can a book be made without paper?" He said, "We have to make something transparent." We started to experiment, printing on

lucite, on transparent papers and he always wanted to laminate it between plexiglass but was always kind of wrinkling or somehow not correct, not orderly. Then Rauschenberg said, "Why not use just plexiglass?" I said, "It's impossible." He said, "Why is it impossible?" I said, "Because it cracks." He said, "Did you try it?" I said, "No, I didn't try it." He said, "Let's try it." I said, "Okay. Let's try it." Zigmunds was the printer then. I said to Zigmunds, "Take everything apart and just don't look at it. It should not come to your eyes please. No accidents." And it turned out beautifully. It just had the right impressions and it printed beautifully, just beautifully. So he printed this book on plexiglass. The book has five pages and another page, a title page which is stationary. Then we put it in the drying rack and when it was dry he laminated it with another plexiglass so that the printed area is inside. And this is a complete square. They did all this experimentation and they were banging it and finally a frame was designed for it in metal and also one of the neighbors made a metal tray so that the pages can be replaced and moved around in variations; they can be turned around in any way; and some mathematician in Atlanta counted some sixty million variations of the pages. So that was the plexiglass period. And then of course came another period which was very exciting. Rauschenberg bought magazines and cut out things and put the cut out pieces in solvent and this he transferred onto the stone by rubbing the stone. And it worked. And we did these transfers from the magazines. And that responded very much to his general idea of printing. He used things that just happened to be around. It was very exciting to do that. Of course these transfers can be bought in various stationers because the same magazine - it's very peculiar - perhaps some inks responded differently to the solvent. Some being better than others. And then of course he added to this. Everything was very exciting in this transfer period. I must say that everything is very personal. The effect is sort of very nostalgic and very lyrical how he does it. So everything is very much *actuel*, it's very much our time. The result is very, very beautiful.

MR. CUMMINGS: How would you contrast the way Rauschenberg works with the way Jasper Johns works?

MS. GROSMAN: They're very different. It's very difficult to compare them. Their approach is completely different. Rauschenberg works very much with the accident. Jasper wants to express what he wants to express.

MR. CUMMINGS: More controlled.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, more controlled. He has this game, to print this stone first and then to see the intensity of the ink; all that is a great part of his sensitivity. Rauschenberg always likes to make discoveries. Like the last things we did this summer that were for the sensitive stones, where the negatives of photographs were transferred onto the stones. He used the night as a dark room. The boys always prayed that there would be no moonshine tonight. The dark room was the night. And then it was transferred to the stone.

MR. CUMMINGS: How is that process done?

MS. GROSMAN: The stone is covered with some kind of emulsion. I really don't know how to answer this question because I don't know enough about it. And then the negative was placed on the stone and then he made some big red lines about it so that was transferred to the stone. Sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't. They did these three beautiful prints: *Tides*, *Drifts* and *Gulls*. *Tides* is five sensitive stones; *Drifts* is four stones; and *Gulls* is two stones. When Zigmunds and his friends were leaving and I was so happy about that and Rauschenberg was too, Zigmunds kept on looking gloomy and Rauschenberg said, "Zigmunds, you know how it worked but if you were to ask me why it worked I still don't know. Sometimes it works and I don't know why it works."

MR. CUMMINGS: That's interesting. How was Larry Rivers to work with?

MS. GROSMAN: Larry is emotional. He holds on to the stone and always his fingerprints are there, on the complete margin of the stone. Of course, he's always inspired with just what happens to him, with everything that he does, with what he's interested in at the moment. It's like his diary that he brings to the stone.

MR. CUMMINGS: He's a great collector of images and objects. He sees something -

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, he sees something and he does it and he's very impulsive and very much inspired by something. It's very moving actually to work with Larry. I like to work with him. But then of course when we start printing the edition I always have to be aware that the edition shrinks because in between - like the artist comes and makes the floors and then come all the changes. In the meantime he changes his mind and then goes somewhere else. And then even when he signs the edition I have to watch because he has a pencil and that's very dangerous. He starts to draw into the lithograph he's signing. And so we end up with a small edition but we have a number of working proofs as we call them. He just draws on them.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's interesting. Do any of the other artists do that - work on the finished print?

MS. GROSMAN: No. The artists usually work before it's finished so that when they have the proofs they start experimenting how to go further, how could this be done? But every artist works a little differently. For instance,



Jim Dine is very inspired always mostly by paper. That's my experience with him. He finds paper interesting. He'll say, "Ah! This I'd like to do something with." And then he'll start doing this something.

MR. CUMMINGS: You mean he finds a thick paper or a textured paper and so on?

MS. GROSMAN: Textured paper: or just a color: an interesting paper. A very striking example is the Kenneth Koch poem that he lithographed. He saw a panne paper which was laminated, two papers together, a light blue with a very, very fine white paper. This laminated paper was very lovely but nobody responded to it. And right away he took a stone and made a gray line on it and then he brought his heart and he mentioned some other imagers. Then he took it home to contemplate. I don't know what happened - whether Kenneth Koch saw it and suggested that he write a poem, or whether Dine suggested it - but anyhow the next thing was he came and asked would we mind doing a Kenneth Koch one-line poem. Kenneth Koch liked the image and wrote a one-line poem. So we printed that.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do any of the artists use transfer paper? Or do most of them work directly on the stone?

