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Oral history interview with Jack Vallee, 1973  
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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Jack Vallee on June 27 and October 31, 1973. The interview took place in Boston, and was conducted by Robert Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Archives of American Art Oral History Program.

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

ROBERT BROWN: This is an interview, June 27, 1973, in Boston with Jack Vallee, Robert Brown the interviewer.

JACK VALLEE: Yes, see how my voice carries, Robert.

ROBERT BROWN: You were born in Wichita Falls, Texas, right?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, I was born in 1921, and went to public school there, took art through most of the years through high school. Then I went to Hardin Junior College, which is now Midwestern State University, for, I think, a year and a half, and took a course in art at that time, although I didn't learn too much about painting because there just wasn't that much exposure there at that time.

ROBERT BROWN: What sort of courses were they?

JACK VALLEE: Well, drawing and pastel and we used designers' colors and at that time, I was very interested in Western themes and did a lot of wagon train things, you know, and actually that wasn't too far away at that particular time.

ROBERT BROWN: What was your—as a boy, what had your main interests been? In the outdoors? In the history of your region or?

JACK VALLEE: Well, to some extent, although I loved history, also, and I applied that to a certain degree to—to what I was drawing, and I remember class projects, like I did a mural one time in pastel on a wagon train fight with Indians and—and I loved those kind of movies and so it all kind of tied in.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] As a—what were your main interests as to say a teenager? Was art or were there many other things, too?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, I had a lot of wide interests in—in other things, sports and I've always loved movies, the—and whatever—and so I sort of split my time—my time at various activities, and I think it took the seriousness of the Second World War and the maturity that I got through that to cause me to focus in on what it was that I really wanted to do the most.

ROBERT BROWN: Had there been encouragement in your art study when you were in junior college? Your parents, were they interested in you becoming an artist?

JACK VALLEE: Oh, well, my mother in particular was always helpful. She—and I contribute a great deal to her and her encouragement to do whatever it was I wanted to do and she kept telling me this and my brothers to find something you want to do and go apply yourself to it and become as good as you possibly can. So and she's still doing it. That's why it helps.

ROBERT BROWN: What—what was your peers' reaction, your—your contemporaries, your—

JACK VALLEE: Well, actually, they - there were so few people that knew anything about art in—in Wichita Falls at that time and—

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

JACK VALLEE:—it was a city of about 50,000 and we just didn't have the exposure.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

JACK VALLEE: I would occasionally get to Dallas and places where there was more exposure and pick up some ideas, go to museums and what have you.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] But they were fairly small then, too, weren't they—

JACK VALLEE: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN:—down there?

JACK VALLEE: Yes—when actually, the art world seemed to bloom a great deal after the Second World War where we had the time and the energy and the money to apply to it and so practically all of my development has stemmed from the period after '45.

ROBERT BROWN: Yes. Well, the military service, you say, was—could you describe that a bit? You say it was a time when you matured but what—how do you think that fundamentally may have changed your—

JACK VALLEE: Well, actually, deep involvement in a war is—is quite an experience for anyone to—to go through and—and I had chosen the Marine Corps voluntarily simply because I sort of wanted to test myself. I—I don't know why, but I always wondered, you know, how I could handle myself under pressures and so I joined what was considered the roughest branch of the Service and after getting in, I decided that I would like to—to see if I could get in the Aviation Branch rather than, you know, being a foot soldier, which didn't appeal to me at all.

ROBERT BROWN: What appealed to you in flying?

JACK VALLEE: Well, it was a clean life and your living conditions were much better and so I managed to—to become a radio gunner, they were called in dive bombers which we spent a lot of time patrolling in the Pacific, patrolling convoys and anti-submarine, and I had a lot of time to reflect and—and watch the water and—and—and live in the huge space areas there and I think that's when it really began to gel, but you would be sitting for hours on end looking backwards, you know, and where you've been and it created a lot of reflection in my mind. So I think that was really where the maturity, the idea of—of pursuing it farther.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you feel very small and insignificant when you were—

JACK VALLEE: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN:—flying in this vast area—

JACK VALLEE: Yes. Yes, indeed. A small plane in a vast ocean and—and a little—a huge ship was just a little dot down below, you know, and it gives you a good sense of values, to— philosophize on.

ROBERT BROWN: What sort of values did you come away from your—from that experience with?

JACK VALLEE: Well, I think I—I rapidly became a pacifist, although I saw the justification of what we were doing at that time. I certainly don't encourage warfare of any kind or killing people and I think that, although it was a necessary thing to do, what we'd got into, but I wanted to get as far away from it as possible, and actually painting does that for you. You're working with yourself and you're working with nature and there's no—there's no actual relationships with other people involved to any great extent. There's no competition with people. I'm out to understand nature, light, and life as much as possible and project it through a canvas or watercolor.

So I think this all fitted in very well for—but I think the period where I really began to come alive more was, say, after 1945 when I really decided I wanted to do something and what it was I wanted to do.

ROBERT BROWN: Did this take you long to decide? You were mustered out in '45?

JACK VALLEE: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Yes, and I came to New York, went to New York and looked at the art schools there. At first, I thought maybe commercial art because you realize I hadn't had enough exposure in fine arts to really know what it was and up until that period of time, not too many people had been able to live very well with art and so I worked in a studio for a year and went to school at night. That's when I studied with Reginald Marsh.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

JACK VALLEE: And then after seeing what commercial art was like, I definitely decided that wasn't for me.

ROBERT BROWN: Why was that? What was in it that you—

JACK VALLEE: Well, it's just a business and—

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

JACK VALLEE:—that isn't what I was looking for, a business and pressures from other people and competition with other people.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] What sort of things did you do in that commercial art studio?

JACK VALLEE: I was a sort of errand boy and—and sort of paste-up person and I did a few designs and what have you and just kind of a general flunky, but the man who ran it encouraged me and wanted me to take over from him and do all these things, which along with all the other business actually didn't appeal to me at all. So I informed him I was going to art school in the daytime and take up fine arts.

ROBERT BROWN: At first, you started out at the Art Students League at night, did you?

JACK VALLEE: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

ROBERT BROWN: Is that when you had the class with Reginald Marsh?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, every evening or five evenings a week, I think it was, and it was—the school was very crowded at that time and it was difficult to get in some of the classes.

ROBERT BROWN: Is this all the G.I. Bill people coming?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, yes.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

JACK VALLEE: Yeah. And so I—somehow the Registrar there was a very fine gal who was trying to be helpful and I got to know her a little bit. She got me into Frank Vincent DuMond's class, which was one of the most crowded in the school. It was difficult to get into, and they would pack 60 or 65 people in one room, just room enough for yourself and your elbows like this, and we'd have two models, one on each side of the room, and work, do heads and—and nudes and what have you, male and female, and he was a very fine teacher and—and he approached the thing in a sensible way in that he asked you to follow him around the room so that he—you were getting instruction while he was helping other people.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, meaning he'd take a few of you at a time or—or one at a time?

JACK VALLEE: Well, as many people as wanted would—would follow him from easel to easel and see what he was trying to say, what his ideas, his philosophy actually of painting was very interesting to me, and this was the first time I'd ever heard anyone explain how to do a painting according to the direction of the light. I just—he talked about how the sun comes up, you know, and at all angles, how objects look under the different lighting conditions and the atmosphere conditions and all this, and he had a complete philosophy which I immediately began to understand and appealed to me tremendously as compared to the other instructors who were telling you to put a little black over here, a little bit over there with no reason whatsoever.

ROBERT BROWN: Was his reason, what you described, the effects of light and the movement of the sun, was—was his reasons—were they mainly technical ones? I mean, the behavior of nature, was that his main—

JACK VALLEE: Yes, it was actually the—what happens in—in—

ROBERT BROWN: In nature?

JACK VALLEE:—nature is what he was talking about and why it looks that way, according to the way our eyes are built and—and the nature of—of the human being in relation to nature, and I think he put it in perspective, you know, very much like me sitting in that airplane, a tiny little dot—

ROBERT BROWN: Yes, yes.

JACK VALLEE:—on a tiny little planet in a huge universe.

ROBERT BROWN: And you were content to be an observer, as you had been in the War, when you—when that was your job? Here, too, as a painter, you wanted to be an observer of nature, a recorder?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, right, and that did fit in in a sense, and this philosophy that he was talking about is something that the kind of mind and person I am immediately appealed to me very much. It gave me a thirst to know more, very much as history had, say, in school or something, and it's something that can never be quenched because you're never going—you're never going to learn it all.

ROBERT BROWN: What kind of mind did you have then? Could you describe what you think—

JACK VALLEE: Well, I—I was very curious and I understood so little about life and remember going through this experience of—of people killing each other certainly made me thirst even more to find something in principle in life to—to live the rest of your life seeking something. And I use painting as a kind of means to understand more about what I'm looking at and I'm trying to uncover—and these problems arise in painting that you're trying to solve that you haven't solved before and in doing so, you better yourself a little more as a painter and as a human being, and it's an unending search for—

ROBERT BROWN: What kind of problems are they particularly that loom up that you try to solve?

