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Oral history interview with Henry Tyler  
Hopkins, 1980 Oct. 24-Dec. 17

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**Contact Information**

Reference Department  
Archives of American Art  
Smithsonian Institution  
Washington, D.C. 20560  
[www.aaa.si.edu/askus](http://www.aaa.si.edu/askus)

# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Henry Hopkins on October 24, December 3 & December 17, 1980. The interview took place at The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco, CA, and was conducted by Wesley Chamberlin for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

## Interview

WESLEY CHAMBERLIN: Henry, one of the things I want to ask is, and this is always a basic question, is there anything in the background of your family, or your beginnings in Idaho Falls, which would lead you to believe that we'd be sitting in the office of the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco?

HENRY HOPKINS: Well, probably not anything that specific. But I would say in fairness that from the time that I started doing drawing, as many young children will, fooling around with paints, fooling around with clay and so forth and so on, I had reasonable support in that manner. My father, who was an agronomist, had in his late high school and college days enjoyed drawing. He'd never had any real training or anything else, but he did some cartooning for the yearbook in his college. He had a great friend who was a mushroom fancier. They would go out and draw various kinds of mush-rooms in the forest, then tint them in with watercolor. So he was not uninterested in the fact that I was interested in drawing. I'll admit I wasn't very good at that moment. But I was never discouraged in that interest, and that's, of course, from very early on. Like, again, other boys of that age at the time, when I got to junior high school and we had the opportunity for an elective subject, I wanted to take drama. For some reason my parents didn't like the idea of my taking drama, so I took an art class instead.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: We're talking about the early forties.

MR. HOPKINS: I would be in the seventh grade, maybe even earlier than the forties. I'll have to figure out when that is. About 1940, as a matter of fact. But the instruction was really abysmal. My home town was a city of about 15,000 people. The woman teaching art was a woman who - who knows where her training came from. We spent a lot of time copying things out of catalogs and books that had nothing to do with art history. Most of the time we spent making posters for school activities. I nonetheless enjoyed that, but I wasn't benefiting from it. I'd say that probably there were two experiences which had the most bearing early in my life having to do with art that certainly had carried through. When I was in about the second, third, or fourth grade, a company, I think it was New York Graphics (I think it was before Harry Abrams), would send around to rural school areas all kinds of reproductions, prints of various great works of art, Rembrandt's *Man in the Gold Helmet*, *Boy with a Rabbit*, *Pinkie*, and so forth and so on. They would put them up in the auditorium of the junior high school in town, and it was an art event. People would come out in the evening and they would walk around like they were going to an art gallery, an art museum, although I had no idea what that meant at that time. And my mother would take me two or three times. She enjoyed looking at them and I enjoyed it. We would talk about things a bit and then our teacher the next day, or the next two or three days, would bring them into the classroom and read the descriptions that went with them. At the end of that exercise, after about a week, there would be a little fund-raising activity which would raise usually about twenty dollars, or thirty dollars, for which the school would buy the favorite print, the one that the kids voted for. Each year we would add a new print to our school collection. So there was an attachment to art history through reproductions over a period of time. I imagine it begins that way for a lot of people.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: That's how art historians see art, I think, through little slides.

MR. HOPKINS: I've often wondered, as art education has become more complex and as we get into all kinds of activities, both to get people involved in the production of and appreciation of art, I look back to those days still with very fond memories, with the simplest kind of education. And yet, when you didn't know better, when you didn't really know real objects, surface texture, techniques and so on, of simply getting acquainted with names in art, personalities in art, and approaches in art, that painting could mean something other than just being a picture - it was a pretty good education. But we had very patient teachers in those days.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: And fairly disciplined children.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, if we weren't, they disciplined us.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: When one reads your résumé, the first place where art seems to rear its head is in college where you transferred from the College of Idaho as a Psychology major, to go to the Art Institute of Chicago for

Art Education. Now what occasioned that?

MR. HOPKINS: Well, biographically, that's correct. But it's much longer ranging than that. We were talking about taking classes in junior high school. There was a woman in town, Helen Opperly was her name, who was a trained artist. By training I mean that she'd had an art education somewhere, I don't know where. She would in the summertime teach private classes. We would sit in a little studio on regular figure drawing benches with a true board in front of us, and some real paper and work in charcoal and work in pastel. As itinerant watercolorists and other artists would float through Idaho, she would invite them to come and talk to the class. So I did learn something there. In that case, from the stand-point of technique and picture-making, not history and theory and education. But that was an enjoyable experience. When I went on to high school it was a typical situation where if you were interested in doing something about art, or perhaps if somebody was really interested in dance, a male figure interested in dance, it was not an outlet that you talked about very much or displayed very much. The whole emphasis was on sports of one kind or another. So you had kind of hidden, secret passions, kind of closet art ability. I didn't take classes in high school but I did continue to draw and got my first set of oil paints and a few things like that. In the process I won the state's annual Poppy Poster contest, if you remember what that was. I don't know whether Californians ever had that thing or not. Every year the veterans on Poppy Day would ask students, high school students and junior high school students, to make posters to help sell these things. It was a national phenomenon. It was a local thing in your school, and then it was a city-wide and then statewide competition. So much to everyone's amazement, including my own, without being in art classes, I won the Poppy Poster contest that year. That gave me a certain notoriety. The competition wasn't too tough, but nonetheless it was a surprise.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Oh, maybe Dick McLean was out there making one, Charles McGill-

MR. HOPKINS: I think if you looked around you'd find out there were a lot of artists in different states around the country doing that. I guess the key in terms of my life was that I simply didn't know; there was no one at my school who was adept at counseling in those areas. I was broad enough based in my interests, I had been doing some drama at that time, I was a reasonably good student, a little bored, but a reasonably good student, and I had a lot of diverse interests. But I had none of the sense of one-directedness in the sense that many of my friends had. I had a good friend who became a very good doctor, and a good friend who's become a very good dentist, a couple of friends very good lawyers, a couple of very good chemists, the kinds of careers that one would anticipate, and a lot, of course, have become very good farmers, that had to do with the makeup of my community. But nobody at that time was really going on to an art school, so there wasn't much way to help anybody or to counsel or advise. In fact, it was not even my ambition. So I went off to the College of Idaho in 1946, which was the year I graduated from high school, with no idea of what I was going to do, except that since friends of mine had talked about medicine I decided that I would begin as a pre-med student. They had a small art department, it was a very small private college, but they had an art department, a weak one, in retrospect. I did not take classes there either, but a man who was the head of the department allowed me when I wasn't taking classes to come in and paint. He was friendly and I got to know him and his wife, who happened to be my French teacher. I was terrible in French, really hideous in French, so they counseled me to a certain extent and seemed to feel that I had some talent. I had in the interim, another amusing step, in my freshman year while I was taking premed, I hated chemistry but I loved zoology, primarily because of the fact that you would do zoological drawings, and I got so involved in doing my drawings that I dropped out of chemistry to spend more time doing my drawings. So I did extraordinarily well in zoology, having nothing to do with zoological knowledge, but I could make nice renderings of interiors of fish. So at the end of the first year there, I had become a psychology major, primarily because the woman who was teaching psychology was quite a wonderful woman, an elderly woman named Edith David. She was so interesting as a human being, I'd taken a basic class from her and I enjoyed it so I took more and more and I thought, well, this is kind of an interesting direction. And as I got into my second year, I was doing a certain amount of drama, stage sets, practically everything because it was a very small school, and Albion Aspenwalt wrote to my parents and said, "Get this kid out of here and get him into an art school." His wife, who was trying to teach me French, supported that view. And so when I got home that summer we had a serious conversation. I was very angry that they had been tampering in my life. So I went home that summer and we talked about it at greater length.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: With your family?