MS. GROSMAN: They work directly on the stone. I like the stone and what happens to it.

MR. CUMMINGS: How about metal plates?

MS. GROSMAN: Sometimes, to introduce an artist to lithography it seems to be some kind of convenience. But - I don't know - I don't like metal plates. I don't like the view of that. Rauschenberg doesn't even want to work on them. He doesn't like the look of that.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really? He doesn't like the zinc plate?

MS. GROSMAN: No. We have zinc plates. Sometimes perhaps it's convenient to use them. I would say just for the convenience of the printer. And perhaps sometimes it doesn't matter too much so I don't want always to be so very, very negative and keep fighting it. Would you like a drink of something.

MR. CUMMINGS: No - do you want to stop for a second?

MS. GROSMAN: No.

MR. CUMMINGS: What about Fritz Glarner? He did something here very early, didn't he?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. After working with Larry Rivers with all his emotions, etc. I had the feeling that I would like to have a calm, clear, quiet and very pure approach. And I was very curious to work with Glarner. I invited him. And really it was wonderful working with him. With him it's the line, the lithograph is *la ligne*: just a sensitive line, how he places it on the stone. That was it.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you find him? Or did you know him?

MS. GROSMAN: I saw his work at Mary Callery's. He happened to live on Long Island. I don't remember if I met him there or not. That's how it came about.

MR. CUMMINGS: You produced a book with him or a portfolio?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. That was a collection that was done in 1967 or 1968. I wanted very much to do a book with him as I do with every artist. He started to work and he did a collection actually of twenty-five years of his ideas, of these paintings and he worked from his notebook copying his ideas, things which were published somewhere, that came in type. But still we transferred here, from the transfer stone he transferred this type on the stone because letterpress would look too crude combined with his drawing. And so he started working in a very interesting way. Actually he wanted to print or to draw certain paintings which were for him major paintings: and which he started to do. But in starting to do that he started to think - he said that actually the ideas in his paintings started previous to this painting. So he said, "Give me another stone." All right, I gave him another stone. So perhaps the painting was done fifteen years ago but the idea started like eighteen years ago. So he superimposed one idea above the other idea. In other words, one painting, but still the one idea on the same sheet to see how this idea came to clarity. That was a very interesting thing. And then of course when everything was made he left for France and we printed the book here. So the time for him to sign them came much later because of his accident. Everything was delayed. And of course today the book is a very important book because it expresses his view of art. It's called *The Relation of Paintings*. I think it's a very important work.

MR. CUMMINGS: It's interesting going over the list here. It's like going back to Castelli again. There's Bontecou, Rosenquist and Twombly. How about Helen Frankenthaler and Robert Motherwell? - that's into another kind of group.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. I must say that I approached Motherwell at the same time that I spoke to Larry Rivers. In fact, I can't remember which one I approached first. I loved Motherwell's painting *Je t'Aime* - I don't know if you remember that. It was a painting which actually was his courtship of Helen Frankenthaler before they were married. And words in painting excited me. And I approached him. I don't know - probably I called him - but I remember I came to his house and told him that I would like to do a book of poems with him. He spoke about Marianne Moore's poems; he said that somebody had given him a book of her poems. He spoke more about doing illustrations. At that time I couldn't visualize Marianne Moore and - I don't know - somehow it just didn't work out. But his response was always so businesslike. But then some years later one day Grace Hartigan called me and said I have here with me Helen Frankenthaler and Robert Motherwell and how about working with them? So I was happy to hear that Motherwell was coming into my life again. I had seen Helen's paintings at an exhibition at The Jewish Museum and I liked them very much. I said, "Yes, let's work." I brought her some stones and so on. So I started to work with Helen. Actually now we're doing a book with Motherwell. It's already completed and ready to be printed. It's Rafael Alberti's poems on painting. This expatriate Spanish gentleman, poet: who has lived in Rome for the past twenty-four years -

MR. CUMMINGS: What's his name again?

MS. GROSMAN: Rafael Alberti. Raffaello Alberti actually. Somehow Motherwell discovered his poems about color, about painting. There's a poem, *La Palette (The Palette)* as black and red and blue and white.

MR. CUMMINGS: How about Lee Bontecou who came here in the early sixties to do a print? How did she get involved?