JACK VALLEE: Well, it could—it could be almost anything. It—it gets into—into a certain spiritualness. It gets into a moodiness. It—it can be a lighting condition or a texture or combination of those things or an atmospheric condition that you had never done before and in doing, you think you can take another step forward.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, when you're—when you were learning, were you primarily thinking in terms of the technical problems or were you—did these sort of just flow as you would practice?

JACK VALLEE: Actually, in—in my thinking as a student under Frank Vincent DuMond, I didn't think of it as purely a technical problem, although some of the students approached it from that and you could almost make a formula out of what he was talking about. I thought he—he was a much bigger person than that and he—he was projecting a whole philosophy of life and not—and—and not just these technical processes that he would at times talk about.

ROBERT BROWN: Did he talk quite a lot?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, he was a very fine person in—in his conversations and I had the opportunity to—to be away from the class with him at times.

ROBERT BROWN: Yes, you were in Vermont there, weren't you?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, we would go—we would go in the summer to Vermont and camp out and paint and he would hold classes every day and that was very helpful, much more to me than—than the Art Students League where you were confined to a room. Being out in the Vermont countryside, he really expanded on what he—he really knew about painting and about life and so it came through very, very dearly, and I was also living with six other guys in a tent on the side of a mountain and—and—and during meals in the evening, we would sit around and discuss what each was learning, you know, and different angles and versions of what this man's philosophy was and that was very beneficial. I grew rather rapidly during that period of time and I think that has caused me to be more of an outdoor painter than an indoor painter.

ROBERT BROWN: What were the things in his philosophy that you think basically stuck with you, were important?

JACK VALLEE: That most important thing was to be a learner rather than a paint pusher; that painting was a means to an end, and it—it deeply engrained in me the idea of not just painting a picture for money, let's say, that money should be the end result of what you want to do the most or would just naturally be the result of what you want to do the most, and I—I remember writing down on one of my sketch pads a quotation that "the greatest fulfillment in life is when what you want to do the most is someone else's need," and that type of thing. It was almost an Emersonian philosophy which I—I was very compatible with—with at that time.

ROBERT BROWN: Were you—were you quite—you were quite concerned with fulfilling what other people might want or was this only a byproduct?

JACK VALLEE: No. That was a byproduct, I think, Robert. I think that I just by nature wanted to be a realistic painter. I had tried at times other forms of painting but it wasn't satisfying at all and—

ROBERT BROWN: Why weren't they, do you suppose?

JACK VALLEE: I felt incomplete. I felt like I had more to say than, say, an abstract statement, although I sometimes use empty spaces quite—quite frequently. I still want there to be enough positive identification somewhere in order for me to—to have learned something, fulfilled me more.

ROBERT BROWN: You're fulfilled then from the—kind of the data, the—the facts that are out there in nature. Are these sort of starting points for—for you or are you fascinated by them in themselves?

JACK VALLEE: It can be almost anything. Whether—I think they vary a great deal in the degree of realism. I'm not—I'm not interested in getting every little minor detail or very seldom do I see something that I paint verbatim. 99 percent of the time I move things around, enlarge, reduce, what have you to get—to emphasize what it is that excited me the most about seeing this situation, and I do that with people, even when I'm people painting. I

don't necessarily paint a person just as they look to them in a mirror or something because I wouldn't paint them in the first place unless there was something that projected about them that I—that I was excited about and this can cause you to—to make changes.—So it can be so many things that causes a person to want to spend the time investigating a situation well enough to invest that much time and effort and energy into it.

ROBERT BROWN: But you were able to, under DuMond particularly, to do this right away?

JACK VALLEE: Yes. Yes, it began to become satisfying immediately upon trying these things, although some of my first oil landscapes were very poorly done, but I could see that the whole idea was going to grow if I pursued it with all my efforts and which is what I've been doing, and then I went into a period where, after studying with him, where I was living in New York and going to Maine in the summer and—

ROBERT BROWN: Did you go up there because there were other artists there or?

JACK VALLEE: Well, I had known a man, a painter in school, another student named Phil Shoemaker who had bought a house there, and it was on the back side of the island on top of a huge cliff—

ROBERT BROWN: Monhegan.

JACK VALLEE: Monhegan, yes. And I started going there through Phil Shoemaker and his family and I would live upstairs and they downstairs and we would work on his property half the day and paint half the day to kind of get it in shape, you know, and it had been vacant for so long, and this we did I think for about five summers, and then he—they started a conservation on Monhegan. Thomas Edison's son returned and started a conservatory to take people only in the village area and leave all the outside area beautiful walking place for them with paths and dehumanize that side of the island in a sense and leave it in a natural state.

So Phil sold the house and I took a studio down in the village at that time and I began to do—I had done an awful lot of seascapes as a result of living over on that—

ROBERT BROWN: Yes.

JACK VALLEE: Away from people. But once I got down in the village, then I started doing the buildings and the fish shacks and boats and what have you and started doing watercolors about that time. I had never taken watercolor in school to any great extent, maybe two or three lessons.

ROBERT BROWN: With Marsh, you'd only had drawing?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, it had only been—

ROBERT BROWN: And he was mainly a technical teacher? Was he one of the—as you described—

JACK VALLEE: He was more of an anatomy-type teacher, it seemed. I mean, he—you know his drawings and how he emphasized the blocking of the forms—

ROBERT BROWN: Yes.

JACK VALLEE:—and the strong heavy forms, which was good.

ROBERT BROWN: Was he—was he—were you sort of sympathetic with him as a teacher?

JACK VALLEE: I didn't particularly like Marsh's paintings at that time. They didn't appeal to me. I felt they were a little bit pale and—and less colorful than I would like to do myself, but I liked him as a person. He seemed very nice, and, oh, yes, I did study at night for awhile with Trafton who was a designer, Howard Trafton, and he talked a lot about the pipe-like shapes in the body and how they fit together and the mechanics of it and which helped some, and—but then once I decided to go to art school in the day time and go with Frank Vincent DuMond and I really got into heavy oil painting, a lot of—we would start things two-three heads a day and just wash them all with kerosene, start another. He emphasized that you really didn't understand the complexity of the human head or body until you'd done a thousand starts and that the—the importance lie in the start more than the finish, which I feel is quite true.

ROBERT BROWN: He didn't stress the very act of finish of studies?

JACK VALLEE: Well, he felt that would come with experience.

ROBERT BROWN: Yes.

JACK VALLEE: That you would find your own ways of finishing and he would at times give examples on—on

where to emphasize, where to focus the eye, and how to do it and where to put the contrast, what have you. So that, you know, that's pretty well carried over today, although I don't paint anything like he did. I still have a certain amount of philosophy that I use.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, in New York, were you involved with other artists' groups or what other kind of things were you doing there at that time?

JACK VALLEE: Well, actually, I was mostly just studying painting and this took me up to about '51. I did a little teaching in a studio. I had a studio in Central Park West and would have some private students in to help earn some money and I had sold some things to galleries in New York, but I really wanted to get back into the open spaces—

ROBERT BROWN: I see.

JACK VALLEE:—in the wintertime and where it was not so cold.

ROBERT BROWN: But you were not involved with artist organizations or anything at that time? Any of the abstract artists of that day, were you—

JACK VALLEE: I knew some of them, and I had worked in the office a half a day toward my last year there and I knew the instructors and I arranged exhibitions of students all around town.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

JACK VALLEE: I learned how to hang paintings, that helped some, and frame pictures, have them framed and what have you. It was a good experience and I was married the last year I think I was in school and had taken the studio in conjunction with my wife who was also a painter and then I decided it was time to leave New York. So I had a sister in Oklahoma City who encouraged me to have a show there. In fact, I sent her some paintings which the director of the Art Center there liked and invited me to have a show. Then I had a friend in Tulsa also. So I decided to have two shows. I don't—I think one was in February in Oklahoma City and then they went straight to Tulsa.

ROBERT BROWN: These were in 1951 or so?

JACK VALLEE: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And I had a show in Tulsa at the same time and these were—a lot of these things were figure things that I'd done in school in combination with seascapes I'd done in Maine and what have you and I loved the people and the simplicity of life compared to New York, so I decided, although I went back to New York a couple of times for three or four months, it became less appealing all the time, and I wanted to—so I eventually just subleased the studio and left and moved to Oklahoma City and eventually turned a milking barn into a studio apartment which I have now, very effective, just about everything I want.

ROBERT BROWN: What was the reaction to your first showings out there? You say a good many of these were figure studies and things you'd been doing?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, everything from heads to nudes to character studies and they were well received. The seascapes were liked. Quite a few people there have—have experiences with the sea, you know, either the Navy or they've lived or they have summer homes somewhere on the water, and so the seascapes, which I had been doing to some extent, were well received.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, could you compare the reaction, say, to a showing of your work there with what you'd experienced before you left New York?

JACK VALLEE: I don't quite understand.

ROBERT BROWN: What is the reaction of people interested in art? Can you contrast them? Are they saying—you had a showing in New York or at least you had things in galleries, and then you had these two shows in Oklahoma in 1951, and was—how would you compare the reception?

JACK VALLEE: Well, actually, a show in—in the Southwest is—is in a sense more intimate than it is in a large city like New York and I was in my early stages of painting, as a painter at that time, and actually hadn't had a one-man show at that point in New York. I had simply had paintings received by galleries and some galleries bought outright and sold them at what price they liked.

