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Oral history interview with Roy Moyer, 1975 September 17-23

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Roy Moyer on September 17 and 23, 1975. The interview took place in New York City, and was conducted by Paul Cummings for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

[Reel 1, Side A]

PAUL CUMMINGS: The actual date of this is the 17th of September, 1975. I'll say it is the 17th of August 1975. Paul Cummings talking to Roy Moyer in his apartment in New York City on Riverside Drive. Well, as always, let's start at the beginning. You were born in Allentown, Pennsylvania, right?

ROY MOYER: Yes. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

PAUL CUMMINGS: And—

ROY MOYER: [Inaudible.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's okay. You don't have to worry about that.

ROY MOYER: Okay. It's sort of 18th-century low German. It's the most common name in the Allentown telephone book.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So what? Your family's been there for a while or—?

ROY MOYER: Yes. Well, my mother's Swiss and she's first-generation American. But I had—as a matter of fact, I thought for a while of being a concert pianist. That was what I really worked—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was the family interested in music?

ROY MOYER: Yes. My mother was a singer.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

ROY MOYER: And she—

PAUL CUMMINGS: A professional singer?

ROY MOYER: Yes. And she thought that one should know about everything, I guess, was more or less what it was.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was her name as a—

ROY MOYER: Well, she did local professional singing, but it was not—I mean, she wasn't a well-known singer. And so I had to study music and singing and everything else. And I studied some painting, but I never really took that very seriously. But I went to Columbia University and studied English lit. And that, I suppose, is what got me into trouble because—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, before we get to Columbia, because that's already, you know—did you spend all of your primary education, say, in Allentown?

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The local schools and—

ROY MOYER: Oh, yeah. Yeah. But my parents had an idea that I should—and a fortuneteller told my mother that one of her two sons would be famous. And I guess it—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Immediately. [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: —put an awful lot of pressure upon me. [Laughs.] Because I had to really, I had to take elocution—you don't know what that is. You're too young. But elocution lessons. And [laughs] one of the things I had to do was get rid of my Pennsylvania Dutch accent, you see? But all forms of art I was supposed to really pursue.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hm. Why was that? I mean, was that their interest, or was there talent in that direction?

ROY MOYER: It was my mother's interest primarily, and I think she felt—she never felt at home in Pennsylvania. And I guess she felt deprived culturally, and felt that I in some way, I had to make up for this.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. What about—do you have brothers and sisters?

ROY MOYER: I have two brothers. An older brother and a younger brother. The same pressures were put upon them, but they reacted very differently. I mean, my older brother became a bad boy, which put more pressure upon me, you see. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: And you were next, right?

ROY MOYER: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That one didn't work. You were next.

ROY MOYER: No. So anyway, I studied piano extremely seriously and I really practiced like eight hours a day.

PAUL CUMMINGS: For how long?

ROY MOYER: Oh, well, all through high school. I was—every spare moment. And also, you know, I suppose this is one of the reasons why I look upon music as being rather sick. I associate it with adolescent problems. And I think all music is romantic music. It's so easy to avoid life.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. With the ritual, one, two, three, four, one.

ROY MOYER: And particularly something that's practicing, like a circus acrobat, you know? Where you have to be sort of idiotic to play that same scale all the time for hours on end.

PAUL CUMMINGS: When did you start the piano?

ROY MOYER: Oh, I started when I was very young, like five years old.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. So you're years and years and years?

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Yeah. And then I saw myself becoming a church organist or something, because in music, there's really no place for the second rate. And then when I went to college, I didn't really have an opportunity to practice anyway, since I was involved in studying. So I got—

PAUL CUMMINGS: What about high school? Were there cultural activities or were you playing the piano all the time?

ROY MOYER: Oh, no. I didn't. Acting, debating. Won the prize for the declamation contest.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Ah, you see? It paid off. [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: It certainly did. I had private teachers and everything. I used to go to Muhlenberg College there on Saturdays and Sundays and have private lessons and all kinds of things, from [inaudible] to what not.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did that happen?

ROY MOYER: Well, it was just this, I suppose, terrible pressure that was put upon me to somehow get above my environment there. And I studied painting, too, with a woman who was an Impressionist.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hm. Who was she?

ROY MOYER: Well, her name was Queenie Stein [ph] and she was sort of the local painter. And she believed that—first of all, I had a palette. You wouldn't believe it. It had about 20 colors arranged; the whole spectrum and all of its little subtleties were arranged on my palette, but no black. There was no black and no white in nature, so I wasn't allowed to use black or white. And I wasn't allowed to draw a line because there are no lines in nature. I mean, it was a real 1860 kind of philosophy about visual phenomena. And that was very—and all shadows were

purple, you know. All sunlight was yellow. It was a—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How marvelous. Everything was cheery. [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: Yes. But it was very good training for me for one thing. Well, it taught me a kind of observation. But also, it was the one—

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did you paint? I mean, still lifes, exteriors, outside?

ROY MOYER: Outside. Yes. It was plein air painting. It was, most of it. And she would say, "Do you see the purples in the shadows?" You know, until you really saw the purples in the shadows. But it was a wonderful thing for me because it's one of the reasons why I'm very much interested in line, and black and white.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: And why I won't use yellow or purple. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, marvelous.

ROY MOYER: No. She's wonderful to throw stones at. I mean, really. She set my career, I guess.

PAUL CUMMINGS: All the things you didn't want.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think that's a reaction against—

ROY MOYER: And also, that whole idea that you mightn't put anything centrally in the composition.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, right.

ROY MOYER: Because in nature, things are not centralized. So of course, I begin by drawing a line down the middle of the canvas.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Breaking all the rules. First line. Well, what kind of problems did she give you? I mean, you'd go out and you'd paint landscape or trees?

ROY MOYER: Well, there weren't really problems because she knew how to paint. I mean, she simply taught me —

PAUL CUMMINGS: What she knew.

ROY MOYER: What she knew. And it was a series of rules actually. Not her own rules. Things she had been taught. But it does require a kind of observation and imagination because, of course, the rules aren't true. And anyway, it may be perfectly true that there is no black and white in nature, but it's certainly the basis of painting or drawing, is black and white. And after all, we weren't recreating nature. We were painting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. You were painting. Right.

ROY MOYER: But I was an obedient student. I mean, I painted the way she wanted me to paint.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long did you study with her?

ROY MOYER: Oh, I would say about four years or so. And then, strangely enough, George Grosz really got me out of that rut.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How?

ROY MOYER: Well, he took away my colors. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: In what way? [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: He said, "Throw them away."

PAUL CUMMINGS: When did that happen? How do you mean that?

ROY MOYER: Well, this was once I got to Columbia.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I got you.

ROY MOYER: You see, I sort of took a course—I wasn't seriously thinking of becoming a painter. I took a course in art.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, you studied with her when? In high school?

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Through high school.

ROY MOYER: In high school. And I studied with her during summers, too, while I was going to Columbia. I would go back and study with her during the summer. It was a pleasant thing to do. But George Grosz took away all my colors and said, "I'll give you only red, and yellow, and blue, and black, and white." And he said, "I will also give you ochre and sienna and—" Just ochre and sienna. And he said, "But one of the primary colors you may not use. And you may choose. Either you don't use the yellow, in which case you have to work against the ochre." You know, work with the ochre.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Right.

ROY MOYER: "Or you don't use the red, in which case you have to work with the sienna. Or you don't use the blue, in which case you have to work with the black." And then he said, "When your painting's finished, if you want to put the missing color in, then you may put it in, but only when the painting's finished." And while I don't follow that as a prescription, I nonetheless have that sort of as in the back of my mind all the time. That's really the way I think. I like to work against odds. I suppose that's one of the reasons why I like to draw a line down the middle of the canvas and try to battle my way out. See, there's certain things I won't do as a consequence. I won't do the easy thing. Like I won't overlap to create dimension. I won't use shadows. They're certain simple, everyday techniques that just seem too easy to me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: These formulas that one can go out and learn.

ROY MOYER: Well, if you use shadows you create depth. If you use—so I work constantly to try to get a central composition without overlapping, without shadows. But to create reality by different means. And that is by creating tension, because I think that the real quality of life is tension. It's not perspective. I mean, reality to me isn't perspective. It's tension. So I like to paint something that looks as if it were going to unwind, spring apart sort of, rather than the—and that's what I suppose relates my painting to Expressionism, except I'm not an Expressionist because I also do things that contradict that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, but anyway, jumping ahead again, which is all right. You went to high school—back to high school a bit—doing elocution, acting, [inaudible].

ROY MOYER: Worked on the school newspaper. I was a great Latin student. I loved Latin. I worked on that very hard. Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really? What appealed to you?

ROY MOYER: The teacher. [Laughs.] She was never satisfied.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. No matter how well—

ROY MOYER: I didn't get the Latin prize and I was the best student. That really made me work.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, dear. I see. Well, did you have any particular ambition at that time in school? Or was it always applied pressure?

ROY MOYER: Well, I never knew what I wanted to be. And I must say that um, I suppose pressure would have been a good thing for me. But no. I drifted uh, very much. I became interested in English lit. and actually that's what I got my master's degree in.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you read a lot? Were there a lot of books around the house?

ROY MOYER: Oh, yes. Yeah. Yeah. I always read. I did a lot of solitary things. You know, I was a very neurotic kid, playing the piano by candlelight like Liberace. That was a—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Piano, piano, piano. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: But also reading. I loved solitary sports, swimming, and that's why I didn't like group sport very much.

[Cross talk.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Were they doing similar things?

ROY MOYER: My older brother was sort of a bad boy. I mean, he really—he got all of his attention through perversity, I suppose you could say. Uh, my younger brother—they sized both of us up and decided to have nothing to do with us. [Laughs.] So he turned out all right.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What does he do? Where did he go?

ROY MOYER: Well, he's an inventor and uh—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hm. What kind of—

ROY MOYER: He works for Western Electric.

PAUL CUMMINGS: As a real light [ph].

ROY MOYER: Yeah. As a real light. But uh, he's an admirable person. I mean, I'm very close to him. I was very—not very close to my older brother.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, did you speak German at home or was it English? Or various languages around?

ROY MOYER: Well, you see, Pennsylvania Dutch, which is really German, is um—the Pennsylvania Dutch, when they came over, they were farmers mostly. And they had no written language. Uh, and there were many things they weren't acquainted with, like potatoes and matches, for instance, for which there is no word in Pennsylvania Dutch. I mean, you say matches and potatoes. But uh, it's—Pennsylvania Dutch is a kind of low German that's written phonetically in English actually.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

ROY MOYER: Yeah. But it wasn't in the family that it was spoken because my mother, who is from Basel, uh, really spoke Swiss Dutch. Swiss German, rather. But uh, everybody, I mean all my childhood friends and everything else spoke Pennsylvania Dutch. My classmates and such. So although it was not a language that one was proud of particularly, so one didn't really learn it. But having it in your ears all the time, you picked it up.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. How did you decide to go to Columbia? I mean, there are so many possibilities maybe that—

ROY MOYER: Well, Columbia had a program that appealed to me. Uh, Columbia originally was called King's College and they decided, I guess as much as about 1936 or so to revive King's College to make it co-ed, to have one student from each state, and to do a third year in Europe. It was a kind of experimental thing, but they wanted a cross-section of people. And I liked that idea. And since it was liberal arts and I didn't know what I wanted to do anyway. Anyway, I took a test and I was accepted into King's College. And the year I was accepted, it was disbanded. So they said, since—"Because it's a little late, if you want to go into Columbia College, they will accept your entrance exams." So that's how I really wound up there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Had you been to New York before? Had you been, traveled anywhere?

ROY MOYER: Oh, yes. I'd been to New York. I had an aunt who had gone to Columbia, as a matter of fact. And she used to bring me over sometimes in the summer to the theatres and that sort of thing with her.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So it was some known quantity.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. It was a known quantity anyway. And I suppose that's why I was interested in King's College anyway. I was very close to this aunt anyway.

PAUL CUMMINGS: She was whose sister?

ROY MOYER: My father's sister.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you came to New York in what? 1930—

ROY MOYER: No. 1939.

PAUL CUMMINGS: '39.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was—you know, I mean, you really grew—you were one of those people who was just old enough to enjoy the Depression in a way.

ROY MOYER: [Laughs] yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How apparent was that? Did it have effects that you realized then or you've been able to look back and ascertain?

ROY MOYER: No. I'm not too aware of any of that. I lived a rather self-contained life and no, I was not very much aware of that. My big problem when I came to Columbia, of course, was that I had never thought of fellow students as competitive. School was very easy for me. And one of the things that was very difficult for me—I mean, I used to run home on weekends. They'd have to tie me up to take me back. But uh, I wasn't accustomed to being with city slickers who were very ruthlessly competitive in school. And of course, I didn't have an adequate background for what I was studying.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did you start then? Just liberal arts.

ROY MOYER: Well, liberal arts, but with English lit. as a major. And I don't know if you know what that's like, but if you take a course with Lionel Trilling on the Victorian novel, you have to read *Middlemarch* in half a day sort of. You know, it's not—[laughs]. You can't do it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's why they give it to you.

ROY MOYER: Fortunately, I wound up in the Army with lots of books and lots of drawings. So I was able to catch up sort of. That was what was very good about it. I at least learned the right, the names of things so that I recognized them when I found them later.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, you went—the Army came along later, right? In 1940-something.

ROY MOYER: Nineteen—well, I was 21. When was that? I guess it was '42 maybe.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. So you'd been what? You had two years at Columbia to start with?

ROY MOYER: I had three years at Columbia. At the end of my third year, I went into the Army.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Uh-huh [affirmative].

ROY MOYER: You see, Bethlehem is right next door to Allentown and almost everybody is deferred because they're working in the steel mill.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

ROY MOYER: So they had a hard time meeting their quotas. And I know had a luncheon date the day I appeared at the draft board. I didn't know they were going to take my clothes and send me south. I had to wave to my girlfriend through the barricade and say goodbye. We'll have lunch another day.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It was really that fast.

ROY MOYER: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. But what was Columbia like for you those three years there?

ROY MOYER: Well, um, it was very hard for me to adjust. But um—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because of the academic competitiveness?

ROY MOYER: Well, that was one of the things.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The city?

ROY MOYER: I mean, the students were very bright, you know. High school was a pushover for me. It just didn't really require enough of me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you didn't know the real world was a little different.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Yeah. But we had extremely good teachers at Columbia. I mean, it was a time when Raymond Weaver was there, and Trilling, and uh, I took some courses in art history with Meyer Schapiro. And the people who were there were very interesting also. And I was—

PAUL CUMMINGS: You mean the students.

ROY MOYER: The students were interesting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Any you remember particularly?

ROY MOYER: Well, I remember all of them. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: All too well.

ROY MOYER: Especially him. But uh, no. They were very—the students were extremely stimulating. As a matter of fact, later, when I taught at the University of Toronto, I found that very strange that the students wouldn't talk to each other on campus at the University of Toronto about school. I mean, that was considered to them to be not what you spoke about.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Just like in England.

ROY MOYER: Really?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah.

ROY MOYER: But at Columbia, I mean, I learned almost everything I knew from my fellow students I had as a—we spoke about our subjects constantly. And uh, that was very important.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So it's a different tradition really from Toronto to Columbia.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. And of course, after the war, when I went back again and Allen Ginsberg was there, and Jack Kerouac, and so on, we were all studying with Trilling at the time. It was small classes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But in the early, the first adventure at Columbia, were there any professors who were particularly outstanding to you in terms of what you were studying, or were more important to you, or influential?

ROY MOYER: Oh, yes. Well, Mark Van Doren was extraordinarily influential, particularly when I started teaching. Because you know, when you teach, you have a concept of what a teacher is. And I was always very aware that I was, that what I really wanted to be like was Mark Van Doren. When I first studied with him, I wasn't ready. I didn't like the idea that he wouldn't tell you anything.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What do you mean by that?

ROY MOYER: Well, he would say things like, well, he'd say uh, "Sebastiano was very brave. Or I suppose," well, wouldn't say—"I suppose that's a form of cowardice." I suppose—it was always a backtracking antithesis kind of speech he had, you see. And a beginning student wants answers that he can write on his exam. He doesn't want that kind of thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: One, two, three, four.

ROY MOYER: So at first I thought, "God, this is just so terrible." You know, he was just the worst teacher I'd ever met.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, he was a young teacher then though, wasn't he? I mean, he taught [inaudible], but he was what? Middle 40s?

ROY MOYER: I'd say middle 40s. Yeah. But then, when I had him a year later, I got to think that was the greatest thing that ever happened to me. And my whole concept, when teaching, was really based upon him, on leading the student through a thought process to some kind of independent answer. And also he had a beautiful attitude towards the subject.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Which was?

ROY MOYER: Which was very—well, never say anything that stops someone from liking something they like. And that's very important, particularly when teaching art, teaching art history. You know, one shouldn't say, "I don't like Renoir," or "I don't—" The important thing is to allow people to have their—the things they love and to develop from that. So that whole attitude of don't destroy anything, which he had, was very important to me. Once I began teaching anyway. Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, what about other subjects? Were there other instructors who were—I mean, he seems

to have taken a little while to be selected in this, you know.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Well, there were some memorable teachers. Raymond Weaver, who taught me a lot, though I'd liked him very little. I found him very grating. I don't know if you know him or not, but he'd sort of discovered Melville and wrote the introduction to the Everyman, uh, Moby Dick. But he was very precious and very grating. You know, that can have a lasting effect upon—

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's a great combination. Yeah. Curious combination. How did you like—

ROY MOYER: I studied with Schapiro, too, who—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How was he?

ROY MOYER: Well, I think he's uh, fast, sparkling, and fascinating. And uh, I must say he led me to lots of things. I mean, I remember I wrote a paper for him on Paul Klee. These things—and Munch. And Munch had a lot—a great influence upon me, but it was really Meyer Schapiro who made me aware of Munch. These were things that people were not too aware of at the time, I think.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You mean very modern art.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. And his great enthusiasm for art was important, but he's not a good person to work with.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why is that?

ROY MOYER: Well, he has a monopoly on ideas uh, which—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you mean that? Somebody else has said that and I'm—

ROY MOYER: He's begrudging of other people's ideas.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

ROY MOYER: And he tends to have you do his work, which is the European—

PAUL CUMMINGS: You do the early work.

ROY MOYER: —*kunstgeschichte* attitude. Yeah. You do my research for me. So that it wasn't the—I mean, I couldn't say he's a good teacher. Another thing I discovered is he's a great bibliographer. I mean, he did work in Avery Library and he knows the names of all the books, but I don't know what he's read. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: I see.

ROY MOYER: Yet he's fast. I think his taste in art, in contemporary art is incredible. I mean, you know what—you know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: In terms of?

ROY MOYER: Well, he said, for instance, Hyde Solomon and Gandy Brodie were the two principal, leading American artists, for instance.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hmm. When did he say that?

ROY MOYER: Well, he—

PAUL CUMMINGS: In the '50s?

ROY MOYER: He said it publicly in writing some place or other. But anyway, uh, it's—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why do so many art historians have such bad taste in a lot of—

ROY MOYER: Yeah. I don't know. And I think that they've built up a cult about Schapiro, which I don't think is real.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mythology.

ROY MOYER: And I must say that his hammering type of lecture—because he does hammer, and hammer, and hammer when he lectures, can in the end be boring.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You mean makes his point over, and over, and over.

ROY MOYER: Well, and he goes on. He's very much teaching himself at his own—he's very, very desirous to impress.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's like Greenberg in a funny way.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, then all of a sudden the Army comes along and interferes with this nice life you had at Columbia. What happened in the Army? What was that?

ROY MOYER: Well, they sent me to South Carolina in the summer and to Wisconsin in the winter. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Perfect time of the year in both places, right? [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: I was associated with a medium aid maintenance ordinance unit in North Africa, which consisted primarily of California car salesmen.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Car sales? Is that [inaudible]?

ROY MOYER: It wasn't all bad, you know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, good.

ROY MOYER: But one thing, they never read the handbook, so that life was fairly relaxed. I mean, they didn't know how to do an about face, for instance. [They laugh.] But um, and they very quickly became involved in the black market, which sort of left me in the camp reading the books that were sent over to the USO or whatever. Well, but uh—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How many years was that?

ROY MOYER: Well, I think I was in like three and a half years. I eventually wound up in the infantry when the unit uh—when the war ended in North Africa, I was sent to Italy on the—as an infantry rifleman. But the Army experience wasn't all bad in that I think there's something wonderful about seeing everybody in the uniform, because you learn—I mean, there were lots of people I had never met and never would have met ordinarily.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You mean different kinds of lives and—

ROY MOYER: Types of—yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —people and personalities. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Bookies and things, you know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Real people. Real folks.