MS. GROSMAN: Well, of course, I was fascinated by her big sculptures. I hadn't seen her drawings at all. But I was interested just by her sculpture. I invited her to work with me. I brought some stones to her studio at 47 Varick Street I think is where she lives and where she works. And she started to draw on them very, very beautifully I think. She doesn't name her work, her impressions, her editions. So it was first stone, first edition, second stone, third stone. And then she brought the fourth stone that was already a large stone, a forty-two inch stone. This stone had a crack in it which fascinated her and me very much - some kind of product of nature. And it was a background made with these stones. It was the fourth stone which I like very much. Later this stone, after it was printed, was effaced and then became Rauschenberg's *Breakthrough* stone number 1, then it was number 2 and then it cracked completely. Actually in printing the edition *Breakthrough I* and *Breakthrough II* it was crumbling apart. In the *Breakthrough II* edition at the center where this crack is from the first impression to the last impression it changed. In printing the stone became powder and completely fell apart.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's fantastic. What happens to the stones? Do you keep using them over and efface the things?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, until, God forbid, something happens. And most of the time things happen with Rauschenberg. I say he is predestined from the beginning to have accidents - which he loves. So that was it. Then Bontecou started to work on stone five edition five and edition six. It was just at that time that Rives paper was imported here. I had been buying Rives paper in France. And the large size Rives paper I don't know why they didn't import to this country. So we printed stone number five on this large Rives paper. And as I could afford to buy only a small amount of paper when Bontecou started to work on stone number six I went to our paper distributor here in New York. I said how I want the Rives paper. She said, "There's no Rives paper. Rives paper doesn't exist anymore." I said, "How come? You've just started to import it and now it doesn't exist anymore. I bought only fifty sheets of it." She said, "Somebody from Los Angeles bought all the Rives paper." I said, "Heavens! Couldn't you have saved fifty sheets of that for me?" So we had the stone that we were working on and we had no paper to print it. Well, nothing will discourage me. So then we printed just on wrapping paper and on large japan paper. Of course, the complete color intensity changed and it was very beautiful. So the sixth stone was printed on a variation of wrapping paper and on japan paper. It's a very big stone. About this time Tony Towle, our secretary, came to work here. And he saw Bontecou, the tiny little lady who looks like a young girl working on this big stone and he was very impressed. I saw him making notes. I said, "Tony, what are you writing?" He said, "Just notes about lithography." I didn't know him too well at that time so I didn't say anything more. Much later I asked him if I could read his notes. He gave me the notes to read on Bontecou working in lithography on the fifth and sixth stone. I was very impressed. I think it was a description of her work in a very lyrical, slightly pastoral kind of feeling. I said, "Oh! Absolutely I will publish that." I was thinking of publishing his notes perhaps with photographs of Lee Bontecou working on the stones which Hans Namuth had previously taken. But then again much later I got our little etching press. I gave Bontecou the notes to read and I said, "How about making etchings of this work?" And she did. And that is a portfolio by Tony Towle and Lee Bontecou, fifth and sixth stones. I like it very much. She draws very much on Indian Head muslin. So the binding is Indian Head print. I think it is called aquatint - I just don't remember the terminology. I think it's very sweet, very nice, very beautiful. We've continued working with her. Her development in art is very interesting. It expresses also many different kinds of approach to the plates or the stone or etching. I'm very curious to work with her again to see what new approach she'll use. I don't know whether you want to listen to a very funny episode that happened

that's not quite related to our work.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, yes.

MS. GROSMAN: About two years ago the Russian poet Yevtushenko was here. Motherwell gave a reception for him and invited only artists to meet him, not the patrons. I heard about the plans for the reception and of course I wanted so much to meet Yevtushenko. Rauschenberg somehow made it possible for me to be present. It was in a room with bar and the only piece of art in the room was one of Bontecou's huge sculptures. Bontecou was present, too. I was chatting with Yevtushenko when Bontecou passed by. She had a glass in one hand and her little purse in her other hand. I said to the poet, "Oh, here is one of our greatest sculptors and this sculpture is her work." and I introduced Bontecou to him. He looked at her. Usually when I mention Bontecou to people they say, "She's so little," "she's so tiny," "she looks like a young girl," "how can she with her hands do this huge sculpture?" He looked at her and at the sculpture and said, "Oh, I saw work of the same artist in Lincoln Center." I said, "of course, that's she." I was just waiting for him to say, "How can this little girl with such little hands make these sculptures?" He said to her, "May I kiss your hand?" It was so sweet. I translated that to Bontecou - "he wants to kiss your hand." And his translator was there and repeated that. And she looked at him so frightened, so stunned: never in her life had anything like that happened. She held her glass tight and her purse tight. I wanted to take the glass away. She didn't give it to me. I wanted to take the purse from her; she didn't give it to me. Finally, somehow the translator got hold of her glass and Yevtushenko bowed and kissed her hand. And then she got her glass back and turned around as in a daze and walked away. He looked after her. It was so fantastic. She didn't say a word. And then, after a while another funny thing happened. Marisol came by. I said, "Oh, that's another one of our sculptors." Of course Marisol speaks Spanish. He said a few words to her in Spanish but Marisol didn't answer. She looked with her big eyes and he bowed to her and said, "I see we'll have to meet in a more intimate situation."

MR. CUMMINGS: That's marvelous. She really is something.

MS. GROSMAN: Marisol - oh, wonderful - her stories. We had dinner with Rauschenberg and we saw the prints and he started to tell us stories about Marisol and we laughed so hard.