MR. HOPKINS: With my family. My father who, in his business, traveled a lot, Chicago was one of the main bases of his operations, and he and mother had traveled there a lot off and on and had gone to the Art Institute frequently and enjoyed it very much as a museum and knew about the school. So I began to get some catalogs from different places, including California schools. I went back to the College of Idaho for a third year, and things kind of jelled during that period of time. I recognized that, so I got a degree in psychology. How was I going to use it? I wasn't really committed to it or dedicated to it, so I'd better really think about this. I did have the support of my parents, emotional, philosophical, as well as financial, so we talked about various schools. For some reason, I guess typical Western or Mid-western attitude, they were opposed to California as being lotus-land and thought it would be better to go to a good solid school like the Art Institute of Chicago, and so I went

there. So I went off to the school of the Art Institute of Chicago with every intention of enrolling actually in Goodman Theatre, theatre design, stage design, which I did have a certain passion for. And my counselors there, the first day, told me you can do that if you want to do it, but if you do not do that, if you become a good artist, you can always do stage design. If you become a stage designer you can't become a good artist. That was their reading on things. I felt very much a fish out of water in the big city. Most of the kids who were in my first year class were students who had been from the Chicago area, or urban area, and had had a lot of pre-training. They'd gone to the Junior School of the Art Institute. I'd keep looking at their drawings and paintings and wondered what I was doing there. We had to send in a portfolio for acceptance, and they did accept me, and so-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Do you mean what you had made out of the zoological drawings?

MR. HOPKINS: Well, I didn't send the zoological drawings. I might have had a better - or for whatever reasons, maybe the students. Who knows. But it was philosophically a good time. It was just after the end of World War II. There were a lot of men coming back from the service, others too young for that, for World War II. But they were coming back from the service, so the mixture of people, there were older guys, older girls, younger guys, younger women. So it was a very nice composite student body and I got acquainted reasonably quickly, had good friends. I was there for three years because I had my academics before that time, so I could work day and night just on my art. I chose to take an art education degree, which, again, is coming out of conservative Idaho heritage, having something to protect yourself, to fall back on. So I did that and it was okay. When I say it was okay, I got good grades and a few other things. Another interesting step in terms of how I got into museum work is that at that time, the artists whom I most admired were artists like Edward Hopper, Grant Wood, Tom Benton, all of the American Regionalists whom I had seen a lot of in the magazines and various other things over the years. Then when I got to the Art Institute there were actually paintings on the walls.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: They were pretty big in 1946, particularly in the Midwest.

MR. HOPKINS: Especially in the Midwest. I didn't know anybody who painted who was older than I was and I assumed was an artist of some stature. I wasn't looking for gods or heroes necessarily. But I know that working there during that period of time, I was getting to be a very good figure draftsman and I was getting to be a very good compositor, and I was putting down paint pretty well and had a certain color sensitivity. So it was all moving along in a fairly good system. I finished up my B.A. degree, B.A.E., Bachelor of Art Education. One of the processes was to do student teaching. I did student teaching at Evanston Township High School, a very good high school in that Lake Michigan area, a lot of bright kids. I enjoyed that teaching. I actually had by that time good training in some of the art education classes I'd taken. I remember a great many specific events, but I remember that when I first got to the school, one of our first papers in our art history class was to go out to the gallery at the Art Institute and write about the painting that we admired most in the museum and the painting we admired least in the museum. I remember the painting that I liked most was a Grant Wood painting, which I eulogized. The painting I hated most of any painting in the museum was Matisse's *Still Life on a Pink Tablecloth*, so that tells you how life changes. I finished my B.A. degree in three years, and had been asked to come teach at Evanston Township High School, which was an honor in a sense. If I had been able to do that, I wonder what my life would have been like. I got called into the service on the draft in the Korean War, and I couldn't plead that I had school because I was finished for that moment. They wouldn't accept teaching as a valid excuse to get out of the draft then. So they put me in the service.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: This was 1952.

MR. HOPKINS: 1952.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: One year ahead of me on that. I was in Germany in 1953-55, until the end of 1955. I was one year after you there.

MR. HOPKINS: Again, it was a very funny, fluke situation, because it's a funny thing to say, but being a native Idahoan and from a relatively conservative state, draft resistance was not a subject we even really talked about at that time, or thought about. It was a natural course of affairs that I was going into the army, to go somewhere, and it had to be the army because that's where I was drafted. Again, you wonder about the fates, because I was put into a signal corps group that trained in San Luis Obispo, California. It had been an old National Guard camp, some of them were comfortable in the old regular army barracks.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Camp Cook, right?

MR. HOPKINS: No, it was just called Camp San Luis Obispo. It was a small camp that had been reactivated during the Korean War because the terrain was so much like Korea, those kind of rolling hills.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It's probably a penal institution now.

MR. HOPKINS: God knows what it is at the moment, but it felt like that at that time. I wear glasses, my eyes are

pretty lousy, so I guess they didn't want me as a frontline infantryman shooting somebody else, or a tank man or something else. But for whatever reason they put me in the signal corps. I was just sick to my stomach, because if there's anything in the world I can't stand, it's electronics, radio, code and all those various things. So I thought, well, what am I going to do? I was so naive, I had no idea how the army worked. I really didn't know what happened after they said, do this. So they offered to send me to what they called photography school, which is code-breaking and working with codes and things of that kind. So that sounded really interesting. It would be stimulating one way or another. They closed the school the week that my class was supposed to go on to that school. I went back into the kind of counseling office and they said, well, you can be a pole lineman, you can be a radio operator, you can be a clerk typist, you can be this, you can be that. There happened to be a lot of photographs around the walls of the room I was sitting in, and I don't know why I did, but I asked where those had come from. They said, well, they came from the photo school and that was part of the signal corps. I said, "Photo school," and they said, "Yes, you can go to photo school," which happened also to be in San Luis Obispo. So I stayed on there another twelve weeks to be trained in photography, which was another kind of adjunct to stuff that went along. But to be in photography was obviously much more interesting than being in other things. And then this horrible moment of decision comes, as you well know from your own experience, where you sit in a big room and they either send you to Korea or somewhere else. At that moment everyone was going to Korea. I think out of the 300 men who were in the room, six of us went to Germany. So they sent me to Germany, Augsburg, as a photographer. Well, that's pretty cushy duty for a private, by then, private, first class. So two things, really of importance, happened in the interim. It was the first time I had been to Europe. I had the kind of job that was essentially a nine-to-five job, so I could be out on the town in the evenings. One of my duties was to drive back and forth between Munich and Augsburg relaying messages and things of that kind. So I would get into Munich every other week. Two things really positive. One, they gave me permission to have a section of signal corps warehouse, about as big as this office, to make into a painter's studio. That was pretty generous for the service, so I had this room of my own and did paint. The other thing, obviously, was being in Europe and seeing works of art in museums. The whole postwar thing hadn't happened yet. It was still pretty much bits and pieces, but really going to museums and really looking at works of art on the wall, going on leave to Paris and London and so forth.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Let me interrupt here. You got part of a warehouse for a painter's studio. You thought of yourself as an artist, you still thought of yourself as a painter, not a photographer?

MR. HOPKINS: Well, no, I always, yes, there was no question about that.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: The two didn't come together yet, you didn't think of photography as something other than as a job.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, I should say specifically a few things. I did think of myself, if I thought of myself in any way whatsoever, as a person very interested in paint. So I guess you could say I thought of myself as a painter. I did approach photography as a job because in that context, it really was a job, and we were not obviously trained in art photography. It doesn't mean we couldn't - even then we had a lot of good times in the lab, doing paper cutouts and photographing those and then composites and making photomontages and various other things. But it was a kind of creativity, it was still in the process of the work. I had wonderful assignments. Saturday morning I would go over and photograph all of the girls who had been rounded up during the week on morals charges and document them. I would be sent out to photograph GI underwear on various lines hanging all over Augsburg. They were cutting into the business of the post laundry or something. It wasn't very exciting photography that I'd been asked to do. But simply being in that environment got me much more involved in history than I had been before because you'd see a Renaissance building with Renaissance work, and you'd see a Baroque building with Baroque work, and you got schools and times and places kind of in a context. I found even at that time, as I was getting through with the eighteen-month duty in Germany, that I was getting more conservative in my paintings. I was getting interested in earlier techniques, looking at the Flemish artists and some of the others. Then the real stroke came when I came back from the service and went back to the Art Institute of Chicago for a Master's degree, more of the kind of self-rehabilitation thing, and getting set for a teaching job, and the whole thing of [Jackson] Pollock, [Franz] Kline, [Willem] de Kooning, [Clyfford] Still, [Robert] Motherwell had all happened during the time I was gone. You remember that issue of *Life* magazine that said, "Here's Jackson Pollock, the world's greatest artist"? That's when I was in Germany. I was totally out of touch. There was no way other than through magazines like *Life* and *Time* and a few other things that I could even keep any vague sense of what was happening in America. As I was saying earlier, in Chicago they had this wonderful exhibition. There is now a Biennial, it's their American show. They invite X number of American artists to show what's happening during each period of time. When I left it was all Jack Levine, Ben Shahn, [Edward] Hopper, figurative Philip Guston, and figurative Stephen Green, and all of those things I really took to. When I came back the show was actually up when I arrived, with all Pollock and Kline and de Kooning.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: This was 1950, the excavation was the big de Kooning. About half the board resigned in disapproval.