ROY MOYER: But when people are in uniform, you have to sort of figure out who they are. You don't go by what they say or what they look like.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you mean figure out who they are?

ROY MOYER: Well, you don't believe—

PAUL CUMMINGS: And be out of uniform.

ROY MOYER: Yes. You don't believe their stories, so you have to um, really become interested in them at face value because you can't make all these prejudgments that you can ordinarily—

PAUL CUMMINGS: So the one-to-one personal evaluation situation.

ROY MOYER: Uh-huh [affirmative]. And that was really very nice. I mean, it was important for me, I think, to learn that one shouldn't judge by appearances anyway.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So this hadn't come up at Columbia ever. Not really.

ROY MOYER: Not particularly. No. But in the Army, you know, living at close range and you have to really learn who people are. That was a—and then I was in Italy when the war ended and I was sent back to the States for—I

was supposed to be redirected to Japan, but the war ended in Japan while I was home on leave. They liked me. They asked me if I wanted to stay in. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: And what did you say? Of course. Twenty-five years from now? So many people it seems either immediately fall in to the joys of military life or they fight it every day they're there. Which would you come—

ROY MOYER: Well, there are different situations, of course. Uh, I suppose I was mostly bewildered, but then I guess everybody else was bewildered, too. But uh, in combat, you have to pretend it's not real or you'd really go mad if you thought for a moment you were really there at that place under those conditions. So you would dream a lot and invent. Uh, one of the sad things in combat itself is that you never—you know, I didn't know who my trench mate was. He was called Tex. I never knew anything more than that about him. Plus, the fact I didn't like the fact that he would go to the toilet in my trench because he was afraid to get out mostly. And he had only two topics of conversation. One was uh, he would suddenly say, "I hear the war's going to end."

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

ROY MOYER: Or he would say, "I hear we're going to be relieved." And uh, I mean, that was all we ever really said to each other, which was kind of a pity. But it's just a very mad situation. Uh, and I never had any real effects after that, except that I couldn't bear to hear anyone whisper for a long while. I associated whispering with that enemy on the other side of the hill, you know, kind of thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Low voice communication.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. So whispering would sort of drive me up the wall. And of course, I was quite shocked by the whole thing. I mean, I went to a station—well, when we were relieved, we walked most of the night. There were about six of us left and I joined another unit.

PAUL CUMMINGS: This is where? In North Africa?

ROY MOYER: This was in the Po Valley. I joined another unit and it was like seven o'clock in the morning and they were doing calisthenics in the rain. And the, I joined the unit and took off my shirt, and did calisthenics with them. But I complained about neuralgia. I thought I had neuralgia. I don't know what I had, but I had a great pain that I had had for months. Anyway, so I went to see the doctor and he said, "You don't have neuralgia." And I said, "Yes, I do." He was very angry with me because I said, "I want some aspirin tablets." And he said, "Don't you tell me what to give you. Tell me what's wrong with you." And I said, "Well, I have neuralgia." And he said, "You don't." So he says, "I'm going to send you to Florence to be examined." It turned out his name was Moyer also. [They laugh.] So anyway. That's how I got out eventually. I was sent to a station hospital eventually to Naples, to a station hospital. And I said I could type, though I couldn't, but I was determined I wasn't going back into combat. So I worked in the office there. And it was at a time when everybody else was very tired of working in the office. So uh, I was sort of fresh and vigorous, and appreciated working in the office.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Moving all the paper—

ROY MOYER: So I was sort of noticed, you see, and kept. But uh, that was sort of the—one of the things I had to do was take care of about 40 homesick nurses. The nurses in the Army were very unhappy because they weren't allowed to associate with enlisted men and most of their patients were enlisted men. So they couldn't fall in love with their patients, which was—but another thing was they weren't really accepted by the doctors as equals. And they didn't like to go into the mess hall with their hair disheveled. They didn't like the PX panties that were rationed out, and they were in general unhappy.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Vanity persisted. [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: So part of what I had to do was keep records of their menstrual cycles to see if they were goofing off. And uh, occasionally take them to Rome and Florence on little week trips. We'd read Suetonius and Tacitus.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: I gave them lectures on scandalous gossip for the Roman emperors, right?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, marvelous.

ROY MOYER: And then we'd take off to Rome and see some of the sights there, up to Florence, and see some of the sights. That became quite pleasant, taking care of them. [Laughs.] I also used to write home for patients that couldn't write because it was a maxillofacial hospital. And people who have uh, wounds of the face frequently panic and don't want to eat or don't want to talk. And they especially don't want relatives to know that their face is marred in some way. So uh, they're very uncommunicative. And part of what I had to do was to get them to

talk and write so that their relatives wouldn't worry about them. That was rather interesting to do. And I was one of those persons who could write. I had three years of college. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you find that college made a difference in general terms for the Army experience or not?

ROY MOYER: Well, the Army isn't interested in anything except experience. Uh, and they categorize you very—I suppose if I had four years I would have been officer. I don't know. But having had three and no experience, I was nothing. It was unfortunate that I did very well in my mechanical aptitude test because they put me in with the engineers, you see, who dig roads sort of, you know. [Laughs.] But uh, no. I had no experience. I was useless in the Army.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you did all these curious little—

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Shifting 40 nurses around.

ROY MOYER: Except, as I say, a lot of people sent books over. Uh, books really to be thrown away sort of, because you, you know, decamp and move on. So uh—and good books. And my college experience at least taught me to recognize a book that I should read. And I had sufficient time to do it. I also learned Italian there, because for a while we were in charge of some Italian, an Italian prison camp. And uh, I worked as a French interpreter in North Africa with the unit for a while, where we'd go around bartering local food and such. And then began by uh, speaking French to a French-speaking Italian prisoner. But Italian is so obvious a language that I very soon picked it up and—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was that the beginning of your interest in Italy?

ROY MOYER: Well, it was the beginning of my interest in traveling, you know. Because when I came back and was obviously distressed, and didn't really know what to do, my father read an article in the newspaper that said they were looking for students at the University of Oslo in Norway. American students. And he suggested that I apply because he thought it would be good if I had a change of uh—I think he wanted me to lose some of my Army talk also. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: What? You picked up like a new vocabulary?

ROY MOYER: But anyway.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Inaudible] or something.

ROY MOYER: Yes. But anyway, I applied to that. So I went to University of Oslo.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, that's where that comes in.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. And uh, and then I stayed on after that because it was—you had to do something like that in order to even get passage on a ship at that time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long were you there then?

ROY MOYER: Well, I was in Oslo only for one semester. I didn't like it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: For what reason?

ROY MOYER: Well, I don't think I liked the European university idea of listening to the lecture and then—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Writing—

ROY MOYER: —writing it back. I didn't like the fact that I was taking a course in Ibsen and the teacher had never read Shakespeare or Sophocles. You know, who cares about Ibsen if—except in terms of other things? I mean, I was more interested in comparative lit. than the house that he lived in and uh, who the play, Brandt, is based upon or that kind of thing. Uh, and then—but I did take a course in 17th-century farmhouse construction.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hmm. How'd you pick that up?

ROY MOYER: It was being offered. [They laugh.] So if you ever need a home. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Nice farmhouse somewhere. Oh, for—

ROY MOYER: That was sort of my—yeah. And I became interested in Munch there, too. I'd been interested in

Munch before, but—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you like the city? Did you like the university generally or was it—

ROY MOYER: I don't—no. I suppose temperamentally I'm Italian. That Nordic stuff—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Doesn't work.

ROY MOYER: Is not really—no. And they're terribly chauvinistic. I can't say that I really like any—there's a lack of adventure-someness about the food, and the people, and the—I know that's a terrible generality, but—

PAUL CUMMINGS: What about the students? Were they interesting to you or were there a lot of American—

ROY MOYER: No. There weren't very many Americans. And so we were in the newspaper all time. We were invited by King Haakon to dinner and a Prince Olav conference. Olav had us to his summer home. And we were constantly being interviewed on everything from what did I think about Norway, to what did I think about drinking, to what did I think about the falls at Rjukan. You know, it was a—so we were given a lot of attention, the few of us that were there. And they were always asking us questions about America, like is there race prejudice there? And there was a great big build-up since it was the first year they had American students.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

ROY MOYER: So uh, they were also concerned that we should give a proper impression of America. And so we were very carefully schooled.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you were used by both sides.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: A ploy almost. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: But uh, I can't say it was uh, a typical experience. But they did entertain us very much. You know, and that's one of the things I think one can say about them, that they're uh, like boy scouts, you know. They'll invite you to their homes and you have a wonderful party and such. We'd have eggadosis [ph] parties where we'd all get into the kitchen and beat up eggs, and pouring brandy, and things like that. I mean, it was all wonderful. But the moment when you sit down and say, "You know, Olav, I have a problem." They say, you know, "Let's climb a mountain and plunge into the glacial lake."

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: "Let's go have a sauna," or something.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right, right. It's a mindless kind of life.

ROY MOYER: Well, it's very uh—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Lots of food.

ROY MOYER: You know, all the students go up in the mountains, and have their saunas, and swim, and such. And you know, I'm not very much impressed by views, by panoramas. That's one of the reasons why I'm, I suppose, disoriented. I look at the telephone pole when it's passing as I'm riding in the train, you know. But I miss the landscape sort of. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, but that, too.

ROY MOYER: So you can't impress me by taking me up a hill and saying, "That's Oslo down there."

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh. [Inaudible] up there. You were there how long for the, I mean, Europe at that period?

ROY MOYER: Well, I left after that um, for France—well, for London, actually. There was a teacher I knew who asked me to do some research for her at the British museum, which I did. And then I read an ad in the [inaudible] review of literature that they wanted a teacher of English in Greece. And uh, I was the only applicant because there was a civil war going on that I didn't know about.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.] They always have them there, don't they? I mean, every year there's another one.

ROY MOYER: Anyway, I arrived in Greece during the civil war. Uh, on a three-year contract. And I taught in the school in Salonica, which was sort of where the war was going on. But uh, Salonica was the second capital of

Byzantium. And some Americans—there was a very small American English community there. I'd say maybe 30 people all together. But whenever Americans would come through, they would want to see the sights of Salonica. And so I found out that I was being asked to be a guide more or less to Byzantine churches. And there are some wonderful, magnificent Byzantine churches in Salonica. And some Roman ruins [ph] also.

So I seem to have become a kind of guide of the Byzantine monuments, and that's what got me interested in art history. And I naively thought that I could go back to Columbia. I was changing my major because I had gotten a master's in English lit. in the meantime, before I went to Norway actually. But uh, I went—I applied to Columbia again to major in art history. I thought I'd study Byzantine art. Well, of course, you can't study Byzantine art in New York.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Inaudible.] You were there.

ROY MOYER: Anyway, that's what I did. And that's how I actually came back. But Greece was fascinating at that time. It really was. One of my students was—

PAUL CUMMINGS: What civil war was that?

ROY MOYER: Well, right after World War II—there was an organization during the war. When the Nazis occupied Greece, a resistance movement was set up called the KKE. And they went up into the hills and they did sort of minor sabotage. They'd come down and blow up a power plant. Every now and then they'd do something like that. But they were people who had given up their businesses or their jobs, or one thing, or another, knowing that when the war was over they'd be reinstated, and the collaborators would be thrown out in some way. Well, that's not what happened, because when the war was over, the British came in for maybe two weeks or so. And then the Americans came in. And they continued to work with the collaboration government, and they continued to trade with the collaborators in business.

And the people who came back from the hills, the patriots, so to speak, were lined up and shot. So of course, they went back up into the hills and became the andarti, the rebels, and got their support from Bulgaria, or Yugoslavia, or wherever they could. So they were called the communists. Uh, however, the Greeks always had a lot of sympathy for them because they were the patriots during the war. But I think the assumption was that anybody who's anti-Nazi must be pro-Russian, and that became more important after the war.

So that was the civil war that was going on. Uh, it didn't last very—it lasted perhaps about a year while I was there and then it ended. And then it was very pleasant to travel, though there weren't any roads. I bought a donkey and I had a, you know, piece of gingham cloth in which I put my bread, and olives, and sardines.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Off you went, like on foot.

ROY MOYER: Kippers. I was very fond of kippers at the time. [Laughs.] And a bottle of wine. And I traveled around. When the sun set, I'd bed down and I went all through the [inaudible]. So that was—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How was teaching there? What kind of—what did you do?

ROY MOYER: Well, you see, a Greek teacher uh, is an authority. He tells the answers. And Greek students respect that kind of thing. I came in with a whole different attitude. If someone said, "Does the subject come before the predicate?" I'd say, "I don't know. Let's take a look." You know, well that's loss of face. It took a while for them to get accustomed to me. And it took me a long while to get accustomed to them. Another thing is that they lived under Turkish rule for some 800 years. And so Greeks' patriotism consisted in getting around authority. I mean, they had ways of writing on their cuff during exams that you couldn't beat. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Inaudible] languages or something.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. So uh, I very soon decided that that was not the way to deal with this at all. So I said, "We're on the honor system. I'm leaving the room when you're taking your exam." Well, they reported me to the principal for making them dishonest. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's marvelous.

ROY MOYER: But uh, what I think was—first of all, I learned a lot about Greeks because Greeks students—this was a gymnasium and the age was like 12 to 21, you see. It was like through junior college. And they're rather uninhibited. And it was—I learned about Greek mentality from them. But what I learned most, I think, was I learned about English because English is based—English grammar is based upon Latin grammar, and that's why I had no problem with English grammar, having studied a lot of Latin. But Greek grammar is even more complex than Latin grammar, and they can run rings around you in grammar. I mean, with second periphrastics and things like that. I mean, they know what they're talking about, Greek students. So to try to teach them that uh,

the present perfect tense is an action that is completed in the present time, and the past perfect tense is an action that was completed in the past time, and all the other nonsense that are done by grammarians that try to force English into a Latin pattern. You know, like they teach you could is a past tense of can, and shall is used with the first person, will with the second and third, and futurity is expressed by shall and will. And I mean, lies, all of it. After a few months of that—because I had a book I was supposed to teach from—after a few months of that, uh, I thought, "I'm not going to teach that." But I didn't know what I was going to teach.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Were you teaching English?

ROY MOYER: I was teaching English. Yes. A lot of them had backgrounds in English.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But you had no Greek, did you?

ROY MOYER: No. No. No. Well, you know, it was that whole system where you stand up and you talk to them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

ROY MOYER: It's really the best way, because once you write, you're lost. I mean, if you write the word girl, and burn, B-U-R-N, and earn, E-A-R-N, and tell them it's girl, bird—burn, earn, turn, and you know, they're all pronounced the same way and they're all written differently, and—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Chaos.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Or once, you know, if you say to them, "This is a box." You'll say, "What is this?" And they'll say, "This is a box." But once you write, "This is a box" on the blackboard, they'll say, "This is a vox." And it'll take ten years to get them to say box instead of vox or box at best, because their language is phonetic. So uh, I learned first of all, to disillusion them about how languages operate, because English is a relational language and has no declension at all. And Greek is a totally declined language, you see. So I had to get them to see that there were languages that didn't operate in terms of declension. And mostly I had to unlearn myself that English didn't operate in terms of declension. So what happened was that I stood literally for several months in front of the class with nothing to say. It was terribly embarrassing. But I thought, "I'm not going to tell them any lies. And since I don't know any truths at this point, I'm just going to stand here until they—" [They laugh.] Well, eventually, I developed my own grammar. And I didn't use any of those words like past tense and things. I didn't use any words they were familiar with in terms of grammar. And I simply described how English worked. And it meant I had to listen a lot to how English was spoken. And then try—I had to do what Aristotle did when he wrote Greek grammar. Well, he started the whole mess. But I had to do the same thing. I had to listen to the way English was spoken and try to give a description of it. And that was thrilling to me. I think I became a good teacher of English because at least my students were beginning to speak, which they would never do by that grammar method. But uh, anyway. That was an interesting experience to me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did you learn about the Greeks?

ROY MOYER: About the Greeks?

PAUL CUMMINGS: From the students in terms of their own world.

ROY MOYER: Well, you see, the Greeks look like Italians, and I couldn't understand why they weren't happy with a dish of spaghetti, and a bottle of wine, and a fly-specked picture of the virgin on the wall, because they seemed very sour. You know, and dancing was forbidden when I arrived there. So uh, I thought, "Here are all these people that look like wonderful Italians and they're behaving sort of like Germans or something." And once I got accustomed, they really are so solid, so serious, so wonderful. I got to love them really as a—I've changed my mind subsequently, but when I was there—[they laugh.] And one of my students was Vassilis Vassilikos, who wrote the novel *Z*. He was a student of mine. And uh, I had a kind of influence on his career since he wrote his first novel about me, which won a prize.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, terrific.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Which is that?

ROY MOYER: He wrote a novel, uh, about Chiron, the centaur, who was a teacher. And anyway, I later translated it with him.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

ROY MOYER: Yeah. But anyway.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Marvelous. Yeah. Did you have every year a new group of students, or was it the same moving through the system?

ROY MOYER: Well, they always came in uh, in shorts and suspenders, and bangs at the age of 12. And the next summer, they had been at a whore house and came back with moustaches, long trousers. [Laughs.] Yes, they changed considerably.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, my God. But you know, I think it's very interesting since you've taught really in what? Four countries almost. Do you find the students of the same ages differ enormously or are there similarities?

ROY MOYER: Well, oh, I think they're very different. Yet, I suppose it depends—the age group was always changing, too. And that may have had something to do with it. I mean, I don't know what Greek students are like now. They might be very different people. But um, I'm certain the teachers are different and that must make the students different. But in Canada, for instance, I was—of course, I was at Toronto and Toronto was made up—is made up mostly of 18th-century English servant class. At least it was when I was there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Then it was. Yeah. It's changed a lot.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. And uh, they're very goody-goody and very proper. And they have very rigid concepts of behavior. So I was always—while the students were bright and wonderful there, I was always surprised at their conservatism. I mean, it was all right while I was teaching, until I reached 1908 and showed them an abstraction, and met this great resistance to uh—or they don't like you to step out of line. They don't like you to imply that artists aren't geniuses and that—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Everything's formula.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. So I thought they were quite different. Yet, when I was there, I was allowed to teach only—well, through a series of circumstances, I was allowed to teach two courses of my choice. And I wanted to teach a course on 16th- and 17th-century aesthetic theory. And I selected my own students for that. And that was an incredible experience. I mean, they were absolutely the brightest, finest students one could want. That was—

[Audio break.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: I wanted to ask you one thing. What caused you to change your opinion of the Greeks after you'd been there and then—was that going back years later or while you were there?

ROY MOYER: No. Going back years later, because I've gone back many times since then. I had different relationships like uh—I mean, I'm hardly friendly with Vassilis Vassilikos at this point. I mean, he wrote me a letter once and asked me if I was—while I was in Greece, was I a member of the CIA basically.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: Other unforgivable things. Well—[Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: And he wrote back that you'll be investigated tomorrow.

ROY MOYER: [Laughs.] But uh, well, the Greeks are between two worlds. They lived for many years under Turkish rule and they are very talkative about politics, but very resigned. Their machismo is something I can't bear, something I wasn't too aware of when I was there. The Greek concept, the Greek male concept of himself is a great block to understanding or communication, I think. I don't know. There are just many things now that I think are not so attractive. And I still say, you know, instead of blaming the USA for the Junta, why don't do they something? I mean, they're there. Why don't they—I mean, we did something here.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why do they always do that? I mean, they always sort become in exile and then they scream, and rant, and rave, and carry on.

ROY MOYER: Well, they're very peculiar. You see, that's why the civil war there was so difficult for them, because for a Greek to fight against a Greek is just about the worst thing imaginable. And uh, you know, Cavafy, who was in Alexandria—his family was in Alexandria for 600 years. He's still a Greek. But Dimitri Mitropoulos, who would not play a benefit concert for the Greek Army is uh, his citizenship was revoked. [Laughs.] Byron is a Greek. I mean, the people they claim as Greeks are amazing. [They laugh.] I soon stopped discussing whether Justinian was a Greek or not, or whether El Greco was a Greek. [They laugh.] Anyone they like is a Greek.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I see. I see.

ROY MOYER: But uh, the climate, you see, is also very deceptive. It was such a magnificent place to be. And life is so beautiful there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You mean in terms of just getting through the day.

ROY MOYER: Yes. Yeah. Another thing that was—is rather surprising is, you see, the superimposition of Christianity upon ancient Greece, with all their ideas that paganism was a dreadful, has totally destroyed their concept of themselves as ancient Greeks. Now, they are valued in the world today, not because of their Byzantine background, but because of ancient Greece, about which they know nothing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Or if they do, they're very confused about today.