So for—for a person in their last year as an art student, I was doing fairly well, but I still felt a little insecure financially. So I—I would do some private teaching and I taught in Oklahoma after I moved there for a few years and then I finally taught a year at the University of Oklahoma and that sort of wound it up. I decided I'd had enough of that and I'd benefited all I could and I helped people all I could. So since—

ROBERT BROWN: Why did you want to give up teaching? Was it too confining or too demanding on your time or?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, it's—it's demanding on your time and it's energy-absorbing and idea-absorbing. So many of the people really are—are not suited for the arts too well. It's sort of a pastime with them and they would use it for that and that was—that bothered me.

ROBERT BROWN: Yes, yeah.

JACK VALLEE: And you expend all your energy with them for three hours while you really just feel like falling apart rather than, you know, doing your own painting.

ROBERT BROWN: And they wouldn't carry on with the work?

JACK VALLEE: Very, very few of them ever did anything with it. Fortunately, some did and they've helped other people learn to paint.

ROBERT BROWN: Now you say when you came out there, the people were—you felt they were—it was a simpler life. What else is—is it in the people out there that has appealed to you to stay there as an artist working full time once you quit teaching?

JACK VALLEE: Yes. Well, of course, I was born in—in that area and the—the openness of the huge spaces there appeal to me a great deal and, in a sense, it's very much like the ocean when you're on it or looking out. It's—it's simplified. I mean, it can be used, and I feel—I love to get the feeling of the space in—around the ocean and in the Southwest where there are vast spaces and I've painted all into Colorado and New Mexico and around Santa Fe and that area, too, and enjoy that. I think I've enjoyed painting wherever I've gone, Caribbean, Mexico, because I'm dealing in light and textures and shapes and that's what's appealing to me and to try these—whatever it is that excites you that day and oftentimes I'll keep several things going at one time, depending on the weather conditions. Like it's raining today in Boston, well, I would want to paint a rainy or foggy type thing because I feel it more sincerely.

ROBERT BROWN: Then you would—you would hold, say, a previous study done in bright light—

JACK VALLEE: Yes, until another time.

ROBERT BROWN:—until another time?

JACK VALLEE: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

ROBERT BROWN: But you would go—this is all painting outdoors? This is all painting directly from—

JACK VALLEE: Yes, right. If I'm painting indoors, it doesn't matter so much because I'm using a skylight which is rather consistent anyway, painting a person, something like that, but the outdoor painting, that—that is such a challenge because it's never the same, exactly the same twice, but the principle is there which you can apply. So I—

ROBERT BROWN: You mean the principle of there being certain forms and textures or?

JACK VALLEE: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN: Not the light, though?

JACK VALLEE: Well,—

ROBERT BROWN: It's never the same.

JACK VALLEE:—it will never be exactly the same perhaps because the degrees of moisture change and what have you, but I—I try to get enough of the idea in my mind through the—doing a quick sketch or at least getting the heart of the matter down, the angle of light, that even if it's never quite the same. I've got the principle of it established so I can go back to it at other times, even though it's different, and I think you get kind of a picture of—of what it is you want to do in those early minutes of preparing yourself and you learn what to look for in the angle of the light because the texture may stay the same, what have you, and the shapes may change slightly. But if you understand the principle of growth, the principle of light and atmosphere and what it's doing, then you can apply it according to what it is that you wanted in the beginning.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, this sounds like the DuMond idea of—of the beginning stages of the ones where you—you worked broadly there and you were also at times very intense. You were probing, are you?



JACK VALLEE: Yes, get to the heart of the matter immediately and completely understand its [inaudible] the type of light it is, the angle of the light, the degree of the atmosphere and what have you, and if you get those things established, then you may never see it again, you can still finish and uncover what it is that you wanted—

ROBERT BROWN: Do you make notes on your sketches so that—

JACK VALLEE: Quite often.

ROBERT BROWN:—you can recall?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, I'll make little initials for colors and densities and angles of light and what have you and get that established as soon as possible. Then if you want to continue to sketch, why, you—you can and still benefit yourself to get the shapes and sizes and relative what have you and sometimes do half a dozen sketches very quickly, very loose-type thing.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, after you'd gone through this, is the remainder of the painting sort of working it up? Does it become more of a sort of a momentum that you've already established?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, I think so, and—and the achievement of—of what it is that—that excited you the most at that particular time and as you—as you continue to build it, to see how far you can take it and still maintain the unity and the—and the overall effect of it without losing it into too much detail.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] How do you know when to stop?

JACK VALLEE: I don't know. I—I have been fooled many times on this and maybe overworked the thing or underworked it or what have you. I'm still learning, I hope, and it—it just varies because no two paintings are ever alike.

ROBERT BROWN: Sure.

JACK VALLEE: So I'll spend an equal amount of time, probably more, just studying the painting and then deciding what to do next, where to take it, and sometimes rearranging quite a lot of areas.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, you use a fairly analytical approach, it sounds like.

JACK VALLEE: Yes, it is. It's not the pure instinct approach at all. It—I really need reasons for doing things in life and so I apply this to painting, too.

ROBERT BROWN: How regularly do—work—did you establish fairly early in your career fairly stable work habits?

JACK VALLEE: No, and I'm not sure that—that I shouldn't have. I tried at times, but I find it very difficult to work unless I really feel it. To force myself to work on a painting just because I know I need to spend a certain number of hours on it to get it finished enough that I'll be satisfied is very difficult. So I try to regulate my life so that when I get up in the morning, I've been thinking about the painting to the extent that—that I'll want to get right into it. It's kind of controlling your time and your—

ROBERT BROWN: But you can't reduce it to a mechanical thing?

JACK VALLEE: No, no. I know people who say, well, I go to work at eight o'clock in the morning and I quit at five. Well, I just can't do that. I may get up at five o'clock in the morning and work till eight in the morning or something or work at night. I like to just before going to bed have out what I'm going to be working on the next day and go to sleep with that on my mind and then you can kind of get a continuity of thought and life processes through that.

ROBERT BROWN: In—you went to Maine before you went back to Oklahoma or is this about the same time?

JACK VALLEE: It was about the same time. I went up one winter for the first time to look this house over that Phil Shoemaker was thinking of buying. So I saw it at—at its wildest and stormiest and liked that immediately. I was drawn to it. So the next summer I was in Rockport painting and—

ROBERT BROWN: Were you there with a teacher or were you on your own?

JACK VALLEE: No. I was just painting on my own.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

JACK VALLEE: And I'd just decided that I'd had enough schooling, so I was ready to—to stay away from instruction

for awhile, and I got a call from Phil Shoemaker saying he'd bought the house and would I like to go to Maine. So they stopped by and picked me up in Rockport and I went up with them and had a fantastic time and I've been going back every summer since and since I stopped teaching, I then stay through October. They turned the water off as it's apt to freeze and so that's when I leave.

ROBERT BROWN: In Rockport—rather, in Monhegan Island, Maine, are you pretty much on your own or is there—was there always a considerable community of other artists?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, but very few that I affiliated with to any great extent, other than, you know, we're friends and the relationship I had with Phil Shoemaker and his family was a very good one and then they moved back to Rockport and so I continued to stay there. And about that time, James Wyeth was growing up and becoming a painter and he's moved there and now we're—we're very good friends and we have a good relationship, not so much that we talk about painting. It's just about life and he's a very interesting young man who's very interested in all aspects of life which I find very compatible with what I'm trying to do and so—and, of course, the fishermen there and all the great characters in Maine. It's just loaded with individuals and they're very strong individuals and I like that sort of thing in people.

ROBERT BROWN: You find it very resourceful or—

JACK VALLEE: Exactly.

ROBERT BROWN: Are they different from the people that you'd known in New York?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, much more, much more independent people, and the kind of life a fisherman leads is—is a very tough and very demanding and requires resourcefulness and, you know, they can fix anything. They can do almost anything, work on motors. They know what they—they know how to think like a lobster does and—and they love the independence. They don't want people telling them what to do which is what I, of course, am trying to do, also.

ROBERT BROWN: How do you compare it with your—the people you know in Oklahoma City?

JACK VALLEE: Well, I think the Mainites are probably more resourceful and more independent. There's a softer quality in Oklahoma because it's a softer land. It's flatter and it's—but the people, both in Maine and Oklahoma, have this in common, they're very friendly and they have time for each other and there's no rush and there's little pressure, and I find them extremely good places for me to paint because of the compatibility with the people. If I can feel that, then I'll—I can work well usually. So that's why I continue to go there.

ROBERT BROWN: Now when you went to Maine, you were still coming back to New York part of the time and thus you weren't—you were in the center of the art world, but when you went to Oklahoma, how does this affect you at all, to be so far removed from the so-called centers of the art world?

JACK VALLEE: Well, by the time I had moved to Oklahoma, I—I had absorbed enough in the way of relationships with other painters that I really wanted to get away from it and I was getting claustrophobia and at that time, the abstract expressionists were coming on very strong and there was just so much confusion going on in the New York area about how you should paint, why you should paint, and all of these things, that I wanted to get as far away from it as possible.

ROBERT BROWN: I see. It must have been a lot of uncertainty, too, wasn't there, for someone who was trying to be an observer of nature?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, right. I recall one of the well-known abstract people saying how could anyone paint a blade of grass in the 20th Century? There's not any grass left. Well, living in New York City in the concrete jungle there, I can see where you might think that, but if he goes west of Philadelphia, he's going to find, you know, there's complete nature, unspoiled for centuries.