MR. CUMMINGS: She's very funny. Well, she's made some prints here a couple of times.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. We're working on etchings. She loves to do etchings. She does it beautifully I think. The metal somehow, and attacking the metal with some kind of a tool, is more her métier. She's more familiar with that than with lithography perhaps. She enjoys it more. So we'll see what she does now.

MR. CUMMINGS: Is she so quiet when she works here?

MS. GROSMAN: She's quiet and yet not quiet. She participates so much with her eyes. Her eyes are so fascinating. She's not withdrawn; she's with you all the time. And then when she says something it's always marvelous. Once we were all sitting here at the table and somehow we got into a discussion about young people. And suddenly she said, "And after all who is interested in young people? They have so many problems." She hadn't said another thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: She's marvelous. Well, she hasn't made that many prints, though, has she?

MS. GROSMAN: No - well, she did quite a number of plates suddenly. She came from what I call an around-the-world trip. She was away a long time. She always corrects me and says - "No, only half of the world." So she came back from her half of the world trip and was somehow a little bit lonely, well, I wouldn't say lonely - she had just arrived and hadn't yet gotten back to her studio. She came here and stayed for a couple of days, then she left, then later spent a couple of more days here. And she accomplished quite a number of etching plates which we are just in the process of proofing and doing. And some very interesting ideas came out of that.

MR. CUMMINGS: So that will be something to look forward to.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. The very first stone which she did was marvelous. And there was a terrible accident. It cracked. So we have only a few proofs from this very magnificent stone. It's a pity.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did Tony come to get involved? Where did you find him?

MS. GROSMAN: I'll tell you how it was. I guess it was in 1964 that the Museum of Modern Art gave us a very beautiful show. It was when they opened the new wing. There were nine shows given at the time. The Museum was closed for about six months and then they opened with nine shows, among which was a show of our prints. I began receiving many, many letters, requests, and so on. I just didn't know how to answer these, how to handle the situation. I spoke about it to Frank O'Hara; I said, "Listen, have you some friend, somebody who could help me answer these letters?" He recommended Tony. And Tony came. He said he didn't think it would be for too

long but he would help me out, at least for the summer. The thing was I think all these letters were never answered. I never solved the problem how to answer all these requests. But somehow Tony started to be my ghostwriter. He writes my letters. And slowly he started to get interested and he's very important to me and the artists all like him very much and I hope he likes them also. He has an eye for things and he enjoys being with the artists. But I think at first he looked at this job as something very, very much en passant. Shortly after he started he was looking to see how he could get out of it. I have the feeling that he himself never believed that he would be working here longer than two or three weeks. But I was very persistent I guess and he caught on.

MR. CUMMINGS: What does he do now? - take care of the correspondence and all that kind of thing?

MS. GROSMAN: Well, I dictate letters to him. He assists me with everything here. For instance he helps when the artist is signing the edition. He spells Rauschenberg's name for him; after Rauschenberg has signed about four prints he can't spell his name anymore. He helps in many ways. He takes calls coming from outside. And Tony has a terrific memory and has a good eye for things. He takes responsibility for many things. He is very good. He works four days a week, but long, full days. I said we work five days a week. He said make it four days; condense, so then he has time for his poetry and seeing friends and so on. He comes out here where it's probably a different world from New York. It works out very well.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's marvelous. What about Helen Frankenthaler? You've known her for quite a while and sporadically she's done some things.

MS. GROSMAN: Well - yes, but still we - the Metropolitan Museum showed her prints. We still work with her. We have done quite a number of prints with her. She's very eager to work and I like to work with her very much. Helen works in a very strange way. She colors the stone, makes a form, then takes another stone and makes a splash, and then we proof it and then she looks at the proofs and says, "This dot and this line and this form here I'd like to print together." Then we start to proof these three stones together. I remember this summer we did about three lithographs of hers from thirty-three stones. There were thirty-three stones sitting around.

MR. CUMMINGS: You must have had a whole garden there.

MS. GROSMAN: Right. She would take something from here and from there and we had to get special papers and colors. Out of it comes something very beautiful.

MR. CUMMINGS: So she'd do a stone with an image and only use part of it then?

MS. GROSMAN: No, she uses the stone, follows the brushstroke, a splash or some kind of a line. And then she takes another stone. Some things succeed or do not succeed. Later she'd say, "This is a nice form and this line we'll print together. Let's try this in green and that in yellow and that in red."

MR. CUMMINGS: So it's really kind of pieces put together, built?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, pieces put together, built, on a specific paper using specific colors, specific ink. And then sometimes she adds a stone if she sees that two or three forms are good together. She demands great precision and purity of ink and registration, like one line has to touch right here and touch over there. So that is it. It's very interesting to work with her. The result is very lovely always, like a flower garden or something like that.

MR. CUMMINGS: I'm curious about the Museum of Modern Art exhibition. How did that come about? Whose idea was that?

MS. GROSMAN: In 1964?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yes.