ROY MOYER: That's true. But also, what they know they've learned from German art historians. I mean, the Greek drama today is German classic drama. I mean, they go around imitating vase paintings, you know, when they're, when they have a—or—

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Inaudible] and stuff.

ROY MOYER: Yes. So what they know about ancient Greece has all been, again, superimposed upon them by some other culture. And Christianity is a very—I mean, Byzantine, Greek orthodoxy is a very strong thing in their lives. I mean, it's a state religion. And yet, I knew some very nice people there. I knew a painter. A lot of them looked—I had a show actually, a painting exhibition while I was in Greece. A lot of them looked upon me as a way of getting information to them about what was happening outside of Greece, because they had been shut out by the war, and then by the civil war. They didn't have too much communication. And uh, for instance, Nicos Sahinos [ph], a Salonica painter who has achieved some kind of reputation subsequently, has a couple of my abstractions, and became an abstract painter under my influence—this sounds bizarre, but anyway. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, but that's why art history has been the way it is in the books, you know.

[END OF TRACK.]

[This is Reel 1, Side B]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Side two. So your three years in Greece was enough, right? I mean, you didn't decide to stay and 1951 appeared and you—

ROY MOYER: No. Well, I really came back to Columbia to study art history. And not only that, but you know, after a while, you don't know what you're looking at if you're—particularly if you don't have someone to talk to. I was quite ready to settle down as a matter of fact, in some way.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Now, were you painting all this time? You mentioned having an exhibition there.

ROY MOYER: Oh, yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Had you been painting in Norway and what about during the Army? Did you draw?

ROY MOYER: No. Well, not really. No.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It wasn't possible.

ROY MOYER: But uh, in Greece, I painted quite a bit. One had to improvise. I mean, one couldn't really get the right colors or the right—you couldn't get canvas and things like that. But uh, yes. I used to—you see, I couldn't stand the fact that they didn't have heat, which meant I spent a good deal of time in bed with all my clothes on.

PAUL CUMMINGS: In Greece.

ROY MOYER: Yes. But it was a perfect position to look at that painting across the room and suddenly jump out of bed and go over and put another stroke on it. [Laughs.] I did an awful lot of hopping in and out of bed.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You don't need heat in Greece, do you?

ROY MOYER: Well, yeah. Strangely enough, you need it more than ever. [They laugh.] Because when the temperature is like 35 degrees all winter and no—I used to go to every Russian party I could find just so I could sit near the samovar. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: So anyway, you came back and you went to Columbia. What, that was two years or so? Because you were in Toronto.

ROY MOYER: Well, no. Let's see. No, I spent three years actually. I was working on my doctor's degree credits,

but I met a man at a party when I was just about to buckle down to write my dissertation. I had finished my credits. And I was mostly interested in 16th-century—I was interested in alchemy, as a matter of fact, alchemy and 16th-century painting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you get interested in alchemy?

ROY MOYER: Well, I got interested in a writer named Lamatzo who uh, wrote a treatise on painting, and he was a painter himself. He went blind at the age of 30 and wrote a treatise on painting, which was the standard textbook for about 200 years. And it's absolutely unintelligible. And when I was trying to figure it out, I got to see that the key was alchemy. And so I did a lot of research on alchemy. And I saw that it had a tremendous influence upon all Mannerist painters because many of them became alchemists or were alchemists. Sort of strange, but anyway. And uh, but I was at this party when a man, who was the head of the art department at the University of Toronto, said to me, "Would you be interested in coming to Toronto to teach if you were invited?" And I said yes. I said yes to everything. And then about a week later, I got a telephone call. And he said, "If I send you a contract will you come?" And I thought, well, it'll take a day for it to get here. I can find out what the University of Toronto is about and I can—so I said yes. And he said, "Were you the tall man in the blue suit over by the window?" And I said, "Yes." And I don't know how surprised he was when I appeared on campus. Well, anyway. That's how I wound up there. And that was something because uh, the teacher I shared an office with committed suicide after I was there a couple of months. And I took over his class. I had 24 hours of teaching a week with no decent slides. First year, you know, every lecture had to be prepared. I had to teach courses in 18th-century porcelain and you know, six lectures on Russian architecture. Do you know what Russian architecture is like? It doesn't exist.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Italian [ph]. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: Yes. You have to show them a picture of something else and say, "We think it looked like that." You know, it's a—well. But it was an incredible schedule.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Gave you time to survey the total culture.

ROY MOYER: Well, it was 3,000 BC to the present day and all around the world. Yes. In addition to which, the teacher who was supposed to teach Chinese art went on sabbatical to write a book on Tang figurines and they asked me if I'd teach her course. And I said, "Yes, provided that I may do volunteer work at the museum with her and she will guide me in this." And they said okay. That was rather nice because I worked at the Royal Ontario Museum as a volunteer for a while, spare time. But uh, anyway, she was teaching a course of Chinese art that was like eight months through Han dynasty. Well, you know, that's an awful lot of chariot fittings and dragon bones to talk about. So I said, "We've got to change the nature of this course." So I changed it to Indian, which she didn't like because she thought it was squiggly. I changed it to Indian, Chinese, and Japanese.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The whole tradition.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. But it was an awful lot of work and uh, I decided at the end of the first year I was going to leave, because it was really too much. And then another teacher wanted to go on sabbatical. They didn't have many people in the department. Another teacher wanted to go—not on sabbatical. He went to do some research on his doctoral dissertation, and they asked me if I wouldn't stay on. I said, "Yes, if I may teach the courses I want to teach, if I may reduce my schedule considerably, and if I get more pay," all of which they agreed to. So I stayed another year. And I also did some scripting for the Canadian Broadcasting company on some art programs, which was interesting. And I really liked to stay for that reason.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hmm. What kind of programs were they?

ROY MOYER: Well, they had a program called Exploring Minds, and we did programs on things like the nature of reality. They were sort of deep programs for 6:00 o'clock on Sunday. And they were all done live. And that was interesting, too, because I would come at 2:00 o'clock on Sunday afternoon. And the actors would say, "Did you write this? I can't say these lines." [Laughs.] And I'd look on the monitor, and I'd see all the cables, and the backs of heads, and all those things. And then they'd call a coffee break, and then it was 5:00 o'clock. But the program would go on rather neatly. Always surprised me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was it radio or television? Radio.

ROY MOYER: Television.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Television. Hmm. What did you do in a program?

ROY MOYER: I scripted it and told them what visual materials to use, gave them suggestions for sets and everything.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Inaudible].

ROY MOYER: I'd say, "Yes. We want this to be an Egyptian tomb," you see. And we want an Egyptian, and we want him to be painting this picture. And we want him to be painting this picture here. We want the trees upside-down, that kind of stuff. [Laughs.] That was black and white, so it wasn't the best kind of thing for art, but uh—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did—you also wrote the script, right?

ROY MOYER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, all of it was rewritten. Mostly I did the idea, you see. I didn't do the casting or anything like that. I didn't actually design the sets. I told them what the set should be. And uh, it doesn't take much to make a set on TV as you probably know. Just a branch of a tree and a kind of bedsheet will do.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Joe Melvina [ph] extended.

ROY MOYER: Yes. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, fantastic.

ROY MOYER: But anyway, that was sort of my—so I liked to stay for that reason. And then I got involved also because of that, because it was a time when uh—the university didn't like the idea that I used a lectern at the university behind my name because they thought it was—TV was, you know, not really a serious enough thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, that was your identification.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Yeah. So uh, but a lot of the students were interested in the educational possibilities of TV. And so they invited me to talk on a lot of panels and things like that, which was good because it was a time when Edmund Carpenter and uh, P.E. Hall [ph], and others interested in communication, McLuhan and so on, were there at the school. It was a very exciting time in terms of communication.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think TV is still a hope in education?

ROY MOYER: Yeah, I do. Well, you know, when we were there we conducted some experiments which were rather revealing. And uh, Edmund Carpenter gave a lecture on Eskimo language, for instance. And one group saw it on TV. One group heard it on the radio. One group read the script. One group uh, sat in the classroom. And he used no visual aids at all, and then gave them a battery of true and false, and composition questions, and such. And the lowest person who saw it on TV got higher than the highest person who read it, for instance. Reading is much slower and very inaccurate. We didn't quite know why TV was better than sitting in the classroom. We presumed it might be because of the concentration in the dark, but came rather to believe that the little lines around the eyes on close-up uh, communicate a tremendous amount. And Carpenter then did a little series of tests with nurses to test what is communicated simply by the lines around the eyes, having them talk behind the glass panels, you see. And having people on the other side interpret what they were talking about. But anyway, TV is, because of its ability to rivet your attention, uh, is very good. But then having made those films and such for AFA with Arnheim, I don't think it's a good educational tool for art.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why is that?

ROY MOYER: Well, nothing's going to be a substitute for a good teacher. And uh, you can't give a package to a teacher to teach, because they will be embarrassed by the questions that are asked. They don't know enough about the subject.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, don't you think TV can extend the teacher's range, you might say?

ROY MOYER: No. The kids are still going to ask that question.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I see.

ROY MOYER: And the teacher doesn't want to be caught short. In other words, who knows what question can be asked.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. That's true.

ROY MOYER: When looking—because he's looking at a TV program. And not only that, but they say, "Who painted that picture?" And it might have been just a detail of something, and the teacher doesn't know. And even if the teacher does know it's Seurat, the teacher doesn't know who Seurat is or how it's pronounced. And you can't anticipate all those questions. You certainly can't ask a teacher to prepare before going into class. So it just doesn't work. It doesn't work.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But how about, you know, the business they have now of a teacher in one lecture hall talking to people in five universities? And then the electronic talk back?

ROY MOYER: Well, I think that's fine, but the home room teacher who's stuck with the questions afterwards, how does he like it?

PAUL CUMMINGS: I see. Once the expert's gone, they're left hanging.

ROY MOYER: Yes. That's right. You see, because then they're going to say, "When they poured the metal out of there, why did it look white instead of red?" Now, is the teacher going to be able to say, "Well, it so happens that film reacts to heat. And therefore it looked white. But if you had been there, it would have looked red." I mean—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Red reads—

ROY MOYER: Yes. You just can't anticipate the questions that are—let alone dealing with art. You have, you know, all of those languages, all of those names, all of those periods, all of those times. And they don't know enough. They don't want to do it. They want to have the kids paint or something.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Package it, package it. Put it in a slide. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. So I—

PAUL CUMMINGS: So Toronto sounds like it was very active with a great variety of you know, possibilities and stimulation.

ROY MOYER: Yes. Yeah. I also learned a lot about 18th-century porcelain. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Which is always [inaudible].

[Cross talk.]

ROY MOYER: English portraits.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Everything you'd always wanted to know about Russia. [They laugh.] Why is that done? I mean, you know, this is what? Twenty years ago. Has that proved useful to you in any way? I mean, most about the AFA had been interesting because it gave you a direct insight to a vast array of [inaudible]—

ROY MOYER: I'm very interested in art history and I read a lot. I read serious books. I don't like fiction, for instance. But uh, I do keep up on art history. I read a good deal about it. And uh, I don't know what kind of an effect that has had upon me, except I do know I don't want to teach.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why is that?

ROY MOYER: I don't like the way schools are administered mostly.

PAUL CUMMINGS: In terms of um—?

ROY MOYER: Meetings, how to get ahead. Uh, everything's important except being a good teacher.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, the careerist aspect. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: Yes. Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Titles and chairman of the committee.

ROY MOYER: A good teacher isn't really that valued by the administration. And that's what I don't like.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But that's the only thing that the school's there for. I mean, the students and the teachers.

ROY MOYER: Well, of course. They're selling the student short. But you know, many distinguished um, people—scientists, musicians and what not—are put on to departments of schools with the agreement that they don't need to teach. But the name attracts students. Well, that—I mean, who suffers from that but the students?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Promotion.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. But there were many aspects about the university. The university was operating in a sort of English way. There was another problem, too. And that is at that time, there wasn't a degree in art history given in England. Now, since the Toronto school um, is based upon the English system, and they would very much

have liked to have gotten teachers from England, they couldn't, because they had to have a degree and there was no degree in art history. Now there's one given through London University at the Courtauld Institute. But at that time there wasn't any. So they had to come to the States. Now, this was the beginning of their being suspicious of people from south of the border. They didn't really like Americans very much. And here they were forced to get art historians from the USA. So uh, I didn't fit very comfortably in the department for that reason, also.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Then you went out and got involved with television and got work. [They laugh.] That just proved their point.

ROY MOYER: Well, Toronto was very interesting at that time, because it was very active in—so far as theatre was concerned.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Still is. Even more so now than then.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. So there was a lot of good theatre there. I mean, it wasn't a waste. The city was not very interesting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So anyway, after that, you what? Came back to New York after Toronto.

ROY MOYER: I decided I wasn't going to be where there was a job, that I was going to come where I wanted to be and see what would happen. So I came to New York and uh, I got a job working at the Weyhe Gallery, which I liked. I lasted rather long. I lasted—I left on my own accord.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Again? [inaudible].

ROY MOYER: I lasted eight months.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's pretty good.

ROY MOYER: And I did everything from their announcements and their press releases, to sales, and uh—it was interesting because they also had a lot of old prints, new prints. And I also discovered a very interesting thing, and that is that there's only one correct price for a work of art.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Which is?

ROY MOYER: A little more than the buyer can afford. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's right.

ROY MOYER: So it became a job of figuring out how much you wanted to pay and charging a little more.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's absolutely right. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Make them stretch.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But now, that's interesting because he had German Expressionist things there. There were paintings I remember hanging in the hallway there up and down the staircase and stuff. Um, why did you take the job? I mean, what interested you about it as a—

ROY MOYER: Well, I wanted to bide my time while I was really looking for the right thing. I never thought of it as anything more than a part-time job. It wasn't pleasant, mind you. It was run in a very strange, Germanic way. Uh, you know, like I also did the dusting, for instance. And uh, Mr. Weyhe never said good morning to me. He would, as a matter of fact, turn his back when I came in.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who else was working there then?

ROY MOYER: Well, Martha Dickinson was in the gallery upstairs. And the same people, Cunningham [ph], downstairs in the bookstore. Carl Hauser [ph] was still there delivering packages. I think it was more or less the same group. But plus a lot of people who came and left. I mean, there were a great number of people who came and left while I was there. But um, one day, he got a letter from someone saying that this person wanted to buy all the books he could on Gestalt psychology. And he asked Mr. Cunningham downstairs. Weyhe asked Cunningham uh, "What is this Gestalt psychology?" And Cunningham said, "I don't know. Ask Moyer upstairs. He knows things like that." So Mr. Weyhe came up to me. He says, [with German accent] "Vas is dis Gestalt psychology?" No. He said, "How you say in English, 'Gestalt psychology'?" And I said, "You say Gestalt psychology." He said, "I know. How you say in English?" I said, "We say Gestalt psychology." He said, "I know. I know. I know. How do you say it in English?" [They laugh.] So I said uh, "That's the way you say it in English." So

he said, "I have letters. He wants to buy books on Gestalt." I said, "Well, look in the back of Arnheim's Book of Art and Visual Perception, and he has a bibliography on Gestalt psychology." Well, the next day he said good morning to me. [They laugh.] But he gave me a very nice little story about how he had to go to work when he was eight years old, and never really had a chance to learn anything. And since Mr. Zigrosser had left, there hadn't been anyone there who could read or write and how glad he was to have me there. It was really very touching.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Amazing. Incredible.

ROY MOYER: And once I asked him to order Freddie [inaudible]'s book on uh, falconry. And the book came in and––I asked Cunningham to order it. And the book came in. I didn't know it was there. And Weyhe saw it. And uh, a day or so later, I bought it. And a few days later, a customer comes in and Mr. Weyhe wants to show them this book. He can't understand why it's not there. And so Cunningham says, "Mr. Moyer bought it." And uh, he says, "Tell him to give it back." So I thought, "Well, gee. It really looks as if I stole it." So uh, I brought the book back and I said, "You know, Mr. Weyhe, I bought this book." He said, "Why do you want to buy a book? We have all these books here." [They laugh.] And of course, all the books, as you know, are on their side. I mean, it's like —

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's insane.

ROY MOYER: —W.C. Fields' The Memory Expert, you know, who can reach in the uh, roll-top desk to the bottom of the pile of papers and pick up the letter of June 2nd or something. He knows what everything—he knew what everything was, but he—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Cunningham's bookstore. Whew.

ROY MOYER: You know, but that was kind of nice. But while I was there, on the bus one morning, I met Bill Rubin, who had been at Columbia with me. And uh, he said, "I hear they're looking for a director at the American Federation of Arts." And he said, "Why don't you call up and tell Messler [ph]," who was then the director, "and see?" And I did. And actually, they had already appointed Harris Prior [ph] as director, uh, but they needed a registrar. They needed two people. One was supposed to travel with the Steuben glass show around Asia. And that was exactly what I didn't want to do.

PAUL CUMMINGS: See all of those things you'd read about in Toronto for real. [They laugh.]

ROY MOYER: You know. But that paid well. But I took the job as a registrar. I didn't know anything about registraring.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So what year was that?

ROY MOYER: Oh, gee. It must have been like '54, some time like that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: '55?

ROY MOYER: Oh, no. '56 probably.

PAUL CUMMINGS: '56. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. I don't know. I'm very bad about dates, but it was I guess 1956 or so, '57. And then uh—and Barbara Novak was the temporary registrar. So all I know I learned from her. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Aha.

ROY MOYER: We tried to put that place together. We had a terrible reputation. There was a great deal of damage and everything else. And one of our big critics was Caroline Kick [ph] at the Brooklyn Museum who kept saying, "Don't lend anything to AFA." So I thought, "I really have to speak to her." So I called her and I said, "I need your help." And she said, "I've been waiting for someone from AFA to call me." And I said, uh, "May I come see you? And I want to know what to do." She was extremely helpful. And then I took a course in restoration with her up at Cooperstown. And she became one of our great champions, telling everybody to lend to AFA, because we had really instituted very good methods. We had to teach the packers how to pack. We had to begin from the beginning really, do report forms, long forms.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why was she so impossible initially, it seems? She always had this stance towards the world.

ROY MOYER: Uh-huh [affirmative]. Well—

PAUL CUMMINGS: I mean, I don't know her, but—

ROY MOYER: She's bright and quick and witty, and extraordinarily egocentric. I learned a very important thing from her and that is that you don't move in. If someone's witty, you don't be witty, too. You become an audience. Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah, right.

ROY MOYER: But she's loyal and full of energy, and very knowledgeable. But mostly she's a character.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So what did you do? You were Barbara's assistant, right?

ROY MOYER: Well, I was learning the job from her. She was planning to leave. She was going to Columbia to work on her doctorate degree.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. And you started new procedures and new—

ROY MOYER: Yes. Well, we had to sort of try to get people to believe in us. But then the exhibition program was at its—just beginning to peak, let's say. And one had to learn about everything. Shipping, and insurance, and lots of things which I thought temperamentally were not suitable to me, which I got to like actually.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, how did that develop? And what kinds of things were you doing? AFA was um—

ROY MOYER: AFA was primarily an organization of circulated exhibitions.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Right.

ROY MOYER: And that's what it began as, you know. Well, I suppose it began as a club, sort of, in 1909 or whenever it was. And it was Elihu Root and J.P. Morgan, a couple of people who I think wanted to get together and talk about art. But very soon it incorporated as an educational institution. Um, as such, had to do something educational. And I think they sent an exhibition of a reproduction exhibition or something to Fort Worth. I mean, that's what began it. And there was really a great need for that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: For museums around the country, and variety, and education.

ROY MOYER: Yes. I came to believe that there wasn't much need for that eventually. For several reasons. Uh, one of them is that I don't believe that a work of art speaks.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you mean that?

ROY MOYER: I don't think that you can learn anything in the presence of a work of art.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Whether you see it in a home in Chicago, or in Kansas City.

ROY MOYER: Yes. I think you need written material to know what it's about, a thing which museum directors don't really like.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, that's not show presentation idea.

ROY MOYER: But you must remember, this was the height, too, of Abstract Expressionism, which believes very much that the picture communicates directly to you. As you know from recent articles, the Hilton Kramer and so on about the show. Like that French show, which you got to know the story in every painting. You know, I mean, they hate it because the painting doesn't speak directly to you. Well, I don't think any painting speaks directly to you. If it did, the guards in the museums would be the best educated people in the world.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: Because it's a—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because they look at them.