ROBERT BROWN: But you're rather incompatible with that outlook, which didn't want to look at nature anymore?

JACK VALLEE: That's right. I saw—I had nothing to say to them at all and they seemed to be getting quite a strong voice at that time. So I just felt like, you know, there's no reason for me. I can go back to New York any time I want to, just get on an airplane, you're there in three hours, so no need to live there anymore because of transportation things, you know.

ROBERT BROWN: What is—in Oklahoma, what is your role? Do you have a voice there or what do you try to—beyond doing your painting?

JACK VALLEE: Well, I try to help the community whenever possible. If there's something that I can be beneficial to the community through my painting, I do. I belong to the Oklahoma City Art Council in an advisory capacity. I

sometimes give demonstrations to raise funds for an art gallery, an organization that needs help, a museum, and try to encourage the improvement of the arts there. I've contributed paintings to auctions for theater groups to raise money for various ways, and I feel it's a part of the community and that I should do what I can.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you think the arts can be sustained in such a place?

JACK VALLEE: Oh, indeed. Oh, it's growing beautifully all through that country. The museums are improving and the galleries. There is a tremendous audience, hungry audience for the arts all through there and a lot of things are being done, a lot of it's very quiet, maybe the—most of the public doesn't know and some things I don't know, but certainly things like the National Endowment Fund has helped a great deal and I see poets going out around these little towns in Oklahoma and giving poetry sessions to children, to adults, truck drivers, filling station owners, and they're really getting excited. You should see these people. They're never had any way of expressing themselves and what they've got inside suddenly coming out and it makes them much more alive and appreciative of life and this is a very fine thing that's going on.

ROBERT BROWN: This means a great deal to you, does it?

JACK VALLEE: Indeed. I think anything that helps the world become more alive, more understanding, more in sympathy with finer aspects of life. I'd far rather see that than, say, these same guys taking a gun out and shooting birds and deer and what have you, which was something like the only thing they had done for centuries there. They'd never had any exposure to anything else, other than sports and killing. So—

ROBERT BROWN: What about the—there must be a feeling that the arts are kind of precious and sissy even. Is this—

JACK VALLEE: I haven't experienced that at all. I did—I did, as a child in school, in grade school, particularly where, you know, the idea was to fight and be tough and play football and all those things, but I haven't—I haven't seen it since the Second World War. I've not experienced anyone ever—ever approached me in any manner about it being a sissy thing to do. In fact, it's a lot of admiration.

ROBERT BROWN: These people who like to hunt and otherwise kind of get out their aggression maybe in that way, they are able, a good many of them, you've found have been able to be open to the arts?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, they're—I have—I have seen very few people that reject painting, music, ballet. There's a—there are—as a matter of fact, that area has brought along some of the finest ballerinas the world's ever known, Michelle Tawes [phonetic] and those people. There's a lot of people who are in the theater there who are very talented. They've made some movies there and they've got some very good theater. They have a beautiful symphony orchestra there. The director just retired and they have had applications from all over the world to come there. So I think it's very much coming alive and more so every year that I go back. So it's very pleasing and I've been happy to be a part of it. I—like I don't—I don't think that New York City needs another painter. I'm sure they will breed them all along but there—there are enough for the people to absorb their ideas and I think there's a bigger need out in the—in the Western part of the country for people.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you find among young people out there a yearning to go to places like New York if they want to be a painter?

JACK VALLEE: Less all the time because I think that they see that you don't have to live in the East to be a good painter, you don't have to even study there anymore. There are enough schools that can—you can go to in their own part of the country and so we're getting primarily a new batch of painters in the Southwest who've never even been to New York and don't particularly want to go, as far as I can tell, and a whole group west of me in New Mexico-Arizona-Colorado range who never studied there. They may go to Kansas City to an art school or Chicago Art Institute, something like that, although there are colleges out in those parts of the country that teach good painting.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah. Do they pretty much follow the whole range of—of taste and styles and—

JACK VALLEE: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN:—painting?

JACK VALLEE: Yes. Of course, the colleges mainly are where you produce pop and op and what have you and it used to be abstract expressionists, but it's pretty well changed into that, and—and most of the non-realistic people are a product of the colleges, whereas most of the realistic people are products of art schools, or just instruction by individuals, and so you get everything, everything, and so there's plenty of exposure if people take advantage of what there is to do.

ROBERT BROWN: When did you—why did you go into watercolors and when about? The early '50s or so?

JACK VALLEE: I think it was more the middle '50s and I was getting more curious about another medium and there was something about just the way the paint flows in a watercolor that attracted me. So I got some books on watercolors and—and tried some exercises and—and got to like it and about that time, I had an opportunity to go to Europe, which I thought I'd like to do once anyway, and it was a free ride on a Dutch tanker to Liverpool and so as a sketching medium, I decided to take and to do watercolors as they were more portable. So I took tiny little pieces of watercolor paper and a little pan of watercolors and did things all through Europe and I think that's what really got me started because I had to express what it was with this medium and I had none of it to choose from and after that, I just seemed to be engrossed in it a great deal.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, this as a medium, you can't go back over, though, and I was wondering if it's frustrating because DuMond had taught you to paint and erase and work and work till you get what you want.

JACK VALLEE: Well, that was another challenge with watercolor. I had heard so much about how you had to do it right the first time and whatever right means, but that you couldn't change things as much, but I found that you can change things if you use good material and I also like to analyze and plan a little bit ahead so that I try to prepare myself perhaps a little more thoroughly for the watercolor than I had been used to in oil and so now it's, you know, almost reversed itself in a way in that I can project in my mind what I want a watercolor to look like and I don't always have to do as much planning as I do for an oil now. I'm doing oils in an entirely different way from the early days and a lot of glazing and so I—I try to prepare for it because it's going to be a much more time-consuming process—

ROBERT BROWN: Sure.

JACK VALLEE:—than the watercolor. So I can be a little more fluid with the watercolor, start simply, and—

ROBERT BROWN: Yes.

JACK VALLEE:—I'm not afraid to throw something away if it doesn't go well, you know. It's just a piece of paper. So I'll start something maybe three or four times before I'm satisfied with the beginning stages of it and then work it from there. But it is quite—there is a big misunderstanding and I see this in books, I hear watercolorists going around and lecturing, you know, these guys that tour the country,—

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

JACK VALLEE:—and they—they put out some rather bad information at times, very misleading, and discouraging to people. They're telling them what they can't do rather than being positive about what you can do which I feel we certainly need all the positive thinking and encouragement we can about trying things rather than being afraid to start.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

JACK VALLEE: By the time I get through listening to these people, you know, if I hadn't known better, I would be afraid to try something.

ROBERT BROWN: But you—you were beyond the technical—

JACK VALLEE: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN:—hang-up quite early, were you?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, right, and I was using somewhat the same principles of painting that I used in oils anyway. So it's just a matter of learning a little bit of the technique of how water flows really that made the difference and how the paper reacts and using good paper from the very beginning, started using the best paper available. So I found that you can change things. You can scrub full areas out. You can glaze it in various ways. You can paint opaquely. So really—in fact, I did a series, I did two demonstrations on succeeding Sundays last year for a benefit of—of a museum and in which I did a watercolor and then the next Sunday I made the same application in oil that I used in watercolor to show that they were a very compatible medium. They don't have to be done alike but there is that possibility, particularly in the early stages. So it creates—it makes it more exciting to me to—to see if you can apply the principle of oil painting and watercolor and vice-versa. So we'll see where it's going to lead.

ROBERT BROWN: Could I ask something about your experience with—as an exhibition, exhibiting?

JACK VALLEE: Yes. Actually, I think—I think the period of time in which I—I took on an agent in New York caused me to—caused her to enter me in a lot of shows as—as I was beginning to leave the New York area about the

same time.

ROBERT BROWN: This was in the early '50s, mid '50s?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, early '50s, and I met a person who was just going out to—to be a fine art agent and I'd known her in school. She had worked in the office at the Art Students League, Anne Barisonik Cox [ph], and she was going it kind of as a part-time because she was a housewife, also. But it—it turned out to be a good thing in that I did enter—she did enter me in all the realistic painting shows of various kinds and I got—entered me in the American Watercolor Society and I became a member shortly afterwards, the Allied Artists show and National Academy and all those things. And I think it was a good period to go through to experience the relationship of your painting to some of the better realistic painters in the country, and this went on for something like eight or 10 years and she would also show my work to all the various galleries all over the country because a lot of the galleries, either the owners or their representatives come to New York looking for people.

So I think eventually she had me scattered all over the country, as far as San Francisco and Denver. She didn't work Maine so much since I was there in the summer, but she had me as far as Miami, Florida, and I was just split up so much I really didn't get to see my work long enough to really know what I was doing.

ROBERT BROWN: There was a great deal of pressure for you to put—on output?

JACK VALLEE: Well, yes. She didn't personally pressure me but the idea of having shows in New York City, I had three one-man shows, and several in Boston and—and having them scattered around so much, I found it very difficult to get a show that represented what I—the best of the things I was doing because so many of them were sent out immediately—

ROBERT BROWN: I see.