MS. GROSMAN: Mr. Lieberman decided that. That's how the idea came about. He told me -

MR. CUMMINGS: He called you up and said, "We want to do an exhibition."?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. It was a very beautiful show I think. In it were Jasper Johns' *0 through 9* and major works of Rauschenberg's and Larry Rivers'.

MR. CUMMINGS: Wasn't there another show after that?

MS. GROSMAN: At the Museum of Modern Art? No.

MR. CUMMINGS: I can't keep the dates straight then.

MS. GROSMAN: No, not our show. The one-man show of ours was at the Museum of Modern Art. What they have

now is a traveling show of Jasper's work.

MR. CUMMINGS: What kind of response - you said you'd gotten lots of letters and requests. Were they from collectors or dealers?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, many, many letters from collectors, dealers and galleries mostly. Now this article in *Life* magazine brought an enormous amount again of letters and requests to "just send us a catalogue" or "send information". It's very difficult to answer these because we are always sold out and I have no photographs to send because in a sense if I make a portfolio and sell it I don't have it anymore. So actually we work mainly with galleries which are interested in us and mainly with one gallery in a town. For instance, in Detroit or Boston or Toronto we work with one gallery only, we don't deal with anybody else there. I like to deal with a gallery which is really interested in our work and frames it properly and is not afraid that somebody will sell it for a few dollars less. They feel what they have is already a collector's item most of the time and they are in touch with museums or colleges in the community and the museums know that this gallery is the only one which has this work and is more or less proud of it. Then some collectors have started to give our prints to museums. For instance, Armand Bartos gives everything we do to the Museum of Modern Art. Dr. Singer buys quite a lot and gives to the Metropolitan Museum. And now young Kott Helcots gives to the Whitney Museum.

MR. CUMMINGS: Your editions are never very large, are they?

MS. GROSMAN: No, they're never large. When I come to the large edition actually I don't like - well I like the printer to feel that he participates; if the printing is done by hand. I feel it loses its purpose if the printer becomes kind of mechanical.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yes, if the edition is 250 or something.

MS. GROSMAN: It loses, it defeats the purpose. The printer is like a musician who plays the composition: he always has to feel what he's doing: he has to participate. So I think if the printer prints a stone one day he should not be printing again the next day. Because then he starts to imitate himself. His emotions. And everything is different somehow - I don't know why - it's always so difficult - it always seems to me that change in temperature or climate makes a difference; one day the stone works this way, the ink works this way; the next day they work differently and the printer has to make readjustments accordingly.

MR. CUMMINGS: The humidity and things affect the printing.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, all these things, many things probably. The printing is different. So I think that what the first day gives in printing should be the basis for the edition. Then of course some things are lost. The next time he comes he prints the second stone on these same sheets. So that's how the edition is printed. But I think a large edition should not be done by hand printing. The printer has to participate in creating the print. He has a very vital part in it. He is more or less the interpreter.

MR. CUMMINGS: He pulls it all together.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. His intensity and his feelings and everything are in it. And if he should become mechanical it would be as well to do it by machine.

MR. CUMMINGS: It's interesting that in the two-part print show that was just held at the Metropolitan Museum a great many of the prints came from your place.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. I must confess that I was very proud of that. I don't know how that happened but that was it. I was very pleased to see that. I don't know - it just happened I guess.

MR. CUMMINGS: There were lots and lots of them there. The prints have generally been sold, how? - through the artist's dealer, or the artist?

MS. GROSMAN: Of course I try to work through these galleries that I try to cultivate. When something is published I try to approach these galleries. And then of course there are some collectors who must have it. Some collectors absolutely watch what we are doing. So then I inform them. And I inform these galleries.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you have very many collectors who buy almost everything that you produce?

MS. GROSMAN: Well, there are collectors who buy - not too many - but very faithful collectors who buy like one artist; like Mr. Victor Ganz of course who likes Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. And Dr. Singer buys for the Metropolitan Museum as much as he can afford from everything he wants. And, as I said Mr. Bartos buys everything for the Museum of Modern Art.