MR. HOPKINS: I'm not sure it was even as early as 1950. I have a feeling, although I can't remember exactly, that it was in 1954, as a matter of fact.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Well, it was 1950.

MR. HOPKINS: It could well have been, but I know it hit me. I sound like an artist because I did see some excitement, certainly, and I saw some validity, and I saw some real vigor and what have you that was so foreign to my eye, to my sensibility, to the way my hand worked and everything else. It was a real shock. I couldn't get close to it, not that quickly. I also found when I came back that the students who I had been in school with had by that time gone on to one place or another. A whole new crop of young bravos were there who were very energized by this whole thing. They really knew and felt differently about it. I really felt uncomfortable among them with my attitude. I got very immersed in history and took as many art history courses during that year as I could with a wonderful elderly woman named Kathleen Blackshear, who taught art history from the artist's perspective, a rare kind of course. It was not like a university art history course, kind of the ignorance of the object, but it really taught you the object orientation. They were wonderful classes. But in the process of that year of study, and the greater involvement with history, and actually taking my M.A. degree in art education, then I had to start making a living.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Was the M.A. in art education still thinking for a career?

MR. HOPKINS: Well, at that time I think probably I would have to say in fairness that the M.A. was simply habit. Because I would admit to the fact that when I came back to school for my Master's degree, I felt that technically I had learned what I could learn from school in terms of my capacity to paint. I did take some classes in sculpture and other things I hadn't had a chance to work with, but it was a stop action year. It was also the year when I was married.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: What year was that?

MR. HOPKINS: That was 1954. At that time my first wife was a girl from Idaho Falls I had kind of grown up with, a friend through high school and college days, early college days. I simply was at a point of, it was relatively late, twenty-five or twenty-six, maturation rites and taking care of myself, and I felt pretty good. I was rather interested in staying in the Chicago area. I hated Chicago winters, and I liked the energy of Chicago, and I very much liked the urban aspect of it. My wife, Joanne's, family had just moved to La Jolla in Southern California. Her father was a dentist, and he had retired. So we were to drive a car from Idaho down there to see them in La Jolla. So while I was down there I did some job interviewing.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: You were still at the Art Institute during this time?

MR. HOPKINS: I finished my degree in 1953. I finished my work at the Art Institute in 1955. I went there in the fall of 1954. I was married. Went there in the fall of 1954, stayed there until June of 1955, graduated with my M.A. in June of 1955. By the way, that year, even though I was painting the way a lot of the other kids were painting, I was one of six candidates to win a fellowship.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: This was in art history?

MR. HOPKINS: This was in painting.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: So you still thought of yourself as a painter.

MR. HOPKINS: I was going to paint. The other that was-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -that was how to make a living.

MR. HOPKINS: You have to remember that out of my personal background, making a living was the primary thing. That was the way I was brought up. And though I can remember on one occasion during my high school days, on a sleepless night I was tossing and turning and I heard my parents in their room discussing back and forth, and I heard my father say, "Well, you'll probably have to support him most of his life. He probably won't make a living doing what he's doing." That irritated me, because of his thoughts of my ability.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -impotence there.

MR. HOPKINS: And pleased me, recognizing that it was a task that he would take on if that happened to be the case. Pretty reassuring for anybody. But I was obviously determined that that wouldn't be necessary.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: He must be very relieved.

MR. HOPKINS: There's no question. But what I never really had in my early days was intensive conversation with

my parents about goals, about this and that. There were times when we would get together and talk about things, we were a very close family, but three or four comments at different moments in time can make a big difference in your life, and how you feel and how you perceive your life to be. I was married in the fall of 1954, went back to the Art Institute for my Master's in art education, although I was still taking primarily painting courses, along with some education courses. My wife became pregnant with our first child, Victoria, so when school was over at the end of that year, we went back to Idaho where my family was still, and her folks had a summer place up there. I drove the car down to Southern California and went to the San Diego School District area, and they told me of this school in the County of San Diego where there might be a good position, which was Grossmount Union High School, actually a very good high school. I didn't know anything about it at the time. What got me to California is a little bit like how I became a photographer, or how I became this or how I became that, more the fates than anything else. I had written letters when I was finishing up school to a variety of places, mainly small colleges, like Humboldt State, which was small at that time, and some other places, put in my application and straightforward presentation. I had put some feelers out, but no specific job application, no specific interview, at least, if college arts existed, I didn't know it at that time and wasn't able to deal with it. I applied at Grossmount Union High School. It happened that the teacher had decided not to come back that fall. One of those fluke things. They called and said, yes, we'd like to have you come and teach. I was very diverse, which I've considered a tremendous asset all along the line. The fact that I had been in the service as a photographer, I had some design experience, and I had a lot of painting experience, and some sculpture experience, and while it's not an important part of teaching education, without putting any label on it, it was an intuitive interest of mine, and I had actually taught classes all the way through high school and all the way through college. I would teach in summer programs. I would teach puppetry and I would teach bits and pieces of design, anything and everything that would fit into those park programs. I think generally, when I went to Grossmount, it was an interesting situation because it was a three-person art department, very big for a high school. A woman named Marjorie Hyde was the head of it, who is still down in the Grossmount area, a pretty good painter. And a man involved in design and photography. I taught basic classes in design, photography and painting. I think I was a pretty good teacher.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Did you teach any art history? Did they have art history in high school?

MR. HOPKINS: I didn't teach art history. Strangely enough, I did some lecturing to the general faculty in art history that we would have in our faculty program, gave an art historical presentation, and I was lecturing a certain amount in the San Diego area on different aspects of art history to women's club groups and things of that kind, and still painting. When I was a student in Chicago I had one small exhibition in a bar and grill, the name of which I've forgotten.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: My first exhibition was in a Quaker day school.

MR. HOPKINS: But it was a bar and grill where they did those things, and the *Chicago Times* critic actually came and reviewed it, about five lines. He didn't say anything necessarily good or bad, but he indicated it was there. It was one of those things again, in a big city you get five lines of review in a major newspaper-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -send home to mom.

MR. HOPKINS: I was continuing to paint. I entered the San Diego Annual. I think it was called "Contemporary Arts" or something like that. Well, got in two years there. But during that time, that time of teaching, two or three things happened. One, because I was lecturing around and about and I seemed inevitably to be getting more and more known, not really even knowing why. Then in my classes, while I enjoyed the thing of teaching, what was happening in that particular school and I think other schools in the country as well, if the child was not adept enough to run a bandsaw, take woodshop, or adept enough to work in a printshop, they would be put into art class. At the same time those youngsters in art classes were some of the brightest kids in the school, if they had an affinity or real interest. It was right at that moment that they changed the California law to allow children of lower I.Q. to be a part of public school education. I can't remember the figures, and I never believed that much in I.Q., but it used to be something like eighty, and they reduced it to seventy or something like that. It made such a diverse classroom situation, where the most time I spent and the biggest problems I had were all behavioral problems. The kids would work for hours. I had one student from that group who was not very adept. I got him interested in car models, and he got turned on and got excited and built three incredibly beautiful little car models, kind of out of match-sticks and tissue paper and what have you. I put them on this ledge in front of him and another kid came along and pounded them with his hands, smashing them flat to the ground. It wasn't a pleasant experience for that kid, and it made me very angry to realize that I was not going to be able to be even-tempered with every trauma that came along. Also, I had sophomores to seniors, a great age diversification and great physical diversification, sexual diversification, kids all the way from mini-adolescence to real adults. I remember one boy I had in my class who was a real problem, and one young woman who was a real solid girl and very bright. I put him on a stool next to her, thinking that would solve that problem. After about three weeks she came to me and said, "I know what you're doing, I know why you're putting Jim next to me. I know I'm supposed to keep an eye on him and watch him but, please, I can't stand it anymore. He's

obviously very fond of me, and the only way he can show it is by hitting me on the arm, and I get bruised to pieces." The combination of those circumstances and the fact that I would have to admit I was a pretty dedicated teacher and wasn't getting much time to develop my own painting, so I decided that high school teaching was not for me a career. I thought then, "Well, how do I proceed in that context? What will I do? I have a young family and obligations, and teaching is secure although, God knows, not much salary." I think my first salary was \$2,900 a year, which sounds an incredible amount for a full-time salary, but we made it.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Well, it wasn't too bad then.