JACK VALLEE:—to various things and you'd have two or three here and there. So as—as I—as I had the experience of—of having one-man shows and entering the competitive shows and could see what I could do and what prizes and what have you, whatever that means, I decided I'd had enough. I felt I knew—I now needed to—to withdraw to an area where I was going to be living for a period of time. So I started showing only in the Southwest in the wintertime and then, of course, the work I was doing in Maine was with me all—all summer and fall. So that I got a better sense of identity as a result of it, although the period did serve a good purpose in the '50s and '60s when I was showing all over. I—I at least got to relate to other painters that way, the better painters, and then I sort of lost interest in it as a result of having overdone it, I think, and wanting to concentrate in the Southwest.

ROBERT BROWN: You found your work was scattered, you said that.

JACK VALLEE: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN: Was there also—what about having your work shown in competition with other—

JACK VALLEE: Well, that was a good period to go through, although the fallacy of a show, of course, is that the people that pick the judge are the ones that are picking the paintings and what he likes, but it was something I just felt like I needed to do and—and I got a list of credits, which sounds impressive to people, and probably partly a result of why I'm being interviewed here is because I did get some prizes and recognition,—

ROBERT BROWN: Yes.

JACK VALLEE:—went to the MacDowell Colony. That was a good experience, lot of interesting people there that you may—around that period of time, and although many of those shows I never did see that I was in.

ROBERT BROWN: So you really had no close relationship with any of these dealers that are—where you had your own-man shows and your group exhibitions?

JACK VALLEE: No. I got to know them and I would go to the gallery before we'd agree on something and—

ROBERT BROWN: Any that particularly stood out at that time that you got to know better than others?

JACK VALLEE: I don't recall a really close relationship with any gallery dealer at that time. I have in the Southwest now good relationships with them but I just wasn't in New York long enough and, of course, they were very busy and I would just be passing through and spending a night or two or something, usually on the way to Maine or back, and I was driving at that time all the way to Oklahoma, as I had a lot of paintings, and I would leave some off to the agent in New York. She's the one that had the relationship with the gallery and it kind of left me out of it and then eventually it just grew so expensive to do that sort of thing, whereas the prices on everything had gone up and galleries were beginning to get 40 or 50 percent and the agent 10 percent and it

just didn't make that much sense, you see.

So—and I—originally, one of the first galleries that I contacted after I moved to Oklahoma City, he was taking 20 percent and paying the expenses for all the food and the opening, the invitations and everything.

ROBERT BROWN: Was this in Oklahoma?

JACK VALLEE: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And because the costs of—of living there are so different and—and he has an established—he's an interior decorator. He's got these beautiful galleries in conjunction with it and it just all works together for a person like that and he can't lose. So he doesn't have the requirements that the galleries here have. So that's been pretty much the picture in the late '60s and early '70s.

ROBERT BROWN: And you find that you're—you found yourself more, you think?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, I think so.

ROBERT BROWN: Being able to—you exhibit mainly a good number of your works rather than scattering them around?

JACK VALLEE: Exactly.

ROBERT BROWN: You exhibit them in one place, in a place that you're familiar with?

You exhibit them in one place, in a place that you're familiar with?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, right. And the people there are so beautiful and they make such great friends and they've supported me beautifully. I haven't had to worry about money. I've got collectors that, you know, buy every year and they say they're going to continue to and so I can just concentrate on trying to get better and—and letting the money side take care of itself. That's what I really like. Of course, my sister's been such a big help.

ROBERT BROWN: Yes. She manages the—the art—

JACK VALLEE: The rentals.

ROBERT BROWN:—exhibits and the rentals of the Oklahoma Art Center, is that right?

JACK VALLEE: Yes. She has the Rental and Sales Gallery at the Art Center and she has a beautiful place to show paintings, sculpture, pottery, Indian jewelry, and all the—and she has all these things that attract people and as a result paintings sell there because she gets—in fact, they oftentimes come to her gallery before they go into the—the larger galleries that the museum—

ROBERT BROWN: Permanent collections.

JACK VALLEE: Yes. Yeah. Right. We have traveling shows as a fresh air school, St. Francis and some of those people there now, these huge abstractions, and I hadn't seen any in a long time and thought perhaps that had pretty well died out, but apparently it hasn't.

ROBERT BROWN: You don't really feel the need to keep abreast of what's going on in New York or—

JACK VALLEE: I don't. No, I have—I have arrived at a point where I have enough self-confidence in what I'm doing, I have an interest in what other people do, but it's not going to affect what I'm doing. I don't think that looking at a St. Francis is going to have any effect at this point in my life. It may have had 20 years ago, but it—I have the direction I'm going is where I want to go and I think I'll continue to improve and continue to learn without trying to relate my work to other people's.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

JACK VALLEE: So that's sort of where it is now.

ROBERT BROWN: This is an interview with Jack Vallee, October 31, 1973. [The tape goes very quiet at this point and I have done the best I can. -Transcriber?]

JACK VALLEE: Yeah. Well, I'm not checked out on Halloween too well.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, I thought we could ask Jack in this second interview. You'd maybe talk a bit about the summer on Monhegan Island, Maine, what you did there and what you'd like to bring up.

JACK VALLEE: Well, I feel it was a good four months. We—it was a blessed time for me. I was doing mostly

watercolors, trying to catch some of the character of the island and get into—I was doing oils, trying to transition painting and the flow of light to the changing atmosphere, the changing weather conditions, and things like that. I did a lot of that at the time, trying specifically to get the transition, say, from a changing mood to—to specifically state more the—the constant change of the world and everything in it and to specifically try to give that old principle, the only thing that doesn't change is the law of change and which is a very basic philosophy. So that I chose mostly things to work on which would develop that idea more in my mind and try to state it as simply as possible how to do that.

In other words, eliminate practically everything except that idea of transition.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you try and concentrate or to bring out in, say, a single watercolor the effects of change?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, I have in mind a specific one of looking out a window and at just some of the change in the fog going from a lighter pattern into the denser fog and disappearing behind the window and a pattern of three gulls flying by the window, emphasizing the flight and that type of transition, and then the change in the fog condition, the change in the window as it moved across the panes, and I think that was possibly my best effort at doing that, and then I got into an oil of an evening church service, just at twilight, and trying to show, you know, just at that fraction of a second when the sun is going behind the terrain and then the lighting up of man's efforts through this lighted church interior with the people inside the building and the light coming falling on the grass outside, so that I had two different lighting conditions to play with, man's lighting condition and then the earth's light disappearing.

ROBERT BROWN: Is there more strength in the natural light than in the others?

JACK VALLEE: Oh, yes, far more. But the natural light had faded to the point where the man's light was beginning to take over and it's kind of that idea.

ROBERT BROWN: The light is an impressive medium, isn't it?

JACK VALLEE: Yes. I feel very strongly about it being the source, you know, for all of our imagery for everything that I know of that exists is subject to our natural light, for our very existence, and—and as a painter, everything I look at and have learned to understand has been a result of the way a thing is lighted and my understanding of why it looks that way. Then I can interpret better and make statements about how I feel about it and so this has been a constant problem of understanding what I'm looking at. I'm not the type of painter that can just sit here and look at you and not understand anything about you and duplicate you. It just wouldn't mean anything to me. But if I understand you and why you look the way you do and why you act the way you do, then I can begin to make an interpretation that's satisfactory. So this is—

ROBERT BROWN: Well, the—what about the light in the church? As you say, it's natural light. It's a giver of light.

JACK VALLEE: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you try to make a comment about a contrast?

JACK VALLEE: To a degree, about man's progress. He gets progressive where he can create his own light but still his energy for the illumination that he can provide comes from the fact that we do have a fuller light system that gives us the material which we can do ourselves and I think I was saying that, of course, it's the primary consideration is the solar life that the man has come this far and—and certainly endeavors at this time to do and that was the psychology behind my doing this particular painting.

ROBERT BROWN: Now do you think you came across with the feelings you had?

JACK VALLEE: Well, I feel it was successful from my standpoint. Now what other people would think of it, I haven't got around to that yet because I haven't exhibited it, but—

[I'm not at all sure about the transcription of this following paragraph. -Transcriber?]

ROBERT BROWN: Your concern about—you mentioned the source and the solar energy as the source. The other concern was nature. So these two things. You gave example. One, you mentioned the change in the light and the second one was solar and artificial sources of light. Well, could you—perhaps you don't even stop to think about it, but how do you get that?

JACK VALLEE: Well,—

ROBERT BROWN: Do you think you work in literal terms?

JACK VALLEE: Well, I don't think of it as literal terms, but perhaps it could be interpreted that way. The constant

change of the sky, the constant change of the light across the earth, the constant change, the transitional value and color and incorporating these, that's how I—I attempt to give this feeling of the universal quality and I—I have the tendency to feel it's a very important thing to immediately in laying in a painting show the transition of value and color, regardless of what direction it's going into the painting, across, up, down. The thing that I find least interesting in people's paintings is the flat pattern which takes away the whole idea.

ROBERT BROWN: Or can you be very literal in your representations of object and form and achieve this type of transition in your paintings?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, I think that if you understand light and what it's doing and how it strikes objects of various kinds, that naturally you would be literal because that is what's happening. It's this question of whether you can see it happening or not.