MR. CUMMINGS: He started buying things very early, didn't he?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, he started to buy very early. That was very funny how that happened. Mr. Lieberman of the Museum of Modern Art wanted to buy prints for the Museum. He didn't have money to pay for them and once in a conversation he said that it was very difficult, very embarrassing, to ask somebody for \$200 to pay for prints. Then I remember that one day I was very, very sad and melancholic and depressed. I didn't know where to go and I didn't know what to do about money. I said to myself I'll go to see a movie. I went to the Museum of Modern Art to the movie in the auditorium downstairs, just to get away from the world. I was really at the end of my fantasies. As I was walking out suddenly Mr. Lieberman passed by and he said, "Oh, I'd like to talk to you. I was going to call you. I want to talk to about something. Could we have tea on Tuesday?" I said, "Yes." I didn't know what he wanted to talk to me about. Tuesday came and he said, "Somebody is very interested in contributing your prints to our museum. As I told you, it will be very difficult to get the money and would you be satisfied with such and such a sum for everything your produce?" Well, it was just one of those great miracles that happen. That was the Gottesman Foundation, and then Mr. and Mrs. Bartos took it over and each time the contribution is tremendous - at least to me. That kept me going. As I've told you, it seems in my life that if I don't know what to do I just sit and wait and then something very fortunate comes along from somewhere else - from above. One of these miracles was Mr. Lieberman's proposition.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's amazing. What about the Barnett Newman project? - because you mentioned that that got to be a whole new adventure for him.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. Well, it was. I met him at Rauschenberg's but I had a feeling somehow that he wanted to meet me. He told me he had done two prints at the Pratt Workshop and he would like to work with me. I invited him and he said he would like to come. It was already in the fall and the weather was very bad. But still he came out. When the first proof was done he said very casually, "Please cut the margins." I said, "What do you mean cut the margins?" He said, "My paintings have no frames and no margins so please cut the margins." I said, "It's very easy to do; I can take the scissors and cut the margins but it will look like a replica of your paintings and I think since you're doing lithography it would be better to get interested in the material that lithography is made from and that is paper and paper is beautiful."

From here on we worked in this way: we did a proof and I'd take the proof to him, he'd keep it for a couple of days. And he was always bending the margin smaller, larger, and so on. And then he knew exactly how much margin there had to be for this particular proof. We ordered the paper mostly from France and it was made fifty sheets of this size; it was flow here; fifty sheets. He gave the paper to the bookbinder to be trimmed - who ripped the paper to the size he wanted. He said the margin did it. It fascinated him so much that he developed projects which were eighteen images. As I said, it could not be seventeen or nineteen images but it had to be eighteen because it was a logical kind of development of an idea. He called it *Eighteen Candles*. He worked on it for about eight months. It was in wintertime and it was very cold. Our studio didn't have the proper heat. Each time he came out it seemed the weather was bad and stormy. I was always frightened that he would become ill. But he loved doing the creative work and working with Zigmunds. It was a kind of monastic work, very pure and very beautiful. He investigated inks. He would call from here to Los Angeles to an ink manufacturer to inquire what ink would be the best, what ink would not change later in quality and so on. That was Barnett Newman's episode. Then last year he worked on etchings with Donn Stewart. Those were very beautiful.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did it come about that you got involved with etchings? - because you were completely lithography for a long time.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, it was only lithography. Very accidentally we began to do etchings. I needed a lithography printer. I can't remember the details exactly but Mr. Stewart wrote that he would like to come here to be the printer. He came and worked at lithography. I didn't know that he knew anything about etching. Then one day when I was in the Metropolitan Museum John McKendry was ordering his prints. He handed me a Rembrandt saying, "Look at this beautiful Rembrandt." I held in my hand this Rembrandt. Suddenly the thought came to me how beautiful it was. Probably I had seen Rembrandts many, many times in museums under glass as one sees them in a museum. But here it was something so beautiful and intimate. I was just so taken with it. I thought, oh, how beautiful it would be to do etchings. Why don't we do etchings; and type and perhaps books. The Morgan Library and everything came to my mind. And then back at home one day - and not related to this at all - Stewart said to me, "You know, I love lithography but I still feel that I am more an intaglio printer, an etching printer." He said, "Can I do etchings?" Well, we did not have an etching press. One day a lady called me and said, "Mrs. Grosman, if you need some money perhaps I can provide some money for you." I said to her, "Can I ask for an etching press and make an etching studio?" She said, "Sure?" So I got a grant.

MR. CUMMINGS: That was from The National Council on the Arts.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. I was very happy about that. Stewart was a printer who waited only for the occasion to work on his métier. He designed the studio. So that was it. He started his etchings and he is very happy doing them.

MR. CUMMINGS: Who has made etchings here?

MS. GROSMAN: First, Larry Rivers. And Bontecou. And Jasper Johns. And Twombly. That is it. Sometimes intaglio etching appears in Rauschenberg's print like an embossing but not more than that. And now we have Marisol. And for two years we've worked a lot on the book with Motherwell. And of course with Helen Frankenthaler. So we're doing quite a lot.

MR. CUMMINGS: How about Robert Goodnough?

MS. GROSMAN: That was a very short kind of relationship. I worked with him and - I don't know how to say it - I suppose he didn't catch on very much for some reason - I can't remember exactly. I think he was busy. I think he experienced already something in prints; for him the print was to make a print; it was less kind of an involvement. It was a little bit shallow so it was not so hot. But later he wanted to do some and again I was busy with other artists. Somehow he missed the point.

MR. CUMMINGS: Grace Hartigan has produced quite a few, hasn't she?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. She's beautiful to work with but unfortunately she lives in Baltimore. She's happily married there. It's hard to reach her. I wished she lived closer.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did Twombly come to do etchings here because he's so rarely in the country?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. I think somebody brought him here; I think it was Jasper. He makes his notes which are very fascinating - just scribbled notes. We still have Plate One unfinished. I would like to work with him. But again he is so much somewhere else always that it's hard to get him.