MR. HOPKINS: It could have been worse. Well, it may not have been, but it was pretty bad, but it was certainly a livable salary.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It could have been about \$10,000 now.

MR. HOPKINS: It could have been. So I went up to U.C.L.A. [University of California, Los Angeles], and I don't have any idea why. I've thought about that in retrospect, except that I did have obviously my G.I. bill, I'd used one year of it and I had four years of G.I. bill. So I wandered up to U.C.L.A. and looked around the Art Department and made an appointment to talk to the man who was the Dean, Chairman of the U.C.L.A. Department, who later went off to be the Yale head of the Architectural Department, a very good composite administrator as well. I sat down and talked to him about where I was in life, what I was doing, what I was thinking about and so forth and so on. He took an interest, which amazed me, so I went back to San Diego and he wrote me a letter and asked if I might be interested in coming up again and talking because he thought he might have a teaching assistantship in the Educational Department, art education. So I hurried back up there. I met the people in art education, and I met the people in art history, and had many confusions at the beginning, because I really wanted to go into art history seriously, but I was trained in art education, my T.A. in art education - how much was it worth in art history. So I was in a funny way in conflict with the department all along, but Gibson Danes was that kind of a mixed-discipline person. The first year that I was there I did a T.A. in art education and began a solid program in art history.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: So that would have been 1957 to 1958.

MR. HOPKINS: That would have been the summer of 1957, June of 1957. I went to summer school at U.C.L.A. and that fall moved on up. So, 1957, 1958, 1959. Then after the first year of getting my basic groundings in art history I really enjoyed it. There were some very good people there at the time in the school itself. Jim Demetron was there taking art history.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Berkmeier was there.

MR. HOPKINS: Somehow, I don't know quite how, Berkmeier became my mentor, although it was certainly not my field of interest, he was a Northern Renaissance scholar. The man in the area of my greatest interest was Fred Wight, obviously the twentieth century. Even though that was my interest, it was obviously something I needed along the line, and by coming from a different environment, a more sophisticated environment, I probably would have tangled earlier than I did. It's all a question of seeking and finding and yet, at the same time, I will say that in that respect, any number of people in the museum field, most of them now directors, like Joshua Taylor and others, had equally scattered backgrounds. But they'd been industrious and ambitious and worked in a variety of things and had finally come into the museum world. When you get into the museum world there is nothing more valuable than that diversity of background. It runs all the way from selling shoes when you were in junior high school and teaching classes or taking psychology to doing this to doing that. Every bit of it at one time or another comes into play. I think if you came from too rigid a back-ground, straight out of art history, and you became programmed, you simply couldn't adapt or adjust to the funny variables of the job which we'll talk about as we go on. But being there that first year, having Berkmeier as a mentor, taking classes from Maurice Bloch in American Art, Fred Wight in twentieth century, and from -

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Jerry Ziff was there?

MR. HOPKINS: Not yet. Jerry wasn't there at that time. In what was called primitive art, Robb Altman who had that wonderful shop on La Cienega Boulevard, and as I say Jim Demetron was a student there.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Was he a student too?

MR. HOPKINS: He was a student. I was a student. We were graduate students, whatever that meant. He had come out of high school teaching, mathematics, as a matter of fact, and come back to school. Shirley Hopps, as I remember, Shirley Nielsen Hopps, but she was then married to Walter Hopps, was there in the department, and had been there for a couple of years as a graduate student. A woman named Laura Lee Sterns, who has never gone on in her art history but a very bright person. It was a wonderful group. We were all kind of T.A.s [Teachers' Assistants]. We shared a little cubbyhole office. Working around the edges of that, because of his



marriage to Shirley, was Walter, for his gallery interests were a whole conversation in itself. But I felt really, in a funny way for the first time in that U.C.L.A. experience, closer to home. But even then I had no ambition as such to go into museum work. I still never had a real clear definition of what exactly the next step would be.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, that's right.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I've never thought of you as particularly an ambitious person, and as you recount your history so much of it's fortuitous. Maybe a combination of fortuity and capabilities.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, I think certain things kick into that. When you say ambition, I would typify myself as having reasonable ambition. I feel when I'm in a job I have ambitions for that job.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I'm thinking in terms of personal programs.

MR. HOPKINS: I don't have a driving "What Makes Sammy Run," compelling thing to keep me running in one direction to make a million bucks or whatever. I thought a lot about that and I don't poke at it, because it obviously is a part of my nature or my makeup, and does have more frequently than not some kind of good fortune. I never get too far down or depressed or irritated because something will come along to bounce it back up. I guess it really could be called fortuitous, or open to opportunities, or right place, right time, or some intuition guides you in that position.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Flexibility, too.

MR. HOPKINS: Flexibility. I think it's a very important part of it, and being multifaceted. I've often wondered if I happen to be somebody who is so directed, so completely directed, that I could be a really dedicated doctor or something of that kind. Whereas if you got off your track you'd really be thrown by that. Jan [Butterfield] and I sit around and on occasion say, well, if something goes wrong, we can always sell shoes. It's a false statement now. I don't think we could really do that, but the implication is at least that there are variables.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Well, at this point, I think you wouldn't sell them. You'd probably start a new company.

MR. HOPKINS: At this point I'm not sure what I would do. There has been a lot of fortune in it. I've also thought from time to time that people from my section of the country are, for some reason, and it's not that I can define it, but we are essentially accent-less. Though there are Idaho colloquialisms, but they don't pin you to the sounds of the Northeast or Northwest.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: We saw that in the army. You could always tell somebody from Texas, Brooklyn, Boston, and the South. The rest of it was anywhere.

MR. HOPKINS: For some reason, if we were not disciplined children, we were reasonably disciplined and we were made by our heritages there. I think the kids still are directed toward maintenance of themselves toward whatever. I felt that all of the Idahoans I have known, not limited to that state, but say the Rocky Mountain region generally, seem to get along pretty well with their own people as well as people at different levels. They're not put onto, if they are confronted with somebody with great power or great wealth or whatever. It seems to be just another person. I think so often that young men and women who come out of the Eastern establishment are cowed by different things. They're trained differently. It's a different psychological attitude and approach to life. They're made timid in certain situations, and for some reason that doesn't happen to Westerners in my generation. A lot of things go to make that up when you think about it. What I think of as the more interesting museum people are essentially Western in their heritage, like Joshua Taylor, Jim Elliott, Martin Friedman. I've often wished in a way that some author might take on a book sometime-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -a sociological study.

MR. HOPKINS: That kind of thing. So here we are at U.C.L.A. Where do you want to go?

MR. CHAMBERLIN: The first time I got to know you was when we taught together at Don Rosenberg's course.

MR. HOPKINS: That was third year.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -for you. I think it was the second year for me.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, your second year. So the way that worked essentially was that after the first year I got out of art education altogether. However, I continued to teach some classes for children in art education during summer sessions, extension, things of that kind. So I was compositing my G.I. bill, my T.A.-ship and some bit-and-piece teaching.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Were you doing some of the extension art history courses?

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, in 1957. The second year that I was a graduate student I was still feeling unknowledgeable compared to, say, Shirley Hopps or whatever. I shifted out of art education into art history and was given a teaching assistantship in art history.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: That was the second year.

MR. HOPKINS: Second year, and I was asked to teach a second year, evening class in art history, basic one, fundamental, 1A and 1B, which required a T.A. I did do that and I really enjoyed it. I very much enjoyed that experience which went on for years and years.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I can remember. I showed slides for many of them.