ROBERT BROWN: Right.

JACK VALLEE: But if you know it's happening and then with that you can interpret what it is that you want to specify about it, then it's not so literal, but still using the lighting to show the transition, you can distort the shapes, you can do whatever you feel you as an individual choose. But I feel that I need this transition quality in whatever I do, regardless of what I change in arrangement in the painting. This is one of my first considerations when I am getting an interest in—in an idea and doing sketching in preparation for it.

One of the first things I consider is what the transition patterns will be and it seems that if I work that out early in my mind, then the painting is quite often successful.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, you do rearrange and simplify.

JACK VALLEE: Indeed, yes. I'm very, very strong on simplification, using—well, I think I first really encountered it to a great extent in the reading on some Zen Buddhist art books and some of the Oriental ideas, you know, of simplification and, of course, a lot of the American painters have talked about that, too, but this was specifically impressed me and—and the idea that they had sitting before what you're going to paint until you felt like the tree or you felt like the rock and the more it came into your senses, the more it would automatically come out your fingertips, you know, as a successful idea and I have done this in—in—for years and I feel it definitely helped. It gives—it gives kind of a—a—it gives a—a—you know, an ability to really put it down in a strong way but in a very simple way because if you feel like the tree and you feel like you grew out of the ground as the tree does, then your hands and eyes seem to—to allow you to give this natural quality to whatever you're painting and I think that I encounter also painting people very much this way.

If you can get to know them and almost think like they do, then I think your ability to project the idea of them is much stronger.

ROBERT BROWN: Are there particular ideas in people that you—of people that you try to project?

JACK VALLEE: Well, of course, it varies a great deal with each person, but I never start a painting of a person unless I find that I'm interested in the person, not only to look at but to talk to and their idea in life is interesting, what have you, so that it comes with a strong conviction. Otherwise, I might get tired of the person and not want to continue or something, but if it's an interesting person and then you can put them in a light and in a—in a situation and composition that expresses what it is that you found out about them. [inaudible] It has to do with professional portrait painting because you're not working on that kind of basis. You're working strictly on a tree or a landscape or the sea or anything else that you—

ROBERT BROWN: Trying to find their—their—their basic quality.

JACK VALLEE: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN: You're not trying for a likeness.

JACK VALLEE: Not so much because it has nothing to do with—of course, I try to acquire a likeness of them but it—it might be the kind of likeness that I see in them rather than what they would see if they looked in the mirror and interpret themselves and it's not a distortion necessarily, but I would emphasize certain things about them to give a feeling about what it is they see in life and what they are doing with their life and it—

ROBERT BROWN: There is interaction with people, some of their ideas about themselves, too, you try to bring out.

JACK VALLEE: Yes, indeed. One of the most interesting things I did was Lilly, when she was under analysis and I painted her right after she had come from her psychoanalyst and she would sit and talk about what she talked to him, you know, and it—it was that, I wanted to show the contrasting side of this person and, you know, her



past that was rather horrendous and her future which was very potential. So I used the two sides of her head and body to show the contrasting ideas and she was very intelligent, bright girl, and, of course, then it evolved into a good painting because I continued to be interested in—in her, you know, even after the painting and I could see that I really got the idea of the whole of the girl far better than if I had just tried to paint a likeness of her exactly, understood it so well.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, the—you want to take a lot of—part of this, let's say, something like the Zen process, to almost think like a priest. Do you think it's a literal graphic preparatory study? Was most of it looking and thinking ahead and absorbing?

JACK VALLEE: I think both, actually about an equal amount of both. I have started many paintings with no preliminary sketching and so that varies with the kind of problem involved and if it has a lot of difficult drawing, for instance, an architectural-type subject, then a lot of sketching preparation is necessary, but if it's very simple plate situation, it's a good sea, you know, the inlet plates, say, in Oklahoma, the West. I might very well do nothing but just sit there and try to become a part of the landscape, a part of the sea, or something, and start right to work directly as there is not—I mean, it's just that transition in time where you saw something and the seed for the idea implanted itself in your brain and so you have a choice of whether to sit there and try to mentally absorb it and create a graphic image of what you want to do in your brain or start sketching and then miss what—what that transition is or, in other cases, you might just catch it and want to put it down in black and white to make notes.

ROBERT BROWN: It certainly sounds like a rather labored or mechanical process. You're trying to shut down mechanically an arrangement?

JACK VALLEE: Well, my arrangement of what it is, based on the seed of what caught my eye or mind, it might just be a little shaft of sunlight striking something, and it might be—and if that's the core of what I wanted to say about that specific moment in time,—

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

JACK VALLEE:—then I—I might sit there and sketch that idea,—

ROBERT BROWN: But if it isn't, do you then turn to another sketch? Do you emphasize another way of getting this core—

JACK VALLEE: Yes, right. And I might do a half a dozen sketches of the same idea of—of just that little shaft of light, let's say, and decide which is the most powerful composition to project the idea that I saw or felt about it and this includes, of course, a lot of elimination and change and rearrangement oftentimes. I very seldom just literally sit and paint something that's as it is. I mean, I—I think that's impossible, in the first place, and I don't think you can try. I've never been inclined to try that. I—I think that the more mystery and more feeling, sense of feeling that you can get into it by arranging your own composition of, based on the feeling and idea, and it seems to come through to me better that way.

ROBERT BROWN: Can you conceive of or do you sometimes make a literal record of what you see because what you see is so impressive to you that you want to still be expressive?

JACK VALLEE: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Yes, that is quite possible. I have done that and it—of course, there's always work, I mean, many times—

ROBERT BROWN: Well, you have, I think, dwelled on it before, but why Monhegan Island? How long have you been going there?

JACK VALLEE: I think this is my 22nd or 3rd year. Well, it's simply a—a very, very unusual, fine place for a person who's a painter particularly. There's just no other place like it. It's a small community. It's a small island and yet it has infinite variety and compatibility with people that's important to me in order to work well and therefore I live in two different places.

ROBERT BROWN: In what way is it compatible?

JACK VALLEE: Well, cooperative and friendly and flexible, accepting you as an individual in a certain line of work, and, you know, are helping you in any way they can to encouragement, all kinds of things, and, of course, you well know how friendly the people are in Oklahoma and how, you know, they're not the most liberal people in the world but then they do accept just about whatever comes along and—and Monhegan, of course Monhegan has been closed to every kind of element in the world for years and years and so they think nothing of any kind of odd behavior that may come up there or any kind of profession that may come along or attitudes and this is very good for me because I like to be around a community of that type and it—and it gives me an added incentive to

work as hard as possible because these people are hard-working, more of a manual labor with them, but they're very industrious, and they give vibrations off of that type to the painters and artists.

[Second disc starts here and it is even quieter. I definitely do not have all that Mr. Brown has said. -Transcriber?]

ROBERT BROWN: You mentioned that one of the things that attracted you to painting, you said, was you were able to work with yourself and other persons weren't necessarily involved, wouldn't collaborate. You liked the element of—of not isolation but working on your own.

JACK VALLEE: I did.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you find that the people in Oklahoma and Monhegan let you alone?

JACK VALLEE: Oh, yes, definitely.

ROBERT BROWN: Yet they're there and they're compatible when you want to be with them?

JACK VALLEE: When you want to be with them, why, they—they're friendly and they're cooperative, but they certainly don't interfere in any way whatsoever. As a matter of fact, pretty well unless they're invited to my studio, I mean, it's not a drop-in-type place. [Inaudible.]

ROBERT BROWN: Can you describe some of your schedules in the summer on Monhegan? Could you sort of typify a workday for yourself there or a whole day?

JACK VALLEE: Well, it's a type of a pattern frequently but the usual workday would be, you know, getting started relatively early. I sometimes like to get up at sunrise because there's certain things that—early in the morning, there's fresh quality that you get there and just walk around the island, make perhaps sketching here and there and—and picking up ideas. But oftentimes I'll go back to the studio and work from the sketches. It is not a place, you know, that's accessible for any length of time. But I would prefer, if the weather conditions and everything allow, to be there most of the time that I'm working on things.

Actually, I have the kind of place where I can do the watercolors on one floor and then I have a second floor with a skylight for working on oils. It depends on the type of problem, and I like to keep enough things going so that I can go with the prevailing weather conditions and the mood of the day. For instance, if I were doing a foggy thing, I—I don't necessarily want to work on it on a sunny day, let's say, or vice-versa because then I'd feel that better things happen as a result. I think I'm so subject to change according to the atmosphere, what have you.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you feel an obligation to try to finish what you start? Say if you start a watercolor or oil, [inaudible] do you go back to them?

JACK VALLEE: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN: So they don't become stale?

JACK VALLEE: No. I prefer to keep several things going so that I can vary it with, say, morning or afternoon things, various kind of weather condition things, and I don't usually just work on one thing until I finish it and then start something else. I'm just not the type of person that works well that way. So I will have maybe half a dozen paintings going and work.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you—how much of the day are you spending on painting?

JACK VALLEE: Well, practically the whole day. There's a break around noontime where the daily mail boat comes in, you know. We get our mail and people are coming and going and we have kind of a friendly get-together on the dock around noon and the mail comes and we get that and then it's lunch time and then you go back to work and work till dark and, of course, July, you can work 8:30 and then, of course, as the weather gets—changes like it was getting dark at 4:30 just before I left today, and it cuts down on the length of your time that you can work in the natural light.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you feel compelled to keep working?