ROY MOYER: So I got to think that what was needed was some kind of interpretive material to go with the show. And this was at great variance with what a lot of museum people felt. The museum people wanted prestigious painting in the show. They wanted Chagall or a Picasso in the show.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Famous names.

ROY MOYER: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Like Hollywood.

ROY MOYER: Now, if they are so interested in art in Alabama, why don't they have any art books? You know, you don't need to have—you know, so frequently the real painting's disappointing after you've seen the good reproduction.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I mean, after Abrams has glazed it and glossed it and everything.

ROY MOYER: Yes. But if they're really interested, they don't need to feel deprived. I mean, for $35, they can have a whole exhibition if they buy a book. Plus a lot of interesting information. So that was one of the things which made me think it was less necessary. Plus the fact that people will lend to you only if it's going to add to the prestige of their work.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

ROY MOYER: Now, if you're going to send something to a small museum, to a university college, and they don't want to lend it to you. They're going to send it to the Metropolitan. That's another matter, but—

PAUL CUMMINGS: It has a nice label. You know, the label collectors, right?

ROY MOYER: Yes. So the people who needed it most, we couldn't really get it for. And I got to think that there were other things that should be done. So that's why I started really programs of going into films.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Now, when did all this happen? You were working in the registrar activity for how long would you say?

ROY MOYER: Well, you know, I don't know how long it was. [They laugh.] But I was—Harris Prior made me assistant director. I was registrar and assistant director.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Oh, I see.

ROY MOYER: When I was assistant director and Harris Prior left, and Peter Pollock [ph] became director, it was a very good moment for me because everything that went wrong, they blamed him for. And everything that went right, they thought must have been due to me. It wasn't true, but anyway, that was the way it sort of looked. And uh—

PAUL CUMMINGS: They were already in that building, weren't they?

ROY MOYER: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Inaudible] and 67th. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: Yes. Harris Prior left shortly after we got into that building. And uh, as assistant director, I was sort of business—I mean, building maintenance man, too. I mean, I learned a lot about the building because I was there while they reconstructed it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So Prior was the one who got the building or got everybody into the building.

ROY MOYER: Yes. Yeah. And I was very good at—once I became director, I was very good at raising money for programs, because I was fairly good at thinking up programs. I was extremely good at firing Alice Kaplan's imagination. And when she liked something, she is very loyal to it and gives her all.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Now, where did she come in?

ROY MOYER: She came in about the time I came in.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who was the president?

ROY MOYER: As—she came in during Harris Prior's trustee, but she became—Roy Neuberger was president. And she became president about the time—let's say about a year after I was director, or two years after I was director.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because she's friendly with Neuberger, isn't she? Or was.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There was some—

ROY MOYER: Yes, but she was an interested trustee already. You see, when I got interested in this uh, visual—these visual perception films with Arnheim, and presented it—I was still assistant director then—and presented

at a trustee meeting. She decided to pick up the tab for that, for a pilot program. And so that's what really got her interested in our programming things, you see.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. That was her project and then it grew.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I see. I see. Well, what year were they? Do you remember?

ROY MOYER: What year?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah.

ROY MOYER: I don't remember. I was I think director about nine years and I left in like 1971. So it was early '60s.

PAUL CUMMINGS: '63, something like that.

ROY MOYER: '63. Something—yeah. But uh, all the other programs in films and rent-a-artist [ph] and the Appalachia program, the Handex [ph] program, and things like that were things that I sort of thought up, things that—and the architectural things, the city planning things and such.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you have a special interest in architecture, say, or did you feel a need for that?

ROY MOYER: Well, the Architectural League was our tenant. [They laugh.] And I was interested in seeing them thrive. And then I was the vice-president of the Architectural League. So uh—

PAUL CUMMINGS: It all worked—

ROY MOYER: It all worked together. Yes. I knew what their programs were sort of. But also, I thought city planning was an important thing. I mean, I haven't been interested in ecology and city planning and such, but—

PAUL CUMMINGS: But now, I'm curious about what—you were with Harris Prior for a little while, and then Peter Pollock was director, but he didn't stay long, did he?

ROY MOYER: He was there about a year and a half.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. And then he went off to—

ROY MOYER: And then I was acting director for a little while, for about half a year, I guess. And then they made me director.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did that interest you or was it an opportunity? Or why did you do it?

ROY MOYER: You see, I didn't want to be director unless they wanted me to be director. I mean, you don't stand a chance otherwise. Harris Prior never really introduced his staff to any of the trustees and stuff. I mean, so I was fairly unknown to them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why was that, I wonder?

ROY MOYER: Well, it was just an attitude. You see, he was a Navy man and he ran that place like a battleship.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. Everybody had a rank, and that was your place, and you were there—

ROY MOYER: It was very organized that way. At nine o'clock you were there. And it was a, you know. But uh, I decided I wasn't going to—I didn't want to be director unless they wanted me to be director. And I—that wasn't a choice that I should make. I mean, they said, "Would you like to be director?" And I kept saying no. I mean, that's not a question to ask someone. So uh, they—however, when they were looking for a director, they knew very well that this thing wouldn't stand a chance of succeeding without my good will. And so they sort of had to say, "What do you think of him? And what do you think of him? What do you think of him?" And so I'd always say, "Great." That's not my choice, either.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

ROY MOYER: You know, until they sort of got tired of it and said, "Oh, come on now." So I said, "All right." But the aspect—I don't think an organization––a serious organization can be run with a board of trustees.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, those trustees have always been very active, haven't they? I mean, every now and

they'd get two or three who—

ROY MOYER: It depends. If you have an active president, you tend not to have a very active board. And Alice Kaplan was a very active president. So the board kind of retires, you see. In terms of money, no. They were not very active. I raised practically everything through foundations and grants and such, which I was extremely good at. I mean, I raised large sums of money.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you develop that ability?

ROY MOYER: Well, I would get a program that I believed in and that Alice Kaplan believed in. And then it was a bit—because you know, foundations give grants, not for ideas which are a dime a dozen, but to people. I mean, they want to really know who's involved in it. And Alice and I, I think, both had a way of being rather convincing that we believed strongly in what we were—

PAUL CUMMINGS: That it was going to happen and it would be of quality and all the other things.

ROY MOYER: And Alice particularly. I mean, she was, as you know, she's a very dynamic person and very convincing as a presence. And uh, we'd go together and—and then, of course, we had very good programs. I mean, we didn't just think them up. I mean, we had programs that we felt were needed.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you develop a program? I mean, before you were director, you'd been there for a few years, and you'd seen what was going on, and you obviously had association with the museum people around, and heard what they were interested in and what they needed, or didn't want, or did want.

ROY MOYER: Well, not really. There's a great difference between producing something that's needed and producing something that's wanted, which was really the trouble that our film program on visual education ran into. It was needed. There was no question about that. But it wasn't wanted.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

ROY MOYER: Now, uh, for instance, the Appalachia thing, someone came to me with a display that he had done for the Department of the Interior. It was the kind of display that he thought was foolproof, that could be dropped to the Eskimos, and they would open them up and see all these items inside and start making things like it. And the next year they'd go around and collect them all.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, dear.

ROY MOYER: And he was very proud of this shatter-proof package he had developed. But it sort of got me to thinking that um, maybe something like this in Appalachia would be worth doing, because there are a lot of people who don't want to work with other people. The biggest cause of unemployment is that you don't get along with someone else. And so all those people who want to work alone, particularly mountaineers, uh, have nothing to do. So I really thought it would be good if we could classify people who couldn't get along with people as handicapped, socially handicapped, that we could get money, of which there was a tremendous amount, for the handicapped.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

ROY MOYER: And sure enough, they decided to interpret socially handicapped as a form of handicapped. So uh, that was how that sort of began. Now, my intention always was to produce large quantities of items of good design for a small price. That was not exactly Mr. Cassenbach's idea, Bill Cassenbach. Once he got in charge of the program, he uh—it had to do something with his time of life, also. He was interested in furniture for the second home. You know, the home you retire to. He was very much—yes. And he was interested in these older designers who were tried and true. And he wanted a kind of antique look to things. I mean, there are certain things that you need when you're doing this. You do need something that's better handmade than it is made by machinery. Otherwise, there's no point in doing it.

But I wanted the program to be different from the Museum of Contemporary Craft. I didn't want it to be the artist's craftsman because I thought that that had ruined crafts. By teaching craftsmen that they were artists and they're going to make that $500 teapot. I thought they should make two-dollar, well-designed teapots and sell a lot of them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Inaudible]. Right.

ROY MOYER: But anyway, that was the intention. The intention was slightly distorted, but of course that's—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Don't you also think there's a problem, because I have had some slight experience of craft things. I do think it is a problem when the craftsmen became quote, "an artist craftsman," or a designer. There

are a lot of people who can build things beautifully, but they can't conceive a design. And uh, they start doing all this really horrendous looking stuff. And I think people who can pay enormous prices want something that looks good. They don't want a piece of oak that's been just shattered, and chopped, and overworked, and looks like it should be sold in a village for $12. But they're asking $1,500 for it. Or a coffee table or something.

ROY MOYER: Well, I think the craftsmen have been terribly misled about uh, what is art and what is craft. Like, you know, they show second-rate sculpture at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts and call it a craft.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah.

ROY MOYER: I mean, why is the awful sculpture craft? I mean, why not show some good sculpture and call it craft? I mean, there are certain decisions they've never made. I mean, don't you feel so?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, it's just horrendous. I think there are a lot of people in the craft field who couldn't make it, quote, in the "fine arts" field. And uh, they make their little jewelry of a this or the that, or the whatever it is. It's appalling. I mean, most of the furniture they make is totally out of I don't know where.

ROY MOYER: Well, it's also the idea that you have to establish a style and a personality, you know. You have to do something that's newsworthy.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But I don't think craft should—are that, that's their place.

ROY MOYER: Well, that was the direction the museum took. But it was sort of in reaction to this, that I thought we needed a program of solid craftsmanship at low prices.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did that work, I mean, as it progressed? Was it effective?

ROY MOYER: Well, it was going. We had 12 plants open and were producing a tremendous amount. And then one morning President Nixon said, "No more money for health education and welfare," and we shut down that night.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hm. Just like that.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But I mean, it wasn't producing enough to sustain itself then.

ROY MOYER: No. Uh, mostly because it was too successful. As a matter of fact, we had a tremendous turnover of employees who got jobs in other furniture factories, or pottery plants, and so—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because they worked for you.

ROY MOYER: Because they learned to—yeah. They learned a lot of that craft, you see.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Their skill.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. So which we thought was wonderful, but it didn't uh, help the program because we were constantly—it became a kind of training program, you see. The idea never was to make a lot of money. And then of course, marketing is a difficult thing. We didn't have any experience in it, and uh, the markup that's required in the department store or something is incredible. You have to produce something for five dollars if you want to sell it for $500. And these—you see, the items we were making—there are certain things that slow people are very good at, like sanding. [Laughs.] You know, they like the slow caressing kind of thing. But they're the people who wouldn't be employed in a factory where they were paid by the piece or something.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. They'd get two pieces a week done and make six dollars or something.

ROY MOYER: So uh, it wasn't designed really to make money or to be self-sustaining. Though we did make money. And a lot of the money went—all the money went back into the program. But uh, it was never enough to be self-sustaining. But we had set up a place in Cherokee, for instance. And uh, no. It was really quite, uh—it had tremendous potential until our funds ran out.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think something could be picked up and carried on again, or was that sort of its period in history?

ROY MOYER: Well, you see, the government was interested in it because they'd never had a successful program. And uh, the reason their Appalachian programs never worked was that they were never producing decent objects. So we realized that the key really was the object they were producing and the standard we

would put upon it. And that's why they were interested in that. And that was working. But unless you begin again where we were, it won't work. You know, they'll be back to making corn dolls and whistles and things.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Corncob pipes.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: All that stuff.

ROY MOYER: But we wanted big things. We wanted them to make uh, pre-fabricated houses and all kinds of things. The first year, we had a very good program. We were afraid that they would uh, stone us as city slickers if we went down there, and told them to get to work, you see.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: So we had a truck. We got a local man from West Virginia. And he put a lathe, and a bandsaw, and I don't know what, all on his truck, and some wood. And he went around and if he saw a house that was falling into disrepair, he'd get out and he'd tell the man, you know, "I'll help you put it back together again if you work with me." And that we put together some 60 houses that summer and uh, found some 60 carpenters. Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Fantastic. But the local man was the key to it in many ways.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Oh, yes. Yes. We had to have a local man.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because they had their own lingo and everything else.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: He wasn't about to embark on something strange from [inaudible].

ROY MOYER: That's right. Yeah. So you know, I'm sorry that didn't uh, work, but—

PAUL CUMMINGS: But I think—wasn't it during your years that the AFA seemed to expand the size and scope in many of their exhibitions?

ROY MOYER: I don't think so. You see, most of the exhibitions that you get are exhibitions that people offer you because uh, it can be a cheap way of, you know, to share the costs. So a lot has to do with who comes by and says, "I have a great show for you." Uh, if it expanded, it was not through my doing, because I was very much in favor of contracting that whole program.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What about the—well, before I go into something else here—you know, there are—I remember years ago, Nina Reicht [ph], Nina Caden-Reicht [ph] now from [inaudible] Reicht, um, had a number of her programs, exhibitions that traveled through the AFA. And it was almost as if the AFA was offering a service to people uh, which still continues I think. You know, a foundation to present exhibitions.

ROY MOYER: Well, I think AFA is a service organization, you know, that should really do what's needed. That's one of the wonderful things about not having enough money, because if there's no need for it, you'll collapse. A good thing, really. But uh, so far as service to businesses, I don't know. I'm very disillusioned about business sponsorship of art.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They all get a lot more than they put into it, it seems, if anything.

ROY MOYER: Well, yes. I mean, uh, Chesterfield, which was the first of those that Nina did with us. I mean, they really wanted to get their name on campus where they weren't allowed to advertise cigarettes. You know, the—I don't know. It's uh—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Philip Morris.

ROY MOYER: Philip Morris. Yes. The whole thing was—I mean, this is true of all sponsorship of art, you know. People are only going to get something so long as they're either controlling or—I mean, they're only going to give you money so long as they're in power or controlling it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, did you get feedback from the institutions? I mean, would, say, medium-sized museums, directors write to you and say, you know, "We hear this is going on in New York. Can we have a show. We can't afford it. Our curator only has $500 a year," or something. Um, were there ideas like that? Or did you really develop them, and send them out, and then they came back?

ROY MOYER: Certain museums depended very heavily upon AFA's services. Uh, the self-respecting museum director doesn't want to take a canned show. That's one of the other problems of this sort of thing. He wants to do the show himself, particularly if it's an educational show, because he's going to have to say to the press what it's about.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And if he thought it up and did it—

ROY MOYER: And if the press says, "Why don't you have a Monet in this show?" And it isn't his show, he's going to be terribly embarrassed. So good museum directors don't really want packaged shows like that. Many museum directors are working their way up. They want to do something that's going to dazzle. They will never dazzle even the local citizens by having a canned show.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

ROY MOYER: They want to do something that's going to have New York sit up and look, you see. So when they're working for money for programs, they're going to work for money for their show that they want to do that's going to bring some kind—they're not going to say, "We need more money for traveling shows, or we need—" So they're always being poor.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You're kind of producing fillers, in other words.

ROY MOYER: That's right. They um, also don't want you to take one of their trustees and put them on your board. Uh, they don't want to raise money for you locally. I mean, a national organization has a great problem raising money because you're in direct competition with all the museums who are raising money for themselves.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But aren't there always people around the country who want to kind of have a toe-hold in New York, who are you know, feel that they're a trustee of a national organization is a little grander than being—

ROY MOYER: If someone from Houston gives money to the Houston museum, they'll know it in Houston. If they give money to AFA, they'll never know it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

ROY MOYER: You know, they feel a community responsibility in a way they don't feel a national responsibility like that. No, it's uh—

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's fascinating.

ROY MOYER: It's extraordinarily difficult to raise money for a national organization, particularly if you have no way of crediting them, and crediting them in their own community.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. It's very—I mean, what—you know, a Dallas trustee of AFA, what do they get?

ROY MOYER: Exactly.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They give you $1000 or $500,000—

ROY MOYER: Not only that, but the local museum will resent it because that's just one person who could be giving money to them who isn't.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Right. So it's a—but AFA has always had trustees from all over the country, hasn't it?

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Well, the nature of the trustees changes all the time. Um, we always had some professional people and some lay people with money.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think that's a good policy? Or should it be two separate—

ROY MOYER: I don't think—I mean, [inaudible] is a good policy. Uh, I think if your work is worth doing, you should be able to do it. I mean, it's—

PAUL CUMMINGS: The trustee should raise money and do the—were your trustees cooperative in terms of raising money? Or was there one or two who would do that, and the rest kind of—

ROY MOYER: No one gives more money than he has to. It depends upon how you can embarrass them or intimidate them, or how you can get them involved. And there are a great number of people who give you $500 and attached to it is a clause that says you must spend $5,000. You know, they'll—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Under the name of their gift. [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: That's right. Yes. Well, foundations do that, too.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Sure. Oh, absolutely.

ROY MOYER: You know, you need $8,000 for this show and the foundation gives you six.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Then you have to somehow—

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —two from anonymous—

ROY MOYER: That's right. So you go $2,000 more into debt. That's what it amounts to. And you're doing it for the foundation.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So that's their discount. [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, how is government funding? Because certainly during that decade almost that you were there—

ROY MOYER: I mean, now, see, we had great hopes for that. As a matter of fact, I was very active on the National Council on the Arts and Government, which set up that whole national endowment. Naively we thought once there are estate arts councils and federal arts councils, they will of course give money to these, poor people like us who have been doing this for 50 years. Uh, we never suspected they would start their own programs. And that in the first years, at least, of their programs, they would be much more interested in doing something that created enough hubbub for them to raise more money than they would be interested in doing something worthwhile. I mean, that's one of the reasons why the ArtMobile became so popular, because the ArtMobile you can talk about. Whether the ArtMobile does any good or not is a whole other matter.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But it's a real thing and it moves.

ROY MOYER: It's a real thing and you sent it to Podunk and they love it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It gets photographed and talked about.

ROY MOYER: That's right. So they were much more interested in programs that could raise money for them. And then, of course, they started their own direct grants for things. And then, unfortunately, by the time a person is in a position to serve on a board of—and be in a position of power in one of these uh, government organizations, he is approaching menopause, which frequently makes him foolish. And he feels he has to be with it, you know. So they eventually fill up with directors wearing blue jeans and Indian jewelry, talking about minimal art or something, you know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And away it goes.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think from those years that all of those things are going to go anywhere, all the federal funding for the arts, and all these different states, and all the peculiar programs they seem to evolve?

ROY MOYER: Well, you see, that's one of the reasons why I think there's not as much need for AFA. Yes, I do. I do think that that's the answer. I think it should be their responsibility. I don't think they're doing anything wrong. I really don't.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They're fulfilling their own needs.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. But it makes an organization which began by circulating an exhibition of reproductions to Fort Worth less relevant. I mean, that's really being replaced. Seeing this kind of replacement coming in, is on of the reasons why you go into other fields. But uh, no. I think that's all for the better. I really do.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think that um, you know, there were other programs, I mean, the film program, for example. Um, that was quite an ambitious project, wasn't it? It was the Arnheim—

ROY MOYER: Well, we did several film programs. We did one with Arnheim on visual education for children in the fifth grade. It was long, difficult, but we didn't have very much experience. But then we had to provide a tremendous amount of teacher background material. Uh, then of course, we started circulating films on art,

thinking that one of the problems, one of the reasons why museums don't show art films is that they don't know where to order them from, and also they're not sure they'll get them all from six different distributors on the same day. And they won't have time to screen them.

So we thought if we can pre-screen them, guarantee a certain level of quality, organize them on—and even provide them with programs to pass out—that there'd be a need for that, and in some way encourage the showing of art films. Uh, we discovered there were a lot of good art films on contemporary art and almost nothing on antique art. One of the problems of films on art is that you're always beginning at the beginning because you don't know who your audience is, so that they're embarrassing to people who know something about art. And they're boring to people who don't. So to get over that, we developed a system of having a progression where film two required that you understood film one. It was only so that we could at least move to the second base, you see. And then we started uh, circulating films as art, mostly the Whitney films and such, which are films not about art, but—

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Inaudible].

ROY MOYER: But have some artistic quality to them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Were the films on art successful?

ROY MOYER: Yes. They were as successful as we anticipated. You see, there's no length of time. We don't need to return them. There are problems of copyright, and royalties, and all kinds of things, which we managed to solve, strangely enough. Which we thought might be insuperable at one point, but uh, yes. Those uh, I think—you see, you can show them for 10 years. You just need to keep adding another film as something good comes along. We're starting a—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was there enough usage though? Were they used sufficiently?