MR. HOPKINS: But every fall I would appear and I wondered, God, is anybody going to come and take this class? It seemed like teaching was a lot, and as you know about a hundred people would show up, all people that had interest - it's amazing how often I'd run into people just on the street who said they'd been in my class years and years ago, and we'd reminisce about it. That had some sort of effect. I think I can digress for one minute and go back to it. Probably my direction toward museum set itself, at least that idea began to set itself, the first year that I was there, and through Shirley Hopps. They were just starting, and I've now forgotten the man's name who was the head of the section at U.C.L.A., I think it was Friedman, they were just publishing a book out of U.C.L.A., called *Looking at Modern Art*. Several scholars around there as well as other places had written chapters dealing with the evolution of twentieth-century art. One dealt with Mondrian, one dealt with Kandinsky, and one dealt with Picasso. One dealt with Hopper and one dealt with this and that, and then up to the Abstract Expressionists, through the Abstract Expressionist. The principle that Friedman established, using that book and slide sets as a guide, was for certain people, myself among them, Shirley Hopps, Walter Hopps, and one or two others, we would simply take the courses, and by taking the courses it meant that if ten people in the community signed up to be a study group, we would go to their houses with a slide projector tucked under our arms and set up a screen and set up our projector and give a lecture. The lecture would be made for that particular study for that particular period of time. I think there were ten sessions. I think they were all together. That course, that involvement, took me to many homes that since then have become some of the major collectors in Southern California, and took me into another kind of environment, because it was teaching at home. The people taking the courses were usually well-to-do, very well-to-do. They were interested in art and maybe thinking of collecting. So that was really outside of the school, an incredible experience. In a variety of ways it was very salutary that eventually some of the people who are still my best friends, like Fred and Marcia Weisman, and Shirwins and others-it touched those classes of different homes, Joanne and Julian Gantz. Some wonderful American collections came out of that class we had worked in together. As a composite group, I guess, you'd have to say, not in any way solid or formed or anything else, but Shirley and Walter and myself, Laura and a couple of others, Jim Demetrian was not necessarily part of that group, we began to have ambitions, which may or may not be the right word, for having some input into what had happened to modern art in Los Angeles, trying to get the door open to more responses. But that type of teaching experience -it became a class where we had modern art which was in a way affiliated with U.C.L.A., but at the same time it was allowing freedom to discuss our ideas about twentieth-century art as well. We could go beyond the pamphlet and begin to open up, maybe bring in some of the art of the area and discuss things a little more widely. We'd talk about prices. We'd talk about the art market. We'd talk about any number of things beyond what the course was devised for. We reported that to Mr. Friedman and he was delighted that we were taking that stance on it. So teaching those courses went on simultaneously with teaching art history at U.C.L.A. and being a T.A. I suppose I should stop and try to find my view of what was happening at that moment. I did not know the museum people well at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Jim Elliott was there as Chief Curator, Bill Osmund was there as Curator in areas of design. Rick Brown was there at that time as what was called Chief Curator, because he was the art head of the tripartite Museum of History, Science and Art.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: That was when it was still down in Exposition Park?

MR. HOPKINS: Yes. I could go down there occasionally, not very frequently. They had exhibitions that I went to see like everybody else. It was always a little depressing to go into that particular environment when you'd been used to something like the Art Institute and the European museums and a variety of other things. The collection was not terribly strong, particularly in the modern area. One thing that was effective to me, for example, the first time I went to the museum I saw four or five of what I considered to be quite wonderful paintings, a tiny little Jackson Pollock, a beautiful Joseph Albers painting.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: They bought an Albers about 1954.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, it was about that period of time. That's exactly what the influence was. There was a Baziotis and some other things. I was reading the label information. They'd all been bought at the same time, and by a group of people, so I asked to look at the registrational files. It was an exhibition that I guess Jimmy Burnes, who was there at a time-I'm not sure what period of time, he then went off to New Orleans and other places. He had

put together an exhibition of American artists and had brought out these generally very small examples, but rather nice ones, and they'd all been bought from that show. The price labels were still there. The Albers was \$400, the Pollock was \$300, the Baziotes was \$150, or something like that. That was kind of the heart of the artists that I was interested in at that moment. By this time I'd obviously made that jump to being very respectful of the Abstract Expressionists and the other true modernists in my mind. At the same time I was still painting a bit.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: You still thought of yourself as a painter at this time?

MR. HOPKINS: No, that was a bit back.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: At this point it had dwindled.

MR. HOPKINS: By this time it was quite clear that I was going to do one or two or three different things. I could go on and be a university person in art history or related in one way or another. I was going to somehow find out more about museums. In my own mind I was going to be a facilitator, or catalyst, or whatever you want to call it, recognizing that my contribution was not going to be in doing but would be more effective in helping other people do it. It was a very complex time in my life. By that time I had two children, my second child, John, who is now twenty-three or something like that, my wife and I had trial-separated at that point. She had gone back to the San Diego area, close to where her family was, and went back to live in the little house that we had on La Mesa, which we had rented when we came up to U.C.L.A. So I was a little bit at loose ends. I had a girlfriend. I had an awful lot of time on my hands.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I remember all about that.

MR. HOPKINS: When you go back to being single after being dual, you find suddenly that there are many hours of the day and night that you use differently than you might have in another situation. So I did paint, usually right there in my little office at U.C.L.A., and put a work in the Los Angeles exhibition to kind of test my hand and I got in. I believe Clement Greenberg juried the exhibition. I didn't really know much about Clement Greenberg at that time. Well, that's interesting, whether I can paint, or do paint or whatever, at least it was acceptable in the eyes of somebody in that context. But I had given up thinking of myself as a painter. Although I would say at that moment one of the reasons for separation essentially was that I felt my creative juices were getting squashed one way or another. I was becoming too much a middle-class American and not enough of somebody who does think work is important and [inaudible] keeps bubbling up and bubbling up along the line. So, in fact, that was about the time that we met. I noticed that going down, I even took a couple of classes. One in ceramics and some other things. I would hang out in the print department where you were working, watching the process of print-making. It was very invigorating, kind of late in life, to be spending time that way. Nonetheless, it was invigorating. The association with Shirley and Walter was a very good one. I won't go into there because some day I hope we can get both of them on tape, because they were much more a specific catalyst as a form and unit than I. I was on the edge of that team. They had been dedicated much more directly along the line, starting early, forming a little gallery. I guess Sindell Studio was the first one over in the West Los Angeles-Brentwood area.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: The Hopps did.

MR. HOPKINS: And Walter would be the eye. The untrained but special eye. Shirley as a T.A. and graduate student and hard worker. Whatever funding was behind it was poor Shirley taking care of it.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: How was Sindell spelled, how do you spell that?

MR. HOPKINS: Sindell. The story essentially, of why that name. There was a funny little building that was over in Brentwood for a long time, now torn down and gone. But the story is that Walter was very much involved with the young, then avant-garde artists, amongst them Craig Kauffmann and Ed Kienholz. The story is that in the Midwest Craig Kauffmann, in the process of driving, hit a farmer crossing the road, whose name was Sindell, and they named the studio after him. It was actually an accident, but it was a tribute to the poor man that had been hit by the car. It typifies, in a very funny way, much of what Walter and some of those people had been about ever since that time, that they would give a name to something that would have some credibility in time. By the time I had come into the picture Walter had been running a gallery of La Cienega called Ferus Gallery.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Sure, Ferus, I remember very well.

MR. HOPKINS: There was a debatable term about what that meant.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: He was in it with somebody else, wasn't he?

MR. HOPKINS: Yes. True. It's history that should go on special tapes, but he was by that time in partnership with

Ed Kienholz.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: But there was a third person in.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, coming, chronologically. But Kienholz, who had run a gallery, Hopps, who had run a gallery, came together in a partnership to form the Ferus Gallery. They were never specific or clear about the name. It is a dictionary word. I liked the bold terminology, again indicating an attitude of aggressive, young behavior. And then, very shortly, in fact, I think it was later that year or the next year, because they were not doing that well financially the artists they were showing were all the young artists who had no real reputation at that time, but were interesting. Irving Blum appeared from New York. Irving had been working for Knoll International. He had come originally from Phoenix, Arizona, sophisticated and suave in manner, but very interested to work in a gallery. They struck a bargain, something like \$150 a month. Irving became the day-by-day consistency of the gallery, and Walter remained just kind of special, there sometimes and not there sometimes. Irving found new ways to get financing. Then history shows that Walter dropped out to go work at the Pasadena Museum. The gallery became Irving's. He has gone on in a very direct line ever since.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I'd like to go back a second here before we get any further. In your résumé you talk about U.C.L.A. You did graduate work in art history. Course work completed for a Ph.D. You never got the Doctorate?

MR. HOPKINS: No, I never did. I had two, well, they were barriers as such. What had happened in my education— I was then in my third year at U.C.L.A. in graduate art history. I had had the opportunity through teaching in extension and doing other things, essentially proceeding as a professional and beginning to establish a profession, among many reputations in those areas. I'll admit that I was getting a little bored by straight art historical, scholarly aspects. I have always had and still have a language hang-up. It's painful for me to learn a language. It takes years and years and years. I just got my French out of the way and I thought, oh God, I've still got that German requirement, which probably was the specific reason that I didn't go on. But also Fred Wight, who was my mentor, and the fact that I had now switched into twentieth-century art history, if it could be called that, and had been developing as my specialty Southern California art.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: You were working with Fred rather than Maurice?