MR. CUMMINGS: He lives in Rome most of the time I think.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, most of the time in Rome. And when he comes here he paints a lot. But I still hope very much to work further with him.

MR. CUMMINGS: How about Jim Rosenquist who started a few years ago?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. It took Jim a long time to produce the first lithograph. He tried and he worked with a spray gun and tusche. Nothing is to be touched by hand. Everything has to be mechanical.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. Not touched by hand.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's very different from everyone else, isn't it?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, of course. No emotion. Actually it's very interesting. He said, "You know, when I look out the window and see the cars passing by at eighty miles an hour there has to be expediency, you have to see everything at first glance, but what kind of work goes into making the car work and function this way - I think the same thing is true of a lithograph; the work is very difficult and very hard and very tedious but it can't be seen, it has to be just right."

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. It has to be just there.

MS. GROSMAN: There, yes. I like it, you know, that this work should not be felt, but it took him a long time, I think about two years, before he finished something. He tried and tried and never succeeded for a long time. He used to say, "I don't know what I'm doing. Do they do souvenirs here? Do they do little postcards here? What am I doing here?" I always used to say, "Have patience. Have patience." So the time came when his little boy was born and he decided to do a birth announcement. And he did only a baby hand with a finger pointed, oversized, of course. And that came to him as recognition of something. He said, "Now I know that when the space is small as it is there has to be something oversized; then it's me." And from there on it started. So a baby hand, a finger oversized - then he's in his element.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, yes. Everything is so enormous in his work.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. I liked to work with him. But now things are different here. He's very demanding now and I cannot always fill all his needs. Like he said, he works out his problems as he goes along. And that is true of him as it is of many other artists. I see how they work out their problems in seeing the work in lithography and proofing this way and that way clarifies many things. He would like very, very much to produce. But I can't always do it.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yes. More and more complicated and difficult.

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. So I think he'll work somewhere else.

MR. CUMMINGS: Your husband has made prints here, too, hasn't he?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. He works from Jewish poems. Actually that was my very first idea but he was not very keen to work on them at first. When he was very ill I thought, God forbid, what will happen to us and to him. So I suggested to him - he doesn't know one poem by heart completely from beginning to end; but he sings a little bit some little excerpts from Jewish songs from their poets. I suggested to him - "How about writing these excerpts on a plate or stone and illustrate those excerpts?" He would never do that of course. Never! Actually it was when he was just out of the hospital that I received \$500 from somebody, a grant or something, and he could have done it then. But he didn't do it. Then later, the next year, I received the next \$500 and I said, "Please do it." So he started. At that time I had already worked with Larry Rivers. My husband did one or two stones. But actually years and years passed and he finished a few stones, writing a few of these quotations from poems. And Larry Rivers saw this work and liked it so much that he wrote a lovely preface to it. And that did it! So then finally we printed from Jewish poems and actually that became a very lovely and unusual book and a contribution - I won't say how much - to various poets whom my husband knew and liked. Then one book he colored and it will be exhibited now I think at Boston College: on April 9 there will be an exhibition called "Judaic Art in the 20th Century" or something like that.

MR. CUMMINGS: You've mentioned that you got paper one time from Douglas Howell. Have you worked with him frequently?

MS. GROSMAN: I got paper from him only once for a special project; that was the only time. I have bought paper in France and have commissioned paper to be made in France. And we now receive paper made in Switzerland by someone who does it as a hobby. It's made for Jasper Johns and has his watermark on it. In general I love paper very much. Paper is very stimulating and interesting.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you find it difficult to buy good papers? Is it getting more and more of a problem?

MS. GROSMAN: There are good papers to be had. Of course some of the manufacturers are changing policy now, they merge, one manufacturer buys out the other manufacturer; so sometimes very simple paper is getting more difficult to buy. In general I like to find unusual papers. I would like that somebody here should develop unusual paper but not many people are interested in that; for some reason.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, it takes a long time to learn how to do it. Like paper restoration, it takes a long time to learn the chemistry of it. You had an exhibition that was at Dayton's in Minneapolis?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. It was a surprising show. There was this fabulous woman there. At first I didn't want to sell her my prints because I thought it was a department store.

MR. CUMMINGS: It's a huge gallery, though, isn't it?

MS. GROSMAN: But she persuaded me. She showed me photographs of her gallery and persuaded me to give her our prints. She told me that she had even called everywhere to get hold of our prints and offered quite an amount of money. This show was absolutely stunning because it was everything we did up to that time, except of Jasper's three portfolios there was only one. But otherwise she got together everything we had done up to that time.

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you go out to see it?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes. I went there and Tony went. It was a grandiose opening. That was very interesting. I was very proud because from that moment on she started to deal with Castelli and that opened up this gallery in various ways. I think in general prints are very important to introduce the artist. Like Canada was not interested in American art until two shows from here were exhibited and made it. That actually broke the ice. I went to Canada and everybody said, "American art, no, no, no." Everybody said, "I made a mistake. I bought two or three paintings. Never again." I said to them, "You did very wrong; you should buy my lithographs; they sell for less money than paintings and then you'll have ten artists." I persuaded one gallery to take them. He said, "All right. All right."