ROY MOYER: Well, I think they were used sufficiently. They were used sufficiently to make the program self-sustaining.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, that's good.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. We didn't charge very much. I mean, we charged $50 or so, which is cheaper than they could have gotten them if they had to order them from several places. And we used that money mostly to repair the films. There's a lot of maintenance involved in that sort of thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, a lot in film.

ROY MOYER: And a lot of airmail.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. So what about the art films, films, you know, who are art, movie art or whatever they call that? The art of film.

ROY MOYER: Of course, that has always been a big drawing card at museums.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Why is that do you think?

ROY MOYER: Well, they're slightly dirty.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, they've got a little—but I thought that's on cable television and everywhere else these days. [They laugh.]

ROY MOYER: Yeah, but as you know, the Whitney was very successful with their film program. And uh, I had just sort of gotten into that when I left. So I don't know how well that's doing, but I hear that it's doing quite well. They're still circulating the new Whitney film programs. But you see, that's what you need. You need the guarantee of the Whitney, that it's—

PAUL CUMMINGS: The brand name.

ROY MOYER: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: On the label. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: And of course, everybody all over the country wants to do what the Whitney's doing and what the Museum of Modern Art's doing. That's a big help.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think it's possible for museums in Chicago or Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Boston, Washington to start a program that would lead, that other museums would pick up on? Or do they all look to New York so much for everything?

ROY MOYER: Uh, I really don't know. I think, you see, when we were working on our film program, we got lots of requests from people who wanted us to make films about shows in New York, who felt starved outside of New York. Uh, they thought that would be a great service. Now, there's a difference between what a museum director or curator thinks and what the audience thinks. Like you know, many museum curators are interested in ballet and they'd like to do show on ballet, only to discover there's nobody in the community that gives a damn about ballet.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

ROY MOYER: But they do. So um, I think that, as an interest, this looking to New York is something more characteristic of museum directors and curators, who we're likely to hear from, than it is from local people. Another thing is that once there were state arts councils, and the national council gave grants to the state arts councils, all those people who had been fighting for their state arts council, all those little groups of painters and such, all thought, "Now at last, we have it. Now's our chance. Now we're going to get into the museum," you see.

So when it began, they became more provincial than ever. They wanted to spend their money in the state and give these artists there a chance to show. So they were very resentful of things coming from New York, or coming from a national organization. Now, I think after they've had their chance to show and so on, I think that'll wear off, and they'll see that you need feed-in from other places. But for a while, that was a—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Big thing.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

[END OF TRACK.]

[This is Reel 2, Side A]

PAUL CUMMINGS: —was killed in a storm. I mean, I—this is side three. It's the 23rd of September, 1975. Paul Cummings talking to Roy Moyer.

ROY MOYER: You asked me why trustees become trustees.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yeah. Right.

ROY MOYER: Well, one of the things I found very interesting when I was at AFA was that a lot of businessmen who become trustees, uh, particularly those that have made money, they think there must be something better than what they're doing than business. And they think it must be art.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh. In culture, society, or art as a—

ROY MOYER: Well, something must be better than what they're doing, and they suspect it might be art. So I discovered that one should never talk to a trustee about art, except with a capital A. In other words, you have to allow them to think that they are participating in something very special. You have to keep the mystique about it, for one thing. But another thing is that you have to be sort of giddy and impractical, and uh—because that's what attracts them to it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because they're quote, "practical".

ROY MOYER: Yes. And you leave the money business, the practicality, the good sound business head and so on to them. This doesn't prevent them from saying, "You're a no-good businessman."

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Which they want to say because it makes them better.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. That's right. Yeah. But I do think that that's one of the attractions. It's the feeling that after they've earned a lot of money, they have to reap some of the rewards of it, which they—and they find their material world they live in rather unsatisfactory.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And just going to the office and making more money, more money, more money. But some people have an enthusiasm for it, because I know that um, Friday, when I went to see Roy Neuberger, I mean, there was a different enthusiasm with him when we went into the trading room and all these people were on the telephone and the quotetrons [ph], and the broad tape, and all that stuff was going on. I mean, you really sensed the football player, or an actor, you know. This is getting into the works.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But now, he was involved with AFA for a long time, wasn't he?

ROY MOYER: Yeah. He was the uh, president of AFA for many years, I mean, for years before I became director. Then for about two years after I was.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you like him as a president? How did you react?

ROY MOYER: Well, you see, he was very unprepared. He was primarily uh, playing everything by feel sort of thing. He wasn't particularly interested in programming. He conducted a meeting in a very casual way and I think bored most of the trustees. He always supported me and he was very good that way. He always said, "Yes, yes. You're fine," and left things sort of alone. He reacted to complaints more than to positive suggestions.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, in what way?

ROY MOYER: Well, if a trustee said, you know, "So and so on the staff was rude to me on the phone," he would call me and say, "You know, we've got to do something about that person." You know, in other words, he reacted more or less to criticism, or more to criticism I should say than he did to positive things. And he's a sentimental person. I mean, he liked the good old days.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I think so. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: And he tried to keep the club atmosphere, which was one of the things that I tried to spoil.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why was that? I mean, from your point of view, why would you do it?

ROY MOYER: Well, I don't think an organization like that should be a club, you know. I tried to turn it into an educational institution. But the uh, he's very human, very direct, very much involved in personal relationships, a very warm person. And so he saw things as you know, this was a kind of club. I mean, it's all admirable, but it uh, wasn't what I thought the American Federation of Arts should be.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But his collection is somewhat like that, too, isn't it? I mean, it's a people-oriented uh, kind of thing for the most part.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. I think so. I think that people matter a tremendous amount to him and he does a lot of things out of personal loyalty. Much more than out of ideas, because he's not the—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. How do you think he became so successful on Wall Street, though?

ROY MOYER: Well, I don't know, except I suppose the way anybody does, and that is—he always told me that it was the ability to hold on in a pinch. In other words, people who have to live on income from stock would have to sell or something. But the ability to hold—because you see, they always go up. I mean, if you just keep it long enough, it'll go up. I mean, that's the nature—everything gets more expensive. It just does. So it's just an ability to stick to it. I mean, that's how a lot of artists make their careers, too. I mean, you just have to live longer. That's all.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Keep turning it out. Right. Right. Well, let's see. To go back to our chronology here, um, I think you were still pretty much inundated in Toronto. And that was about two or three years you were there, right?

ROY MOYER: I stayed there—well, it was two full years of school, whatever that amounted to, plus time to get in and out, you know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Is that the time when you became unhappy with teaching, or administration, or—?

ROY MOYER: I was never unhappy with teaching. I was quite unhappy with the administration. It was disillusioning to me. I presumed we were all in it together somehow, and I saw them, that there were differences—running a school economically is not running it to the advantage of the student necessarily. And that was disappointing to me. And uh, I mean, just as I think I told you that I was disappointed in what was necessary with the National Endowment on the State Council on the Arts and such. Instead of devoting their efforts to their program, they um, had to do things that would be—make it possible for them to raise money.

PAUL CUMMINGS: To get money next year. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. And it's not necessarily the thing that's needed or the thing that's best for—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think it's possible to combine all those uh, factors into a program within an institution,

and then balance the—

ROY MOYER: I don't know. But I have always been very much interested in program of whatever I'd been involved in, and very little interested in the uh, glamor of the job, or the fundraising, or the—and I think it does take two very different personalities.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You mean—

ROY MOYER: I—yeah. I think this will always be a problem in museums, to know whether you should have a director who is program oriented and therefore is fulfilling his function to the community, or someone who is raising money and—I don't see those things as very compatible with a single personality. And yet, I think to do it with two different people is even more disastrous, because then you're always in opposition to each other. And one of the things that I felt about AFA, one of the reasons that I was really interested in leaving was uh—this may sound very snobby—but once they started inviting the business manager to the board meeting, it means that your policy is determined by the money you have, not by what you feel should be done.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And the quality of the ideas or—yeah.

ROY MOYER: That has to be. It means that you—that the final vote—you either have to decide whether you're going to do this because it should be done and raise the money, or whether you're not going to do it, even though it should be done, because of the money. And when money is determining what your program is, then I think there's no reason to exist any more. I mean, why should people belong, contribute, and so on, if you're doing things that are simply profitable? And why would a businessman join your board if you're operating it like a business?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because that's what he does all day.

ROY MOYER: Exactly. Yeah. So um, I mean, because of the times and because it became difficult for people because of the stock market and so on, it became difficult to get people to make contributions and such. The uh, business people on the board felt that the thing to do was to get the thing into some good business shape. And so the accountant on the staff became increasingly more important, until eventually he was invited to the board meetings. And before they would decide whether something should be done, they'd ask—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How much money was in the till?

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Now, I mean, this is all sound, but I think it's no way to run a non-profit institution that depends upon contributions, because to ask for contributions, you have to have a cause.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. And if you're breaking even or showing a profit, where's your cause?

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. In terms of a lot of these—yeah.

ROY MOYER: But this is a problem that every institution faces, I mean every art institution. You know, do you have one director and keep criticizing him for not being a good businessman, or do you have two and have them fight with each other? And who wins? I mean, who has the last vote? In almost all those cases, the business manager has the last vote. I don't think these things will ever be solved if you have non-profit institutions.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's just going to go on.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You get some directors who are good at fundraising and others that are good at [inaudible]. I'm just curious if there were any other things about Toronto that you might have thought about since last week that—

ROY MOYER: Oh, that's right. This began as Toronto.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

ROY MOYER: Well, the school is managed the same way. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. We're right back to where we were before.

ROY MOYER: No, but it's true. They will take a teacher in and ask him to teach more courses than he can handle, and won't give him a raise in salary, knowing that he can't leave. And then hoping that after two or

three years he will leave, so they can get someone else in the beginning. I mean, this is going on—

PAUL CUMMINGS: And they don't have tenure or any of those—

ROY MOYER: It's good management. It's dreadful teaching. And uh, that's what I learned at Toronto. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, Hunter College is notorious for that.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So besides an overload of teaching, it was a good management course. [They laugh.] Anyway, you did come back to New York and you went to Weyhe for a while. And then you started at AFA. Um, and you did talk about becoming director in 1963 I think it was.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Um, what I wanted to—

ROY MOYER: But you see, I sort of grew up with AFA, strange as that may seem. But I came in knowing nothing about—I had never worked at an office job. I consider that a great advantage, by the way. But I had—

PAUL CUMMINGS: In terms of what?

ROY MOYER: Well, I don't think—I had to develop my own system of what would be good management, because I had no prototypes. Now, uh, which is one of the reasons why I don't believe in a hierarchic structure for any business.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What do you mean by that now?

ROY MOYER: Well, I don't think that things should be set up like the Army, where you have one head and two people, and you go through channels, and uh, decisions are made en route, and matters are distilled and presented to other people, and—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who present them or present them and finally get the—

ROY MOYER: And that protocol will be observed. And since an art organization has a lot of volunteers, and has a lot of people who are willing to work for very little money because they want to be in a pleasant environment, it has a lot of dropouts from other occupations that drift towards art, it's—the only way you can really successfully manage an organization is to keep it, constantly the goals in mind of everyone. They must know every minute of the day what they're working for so that they can make decisions towards the common goal. In other words, they will be able to decide on whatever it is, whether it's whether they should ship something by railway express or by air, they will be able to make decisions on their own if they know what your goals are and what you're working towards. Now, that's why I started having staff meetings, which weren't uh, gripe sessions. And they weren't about business really. Uh, they might—we might talk about a show that was in town. I mean a show of paintings or something that was in town. Or we might talk about—we might read an article on criticism from the newspaper and discuss it. Or, for instance, if there was someone on the staff who was particularly interested in—I remember once there was someone who was interested in tantric art. So we had a staff meeting in which he spoke about tantric art. And we asked questions about it, because I felt it was more important to get people involved in what we were working with as subject matter. I mean, even the typists and the multilith operator—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How often would you have those meetings?

ROY MOYER: We had them every Friday morning. And if there was a visitor in town, frequently we'd invite the visitor to come and talk to us about something. But it was only because we didn't want to start that, you know, who took the mimeograph paper from the lower shelf kind of stuff?

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.] Yes. And why are all my paper clips always missing on Wednesday morning?

ROY MOYER: Yeah. I mean, those problems one can solve or don't even matter, but uh, anyway. AFA was a perfect opportunity to set up some other kind of business system. And my naiveté about what offices were supposed to be like, of course, helped to make it possible to do that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You didn't have a lot of already learned rituals.

ROY MOYER: Well, yeah. No, I didn't. So we had to sort of work on problems as they occurred. And I always wanted to be not accessible, but you see, a director of an organization has to make decisions not—the decisions the director makes are never of any importance. It's true.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Some directors wouldn't agree. [They laugh.]

ROY MOYER: Most people make their own decisions if they know what they're doing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Doing. Right.

ROY MOYER: All right. The only time when they can't decide is when things are of equal value. In other words, if I say yes, it's just the same as if I say no. And then they can't proceed because they're in a bind. They don't know what to do. And then they might come to you. In that case, it doesn't matter whether you say go ahead or stop. The important thing is that you tell them something, you know, to get them out of the bind because in all probability, either way is workable, you see. So all you have to do is say, "Yes. Go ahead." So that to some extent what the director is, is a father image. And I thought it was very important to go around every day and to tell people they were doing a good job. It's very hard to work if you never get praise and if you feel that people who can raise your salary or not—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Don't seem to know you're there.

ROY MOYER: Don't know what you're doing. And so I felt it was much more important to pay a daily visit and to say, "What are you doing?" And, "Yes, you're doing that beautifully." And to be accessible. Because if you're accessible, people come to you very seldom. If you're not accessible, they will throw pies at each other to get your attention. I mean, you have to spend all your time untangling things. You know, they want to be seen. They want to be known by you. And they will get into trouble in order to do it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.] Hm.

ROY MOYER: Well, anyway, it was a very good opportunity—

PAUL CUMMINGS: You'd make [inaudible] association, you know. Oh, my.

ROY MOYER: I do think that it was—an art organization is a very good opportunity to practice things like that because of the free-flowing nature of the people who work for you.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why do you think, as you said before, so many dropouts and people with free time, or one thing or the other, drift into art activities like that?

ROY MOYER: Well, again, I think it's for the same reason a lot of the trustees come. Uh, they feel there's something higher and more spiritual than what they've been successful at. Now, I feel this, too, about painting. You know, I really am a painter only because it is such a stupid thing to be. I could be a great sculptor. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Which is [inaudible] somehow, right?

ROY MOYER: But it's so impossible to express anything in painting that I feel—[They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Now, you know, you had said that before about works of art not speaking, you know. And the museum guards being so [inaudible].

ROY MOYER: But I do think that—I don't know. Some people like to work against odds, and I think that that's one of the reasons why I find painting challenging, because I think it is a very mute kind of art. And I'm serious when I say I think I'd be better in almost any—dancing. I mean, I don't know what. But I think I'd be better in almost anything else. And that's why I stick to it sort of.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's a competition. [They laugh.] You know, it's fascinating because I think that what you say is true for a lot of art in terms of—because some of them have great skills in a lot of areas.

ROY MOYER: Oh, cooking particularly. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. And you know, they could do all sorts of things, but they just—they prefer to go and look at you know, a blank canvas or something and fight.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. That's right. Yeah. Well, there are some who don't. I mean, painters like Matisse. And there are very good painters also. I mean, you know. The thing is that uh—and I think that's another reason why a painter's a bad judge of his art. Because probably the paintings which turn out the best are those that you just sort of spill out. But they're less interesting to the painter.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Than the ones you had to work on.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Push and pull and—

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Which are probably less successful as paintings. But you know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why do you say Matisse as a contrast?

ROY MOYER: Well, I think Matisse is a very natural painter. I think he didn't think once in his life. He just sort of painted. I mean, it's like a poem. You know, if you take a poem like John Donne's poems, which are so philosophic and wrought, and so—I mean, they're hardly poetry. I mean, they're lectures.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. Right.

ROY MOYER: But if you take um, "Tell me not what Jove bestows once summer's gone, the fated rose." Something. You know, I mean, that's poetry. It just—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Baddum, baddum, baddum. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: Do you know what I mean? It's just—and that's what I think art is, too. I think it's high moments, when those moments spill out.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Inaudible.]

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: A songwriter friend of mine said to me one day, I said, "Gail, you know, how do write your songs?" She said, "I don't know. They just fall on the floor in front of me."

ROY MOYER: Yeah, yeah. Well, that's real songwriting. I mean, it's real singing. It's the difference between singing and writing. Just as I think it's the difference between painting and uh, and working. Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But don't you think painting is work or not?

ROY MOYER: The backgrounds, Paul. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

ROY MOYER: No, that's something—

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Cross talk] little blue [inaudible] back there.

ROY MOYER: Sometimes I wish I had an apprentice. No. I discovered that if I take my mind off anything for a moment it flops. And that's why I try really, when I paint, I try never to paint mindlessly, which you're likely to do if you think it's work or if you're bored with it. And even if it is a background. You know, you sort of have to—you have to love everything. You have to love the magic that occurs when you're—the smell of the paint on your hand as it moves. But you have to keep your mind on it and say, "Oh, yes. Yes, yes, yes, yes." And the minute you stop and say, "Oh, now I've got to get down to the lower right hand corner," then it starts disappearing. It becomes somehow mindless and mechanical. So I don't think painting is ever work. I think when it's work it's not painting any more to that extent.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It becomes what?

ROY MOYER: Well, it becomes filling in. I mean, people can tell. You can tell that in an actor or anything else whether he's with it or not.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You know, I'm curious. Now, you had talked about painting in Greece and how nice it was to be in a cold room and lay in bed all covered up. Get up and tap the canvas. Did you continue painting all the time you were in Greece and then in Toronto?

ROY MOYER: Um, I didn't paint when I was teaching in Toronto. And I must say it's the only experience in my life I found that was—that made me not want to paint. And that's teaching art history. But you know, I'd looked at that all day long, all the stuff. And I mean, who wants to, after you've turned the lights off on Michelangelo, who wants to sit down and paint? But um, when I was in Greece, I painted because the circumstances were quite interesting there. For one thing, they had been shut off from communication because first of all, the war and then the civil war which was created right after that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Sort of like a dozen or so years almost when there's no—

ROY MOYER: They also uh, always looked to America as utopia in Greece, so that the painters who were there had a natural proclivity towards Americans and American painters. And there were no American painters there but me. And uh, so I found myself in a position of demonstrating always, which was a very liberating thing because uh, I mean, I did paintings at that time which I'd embed things in the canvas. I did mostly abstractions. I know I was very much interested in Byzantine art, but that's not abstract anyway. And almost everything I did was a kind of demonstration. You know, yes, this can be painting, too. Or yes, that can be painting, too. So when you find yourself in that kind of position, it's very easy to let your imagination run riot and to paint. And there were lots of Greek painters who wanted to study with me. I mean, they still had the idea that you studied with someone, that you—and I had an exhibition in Salonica with another local painter, a two-man exhibition, which was a claim to great success because a woman fell down the stairs while leaving.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: So bedazzled was she by what she saw. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who was the other artist?

ROY MOYER: It was an artist named Nicos Sahinos [ph] who was a—at that time he was under the influence of Matisse, I suppose. He subsequently became an Abstract Expressionist painter.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But now you—you know, I don't know those. I've never seen any of those paintings from those days.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. I don't have many of them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So there was that period. Then Toronto where you didn't paint for a couple of years.

ROY MOYER: No, I didn't. Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And once you came then to New York, what happened?

ROY MOYER: You see, well, I never took myself very seriously as a painter. And I must say I still don't take myself very seriously. Uh, I mean, I would never go at it as a career. But—

PAUL CUMMINGS: For what reason?

ROY MOYER: I think I don't respect it enough as a thing to do. I don't like artists as friends at all. I think they're destructive to other artists, you know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. Because they're always—

ROY MOYER: Yeah. They say, "What are you doing that for?"

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. I did that last week. [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: Or, "That looks like so-and-so." Well, um, but since I didn't—and I never took myself very seriously as an artist. And then I had a show at the Contemporaries, which was a show of still lifes. Now, I decided to—I mean, I have always been interested in still life. Mostly I think because I'm interested in painting problems, and the still life is a manageable form. In other words, you can move things around, and you can select whatever you want for subject matter. It's a highly abstract form of painting as a matter of fact, because you can choose anything you want. And it's there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Sits. Doesn't move. Doesn't change necessarily.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. And uh, I'm interested in creating a kind of illusionistic reality from—I'm interested in creating life intention from something that has no life. So still life is perfect for me because it contains the two elements I'm interested in—stillness and light. But um, I had a show at the Contemporaries where things sold for like $400. And the show sold out. And then I started thinking, "Well, you know, I have to—" You see, I paint like a—the way a chicken lays an egg.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: Whenever I paint something, I put it away. I don't look at it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What does that mean now?