JACK VALLEE: To keep working every day?

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

JACK VALLEE: Oh, indeed. I mean, you know, it just becomes just as much a part of your life as eating does and I just—I can't even think of surviving without painting. I'm sure I could, but I just—it wouldn't—I don't know what I'd do with my time. You're kind of married to those paintings.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Do you ever think [inaudible]?

JACK VALLEE: Well, I'm not so much that. I wouldn't phrase it in that manner. I think it's an obligation for me to. It's the thing I've chosen to do with my life and I've spent all my time trying to learn to do it better. A lot of money invested in studying and a lot of effort in travel and what have you trying to improve and I just feel like that I would be a lost person if I didn't do painting. It's not a question of choice. It's a question of it's a part of my—my life. So it's just as natural for me to want to paint when I wake up in the morning as it is to, say, have breakfast.

ROBERT BROWN: Yes. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

JACK VALLEE: It's that kind of thing.

ROBERT BROWN: It's that rhythm of life. [Inaudible.]

JACK VALLEE: Yes, it's a rhythm of life working for me and I hope it remains that way. I'm sure things could change but I don't know how it—

ROBERT BROWN: As you work, do you have any awareness of the other—of the end of the line; that is, when the work is seen and exhibited and sold or not bought? Are you thinking at all about that?

JACK VALLEE: Not while I'm working on something, no. It—it really has nothing to do with it whatsoever. Because it's not—I haven't really got that kind of commercial plan to it, you know, doing something for someone else. I—I do it for my need and then if I feel it's successful, then I present it to the public for sale or, in some cases, if something gets personal, specifically personal, you want to keep it yourself, you know. I do that. There are certain kinds of things I think are—are progressive, a step in the direction I feel I want to go, and I need it as a reference, let's say, or that sort of thing, and I also keep bad things, not always by choice but then that's a good lesson, too. See how bad you can be or how good you can be at a given time, at a given period.

ROBERT BROWN: And you refer back to both?

JACK VALLEE: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN: Both the good and the bad?

JACK VALLEE: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] There are things when I want to kind of get a better idea of where I stand, you know, in relation to where I've been and where I hope to go. So I may get out a whole series of paintings representing the worst and the best things that I did at a given period and it's a good sort of self-analysis, I think, to do that periodically. Then you can get to thinking you're too good and get out your bad—if you begin to feel sort of moody about whether you—you're progressing as much as you'd like, then get out the good things and this can balance it out for you. So I guess that's it.

ROBERT BROWN: Have you got somewhere out there a pretty good idea of your goal in your inventory?

JACK VALLEE: Well, I can't really say that there's a specific goal, other than self-improvement, and I—I think that is my goal. But there is no specific point to say, well, that's as good as I want to be. So I don't think you can sit still. You're either progressing or digressing, I feel.

ROBERT BROWN: You've mentioned this summer the effort to capture painting and the force of natural light. When you look back, do you feel you've come a long way from some other points? Do you know your progress? [Inaudible.]

JACK VALLEE: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN: Can you see a time back in time past and now that you are a mature artist, how do you compare it with what you did 10-20 years ago?

JACK VALLEE: Well, I feel that it's—I'm more successful at getting those things we were just discussing and in—and more successful at doing it in a simple more powerful way. This isn't an entirely new idea with me. I mean, this has been coming along for some time, but I do feel that I'm—I'm doing it more successfully than I have. Of course, each painting isn't a definite step in progress. I mean, you may fall back a little in a little time, what have you, but I feel as a sum total, say, of a year's work is going in the direction I'd like to do it and—and that's—my intention is just to be where I can understand what I see and where I understand the world, visual things.

Probably in the final analysis, that will be my general direction to self-improvement. Now I have to say it's difficult to say because at this point I can only see it as, you know, a better understanding and therefore the self-improvement automatically comes with understanding.

ROBERT BROWN: Do your colleagues, your fellow artists play any role? Now you've mentioned several who are on Monhegan with you.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

ROBERT BROWN: What effect and what relationship do you have with them?

JACK VALLEE: Well, it's—actually, most of the painters that I relate to are not necessarily interested in the old way of talking shop, let's say. We don't sit around and say, well, you know, the way to do a specific thing is the transition of this or that or something. We do discuss nature and, you know, why that looks a certain way, something like that, but we very seldom talk about how I would paint or he would paint something, and I feel that's a far healthier climate, that I don't think we should intrude on each other's thinking to that extent because that can be an influence that wouldn't be natural for you but, you know, it might seep into your mind through a side panel somewhere and so most of my relationships, say, with the things I know, the Wyeths and those type people, it's more a friendship basis, you know. This is self-respect for what they're telling me and to me, most of our time spent together is just we may be talking as much about politics or something of that type, what's happening in the world, and that sort of thing.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you look at their work?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, I do. I'm very fond of what a lot of them are doing. They're powerful things, but I don't have any desire to, say, do what they're doing specifically, which is very fine. I mean, it has lots of quality to, you know, be very close friend to another painter and have absolutely or as little as possible input into each other's work.

ROBERT BROWN: What would you think [inaudible]?

JACK VALLEE: Well, I don't think they're doing the same things, that I see—that I see them do so very, very strong and they have a tendency to do, say, Jamie White [ph] has simply to do almost an eerie quality in his paintings. I mean, it's almost like the N.C. Wyeth influence, you know, of the classic that he did in some cases and sometimes there's almost a scary quality. He loves that kind of feeling.

ROBERT BROWN: Does that come out in his personality, too?

JACK VALLEE: Well, yeah, but not directly. I mean, you wouldn't necessarily see it. [Inaudible.] He loves that stuff, that feeling of—of kind of the strange side of the world, [inaudible] and I didn't see the latest thing that Andrew did this summer. Apparently it's a type of a portrait painting of a person and Jamie did a fantastic painting of a huge black-capped [could be blackbacked] seagull [inaudible] and it's in the middle of a fog and you know how their neck fills out and it's a huge beak and beady little eyes but it had that eerie quality again and he likes to do. Although I admire it very much, it's not the type of thing I would do.

ROBERT BROWN: You said earlier that you don't need this nurturing or this frequent meeting with fellow artists.

JACK VALLEE: Not so much as I—as I thought I needed in earlier days. It's—it's more just a friendship thing than anything else, a respect for what they're doing, and it doesn't have too much to do with learning to paint from each other or something like that, you know. It just has to do with, you know, if you respect the person's work and what they're doing and they're—and they're friendly with you, why, you just—it grows, like any type of friendship grows. It doesn't grow only because they're painters necessarily.

ROBERT BROWN: The—these last years you've been painting a great deal of predominantly watercolors?

JACK VALLEE: Well, I've produced more watercolors, of course, because the type of oils I'm doing now, I work very slowly, a lot of glazing and it takes a lot of drying time and all of that. Therefore, I'm doing more watercolors, but I would say about an equal amount of time spent on each medium, and then together with drawings or whatever preparation for it.

ROBERT BROWN: I was thinking of the watercolors. Quite often with the preparation, unless you've got a couple —[Inaudible.]

JACK VALLEE: Yes. The preparation is quite often some sketching and a lot of observation and a lot of concentration and getting yourself prepared for the moment because a watercolor goes rather rapidly most—most of the time, and I think it was very important to get yourself in just the right sensitive state of mind, according to what it is that you're doing, and then to let it flow and it seems to work much better that way.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you find that the medium, therefore you don't have any—even the control?

JACK VALLEE: Well, watercolor—yes, it can—it can be corrected to a great extent. There are certain things that

would be fatal if you erred, but there's an awful lot you can do here. You can get materials to change a situation that you didn't particularly like, but it is a faster medium than oils.

ROBERT BROWN: Now why do you do the glazing in oils versus the drying?

JACK VALLEE: Well, actually, in areas where I want to give a luminosity or transparency, which is actually what you're doing in watercolor, too, glazing over a white surface and letting the light go through and bounce back, and if I do that in oils where I want to give a very illuminated surface or like a sky where you want the feeling of a lot of penetration of light, then I'll use that glazing technique as opposed to an opaque passage where you have sort of a blank wall or something like that. I find the two, opaqueness and transparency, more satisfactory in what I'm trying to do.

—Actually it's not too different from watercolor, the way I'm doing the oils now, even though it's a different medium entirely. You're using canvas instead of paper.

ROBERT BROWN: Oil is a whole other thing.

JACK VALLEE: Yes, right. So that I can work on either medium, and it just doesn't seem to make that much difference. The application in some ways is very similar.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you ever say to yourself—see yourself as going into—

[CHANGE OF TAPE.]

ROBERT BROWN: Now as I was starting to ask, you do simplify. Do you ever see yourself as becoming abstractive, working no longer in these forms?

JACK VALLEE: No, I don't think that would be as satisfactory, regardless. I think that I—I may abstract by simplifying even more, but I can't conceive of not taking it into a realistic realm. I don't think it would be satisfactory for me because I think I would then be dealing in abstraction and none of the other things that we're talking about.

ROBERT BROWN: Of course, in the medium of abstraction, there have been artists who are completely abstractionists, who seem to convey that.