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, exactly right. In twentieth century rather than American. But I was still teaching courses, or doing some art and language courses. But my interest was in Southern California art, which was not at that time defined, and still is not defined, which will give you a clue to my affection for people like Helen Lundeborg and Stanley Donald Wright. Even whether I loved them as people or not, some of whom I did, at least I spent a lot of time talking to them, interviewing them, getting to know more about them and the history of the Southern California scene. I probably, intellectually, knew more about the history than almost anybody at that moment, because I went about it in a dedicated fashion. That spurred me in certain ways. I did have one seminar with Maurice Bloch in nineteenth-century American art. One of the projects asked for in the seminar was to put together an exhibition. So we put together an exhibition of Civil War illustration, Civil War artist illustration, and spent the whole seminar looking into that material and doing a little catalog which I wrote, and installing it in the cases in the old U.C.L.A. Art Department. It was far from a brilliant show, but it actually had a purpose and it was well put together. That was my first museology experience as such. I began to think a little more in that direction because I was really enjoying it. I guess you can throw that clear back to my interest in theatre design among other things. There were a lot of different things coming together all in one moment. I approached Fred Wight and asked him if he would allow me to do an exhibition in the main gallery of U.C.L.A. He talked to me about it. I said I wanted to do an exhibition of Los Angeles art, kind of a prototype of some of the earlier figures and these young people working at that time. He agreed and I think, to the best of my knowledge, it was the first time in an American university of an art history program for a graduate student to use an exhibition as a dissertation approach.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: You were thinking of this actually as your dissertation?

MR. HOPKINS: No, the dissertation would have to come out of it. That said something too about Fred's flexibility and willingness to let me do that. As you remember, at that time Fred was not only teaching twentieth-century art, but he was the head of the U.C.L.A. Art Gallery. He was a museologist, and he had had a lot of experience and this and that. Jade Carter, who is still there, was then head of installations. So it gave me an opportunity to work with installation, to do an essay for a catalog, select the artists, to get them in a pickup truck, to do all of those things that one has to do to put together an exhibition. While it was not a resounding exhibition, it has proven over time, I can't be avidly accurate on account of its being a first exposure in a museum context of these, Billy Al Bengston, Robert Irwin, Kenny Price. It looked a little bit like prophecy at that given moment.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: So you had early figures, but you really had the contemporary—

MR. HOPKINS: I had Bill Brice, Stanton McDonald Wright, Ben Berlin. I can't even remember all of them.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Was Ruscha in that show?

MR. HOPKINS: Ruscha had not yet come along. He would probably have been at that moment in Southern California. But I didn't know him yet, he hadn't appeared on the horizon.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Kienholz was.

MR. HOPKINS: Kienholz very much was. He had been an important figure, not only in the gallery scene, but as an artist he was beginning to form his key pieces, like *John and Jane Doe*, and some of the earliest assemblage pieces. Through those contacts, through that whole variety of things, I got to know some important people in the art world. A man named Bill Sykes. I got to know Peter Selz, who at that time was teaching at Pomona and went off to the Museum of Modern Art to be Curator. At that particular moment in time there just were no more gods and heroes than in the Museum of Modern Art. In my mind, that was the epitome of the world. So, in getting to know some of those people more, putting on the exhibition, being a little bit tired of graduate work, finding myself already with an M.A. degree and a lot of extra graduate work, I was leaning more and more toward something to do with art as an object. I think the next step was when you and I were probably in closest contact. I made a decision that I would not enroll in school that year. That in fact, if I could find the backing for it, I would open a gallery. The reasoning behind that, again, was the composite idea, the Ferus Gallery was there, the artists that were being shown at the Ferus Gallery, I won't remember them all, but Kenny Price, Billy Al Bengston, Craig Kauffman, Robert Irwin, John Altoon, Hassel Smith from up here, Jay DeFeo from up here, occasionally a Diebenkorn drawing, a composite of avant-garde activity normally from Southern California, which Walter was very well informed about. It happened that a number of galleries that had been on La Cienega were leaving to go other places. There was a fear in our minds that if this was allowed to happen, the art scene would dissipate.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: "Our?" You're saying Hopps?

MR. HOPKINS: Walter, Shirley, myself and Irving. Obviously we were all going through many personal crises at one time or another. So the situation became, all right, if I can find a backing I'm going to start a gallery. Three young attorneys came along. I've either forgotten or suppressed their names. Except that, interestingly, in fact sitting on my desk right now, there's a phone slip from Ambassador Lloyd, asking me to have lunch next week. Ambassador Lloyd is Frank Lloyd, who was one of the three young attorneys. Now Ambassador in Washington on his way to his assignment. I will see him the first time for twenty years. Anyway, three young attorneys wanted to start a gallery, mainly as a tax write-off. They were obviously young, aggressive businessmen. They didn't need to make money, although they were interested in it. They happened to be Jewish and they had interest in great art.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I remember one friend of mine who's been involved in galleries many times. When anybody comes to him and wants to start one, he says, are you willing to drop \$10,000 the first year?" And if they go for it and say, "Yes," then he's willing to talk to them and plan.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, this is more or less the way. We didn't talk about money. But I think everybody recognized that it wouldn't happen. We found a place across the street from the Ferus Gallery. We thought a lot about how and what to name it. Since there were so many of us, three backers and myself, we didn't want to name it after anybody. We struggled here and there. I forget who, but not me, came up with the idea of using the name Huysman, a nineteenth-century decadent writer and poet. That sounded okay. I became known as the Huysman Gallery, Dutch. Everybody called it the Huysman Gallery. It was supposed to be Weisman.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: That'll teach you to be smart.

MR. HOPKINS: It didn't last long enough to make a difference. So any-way, the first exhibition that I did was a composite show of mainly Northern Californians because they had a lot of association with Northern California. I remember Gerald Davis was in that first show, a painter named Enrico Yamamoto who, I thought, was pretty good. I don't know what's happened to him. Lundy Siegriest was in it, John Saccaro was in it, and a few Southern Californians, but not really avant-garde Southern Californians. We were trying to look to a kind of art that wasn't being shown in the galleries. It was a very successful opening. We had a lot of friends and a lot of people poured in and, of course, nobody bought anything. So I did one or two other exhibitions. We began to have some difficulty about the time of the third show, because David very much wanted, under the aegis of one of their girlfriends, to do an Israeli exhibition of contemporary Israeli art. I felt strongly it simply wasn't in the direction of the gallery, of what we wanted to do, so we began to argue about what that was. We had the exhibition. It did not have that many terrific things. It did not bring the Jewish community in to buy hundreds of dollars worth of paintings, which we had hoped would happen, and so I went on for a couple of shows. At that moment in time I met Ed Ruscha, Joe Goode and Larry Bell. They were all essentially students coming out of Chouinard Art Institute, who had been trained by Altoon and Irwin and others teaching there. They were in roughly their third or fourth year. They'd all been told that if you got out of school, you go out and be artists. While that had not

been my temperament, yet it goes back to temperament. Obviously, as I told you, I took art education courses and resisted being thrown out on the street and being an artist. I've always admired people who take that risk. The first one to come in and actually talk to me was Joe Goode. He's become a very dear friend. He brought in some little drawings on paper, kind of little star patterns, heavily impastoed, so I just asked if he had some friends and so forth and so on. He brought around Larry Bell and brought around Ed and Nate and we got to know each other well. I did one little show where I showed Joe's drawings which taught me two things. One, that when I grew up and got into the art business, or whatever you want to call it, I never had any illusion that I would make much of a living. At that moment it was even a kind of surprise but, in the interim, with the high prices even than for Abstract Expressionism, the earliest beginnings of the Johns, Rauschenbergs and so on, young artists had a whole different attitude. I remember when I hung Joe's little show of drawings along with another artist, one of them sold, I think for \$100, and he was ecstatic. Joe was depressed for about two weeks, and I couldn't figure out why, and his hope had been that the show would sell out that first night. I suddenly recognized that the world had changed somewhere in there, where art had been something else. I don't [inaudible] that Joe has sold out since that time, but he'd gotten used to that idea, that they were young, aggressive artists, and their whole ambition in life was to knock off, philosophically and esthetically, the artists across the street, to knock off Kenny Price and Ed Kienholz and Irwin. I liked that competitiveness, so I did an exhibition.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: This was the "War Babies" exhibition.