ROY MOYER: I paint a picture and I put it to the wall, or in a closet, or send it off to the dealer, but I never look

at it again. As a consequence, I don't know half the paintings I've painted. I mean, I'm so surprised when I see a painting of mine somewhere, because I have very little remembrance of it. And then I put a blank canvas on the easel and I say, "Gee, time to paint again," you know. As a matter of fact, when Carl was trying to increase my productivity, he suggested keeping the light on in my coop all night—

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: —so I'd paint two paintings a day instead of one. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's a shrewd dealer, right? [Laughs.] They pipe in music, speed it up late in the day so you could work faster.

ROY MOYER: No. But I really paint to replace that one that's been taken away. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right, right.

ROY MOYER: So in effect I've only painted one painting and I'm still painting it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's marvelous.

ROY MOYER: But that's I think a difficult thing to learn. What motivates one to paint? I think that's the only thing a painter has to learn. I mean, you can't practice mixing colors. I mean, that takes half an hour to learn. So I mean, after you've learned how to mix the colors, uh, I mean, what is there for a painter to learn?

PAUL CUMMINGS: How to draw a little bit and how—

ROY MOYER: Well, if you don't need to draw—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Make a composition that doesn't fall off the canvas.

ROY MOYER: You don't need to learn that. And if you need to draw it's a simple—it's a question of observation I suppose, more than anything else. But my problem always was, "Should I draw before I paint?" Uh, should I—I mean, what is the relationship of line to solid space and solid form? What is the—how do you create dimension without using tricks? In other words, there were lots of things that interested me about—that were problems in painting, but what makes you sit down there in the first place? And I guess that's what I spent my life working at, trying to figure out what were the circumstances that would make me sit down there and paint? Because there are many circumstances that make you not want to paint. And I think that's what an artist has to learn. I think he has to learn what his motive is. And uh—

PAUL CUMMINGS: What about when you said—I know some people who paint like office hours. You know, they get up every morning and they will paint from, say, 8:30 'til 12:30.

ROY MOYER: Well, like Isabel Bishop. I think that that's valid for her. I mean, that would destroy me, but it's—that's what I mean. A person has to learn how one paints, how one paints best, what the circumstances are. Now, of course, that requires a particular philosophy to do it her way, because it means that you consider it not to be a question of talent or anything, except work, craft. And you practice it like a tightrope walker.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And it becomes refined, like a virtuoso. Back to the piano.

ROY MOYER: Some painters find it best to have a glass of beer and that works, too. And I find it best, because I'm interested in tension—I find it best to create circumstances of tension, and that requires control. I mean, I like to work all day and want to paint, and can't, so that when I sit down—

PAUL CUMMINGS: You're ready to go.

ROY MOYER: I'm beginning to unwind. Yes. And I say, "Okay, now." And I'm very much a hit or miss painter. You know, I destroy three canvases for every one I keep, because I know after a while whether it's going to work or not going to work. And that's another thing one has to learn—when to give up.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How accurate is it, knowing, do you think?

ROY MOYER: How accurate is it?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROY MOYER: Well, I think it's fairly accurate in my case because I know whether my mind's on it or not, you know. Which is really my test.

PAUL CUMMINGS: When do you select? I mean, after you have three canvases. Do you pick and say, I don't know, that one or that one and throw them away? Or do you have many?

ROY MOYER: No. I throw them away immediately.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh. So—

ROY MOYER: I say no.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There's no comparison to other—

ROY MOYER: Sometimes before they're dry I wipe them out.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, so it's right away almost.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Yeah. Uh, but you know, nothing's ever lost because what you wipe out today is going to be right back there tomorrow. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Just to remind you.

ROY MOYER: You know, I took that orange out yesterday. How did it get in today?

PAUL CUMMINGS: So what—yeah.

ROY MOYER: Anyway, I do think nothing's lost. I think if it's on your mind—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Once it's there.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. It's going to come back. Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So when do you paint now? I mean, on the weekends or in the evenings? Or do you have a schedule? Or is it arbitrary?

ROY MOYER: Well, it's fairly arbitrary. I discovered I can't paint if I'm planning to travel.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hm.

ROY MOYER: It takes a certain kind of a situation for me to paint and I know what the situation is. Uh, I paint most vigorously when I shouldn't be painting, but doing something else, like filling out my income tax reports. [They laugh.] April's a very good painting month for me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You mean when there's an external pressure.

ROY MOYER: Yes. And I paint in the evening a lot. I paint during the night. Uh, I paint on weekends sometimes. And then I go for stretches without painting. That used to frighten me. I think, "Oh, I've painted my last painting. I'm never going to paint again." And then, of course, now I've learned that that's not so, that these are just moments. Because you see, again, it depends upon how you paint. But I have think and lie fallow for a long while. And I used to think that I wasn't painting and feel slightly guilty about it. But now I think—now I know that what I'm really doing is painting during those times, but I'm working it all up in my mind. And that when it's ready I'll do it. But these are not wasted moments. These are moments of adjustment somehow to something else.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you decide what you're going paint? I mean, if you're doing a still life. How do you pick what goes in it? Or are there certain reoccurring—

ROY MOYER: Well, you see, now this is another thing that I think has a lot to do with how one paints well, let's say. I am terribly inspired by second-rate art. I mean, a masterpiece will leave me breathless, but I primarily paint to fix up other people's paintings. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Sounds like [inaudible].

ROY MOYER: I'd say, you know, "Corot, if only he would have—" Something like that. And uh, so I'm likely to see a painting that suggests something to me, but which isn't realized in that painting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: Like you know, like Velázquez. Now, I can't say I like Velázquez. But anyway, Velázquez turns me on because he has more unrealized elements in what he's doing than almost anybody else. Or Daumier, for

instance. Now, I can look at a large black area of let's say a dress in a Velázquez painting and I think, "Oh, my God. How big could he have made that and still had it look like a dress?" You know, with no detail in it. Just a [inaudible]. So I think, "I've got to try that." So I try to see how big an expanse of black I can paint before it disappears as a form. Or um, that's why I say I'm inspired by art. I think all art is inspired by art.

I don't believe that people paint because they see the sunset, or that they compose music because they hear the birds singing. I think they compose music to be better than Debussy, or you know. And that's what I always say after I've finished a painting. I always say, "I showed Cézanne [inaudible]." [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Marvelous. So when did you start painting once you came back to New York again? Was it right away or did it—

ROY MOYER: Well, no. Well, you see, I've always been working at something. I was working at the Weyhe Gallery. And then at AFA as registrar. But all the time I was—I've been a Sunday paint—a Saturday painter, I suppose I could say. But uh, that's the way I've always painted. And you know, you can't overproduce. That's very bad for business. Uh, if you paint 20 paintings a year, that's about what the market will bear. And it turns out that God inspires me 20 times a year [they laugh] so that I just happen to have a kind of production, which is uh—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Consistent.

ROY MOYER: —consistent with what I sell. Or maybe vice versa, but anyway, it turns out that way.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you don't have a great stash of paintings.

ROY MOYER: I don't have a stash of paintings at all, and I don't—however, there are paintings that I—there are a few paintings I keep for sentimental reasons, that I know are awful paintings. Uh, they're paintings I learned something in. I don't want to show anyone.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you mean that? Or what do you mean by something—

ROY MOYER: Well, sometimes I [cross talk] do something.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

ROY MOYER: Sometimes I learned I could do something, but didn't quite do it right. In other words, there are a few paintings that I think are pivotal to my painting, but not interesting paintings to anybody except me. But other than that, I don't really have any. I mean, if you were to ask me, "Show me your painting," I couldn't show you two.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They're all floating around the world somewhere.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. Well, you know, one thing that I find interesting is the fact that you have painted uh, all this time and particularly, the years with the American Federation of Arts. You were looking at a lot of other artists' work of varying periods and cultures, making decisions about it for inclusion or exclusion in exhibitions. Um, do you think that the fact that you painted was an aid or a detriment in those activities?

ROY MOYER: You see, this is one of the reasons why I don't like painters as friends, or why I don't think painters should be on juries, or connected with museums. I think they don't like anybody's paintings except their own. Now, having said that [they laugh] I can say that I like practically everybody's paintings. [They laugh.] But it's true. I do. I'm sort of a sucker for painting, you see. I really like all painting. I like all these manifestations. Uh, I think one always paints at where he is, because as I said, I don't think they're poor—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you mean?

ROY MOYER: Well, I don't consider paintings to be good or bad. You see, I don't think good or bad are relevant in terms of art. I think they're manifestations. And they're manifestations of what they are, of the people who did it, and the place they were done at.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But don't you think some are more successful than others? I mean, you just indicated that.

ROY MOYER: Well, some are more successful than others. Well, I suppose I don't know what that means, except that I suppose if one said, "Who is a neo-classic painter?" And one said angro [ph]—one could say yes. He's more successful than others. You know, one can say that. Except that I find the others interesting, too. You know? I find most paintings interesting, because I look at paintings the way I look at handwriting. I'm very much

interested in handwriting. I think it's a very under-rated science.

But just as I can—and to this extent, I suppose it's like Abstract Expressionism. I think that the way a person moves, what he chooses to put down or omit is very revealing about the person. And I'm interested in people. And as such, I find them all interesting manifestations. But I don't think good or bad—

PAUL CUMMINGS: The right terminology.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. I don't have a concept for—

PAUL CUMMINGS: For that moral judgment or something.

ROY MOYER: Well, I think good and bad is always moral judgment, don't you?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROY MOYER: I mean, it always is. I mean, in the case of someone like Mondrian, it certainly was. I mean, if you're afraid of a crooked line, a curved line because it's dishonest, because you don't know where it's going and it doesn't tell you—[They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Then.

ROY MOYER: That's pretty moral. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Great. But um, I mean, did it affect you, do you think, in terms of making judgments and selections? Or was it an aid because your interest is so broad?

ROY MOYER: I don't think it was an aid or a detriment. As I say, I don't take my own painting that seriously that I feel have to uh, have a manifesto. So as a consequence, I like many different things. But it's not really—I didn't really learn anything from painting that I could be—I'm not aware of it at the moment—that I learned anything from painting that would have helped me in—I like painters like Alma-Tadema who are very tight, and picky, and academic. I mean, I adore that. And I like illustrators, I think. T.M. Cleland and uh, and Rockwell Kent, or you know, I think those people are interesting. I like very serious art. I'm crazy about Michelangelo. And uh, there's some painters I feel close to. Like I feel very close to Giotto. There was a time when I thought I was his reincarnation, strangely enough.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hmm.

ROY MOYER: Uh, and I feel very close to Daumier. Uh, a couple of people I feel—a couple of painters, strangely enough, I feel very close—I feel I have a natural understanding of the personality, of looking at their art. Uh, but I don't think I got any of this from painting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where do you think it came from? Or how did it, you know, develop to the point that you could, you know, recognize it as such?

ROY MOYER: I think the important thing is to be awake and aware, and have an interest in life. And painting can —

PAUL CUMMINGS: There's Carl.

[Audio break.]

ROY MOYER: Where were we?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, [inaudible].

ROY MOYER: Whether painting helped me in the—I was saying I think if you're aware of life and awake, and awake, which is what I think is really the purpose of education of any sort, then you're interested in things, you see. And I think it's just an interest in people and an interest in phenomena that makes one tolerant of all kinds of manifestations of life, of which painting is certainly a very interesting one.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, I notice the apartment here. It's filled with books everywhere.

ROY MOYER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

PAUL CUMMINGS: Um, do you read a great deal? Lots of things? Different things? Special things?

ROY MOYER: I read serious books. I read books on visual perception, and on science, and on the senses in

animals, and that sort of thing. And I read the classics. I am building up to that moment when I can do what Machiavelli advised, which is light two candles and read the classics. That's what I want to do in my old age. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, marvelous.

ROY MOYER: I think—and I read a lot of classical stuff. I read art books, too. I'm interested in Panofsky and people like that. I'm interested in art history books. And I do a lot of looking at pictures and [inaudible]. I'm not very fond of fiction. I've never read a detective story in my life and I can't imagine my reading a detective story or—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Ask John Canaday about that someday. [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: I want to ask him about a lot of things. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: He won't tell you. He won't say a word. But do you think this just adds like one more grain of sand on the beach of everything? Or does it have a—does it fill in certain specific questions reading about it or [inaudible]?

ROY MOYER: Well—

PAUL CUMMINGS: One can read art history endlessly. Do they really keep saying something or—

ROY MOYER: Well, I don't know. Um, there's always something. I think that you have to read between the lines in almost any art history book, because art history as a subject is not a—art history, you know, began in the 19th century with the invention of photography, because then for the first time you could compare two things. Before then, you sort of had to remember what you saw at the Louvre and think about what it was like when you went to see it at the National Gallery of London. It wasn't possible.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Right.

ROY MOYER: But because it was a German 19th-century study, uh, that began with Freud, and Marx, and uh, Darwin and other evolutionary concepts of life. Uh, it developed an evolutionary concept of history, which meant that there are influences, and developments, and peak periods, and periods of decadence. And they saw the whole thing like a living organism, that grew and developed and decayed, and came in contact with something else, and the stronger won out. Well, life isn't like that. And art especially isn't like that because people have different touch—I mean, Picasso certainly. For years, people of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris and uh, but one day, because he was looking for something, working on a similar problem, African sculpture, seemed to be working on the same problem. So that had meaning. In other words, we're influenced by things we already know, so to speak, or things that we've already prepared ourselves. So the whole concept of that doesn't work. But art historians continue to operate in that 19th-century way. And they're interested in two of the things that I think matter least about art. Namely, authorship and dating. Now, the things they aren't interested in are phenomenal. So—

PAUL CUMMINGS: All the rest.

ROY MOYER: Yes. It's all the rest of art. So uh, they don't know what to teach. The thing is that most of their students do know that they're not teaching art, so that they tend to encourage and further people who toady down to their concept of *kunstgeschichte*. And those are the persons they eventually lead into the art departments, in art history departments. They're the persons whose doctoral dissertations they publish eventually. And uh, but it's become a rabbinical study now. It's no longer vital, because it's not aware of some of the basic facts of life. Namely, that influence, and authorship and so on are not really relevant outside of the context of the economic development, the social development, the mythic relationships between—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why do you think that's happened?

ROY MOYER: Well, it happened because it was German. And you see, there was a terrible fear in the 19th century of having your emotions interfere with your scientific investigations. As a consequence, when dealing with art, which has a terrible danger of involving your emotions, they had to make it very scientific and cut and dry. And they compared, you know, you count the number of cabbage leaves in the manuscript, or you find a written document that proves something or other about contract for payment or something. But they tried to keep it as removed from emotions as possible, which meant that they dealt mostly in black and white slides. I mean, it's still like that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, absolutely.

ROY MOYER: Because color can really upset you emotionally. So they try to pretend that painting doesn't have

any color. I know now—the whole thing is the result of an attempt to form a science out of something which is much bigger than a science.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why do you think the Germans prevailed in the English and the Italian art historians?

ROY MOYER: Well, you see, it's only because no one has ever respected French or Italian art history. I think they're fascinating. But you see, the same is true of criticism. A French writer, when writing about art, writes eulogies. He's not interested in criticism as such, or [inaudible]. He's interested in saying things are magnificent, and wonderful, and grand, and elegant. In other words, he thinks that the writing, the style of the writing—in other words, he thinks what his value is, is the ability to say beautifully something which is inspiring. Now, that's a very important and interesting thing to do, but it's never been respected outside of France.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, that's true, you know. If one has––

ROY MOYER: I mean, they think Malraux is dreadful. I think Malraux is one of the most exciting writers that ever wrote art. But he's not *kunstgeschichte*, you see. So they say, "Well, bad scholarship," bad, you know. I don't care if it's bad scholarship. One sentence of his will give us enough to think about for the next 100 years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Whereas a row of dates by their doctor/professors—.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Exactly. Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But I don't know why there's no—it seems there's no possibility to shift that. Is it that they're so trained, you know, and then they pick somebody to succeed them who is trained the way they were, and their professor, and his professor, and it's a maintenance of the system?

ROY MOYER: Well, when I say it's become a rabbinical study, I mean that exactly. It's study for the sake of study now. They've lost sight of what their subject is at this point. That's uh, one of the things. Another thing is that young people coming up, who think there must be more to it than that, leave. They're discouraged by the department and they leave. Or they leave because they know they—it doesn't interest them to do that sort of thing. The best people in art history aren't in art history. They've gone elsewhere.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where have they gone then?

ROY MOYER: Well, anthropology. I don't know where they've gone, but they leave because they're discouraged by that situation. So that, again, it encourages the worst. Not the worst, but encourages those that fit in. And every now and then you find someone who's naïve enough to go through it and keep his integrity. And you find some young people who are starting to change all that. But you see, there was a time when, for instance—well, this was not so long—it still is, for that matter. If the students like the course, then it's art appreciation and really ought to be taught at finishing school. If it deals with aesthetics and aesthetic principles, it ought to be taught in the philosophy department. If you know how to paint, then you're at best an inspired idiot, and ought to be over in the studio somewhere. Uh, if it's the economic history of art, something like that, it really ought to be in the economics department. And so in other words, everything is put in some other place. The truth of the matter is that art is all of these. At least when it's interesting it is. And that some scheme has to be devised whereby people aren't afraid to like things. I mean, until very recently, art historians and so on would make attributions and so on, never once bothering to X-ray a picture or see whether what they were looking at was dating from the time they thought it was dated.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's all done through some mystical incantation.

ROY MOYER: The surface. The surface of the thing was taken as fact. They never bothered to find out anything about Gestalt psychology or the principles of vision. It's only very recently that anyone has been interested in figuring out how we look, how we see things and so on. Now, certainly, perception ought to be part of the art history course, you see? Certainly chemical analysis of art ought to be. They just—I don't know. It's just very behind the times.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why is that? Do you think because it's such a tentative discipline as it is anyway?

ROY MOYER: Well, there's also—it's a very in group, you know. Well, as almost everything in the art field is. I mean, certainly criticism is almost in groups.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So that it can hardly move. [They laugh.]

ROY MOYER: But uh, I don't know. I guess they just like it that way. Certainly the art history departments like it. And there aren't that many schools that have it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, it's growing.

ROY MOYER: There are five schools you can go to.

PAUL CUMMINGS: More than that now.

ROY MOYER: Well, they just came out with a new publication where they're uh, publishing doctoral dissertations. There are about four schools whose doctoral dissertations are being published. You know, it's NYU, Yale, Princeton, Harvard, Columbia. That's it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yes. I got that. But they're all old ones, if you notice.

ROY MOYER: [Laughs.] Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Leo Steinberg. [They laugh.] Robert Rosenblum. People like that.

ROY MOYER: Yeah, well, that's part of the in group. I mean, they also sit on the board, the editorial board.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And everything. Yeah. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: And they were the favorite students of someone or other.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Whereas Harold Rosenberg says that art criticism is no activity. He's marvelous about it.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Well, he's bright.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Harold. Yeah. But you know, was it the show at the Contemporaries then, which was what? '58 was it?

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Uh, that was the first New York adventure. And you showed consistently with them for a while, didn't you?

ROY MOYER: Yeah. I showed with them for quite a few years. Yeah. I can't remember.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Just every other year, depending.

ROY MOYER: So, yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. Uh, and then you went to Midtown.

ROY MOYER: Well, what I wanted to do was I wanted to take some time off and paint. So I got a studio down on 30th Street. I got involved with a—

PAUL CUMMINGS: When was that? The 30th Street uh—

ROY MOYER: Gee, I don't know. But I'd say it was about 12 years ago or so, you know. Just about 12 years ago. But what happened was that I met a very kooky and very good artist. She was totally mad, but her father had left her a building. And since I became her entrepreneur and her—the only person she ever spoke to actually.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who is that?

ROY MOYER: Uh, her name is Dorothy Globe [ph] and uh, I mean, you wouldn't know her, but she is a superb painter. She paints pictures of her father as a magician or of her mother as a strip tease artist. And uh, fascinating. She paints with her finger. She says it's like putting on makeup when she paints. And she's a very compulsive painter, paints a tremendous amount of pornography. She does mostly women consorting with pigs, or their breasts turning into roses, or phalluses and things like that. Uh, very, I suppose you could say like Francis Bacon, slightly like Francis Bacon. Uh, but she was afraid to go home during the day because she thinks she sees her father sitting in the chair. Her father died. So she wanders the streets all day long and goes home when the sun sets and paints. Well, I became involved with her because she stumbled in one day to my office rather desperately and wanted me to look at some photographs she had of her things, which I did. And I was just quite encouraging to her.