JACK VALLEE: Yes, definitely.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you feel that's not really going to be your language, not something you would do?

JACK VALLEE: Well, it could happen but I just don't foresee at this time. For instance, the—the—there's that document I can appreciate. Each are doing something that I am trying to incorporate but they're doing it—I—I oftentimes see it as an expense at another thing that I'm trying to incorporate, so that if—I would be sacrificing something to specialize in, say, pure abstraction. I feel there would be that sacrifice in my mind.

ROBERT BROWN: What do they sacrifice?

JACK VALLEE: Well, say, for instance, your Rothko, I mean, and he got tremendous feeling of light and prismatic changes of color which I felt were fantastic, but then there was just no other communication, other than that. I mean, there's no object. There's no statement about a specific time or place or something that I would be wanting to incorporate with that. So I feel like that I'm not at this point ready to sacrifice any particular thing, other than, say, detail or something of that or number of objects or what have you. I just want to get a more powerful statement in as simple as possible a way and still project an idea to mankind and humanity as well as myself.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, sacrificing [inaudible]

JACK VALLEE: That's right. I wouldn't at this particular time. If I change, my idea of change, then, of course, I'll go along with that and just do whatever I feel is necessary.

ROBERT BROWN: That's your progression. It's part of your evolution.

JACK VALLEE: Right. I think progression is more what I am interested in getting into and not just sudden erratic changes in technique or style or—idea.

ROBERT BROWN: Throughout your career now, you've been able to keep true to yourself, is that right?

JACK VALLEE: I feel so very much. I haven't had any tendency to want to commercialize or repeat myself or what

have you and I feel quite honestly that it's important for me and—and within what we were discussing, I feel like I can continue to improve. That's the important thing.

ROBERT BROWN: How do you feel about your fellow artists in general with respect to your own thing or what about the pressures on them?

JACK VALLEE: Well, I see every aspect of this. I see people who are very honest and doing exactly what they feel is important to them and I see other people that are influenced by popularity, you know. They'll go from one way of painting to another or whatever occurrence and what's popular, like they'll miss something if they don't, and which I don't feel, at least for me, is important, regardless of what's popular school of painting is at any given time. I can look at it and appreciate it and if I can learn something from it, fine, but it doesn't seem like I need to join that way of thinking.

ROBERT BROWN: Within your profession, do you generally think of yourself as trying to carry out something? It seems to me the latter is what you've been emphasizing.

JACK VALLEE: Yes, I think—

ROBERT BROWN: Do you—

JACK VALLEE: No, I don't particularly feel a kinship to a person because they paint. I've never really felt that. I don't particularly respect a person just because they're a so-called artist. There's good and bad people in every profession and the ones that I like are the ones that have been honest and are projecting their own ideas to the best of their ability and I have, too. So I'm not drawn to any kind of school of thinking necessarily. I mean, if I happen to—to be classified in a particular school of painting, that's an accident. It has nothing to do with my wanting to belong to that school.

ROBERT BROWN: What do you see in your future? A pattern of living in the Southwest and living in Maine continuing?

JACK VALLEE: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you have any inclination that it has become a tackle or are you perfectly compatible?

JACK VALLEE: So far, I feel it has. It's been something that I've enjoyed the change and the change has been in the difference in environment and what have you and I think it's been a healthy thing for me. I would change immediately if I didn't think so. I feel if it does become a tackle or it becomes too much of a habit sometimes or that it's creating a bogging situation, then I think I would change, but I have no reason not to be able to. I have no obligation.

ROBERT BROWN: I know you go back to Oklahoma tonight. What will be your work pattern now for the next few months? You have described the Monhegan life.

JACK VALLEE: Right. Well, the first thing, of course, is I'm getting up a show in November, so I'll need to go through the process of framing and arranging the show and that will take a couple of weeks and then I'll be free to—to start working the area there. I generally do landscapes. Of course, as the weather progresses, as it gets worse, then I can't be out of doors as much and I can kind of start working on people with inside painting and what have you and not on a commission basis, just, you know, [inaudible] and then oftentimes in the middle of the winter, I'll take a trip for, say, to a sunny place or, you know, just for a change to kind of renew my idea of another place, and I might go to Colorado, New Mexico, what have you, Old Mexico, sometimes I go back to Maine for a couple of weeks to see it under more severe conditions, whatever I feel I need to do at that time. I don't have any clear plans at all. I leave it up—

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.] And the goal this winter is a continuation of the work that you started on Monhegan?

JACK VALLEE: Yes, that's—that's the way I'm thinking at this point, and—

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.] Nature things?

JACK VALLEE: Exactly, yes. I feel like at this point that's what I can improve at best. As things evolve, it may be that I'll want to find something else but that's it now. I hope to have a successful winter doing that. It remains to be seen. A lot to think about it, getting yourself involved with it, getting the feel of it.

ROBERT BROWN: A relatively stark range.

JACK VALLEE: Oh, yeah. Sometimes that's—sometimes that's the great contrast. A lot of contours and ups and

downs and hesitation and what have you but it is always of interest to me. In fact, when I left Maine—Monhegan this morning, I was very excited because the scapes are much greater. The landscape is much greater than I get on Monhegan and I immediately began to want to do something that was more landscape-oriented. [Inaudible.] I don't see any difference between a prairie and sea, other than the sea is wet and, you know,—

ROBERT BROWN: They're all the same.

JACK VALLEE: Right. And I love the long sloping flat spaces of the Southwest and the Big Sky, you know, and so on there. It's a great challenge to get—to me to get the real feeling of the light and space. It's just a constant working at improving your ability to do that kind of thing there. It's specifically obvious in what I'm doing in trying to really get miles and miles of feeling whereas in the Monhegan area, you have, other than the sea, you have a far shorter space to deal with because the contours are so great that it blocks out your spaces. It seems to me that it's a contrast kind of thing. That's the way to understand it. I find that painting quite a few different places, like painting in Old Mexico or New Mexico, Colorado, getting many types of terrain and environmental ideas and atmospheric ideas, I think it rounds me out better to expose myself to many areas rather than just painting in the same places.

ROBERT BROWN: Such as California?

JACK VALLEE: Could be. Yeah. I think that's happened, and when I feel that a little bit like that might be happening, that's when I usually go some place, change that.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JACK VALLEE: Right, yes. And if an area is no longer exciting to you, then something has happened to kind of deaden it temporarily, so I feel that by going some place else and then coming back, going to a new place with a fresh eye and then coming back, you have a fresher look at what's there.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you ever paint from your imagination?

JACK VALLEE: Well, I have. I have many times, but I don't feel like that I am refurbishing myself quite as much if I do that very often. It's good today to just take your imagination and work from that but you're not refurbishing yourself through nature as much that way.

ROBERT BROWN: When you work from your imagination, are you trying to in some measure represent something that you remember and you're still working—

JACK VALLEE: Could be that. I think it's almost impossible not to have seen something to that effect somewhere and have it in the back of your mind, even though you don't remember where it was. I think it can be difficult to conjure up something that hasn't happened before. I don't think our imaginations are capable really of putting together a series of shapes and colors and values that actually haven't existed in some way and I think this is more clear, this event of the enlarged topography as opposed to a small snowflake. A painter worked years ago and thought that was an abysmal contrast and he blew up some kind of small piece of nature and it was a bad idea that he had.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

JACK VALLEE: So I'm really kind of careful about trying to refurbish the ideas through nature and not just draw on, you know, what you already know or feel about something in order to use topography.

ROBERT BROWN: You start using your imagination.

JACK VALLEE: Totally, yes. I mean, of course, I think it's a very good exercise to produce something that is a combination of—out of your head but I don't think it would be a satisfactory thing for me to do as a pattern. It wouldn't be the kind of stimulation I would need. That's more like injection of something to calm yourself rather than absorb something and then really vitalize it back again, using yourself as a medium.

ROBERT BROWN: Using yourself.

JACK VALLEE: Right. I'd feel like I'd drained it all out and there wouldn't be anything left to work with. So [inaudible] typical animal in nature with higher intelligence. We need to be constantly refurbished in every way in order to make progress. Many have tried to understand this and incorporate in our work pattern.

ROBERT BROWN: To be effective.

JACK VALLEE: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JACK VALLEE: Oh, indeed, very satisfying.

ROBERT BROWN: It's not an end in itself. The end is projecting something.

JACK VALLEE: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] But to—well, the sheer beauty of discovering something new is incredible, whether it be staring or through sketching or whatever it is that's necessary, but you'll have found a new facet of nature or life or expression. I think this is one reason people see things as immense joy, if you will, to have discovered something, an additional thing to work with. I guess that's the reason why we continue to go to so much trouble when they want to—go to so much trouble to make these discoveries, and I think that probably the continued part is part of the process that you go through in order to do that quite often and when that—when that stops becoming important, it's just my observation of other people, the work doesn't seem to progress as well. So I assume that that would happen here and there is a fantastic medium and the—the satisfaction that I get out of it is certainly worth the [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: It is unique.

JACK VALLEE: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN: What you project, as well.

JACK VALLEE: Right. And the understanding that you get and the—through this stimulation of understanding and appreciation of art and in the painting is kind of a key to the film that piques your curiosity. So I think that's generally what—the way it is, working with that medium.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]