MR. CUMMINGS: Who was that? What gallery was that?

MS. GROSMAN: That was in Toronto - the Gerald Morris Gallery. He bought our prints and made a show of I think ten artists and right away his museum and some private collectors purchased the second show. And from there on there was interest in American artists.



MR. CUMMINGS: Yes. Are there other dealers that you - well, you said that you don't work very much with Castelli but he's so apparent here.

MS. GROSMAN: Well, Castelli purchases from every print which I do. Of course he is a distributor more or less; I mean he buys two prints from each edition. Emmerich also. I don't sell to anybody here except to Castelli and Emmerich.

MR. CUMMINGS: So you work then really with dealers around the country outside of New York?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes-s. That is to say, one dealer in a city.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's interesting. How did you arrive at the name of the company - Universal Limited Art Editions?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, it's a very complicated name - such a fantastic name. It's embarrassing but I've gotten used to it already. Somebody who gave me the first money - \$200 - I was given. Actually he's the director or owner of the hospital where my husband was when he was ill, Harold Corner. So I called it Limited Editions. And then I wanted to register the name. When I went to Riverhead to register the name they said, "We cannot register 'Limited Editions' because - I don't know - they said you have to name it somehow Grosman Limited Editions. I said, "No, I don't want to use my name." He said, "Well then call it International Limited Editions or Universal Limited Art Editions. I thought I had to make the decision right away so I thought perhaps I will work with universal artists, artists from all over the world and speaking all languages so I said, "All right, let's make it 'Universal'." He was very, very appreciative that I should right away make the decision and actually he made the decision; he gave me the choice: Grosman or International or Universal and I picked Universal. It's much too long and much too complicated.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you have a plan of whose prints you want to do next? Or do the artists just kind of come and go?

MS. GROSMAN: Well, it's something that grows. It's an organic growing process. Now I feel I have to work with Larry Rivers because it's a combination of ideas. And Terry Southern's book is here in work. So now it's Larry Rivers. So one thing grows out of another. The idea comes and the artist is ready and so it's some kind of natural thing to come together and work.

MR. CUMMINGS: My goodness, we've gone through lots of things here, haven't we?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, we've talked about an enormous amount of things.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, what kind of plans or projects do you have besides the Larry Rivers?

MS. GROSMAN: At the moment, as I said, we're working with Marisol. And somehow I now have to print Motherwell's book because it is here. And also I have Jim Dine's plates - *Letter to Nancy*, a portfolio. Last summer he was here probably preparing his show for the Whitney Museum and we agreed all right, we'll do something together; we'll do a portfolio together. So what should we do? Each time he came here when he arrived first of all he'd run to the telephone to call Nancy in London. I said, "Don't you sometimes write letters to Nancy?" He said, "Sometimes, but mainly I telephone." So I said, "Listen, let's write letters to Nancy. He said, "All right. That's a wonderful title. We'll make letters to Nancy." So he has the plates here.

Then, I have some ideas of things to do with Rauschenberg which I would like very much to do. I hope that when he comes back he will do that. It's an idea which came to my mind seeing the kind of work he did in Los Angeles on a big kind of - what he calls drawing for Dayton's gallery. Dayton's had a show of his the third of April - a show of this big drawing which he calls *Current*. From here on I have some ideas that I think and hope we will work on.

MR. CUMMINGS: So you have lots of activity really?

MS. GROSMAN: Yes, I think so. I have many plans with everybody.

MR. CUMMINGS: Are there any artists that we haven't talked about?

MS. GROSMAN: I think we've covered everybody so far as I can remember.

MR. CUMMINGS: We've gone through the whole list?

MS. GROSMAN: We've talked about Glarner and Bontecou. I wish to work again and again with everybody we've mentioned. You see when you finish a work then you feel that you would like to start something new because you get so involved and as the work goes on you see other possibilities.

MR. CUMMINGS: What do you think of all the new techniques that are going on now in printmaking - the plastic forms, and the silkscreening and then changing the forms and all that sort of thing? Does that interest you? Or not?

MS. GROSMAN: It doesn't interest me too much. It comes from the interest of the artist, where he leads me; in that way I'm interested. I am more or less interested in ideas that I would like to work out. But technical things - like Jasper Johns has the idea to print something with the same roller to roll out three colors at the same time. He did that in *Pinion* and *Ruler*. The *Ruler* had black, gray and white rolled out at the same time. These ideas come more from the artists who are more technically inclined and inventive and so on. My ideas are more a certain kind of something, like I'd like to do fairy tales with, say, Larry Rivers. I'd like to do something specific. So that's more or less my way of functioning and how to solve it, how to do it. So I try to explore all possibilities on how to do it.

MR. CUMMINGS: I don't think I really have any more questions. We've talked about almost everything. Okay?

MS. GROSMAN: Thank you very much for your patience and for your thinking.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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