[END OF TRACK.]

[This is Reel 2, Side B]

PAUL CUMMINGS: This is side four. Anyway.

ROY MOYER: Well, since I became absolutely everything to her for a while, including her real estate dealer—her father left her a building and she couldn't rent it because they'd talk to her and run, you see. So uh, I decided to take the building and use it as a studio. But it was appropriate for me because I wanted to paint for a while, and I thought, "I'm not going to do anything. I'm just going to sit and—I'm going to paint and wait." But I wanted to look like an artist, you know. I wanted them to recognize I was an artist when they came to see me. So I started having—I put a cot in the studio and I started painting very big paintings. And I started wearing blue jeans and uh, I didn't clean the floor. And I drank from coffee cans and things. And I thought then when some dealer comes, they'll say, "Yes. He belongs in the Museum of Modern Art."

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: Anyway, Otto Nelson, the photographer, told uh, Mrs. Gruskin, or Gress [ph], one or the other that I had left the Contemporaries and that I was looking for a dealer. And they came and saw my work. And Mrs. Gruskin was wearing her little white cotton gloves when she climbed those stairs. [Laughs.] And uh, anyway, then they signed me to a five-year contract. And then I closed down my studio and started painting on my lap again like Marie Laurencin. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, marvelous. Marvelous. Well, you know, but the—as I remember, uh, the exhibitions at the Contemporaries, you said the first one was successful. They continued to do—

ROY MOYER: Oh, yes. Yeah. Yes. Yeah, they continued to do very well. But you see, that's a gallery that sold very well to people who came in out of the rain, or who were waiting for the bus on the corner. And they sold a lot of my paintings to people who liked them, which was very nice really. And they were moderately-priced paintings. It was time for me to change also from that scene.

Now, Midtown Gallery was very good about sending things around to museums, and art tours, and such. But since it was a third-floor gallery and you didn't go there unless you really had some business, and most of the people who went there were trying to fill in missing parts of their collection from the '30s because they had mostly artists from the '30s. I didn't fit into their stable very well. Also, I have very little—I suppose if there's one kind of painting I don't like, it's uh, fractured Cubism. It's late cubistic painting, academic Cubism. I don't really have very much rapport for it because I think it's devoid of the idea of Cubism, which I think is a thrilling idea. And uh, turned into a kind of painting manner, rather than justifiable any longer as a principle of painting. And most of their stable is Cubist. So I never felt very happy as part of the stable. And I think that people who came there and who liked—you know, if they liked Palmer, and William Thon, and things like that, they're not very likely to like my painting. Uh, although Mr. and Mrs. Gruskin always liked my painting very well. Well, uh, but it was right for me, I think, to be somewhere where they were interested in working with museums. And they did very well by me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, it was effective uh, as a dealer, the gallery?

ROY MOYER: What? What was the effect of?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was it effective for you? I mean, did they—

ROY MOYER: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —exhibit things and sell pictures?

ROY MOYER: Yes. Oh, yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Move them around.

ROY MOYER: Yes. Constantly.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I mean, in terms of business, you were pleased with them.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. But you see, I never had much contact with them. I mean, they would call me every now and then and say, "Will you send me some paintings?" And I'd do that. And uh, it just wasn't very exciting. I don't know how to explain it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You didn't have any exhibitions with them, did you?

ROY MOYER: I had only one. They were planning another exhibition, as a matter of fact, last year, when I left. And they asked me every year, "Do you want an exhibition?" Of course, it was a dreadful time for me to show. It would have been, I felt.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why?

ROY MOYER: Well, it was you know, all minimal and Pop art. I mean, you have to be fairly insensitive to have an exhibition. You have to be insensitive to be a painter.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, you have to be single-minded, I think, is—[laughs.]

ROY MOYER: I think insensitive. [They laugh.] I mean, who exhibits themselves?

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Inaudible.]

ROY MOYER: So anyway, it's a dreadful experience to do so, but I didn't think it was right. And I seemed to be doing all right anyway.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They were selling things and all that was going on.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. But then, this other gallery, the [inaudible] show gallery said—and they were very insistent. They said, "We want you to have a show." And I said, "I'm planning a show elsewhere," and I wasn't interested in that, either. They were extremely insistent.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where did they come from, now?

ROY MOYER: From Boston. They had a gallery in Boston.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. How did they find you?

ROY MOYER: Well, they found me through uh, it was a Belgian sculptor who recommended me to them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who's that?

ROY MOYER: His name is Nathaniel Nurgon [ph].

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: And uh, they had a show of his. And when he was in New York, he said that they should get in touch with me, which they did. But uh, I thought when I left Midtown, it was probably a big mistake. And I thought it was time in my life to make a big mistake.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why is that?

ROY MOYER: I just felt alive again. I don't know how to explain it. [Laughs.] You know. And it did. It really woke me up sort of. I'm not sorry I left Midtown at all. I don't think I'm with a good gallery, but that's not the point, you know. I'm uh, free again.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: I'm uh, I don't know. Somehow it was good for me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hm. Because that was what? From—

ROY MOYER: That was just last year. Last September. And then I had a show in Boston at their gallery.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But how did that work? I mean, you haven't had what? A year or so experience with them. Not that.

ROY MOYER: No. You know, um, they're nice and honest. I mean, there's nothing wrong with them. They have a sales line that I find obnoxious, which is one of intimidation. You know, they say, "If you don't buy it now it won't be here tomorrow." They're not interested in people and so they don't bother to find out or to enlist their confidence. Or find out what they have or what their—They don't see picture selling as problem-solving for the client.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's just merchandizing.

ROY MOYER: Yes. And it's uh—well, anyway. They do other things. I mean, they're scheduling a show for me now in Palm Beach, and one in Jackson, and yeah. So uh, I mean, that's all all right, but—and yet, I don't know. I have very strange feelings about dealers because uh, you know, a dealer knows what he can sell. He knows what his clientele is. And I think so many people who are looking for a gallery seem to think that the dealer can tell them whether their paintings are good or not, which isn't the issue. The thing is can they sell them or can't they sell them. And they'll know that the minute they take a look at it. Uh, so I think it's very—and one shouldn't expect the dealer to be intelligent, or to know anything about art or art history. But you do expect them to be

affable and to have clientele. So uh, I think it doesn't make any difference who the dealer is. It doesn't make very much difference.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you combine—I mean, there were—did you find it was complicated when you were at uh, AFA being a practicing artist, having exhibitions and all this? Did you get feedback, good, bad, or indifferent?

ROY MOYER: Well, you know, I suppose one of the reasons I always underplayed my painting was that I didn't want people to think that—just what I was telling you about Barnett Newman. I don't want people to think that my taste is in some way related to my own thinking. I think that would be bad. And I think that—and that's one of the reasons why I—I mean, lots of people know me for being at AFA and don't know me as a painter. But uh, that was a little bit of a problem. But not a great deal. You see, another thing is that being a painter has a kind of romantic appeal to the kinds of people who are likely to be on AFA boards. Like when I left, they all said, "Oh, isn't it wonderful? Now you're going to devote all your time to painting."

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did they really?

ROY MOYER: Well, sure. That's their idea. Oh, you know. That's what they would like to do, you know. Well [laughs].

PAUL CUMMINGS: Little did they know.

ROY MOYER: So that in the back of their minds this is just another thing. "Oh, yes, he also paints and that's sort of wonderful. He does what he wants to do." You know? But uh, I don't think that it—other than that, I don't—I think there's a kind of romantic background that was kind of felt actually. But uh, when dealing with other artists or with museum people, it could be difficult, except that I never spoke of myself as a painter. I think it's particularly difficult if you're dealing with a museum person. I mean, you must never bring it to the point of where he would have to say, "Well, would you like a show?" You know, or anything like that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because then it's—

ROY MOYER: They also don't take you very seriously if you're doing something else.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The museum people.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But that's sort of right, isn't it?

ROY MOYER: Well, you know. But they have this concept, too, of an artist who's working full-time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Half of them teach, drive trucks, and all these other things.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Well, they have these clichés about artists, which have to fit into their image.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I find most museum people don't really know very many artists. So they have such an awed idea about them. It's really curious.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Well, you know, artists are supposed to have a particular personality. Most artists don't fit into that. I mean, certainly Joseph Cornell didn't fit into it. Certainly Ad Reinhardt didn't fit into it. Barnett Newman tried to do the exact opposite, you know. Passing himself off as an English gentleman. But uh, I think mostly they think of the artist as being outspoken. You see, they admire masculine things in painting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hmm.

ROY MOYER: I mean, they can look at de Kooning, who I think has a very flabby wrist, and say, "Isn't that strong painting?" I mean, they don't know strength when they see it. But what interests me is that they value strength in painting. Now, this eliminates a tremendous number of women from the field.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why do you think women are, you know, eliminated so frequently?

ROY MOYER: Well, it's because the standards which are set up are masculine standards. They like dynamic things. They like uh, outspokenness. You know, a woman's supposed to be in her place. A man can say dirty words and you know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But all the women do today anyway.

ROY MOYER: Well, I know, but uh, but you see, the qualities they associate with the artist are masculine things.

He has to be hard living, driving fast in a car, and sleeping with models, and I don't—you know. With lots of illegitimate children—it's a whole romantic concept of what—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Now, Picasso. He's the great image for so much of that.

ROY MOYER: Well, and uh, Jackson Pollock. I mean, that's the only way you can make a reputation. It's the only way you can get into the mass media, which is the only way you can make a—you can't make a reputation by having a show. I mean, it's not—

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Cross talk] character.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Well, if you're shot in the stomach, it helps. I mean, any number of things will get you into the—

PAUL CUMMINGS: We've seen enough of notorious people in *Women's Wear Daily*. [They laugh.] It works. But it often intrigues me because, say, in the last half a dozen years with the rise of the radical female curator, um, they end up making choices where the women artists they pick are usually the least interesting in many terms. They don't seem to really say, "Well, you know, these are the qualities—"

ROY MOYER: But you see, women who make it in museum administration are women who have adopted male standards. That's why they make it. That's why they're more likely to promote male artists, too. I mean, in other words, uh, it's the same in business, too. I mean, the woman who has become the director of an organization is likely to promote men because she admires aggressiveness, dynamic personality. Do you know what I mean? In other words, it's a distortion of—these women don't have women's values to begin with. There must be some place in art for gentleness and paleness, and uh—I don't know what are women's qualities, but you know. There must be some good art with those qualities. Men who buy paintings for power—which is why most people buy paintings, for vicarious strength, you know. If you've ever seen Nelson Rockefeller talk about his art, it's strong and dynamic.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Just like his collection.

ROY MOYER: Terrific and uh, yeah. So it's vicarious strength they gain from owning these things. They're not going to buy sweet, gentle paintings. I mean, those things are dismissed right away. They say, "Oh, that's so sweet." Or, "That's so timid, or gentle, or shy," or I mean, any of the—

PAUL CUMMINGS: The old Victorian qualities.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Are uh, dismissed as being unfit for painting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But that's really almost been an American thing, hasn't it? In the last—I mean, if you look at Cezanne. He's not loud necessarily, flamboyant, or—you could put a de Kooning in a roomful of Cezannes and it'd be wild. Or Ellsworth Kellys, or Pollocks, or you know. All the big, bold, tough images.

ROY MOYER: Uh-huh [affirmative]. Yeah. I suppose it is that. Well, I suppose it has to represent the qualities of the buyer. And uh—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Patronage.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. It always has sort of, because certainly royal taste has always been for detail, and finesse, and tradition. Whereas bourgeois taste—I mean, 17th century, they bought pictures of lemons and oysters because they were expensive. I mean, lemons and oysters were expensive. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Now they buy—what do they buy now? [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: It was so interesting. When I was going through the Leningrad show—I'm terribly interested in the relationship of subject matter to painting, ever since I went to that French show at the Metropolitan where everybody was so puzzled because they had to know what the painting was about. But when I went through the Leningrad show, I saw that people really do comment almost exclusively upon the subject matter. Like they looked at the uh, de Hooch and they said, "Oh, the dress is too ornate," I heard one woman say. Or at another Heyde [ph], or class or whatever it was, they were terribly concerned of whether that was a ribbon or a lemon peel that was turning around that way in one of the paintings.

And I even saw a fellow standing in front of the Claude [ph] landscape, rest on the flight, saying, "That's terrible. You know, Egypt doesn't look like that." You know? But the absorption they had of the subject matter, it can't just be because they're trained in photography, because before photography people were absorbed in the subject matter, too. Well, there must be some way to integrate subject matter in painting into one single unit and and make it work again. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Inaudible] and his art.

ROY MOYER: Oh, yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: One color here and one color there. Oh. But it's very—I mean, I think that's, as a matter of fact, the imagery and subject matter is one of the great uh, things that launched Pop art in many ways.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: After Abstract Expressionism and the hard-edged painting.

ROY MOYER: But these are all anti-art movements. I really think that uh, there's a plot. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Aha.

ROY MOYER: Uh, I really think the move away from subject matter is the move away from art.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hmm. More about why.

ROY MOYER: What?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why? I mean, you know.

ROY MOYER: Well, I think that there's a mistrust of subject matter, just as there is a preference for Expressionism. And that's why Abstract Expressionism had a tremendous amount of appeal. But it was the beginning of let's destroy art. Literally that. Uh, which then went through Pop art, which turned everything into art. I mean, all of our packaging and everything else into art. And then to minimal art. Until there was no longer a distinction between daily life and art.

Now, uh, and it began with the destru—with taking out the subject first.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, it's sort of Duchamp or something that they always call for to—

ROY MOYER: Well, yes. Sure. I mean, Dada. These are all forms of Dada actually. I mean, they were all done in 1912, weren't they? I mean, they just do the same thing again and again. But uh, I mean, now, so that teachers on the faculties of schools and so on are minimal artists, or doing earth works and things. But um, it is a—and it has succeeded in destroying art. I think it's one of the reasons why the market is so confused. I mean, there's no longer anything to buy. Now, that's a good thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I mean, if you buy a ditch that's two miles long in the middle of the Arizona desert. What do you do with it?

ROY MOYER: You support the artist who's digging the ditch instead. Yeah. Well, that's—

PAUL CUMMINGS: I said it's a return to the work ethic to a critic recently and they got terribly upset.

ROY MOYER: Well, it may be, you know. And the whole idea that creating is the fun, and that if you think you're going to know anything about it by buying the souvenir program, you're wrong. Well, I mean, those are all good things. I mean, I like it. I like them as philosophies. I think it's led to disaster in terms of uh, someone who wants something for his wall.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Or floor or ceiling, or whatever. Art goes everywhere now. But do you think art still has that, you know, situation of going on the wall, ceiling, or the floor? Or has it have, in fact, become something that one does outside or in the desert?

ROY MOYER: Well, you see, it has always been that. You say you have troubles talking to collectors. Well, the collector is an enigma simply because he thinks that if it's in a frame it's aesthetic. And they live in such aesthetic poverty, and have expensive paintings on their walls. I mean, nothing else in their lives—frequently—I'm not saying all them, but many of them. Nothing else in their lives is related aesthetically to their collecting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You mean in terms of their living styles and—

ROY MOYER: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Floors, houses, furniture.

ROY MOYER: Their interests [inaudible].

PAUL CUMMINGS: Interests. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. So uh, I mean, that's very suspect and very sad, I think, to find a person living in poverty and owning paintings on the wall. But if a person is really interested in art, you don't really need money. I mean, the Japanese have mastered the technique of listening to the rain and getting tremendous enjoyment out of the smallest visual experience. I mean, the relationship of the eave of the house to Mount Fuji is as high an aesthetic experience visually as one could have. The respect for rocks and trees and such. I mean, these are all highly developed aesthetic senses.

Also, one can buy books. Uh, you can go to museums. There are any number of experiences of art that are available. Collectors don't do those things.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Don't you think it's also the American thing of instantaneous, you know, you buy a painting, put it on the wall. And you're supposed to say, "Wow," every time you walk by?

ROY MOYER: Well, that's why it has to be recognizable. That's why an artist can't change his style. It has to be the mink coat recognized from across the room. The Japanese knew how to get out of that. You know, every time a Japanese painter wanted to change his style he changed his name. You won't find that happening here. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: You'd have to start the market all over again.

ROY MOYER: [Laughs.] That's right. Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But uh, you know, I think we should go back to AFA a little bit, because that's a really a decade of activity which brought you into all sorts of other organizations, or in contact with them.

ROY MOYER: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Um, one of which was the Sara Roby Foundation at some point. Uh, had that been around the AFA? Or did you meet her? Or how did that come into the circle here?

ROY MOYER: Well, that probably happened through Lloyd Goodrich. I think that they came to us to circulate an exhibition, because you see, as you know, an educational institution has to do something educational. And uh, showing the work. And anyway, that was the purpose of the Sara Roby Foundation. We then got to see that their organization was in rather sloppy shape. And they needed someone who would manage it more or less. That's the way that sort of came about. I think Lloyd Goodrich mostly, because he was one of our trustees at AFA. I think mostly he was responsible for seeing that it was done well and not having the time—trustees not having the time, not having the paid staff, so that they sort of—they thought it would be better if they simply gave the fee to AFA and had them manage it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So it's to their advantage in a way.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Yeah. And it was to AFA's advantage also because we had shows to circulate and got a fee.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Right. Um, how long has that collection existed?

ROY MOYER: Sara Roby?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. I can't find out when it started.

ROY MOYER: You know, I don't know either, but I would say in the '50s.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Everybody's so vague about it. Well.

ROY MOYER: One can find out.

[Cross talk.]

Because, yes. They have this, certificates of incorporation, all kinds of things. I know because there was a time when the tax laws were changed and we went through all the material.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. You also had mentioned the National Council of Arts.

ROY MOYER: Of Arts and Government.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. That was Harold Weston, and Lillian Gish, and Gertrude Macy, and uh, so. Lloyd Goodrich was on their board. He managed at trustee meetings of the American Federation of Arts once a year to get voted upon a 100-dollar gift to the National Council on the Arts and Government. And I thought, "Why is this poor institution making a contribution to another institution?" It was the only contribution we made to any institution. So I think I wrote a letter or something and asked them—what we did was the contribution was to be used for a newsletter or something. And they never even sent us a copy of the newsletter they printed.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: So I wrote and asked them if they wouldn't send us if they wouldn't send us a copy of the newsletter. And when I saw it, I saw it had all these rich people on it. I mean, it had everybody from Mrs. Inness-Brown to uh, Roger Stevens, you know. So why would—people who own the Empire State Building—are we giving a $100 to this publication?

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: So after I saw the people who were on it—

PAUL CUMMINGS: The mountain, the elephant [ph]. [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: I said no. We won't. Because they have a rich board. They don't acknowledge us. They don't even send us anything. The least they could do would be send us a newsletter to send to our members or something, if their newsletter's worth printing. And uh, they said, you know, "Won't you join our board?" [They laugh.] Well, actually it was very useful. And it was very related to our work. But that's how—well, they were working with legislation and things. And we—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why had Lloyd been giving them—

ROY MOYER: And we had a large membership we could canvass and inform. Very important, because they had no membership that they could canvass or inform, you see.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you brought thousands of people with you.

ROY MOYER: That's right. Yeah. And also, we were working on important things. We set up our greatest competitor, the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yes. Yeah. Why did Lloyd have them receive $100 from AFA every year?

ROY MOYER: They needed $100 to publish the newsletter.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And so he thought why not the AFA?

ROY MOYER: Well, the whole thing was run very—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Strange.

ROY MOYER: —casually. Uh, it became terribly serious and involved shortly after I got there. Not through my doing, but it was just a very serious moment. And you know, after he'd done all that, we disbanded, as having no further function. We also disbanded because Harold Weston, who really did most of the work, died.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What about other organizations? Weren't you called upon frequently to do this, these, that? Committees and things like that? Or did you not accept much of that?

ROY MOYER: Well—

PAUL CUMMINGS: It seems once one is the head of a national organization or even a museum, there are endless little committees that want you.

ROY MOYER: Well, that does happen. I got involved in a few things. I got involved in childcare. That was through a strange circumstance actually. They asked the heads of New York museums to speak at the Metropolitan on art, its markets, and uh, I don't know what else. They asked Lawrence Alloway and I know they had about 10 people there. And uh, there was no rehearsal for this. People had paid $25 a ticket. The auditorium was filled at the Grace Rogers Auditorium. I prepared something. And we had dinner before then, which they seemed absolutely unconcerned. August Heckscher was chairing the thing, and he was going to ask for questions from the floor. Well, I thought, boy.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: They're going to ask uh, Carl, what's his name? Wein—who's the head.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Weinhardt.