MR. HOPKINS: It had some vague historical significance. I called it "War Babies," the poster for which Joe Goode designed, as a matter of fact, and Jerry McMillan, who was an artist and photographer in Southern California, did the image for the poster. He made it with four artists. It was Joe Goode, Larry Bell; Joe Goode did construction out of cardboard boxes. I was really angry with him because we had one big white wall which was pristine, and he came in with six penny nails and about thirty cardboard boxes and nailed them all to the wall with these giant spikes, making this big composition of open-ended and close-ended cardboard boxes. Very prophetic, when you think of Rauschenberg's cardboard doors and the things that came along a whole decade later. There was no question that this was a prototypical piece for that kind of environmental statement made on the spot. Larry Bell was still a painter. He was doing what he called "saddle paintings." They took a kind of configuration at the top and they had a little saddle indentation. But they were Abstract Expressionist paintings, though they actually now would be more related to color-field things. A young artist named Ron Miyashiro, who has just recently reappeared again on the scene, did rather elegant drawings. Mainly very black and very dark drawings of vaginal shapes, very rich oily, charcoal things. There would be a kind of slit in the middle. And the fourth artist was Ed Boreal, who was a black artist. Big, tough, mean, really black in every sense of the word, pre-civil rights in a way. But he was a wonderful guy and we're good friends. He was doing really bizarre constructions, assemblages, of leather pouches filled with stuff and then filled with oil, and projections attached to them and swastikas painted on the outside edges of it. Oil would leak through the leather sack and it would begin to get odiferous. These were quite unique and special objects. Ed Ruscha would have been part of the "War Babies" show, but he was off on his first trip to Europe. I had not ever really shown Ed's things, but I did have a few of his works there. I bought a painting of his called *Sweetwater* for \$200. He got paid off in ten dollars per month over a two-year period. Another guy named Jerry Rosenzweig got a little painting called *Sue* which will be in his retrospective coming up, pre-Ruscha Ruscha series in words. He was using paint like he does now. But he was off and away. The reason that the "War Babies" show created so much interest or trauma, whatever you want to call it, was that it was really tying into the McCarthy era and the John Birch period. The poster that Joe had designed and Jerry had photographed showed these four young guys, bravos, all in their own ways but pretty rough on the exterior. And that Joe, who happened to be a Catholic, they were sitting at a table draped with the American flag. On that were various crumbs of this and that, Joe, being a Catholic, was sitting at one end, eating a mackerel, and Larry Bell, who was Jewish, was eating a bagel, and Boreal, who was black, was eating a watermelon, Ron Miyashiro, who was oriental, was eating with chopsticks. It was a great photograph, dark and intense. Here was an American flag, and all these diaper types eating. Somehow it got the attention of the John Birch Society. They drove me crazy with their phone calling, chastising me for using the flag like that. It brought all my social instincts to the fore, and I very patiently explained that if they were all beautiful young women in spangled costumes and football games, then they wouldn't have any qualms about it. It was only because these were some people who were multi-racial and that bothers you, and you have no business being upset by that. That's not what America's about. That was my political phase at the moment. The political phase was the key backing on this, it touched a number of-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -a catalyst.

MR. HOPKINS: My backers got bothered to the point where they refused to let me put up the poster. I put up the poster anyway, which meant obviously that I was going to have to leave the gallery. The gallery was quite frankly not making much money anyway. I had a salary arrangement. My salary arrangement was \$300 a month. And I'll tell you that's about the time that we really got broke. And so I knew I had to go somewhere. Also, it was at exactly the same moment that some had personal stuff was going on at U.C.L.A. They had brought a man in named Lester Longman who was head of the department.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Yes. Well, Longman had been in there a couple of years, because he was the one who put in the course that we taught.

MR. HOPKINS: That's correct. The first year he came - you know how everybody asks about who's coming, who's going to be our leader. He had a reputation for being a man who had been supportive of contemporary ideas. In fact, he brought Guston to the University of Iowa after Grant Wood. That was a pretty advanced set. He taught about Picasso. He wanted to bring these courses in esthetics back into the university structure. And John Rosenfeld, whom you know and who is a wonderful scholar and very interesting person, was our head in that thing. I enjoyed teaching because it was different again. I had one T.A. in art education and two in art history, one in theory and one in esthetics. It turned out in my mind that Longman was a bad guy. He would come to meetings where artists like Motherwell would be invited to speak, or Dore Ashton who would speak, and he would come and prophesize against modern work. It had gone too far. He was bugged so I wrote a broadside. He wrote something in the *New York Times*. I wrote an answer to that, about a six-page document and answer, a fiery political letter. I published it in an edition of about 200, and passed it out in the gallery about the time of the "War Babies" show. It made me some friends and some enemies. The friends that it made me were new people, very interesting people and people who had something for my career, but it put me in trouble at U.C.L.A. The "War Babies" show was going on, the battle with Lester Longman was going on, and all of a sudden, out of nowhere, came Jim Elliott. He was with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and asked if I would like to think about working there.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Had you gotten to know him before in some way?

MR. HOPKINS: Not at all well, just fleetingly. I had met him. He had come into the gallery; we talked. I knew who he was, but we certainly weren't friends in any real way. He said he had been watching, that was a magnificent show at the University, and would I like to think about coming to work at the museum.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Well, I've got two digressions on the gallery I want to get in before we get on to the museum. One, do you sometimes fantasize or think that you could have been a real major gallery dealer, a Castelli or Carper, in this town, Berggruen?

MR. HOPKINS: No, I had no real fantasy about that. Philosophically, I could be. I think, probably, that I would feel competent if people with real sales capacity and backing would come to me and let me work behind the scenes and suggest this artist and that artist.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: In other words, if you could be the eye rather than the front man.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, I would like to be more the eye than the philosophy, because I'm a great absorber of information. Again, that's one of those things when we were talking about diversity. I spent, not a lot of time, but I listen to the news endlessly, I read newspapers endlessly, I watch T.V. endlessly, and somehow in my own mind I've juried shows endlessly. God knows how many hundreds of shows in how many different states. It's coming up to thirty now. I lecture very well, sucking up stuff, and so I consider my information, rather than being a true eye, it's a composite opinion, is really what it comes down to, it boasts at the same time. It's not a capacity I poke at, it's a temperamental thing. I think that I do know kind of where pulses are at times. I think in a gallery situation I could be very helpful. I learned many, many years ago when I would sell shoes in the summer and sell furniture in the summer, that I simply am not a merchandiser. Whenever I'm called upon to sell something that didn't fit quite right or was out of date, I was in a moral dilemma within. I've never really, it's a terrible thing to say, but I never really look at art in monetary terms. You have to use money to get it, buy it, and so on. That Joe Goode painting on the wall over there that I've had since the 1960s, I bought for ten dollars a month over a long period of time, has a value now of over \$10,000. It doesn't to me. But that's not the issue. But then that's not what that is, it's still ten dollars a month or whatever. I couldn't succeed in that and I knew it. My dipping into the gallery business at the time was essentially to-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -proselytize.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, it was to save a scene and to proselytize and get a little stimulus going. It had that effect. It only lasted about nine months. But to digress, that's at the time, for example, specifically when you'll remember that I was living separated from my wife, not yet divorced but still separated, in a little place over near Brentwood, just off the freeway to the west of U.C.L.A. Down in a eucalyptus grove there was a residence that had belonged to an off-beat artist. He had built a little house about as big as this office, with a tiny little bedroom and a tiny little bathroom and a tiny little kitchen. But an incredible setting, beautiful. They said that it was for rent. I said how much, and it was seventy dollars a month. Well, that was possible because at that time I was making \$300. Well, I thought I was making \$600 a month, \$300 to my ex-wife and living on the other. So I had this neat little place. The reason they were going to rent it to me for seventy dollars a month was that sooner or later it was going to be torn down. One day I came back and there was a notice in my mail saying that on whatever date it was they were going to tear it down. I didn't pay any attention to it, assuming those things

would go through a third, fourth or fifth warning. One day there was an exhibition in Pasadena. I'd gone over with Walter [Hopps] and Shirley, and drove back about two o'clock in the morning. I walked up to my little house and the house was gone, flattened to the ground. My file cabinet, my Ruscha painting, my Joe Goode painting, my guppy tank, my clothes, sitting there in the moonlight. My house was gone forever. I actually stayed with Walter and Shirley for a while. Then I shared rent with you down on Thirteenth Street and Euclid. It was both an ebb in a way in my life, and an incredibly invigorating time. Just so diverse, so full of confusion, just unbelievable. I was asked then to go work at the L.A. County, if it could be done. I should say about that same time, Walter Hopps had decided to go work at the Pasadena Museum. He had been asked by Tom Levitt to come and function in a curatorial capacity. While Walter was a very diverse person, brilliant, but not responsible, we were surprised at that appointment, but delighted, because the implication was that he would, through his knowledge which was compatible with what we were generally thinking, have more influence, that he could actually bring people we knew into those exhibitions. And then they asked me to work at the L.A. County Museum. I felt very good about it. I felt flattered, as a matter of fact. I thought it was a wonderful risk on Jim's part. I've admired him for giving me that opportunity every since. There was no money at the County to do it.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: This was Assistant Curator of Modern Art. And that was under Jim Elliott.