ROY MOYER: Carl Weinhardt, what the museum's doing. You know, they're going to ask very difficult questions. So I had prepared my own questions on slips of paper. And also prepared something on the subject. The others sort of talked vaguely about their collections and that. And so I said, "Well, since we don't have a collection, I'll have to talk about the subject of the evening, which is art and dealers, and so on." And I gave my little speech, which was greeted with tremendous applause. And then came the question period. And they—I had at least convinced August Heckscher that they should write their questions on a slip of paper. So the paper was distributed in the audience. The paper came up. And I opened my little slip of paper which I had written the question on previously. I mean, I wanted to talk on what I wanted to talk on. I didn't want—[they laugh]. Well, anyway—

PAUL CUMMINGS: What happened to the real question?

ROY MOYER: Since they felt that I had given them their $25 worth, they asked me if I'd join their board. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Is that what the question was? [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: So that's how I got on the childcare board. I never felt very happy with that, because they desperately needed money. And Lloyd's son was of money. And they really needed a contributing board, which they didn't have. And uh—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Is there such a thing as a contributing board? I mean, when you come down to it, all these institutions that I've run across, they all seem to say, "Well, you know, we have 20 people and three give us money. And three give us ideas. And the rest of them give parties or—"

ROY MOYER: That's true I think. But they're all on for different reasons, you see. Some of them are on to attract other people with money. Some of them are on to balance the thing. Some of them are on to give advice. You know. But I don't know if there is a board that actually contribute—where there are people who actually—well, there are some actually. But uh, certainly AFA didn't have that kind of a board. And uh, childcare didn't. And then, you know, there are all those other little things that are set up. Like they once tried to set up uh, an organization of art institution presidents and directors.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That sounds marvelous.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: It was where all people from different fields of art who were directors or presidents would get together and we'd exchange ideas. We did that for about two years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And what happened?

ROY MOYER: Well, I think, as usual, the person who feels very strongly about it took the lead, did all the dirty work, organized and got the minutes together, and all that kind of stuff, uh, left and the [inaudible]. There was no real need for that kind of thing anyway.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why are there so many organizations? Or at least there seems to be every month or two months, there's another art type organization that pops up. Are there people who don't have anything to do in the art field or do they feel that there's a group of people who need representation and they're going to do it? I mean, some things—I mean, the American Abstract Artists has lasted 40 years and that was astounding. But there are so many other ones that kind of come and go.

ROY MOYER: You know, I don't understand artists clubs or artist organizations. I mean, why do you want to get them all together? I mean, that's one of the reasons why [they laugh] I think that housing project, Westbeth, couldn't possibly work. Who wants to live in a building with all those other artists?

PAUL CUMMINGS: They obviously all do for one reason or another.

ROY MOYER: But they don't, you see. I mean, it doesn't really work in the end.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But it's all—somebody once said to me, you know, they said, "The best thing about Westbeth is if you know somebody who lives there, or if somebody tells you they live there, you don't have to worry about

them." I mean, they're so groupie. They're so—

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I don't know. They never get out of school or something.

ROY MOYER: But um, there are certain organizations, like the neuro [ph] painters who are involved in a subject that doesn't exist.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Cross talk.]

ROY MOYER: Also, for instance, even something like the Century Club doesn't really work. First of all, very few artists have enough money to join the Century Club. And secondly, you don't want to bump into those people you've been avoiding all day, you know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, but it's interesting, though. They're having a terrible problem getting artists to join because they want people like de Kooning. And he couldn't care less. You know, they want people of that kind of —

ROY MOYER: Well, sure. Well, artists don't want to join that kind of thing anyway.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —stature. And the ones who do want to join, you know, and can afford it, seem to be of no interest to them one way or another.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Well, Robert Motherwell belongs and uh, Ivan Chermayeff. And uh, there are some—

PAUL CUMMINGS: But I'm sure Robert goes there what? Three times a year maybe. Four?

ROY MOYER: Well, no. Maybe he's a little more active now. They're trying very hard to get, you know, artists to be a little more active. But once they had once-a-week drawing jamborees.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, the sketch club was 100 years ago. [Laughs] You know. That's back when they all lived within two blocks of each other, and didn't have a house in Greenwich, and East Hampton, and places like that.

ROY MOYER: But I don't think that uh, artist groups like that stand very much of a chance. Though it's one of the ways to ride to success. It's very hard for a lone artist to get anywhere. If you join a group, you can often cash in on the publicity of the rest of the group.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And it's the momentum of the group.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I mean, Nevelson was [inaudible] to organizations she was involved with for so long. Did very well. You know, I'm just curious about if there were more uh, sort of [inaudible] you might say about AFA in terms of either programs that you remember that were particularly satisfying or important, or projects that you felt were you know, that you worked very hard and they didn't come through, or things that didn't.

ROY MOYER: Uh-huh [affirmative].

PAUL CUMMINGS: Or were there just so many that you—

ROY MOYER: Well, I must say, most of the things we worked on I think came through most of the things we cared about. We instituted a lot of programs. When I say we, I mean Mrs. Kaplan and I. We'd instituted a great number of programs and that was all very uh, rewarding. Then, of course, there are the individual shows, which I suppose one can consider to be individual projects because they varied so greatly from one to the other. I can't say there were many disappointing things. One of the things that became very difficult for me towards the end—I think a new director stands a good chance because you have everybody behind you. They want to see you succeed.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's kind of a clean start.

ROY MOYER: And you have a whole new route to go around from contributions and so on. Now, you can only do that a certain while. I mean, after I've gotten three grants from the Ford Foundation and two from the JDR 3rd Fund, you know, it's pretty hard to go around again and start it all over.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They're going to say, "Oh, we've seen you and go somewhere else."

ROY MOYER: But a new director, they'll want to be with and they'll want to—and there were so many projects I

was going through. We got all involved in a lawsuit with the producer of our film, who was really a dreadful, dishonest person. I wasn't accustomed to dealing with dishonest people. I was really rather naïve about the whole thing. But uh, that dragged on, and dragged on, and then grants coming through, and working on films with people who, film producers—you know, if you had money and give to a film producers, because we wanted a handmade product. We didn't want uh, some commercial thing. You have to deal with their temperament. Now, they feel that they've gotten the grant. It's not as if you asked them to produce a product for you.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That to me always smacks of not necessarily great professionalism.

ROY MOYER: No, but that's the way they feel. I mean, this is their chance now to do what they've always wanted to do.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

ROY MOYER: So you have to work against that, also. You have to say, "Look. You're doing something for us and we want it also to reflect us." And so it becomes very difficult. Plus, all these people who were, the foundations and everybody else who were being investigated, and who weren't giving out any money until next October, and who were—it all got to be like walking through mud eventually. I had 20 projects all suspended, you know, hoping—I mean, what can you do under these circumstances but pray, you know? Oh, I hope one of these comes through today. So that, I got to feel—and then they wanted—because the government insists upon this. They wanted these terribly elaborate reports. Well, I love to do a project, but I hate to write a report. And who else is going to write it, you know? So I found that I was spending all my time allowing the other people to have all the fun, and I was just trying to get the figures together for that stupid report.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, dear. Yeah.

ROY MOYER: You know?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROY MOYER: And the whole—it just got to be so slimy and bogged down that—and I was working on all kinds of things, and wanted to publish a book on sources of films on art. And I was working with a publisher who finally agreed. And then we had to write up the contract. And once the lawsuit was settled, once the book contract came through, once the grant was given for the uh, city planning program and so on, I said, "No." I'd reached a plateau and then I really wanted to do something else, because I can't do this for the rest of my life. It isn't fair to the organization for one thing. And also I don't like this sticky feeling. So I think it's good to change. I mean, good for an organization to change directors [inaudible]. And of course, that did happen. Wilder came in and people became enthusiastic again.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's a new way of looking at things.

ROY MOYER: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: New interests, new areas.

ROY MOYER: He has a different perspective. All those things you couldn't get when I was there, maybe you can get now, you know. Because a whole new group of people, new confidence. You know. All the ideas I wasn't sympathetic to, they think they'll find a sympathetic ear now.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But he says—it's interesting with many of the things that you say about funding a national organization, getting trustees. They're very ambitious now of getting trustees around the country. Very difficult. I mean, they talk to somebody in Denver and he starts getting nasty letters from the museum, and the art association, and the library. Why are you trying to get so-and-so? They're important to Denver.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And it's, I don't know. I think it's the breadth of the country and the fact that it's really quite different in so many of the quadrants, you know. People are interested in their own area.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Well, it's extremely difficult for a national organization.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I mean, one person told me the other day that you can get people on national boards if they've been frustrated in their own locality or something.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Then they will say, "Okay. You're going [inaudible]. I'm going to go to the next city," or

something.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Well, that's true. I mean, it's like someone they won't allow to be on the board in Rockford will try to get on the board in Chicago.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. And if they can't do it in Chicago, they'll try and get it in New York or some place. And then you have a different kind of situation. But then you've got an angry board member. [Laughs.] Um, how did you come to go to the United Nations? That's where your—right. It is the United Nations.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Well—

PAUL CUMMINGS: And did you spend a long time looking around for things or—?

ROY MOYER: No. When I said I was leaving, I said I was leaving like in eight months. I said I was leaving by the end of the year. And this was like in May. I guess the beginning of May. But you see, they wouldn't find another director until they really had to. So they didn't really begin a search until like October. But in the meantime, I thought, "Well, I'll just wait and see what happens." Well, they sent a circular to AFA asking me if I could recommend someone for this job with UNICEF. And I wrote back and said, uh, "Will I do?" That's really sort of how it happened. [They laugh.] But I wanted something that didn't involve fundraising.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You'd had enough of that.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. I'm with uh, the greeting card operation, which raises like eight million dollars this year, profit. That's wonderful. I mean, I feel I'm accomplishing something. I like the idea of being with a do-good organization. And certainly it's absolutely scrupulous about what it does.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They sell an enormous amount of cards. I mean, if you make that much profit and grow sales.

ROY MOYER: Oh, yes. Sure. We print like a minimum of 500,000. And something like Ivan Chermayeff's cards sold some six million or so.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Oh, yeah. I mean, it's extremely good coverage for the artist. But what is interesting is that I learned a lot about art from other places. And that's fascinating to be able to have to adjust to some different aesthetic principle. You know, you get very provincial in New York. It's tremendously varied, the work. There are certain things I don't like about it, but which I don't need to do too much of.

I don't like the diplomatic organization structure. I don't like diplomatic parties. I don't like making decisions which are diplomatic rather than aesthetic, which one has to do from time to time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What's wrong with diplomatic parties?

ROY MOYER: [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: I mean, you've been to so many art parties. [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: Well, strangely enough, I'll invite you to one, Paul. You'll see. [They laugh.] It's just like the last art party you were at.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I see.

ROY MOYER: Except that there's less to talk about.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because everybody's being careful.

ROY MOYER: Well, everybody's looking over your shoulder to see if there's someone of a higher rank behind you that they ought to be talking to.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, right. It's the one-upsmanship and all the—

ROY MOYER: Oh, no. They're very status conscious. You see, title is everything. And we have very elaborate titles for everything. But uh, anyway, it's easy compared to what I did. And I think what I do is useful because they uh, well, they need someone like me, if not me there. And there are things I'm working towards. I mean, I

haven't given up all my causes. I'm still—I'm trying to get them to use recycled paper. I succeeded in a small way and hope to increase.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was that difficult?

ROY MOYER: Well, it was difficult because we get all of our information from paper salesmen.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

ROY MOYER: You see? So I mean, yes, I had to read Ralph Nader's [laughs] reports. It was very difficult on a certain level. I discovered that on the highest level it was really rather easy. Uh, but I didn't want to break channels and when I did it was very easy. And then, I must say, I work with intelligent people. This was true, of course, at AFA. But this is very important, I think, that you work with—

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's hard to find them.

ROY MOYER: And people who come to the United Nations are superior people. I mean, they're dedicated people, and also it's in a very mixed group of people. I mean, my—one secretary's Jamaican. The other is Korean. People I work closely with are German, and Swiss, and Philippine, and Australian. But so, it's interesting. It is. And I am more or less my own boss. I can—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you travel much for them or don't you have to?

ROY MOYER: I could if I wanted to. I choose not to travel because I don't like to travel that much. But uh, yes, I'm going to South America next year to look for artists and things, because I've run out of what I knew, you see.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of artists are the most successful in terms of—

ROY MOYER: Of cards?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah.

ROY MOYER: Well, abstraction's very successful if they're by well-known artists. Now, we have a Calder next year. We have a Montier [ph] this year. We have a Bozzarelli [ph], Mondrian. We're working on Kandinsky. If they're very well-known artists, there's a very—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why is that? Is it the name or the image?

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Yeah. It's the name.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The brand label of the times.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Uh, other than that, you see, I have to find things that are suitable for the birth of the Buddha, for Ramadan, for Jewish new year, for Christmas, for all kinds of—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Holidays.

ROY MOYER: —occasions. Uh, and people have different emotions associated with these. Things are fairly rigid in terms of Ramadan or Jewish New Year. People are nostalgic about Christmas. So that you have to, you know, you have to use antique art or—yet, I have—one of the most successful cards we ever had was the Georgia O'Keefe bird over white covered, snow-covered hills, you know. In other words, we don't really know the audience. It can be anything. It has to be a compelling image. That's one of the things that's interesting about it. There are really no known factors. There's a lot of information, a lot of talk, a lot of dogma.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's kind of sensibility.

ROY MOYER: But none of it's true. I mean, anything can change.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Last year's abstraction goes klunk this year.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. That's right. They say you can't sell a green card and then this year the cards—the green card's the most popular.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you maintain a card for a number of years or do they change?

ROY MOYER: No. It changes every year.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So it's a whole new—

ROY MOYER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yes. I have to collect about 300 things a year.

PAUL CUMMINGS: My goodness. For all these different countries and—

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because they're sold everywhere, aren't they?

ROY MOYER: If you know of any snow scenes, would you let me know? If you—

PAUL CUMMINGS: I might have one here. [They laugh.]

ROY MOYER: If you find any snowmen with carrot noses, and kids dancing around them holding hands, preferably of different colors, would you let me know?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Different colors is a problem. [Laughs.]

ROY MOYER: No, we're moving away from that image. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: But now, these—you must have to print these in the middle of the summer almost to show them around the world.

ROY MOYER: We're printing them now for '77. And we're doing the calendar for '79. We do a desk agenda, which is rather interesting, too. I decided to do—we decided to do a photographic—photographs for '77. We had naïve artists [inaudible]. So we're going to get themes sort of for them. We're doing the tree of life for '78. And for '79, I hope to do something on the environment.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you think that will react around the world, because these things go into—but does every country subscribe to this?

ROY MOYER: They'll say they don't want it, and then they'll sell more than they did the previous year. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. So like every government, right? [Laughs.] But where do you print all these things? In different countries or here?

ROY MOYER: They're printed in the United States and Canada, and in Europe. You see, it's better to print in Europe than to print it here and ship it to Europe. So it depends upon where the distribution is. We distribute different things in different countries. Like, you know, South America, they don't want snow, but they do want Christmas. And in Italy, they don't want Santa Claus. And in Saudi Arabia, they don't want [inaudible] manuscript. So it's a—

PAUL CUMMINGS: See what's going in the local world.

ROY MOYER: And India, getting things for the Buddhist and Diwali Festival of Lights and things like that. It keeps you hopping, particularly if you're not in India. You know, I have to do all this by going through books or writing—we have offices in most of these places and the people like to be helpful. And uh, they're not always capable of being helpful, but they like to be. And so I can use them a lot. And I know where there are good people who can help. And so I send them out on little missions. Like uh, I saw some beautiful—a beautiful herbal from a library in Rome. I saw it in a book. But I write to our Rome agent and ask if he'll go to the library and see that we get good transparencies. I have to tell him how to photograph. And then the printing process is fascinating. And that's interested me a lot.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you have a lot of people working with you or is it kind of scattered around?

ROY MOYER: Uh, there are—there's a person in charge of publicity who does films, brochures, and so on, who works under me. There's a person who is sort of liaison with foreign countries, finds out what they're selling, what they want to sell and that sort of thing. There's a person who's in charge of printing. We call him our quality control man. He goes, when things are being printed, he also goes to the color separator and sees that uh, things are separated properly. And when I get a transparency from a museum or something, I show it to him. And he tells me whether it's suitable for reproduction. And if not, what we can do to make it so. And uh, then we have some people who do mechanical layouts, that sort of thing. And someone who takes care of physical things. But other than that, there's nobody else.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hm. And what about—

ROY MOYER: And a procurement officer who orders the paper and gives me samples. I'm always discussing with

paper salesmen whether you can print this on that or—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Can I get from—[cross talk].

ROY MOYER: Yes. Most of our papers are made up especially for us, but uh, I try to find some standard product like that. And with recycled paper, it's particularly—you see, I have to know the opacity of the paper, the whiteness of the paper, the whiteness index of it, the weight of it, and then give specifications for this and say, you know, "Yes, we want this. We want it recycled. And we want a 78 on the brightness index." It's fairly complex, but there's a person who assembles all these samples and things for us to look at.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hm.

ROY MOYER: But it's, I suppose, similar to being an art director of some magazine or something. And, of course, I also have to speak to these thousands of people who think they have a great idea for a card and who want to come and see me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, there must be.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: From everywhere.

ROY MOYER: Yeah. Yeah. Oh, yes. From all over the world.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What do you do? Do you get letters and sketches and things in the mail or—?

ROY MOYER: Well, I discourage it. Mostly I ask for photographs and most—you very seldom get things that way. Almost everything you find, you find yourself. Very seldom does someone stumble in.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's like so many dealers. An artist never walks in the door. They're brought there, directed by another artist or it's usually some ritual on his own.

ROY MOYER: But occasionally. I mean, I found some good designers of brochures and things like that. A very good one from India and a very good one from Sweden who just stumbled in.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you have to have a mix or do you—

ROY MOYER: Well, I try to. Certainly we have to have a mix in our cards. I mean, we have to have just a certain number from each country, because they can get publicity in their country if they have an artist from their country. It's not that they will sell that card necessarily, but they can get in the newspapers and things with that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you go into all the UN countries or not?

ROY MOYER: Yeah. We sell in a 132 countries.

PAUL CUMMINGS: My heavens.

ROY MOYER: Which is uh, most of them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah.

ROY MOYER: And I got artists last year from about 80.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You really have an international pipeline out there.

ROY MOYER: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's terrific.

[Audio break.]

Um, Hudson Walker [ph], which you said was such a good trustee at AFA. Uh, in what terms? Because he's always seemed to be such a quiet fellow around.

ROY MOYER: Well, that's one of the terms I mean. [They laugh.] No, he's uh, he stands behind you if you need money. He's generous. But I mean, large, large contributions. He is thoughtful about his contribution always. He is faithful about attending meetings. He introduces you to people who will be helpful.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hmm. So he's very serious about what he—[cross talk].

ROY MOYER: He's very serious. Very serious. Very fair. And never does anything for his own motives. At least, that's the way I found it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How can he be a trustee? [They laugh.]

ROY MOYER: No, but he really never asks anything in return. And—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why do you think he does that? I mean, he's been the trustee of so many organizations and supported them.

ROY MOYER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, I don't know. Maybe it's upbringing. I think he feels tremendous responsibility towards people. This is certainly true of his attitude toward Provincetown. Where, I mean, he came as a New Yorker and lived in Provincetown, and immediately felt that this town was his responsibility. Now, all the other citizens, or many of them, go back to New York and leave the local taxpayer to pave the streets, and pay for the schools, and—but he assumes a responsibility. That's—and you know, he's not rich. At least I don't think he is. He doesn't live as if he were.

PAUL CUMMINGS: He lives in a famous house, you know.

ROY MOYER: Oh, he does? No, I didn't know that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah.

ROY MOYER: In Provincetown or—

PAUL CUMMINGS: No. In Forest Hills.

ROY MOYER: In Forest Hills. Yeah. What house is that?

[Audio break.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Is there any more about him that—

ROY MOYER: Well—

PAUL CUMMINGS: One could say in a half a minute.

ROY MOYER: I don't know, except that I think that his ability to be self-effacing and to be a real supportive person when you need him is an ideal that very few trustees realize, you know. And he never inflicts policy upon you. No, I think he deserves some kind of credit. I really do.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]