MR. HOPKINS: When I first went. And he said if I could work it out, I will let you know. So time went by and I was getting a little shaky because I knew I was going to leave the gallery into another couple of weeks. I was wondering exactly what I would be doing, selling shoes or something. So he came and said, "All right, we've worked it out. We'll give you \$3,000 a year." (This was a long time after my initial salary of \$2,900. Three thousand was really peanuts, but fine.) And so that was it. You would begin on X day in June or whenever that was. I found out many years later that there was no County money at all. The person that paid my salary the first year that I was there was Marsha Weisman. She was not paying it because it was me, she was paying it because of Jim. Jim really needed the help.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: She was being kind of an angel.

MR. HOPKINS: So she put up the money to employ someone.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: When it came to unmarked bills in brown envelopes, weren't you suspicious?

MR. HOPKINS: No, no other artist, I was paid to assist, but my title was Assistant Curator of Modern Art. I thought, well, a pretty ambitious title. The first day that I went to work at the museum was the day when they were jurying the next to the last of the Los Angeles Artists show. The juror that year was William Sykes. As I've mentioned before, I had great admiration for him. How wonderful to be beginning a whole new career on the day when this great hero was working! I spent my whole first day at the museum helping him jury. Schlucking around with this and that, listening to his comments and watching the process and having, really, a wonderful time. It got to be about six o'clock and we stopped jurying and went over to the Weisman's house in Beverly Hills, and went swimming, and had a massive dinner and ate thirty-dollars-a-pound chocolates. About midnight Jim came out and put his arm around my shoulder and said, "Just remember, every day is not going to be like this." It was a very valid observation, but it was a euphoric first day, a pretty wonderful beginning.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: The \$3,000 seemed quite palatial.

MR. HOPKINS: Anyway, that's how I finally, after many, many years, got into the museum profession. I really have enjoyed life. You know, there are incredible frustrations, and more as it's harder to get money together and this and that, and more as you're asked to be an administrator. But for that first day I felt that, like a duck in water, I'd found my pond.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Well, the other three positions that are listed there: Head of Museum Education, 1963-1965, Head of Museum Programs, 1965-1966, Head Curator of Exhibitions and Publications, 1966-1968, all sound to an outside, they're somewhat cross-reference. It's the same job with new titles.

MR. HOPKINS: They were different jobs.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: So why did we go from one to another?

MR. HOPKINS: Well, okay, that has to do with diversity of background, timing, the museum, the same thing that we've been talking about from time to time. I went to work as Jim's assistant. For the first day that I started to work at the museum, Jim gave me certain responsibilities, and let me do them and make my own mistakes, and he was always available for advice. As I say, I couldn't have asked for a better person to get my feet wet, because he really made me, from the first day, function in some real way. I had a lot of diversity, so I was able to. I can't remember specifically how my duties went, but I know one of the very early things that I did was to install the Reuben Nakian exhibition. It was Nakian's first museum exhibition in the United States, and there has been a lot of criticism of the installation of shows at the L.A. County Museum. It gave me a chance to do what I



thought was better than what had been done. It was very well received, and Henry Seldis who wrote in the *Los Angeles Times* gave a nice installation award. It gave me a little credibility at the beginning in a nice way. I was perfectly happy working with Jim. Then obviously, after six months, I think, it went on to a County salary. I made somewhat slightly more of a living wage, but not much more. That was really not very much money at the time.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Were you still trying to send half of it to Joanne?

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, and the old Head of Education was retiring. They did not have an Education Department, and they were thinking about that. I had a strong background in education in a lot of different ways, and they wanted to start a new docent council. We were still down at Exposition Park. Rick Brown called me into his office one day and said, "All right, I'll just lay it on the line to you. We need the head of the Education Department, and we need a person to come in. We need this done and we need that done. We need a sense of direction set for us. You'll have a great deal of responsibility. I realize it's not curatorial and I realize this and I realize that." I guess I was, you'll have to say in fairness to that point, simply a company man. I tried to weigh what I thought would be more valuable for me. I must admit that I really felt probably the curatorial work continuing in one sense. But it was a point of transition, it was already determined that we were going to move to the new building. They were even starting to dig the ground and so forth. I listened to everything back and forth. Then I went back to Rick Brown and asked, "What do you want me to do?" He said, "I'd really appreciate it if you would do the Education job, because we really need that very badly right now, and because we were beginning to close down the exhibition program until we make the move, and we won't have as much activity in that area." I said, okay. I became the Head of Education, started the docent program with Glynn Janss, a woman volunteer, a very good, energetic organizer.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: They had not had any docents before that?

MR. HOPKINS: They had not had docents in an organized way. As a group it has achieved a certain special renown of its own. Some people think it's wonderful and some don't like it as it's structured. But it still goes on very effectively. I was just down speaking to them a few weeks ago. Many of the same old-timers that were there when we started were still there. I trained them in art history, which begot teaching, worked with them in the galleries, started a lot of education programs there, organized the first Animated Film Festival which is now in its fifteenth year, or something like that, the Tournee of Animation, started a lecture series, brought in a number of very interesting speakers. All of this time was in transition. The person who was the head of my division, I forget even what he was called, who was between myself and Rick, who handled programs and education, simply had not worked out as a person. About the time we were ready to move over to the new building, he was let go. I was asked if I wanted to take that position, which was Head of Education, as well as being Head of Programs, Head of Public Relations, Head of the Museum Travel Program. A whole diversity, really, a catch-all position. Since I had been doing a lot of that work anyway, plus publishing the handbook for the collection that was given out when the new museum was opened, this was an advancement within the area.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It also gave a little more money, too.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, in fact, by that time it was a living wage. So that was the second step, actually third step, Head of Education, then Head of Programming. If you remember, when we got into the new building, and had been there for about a year, the trustees and Rick Brown got into conflict. Rick Brown left and went off to the Kimbell Museum in Texas. Shortly afterwards Jim Elliott left to be the Director of Wadsworth Atheneum. The question was how would things function. Kenneth Donahue became the Director. I was anxious to move on because I was very supportive of Rick, and not so much of the new director, or have some different kind of job than I had at that time. I talked to several of the trustees and the agreement was made that I would take the position, not a chief curatorial position, but a position that would handle all the publications of the museum, and would set up the exhibition program.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: They hadn't had somebody in charge of this before?

MR. HOPKINS: No, and it would occasionally give me the flexibility to do an exhibition. So it brought me full round again into the curatorial section, but in a more administrative way. I'd been semi-administering, but this gave me even more administrative responsibility. We had a very active publishing program at that time, giving museum members a catalog. The membership, when the new museum opened, jumped from something like 5,000 to 20,000 at a time. Just because of the new location, it was that big a membership. You can publish catalogs, the cost to print a catalog and reproduce it, the New York School catalog, "American Sculpture of the 1960s," a number of major catalogs we could reproduce for very small amounts of money because there were so many of them, because we gave them to the membership. I started that program, made alliances with New York Graphics so we could distribute the books nationally, as well as to the museum. This was a whole new facet of work. I was fascinated by it. I really enjoyed working with the designers from the ground up. I also patterned the whole exhibition program which was at that time more modern than it has been since. We did the Giacometti show, the de Kooning exhibition, the Pollock exhibition.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Man Ray, Oldenburg.

MR. HOPKINS: I worked with Jules Langton on the Man Ray show, with Maurice Seldis on the Rico Lebrun show. I did most of the installations.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: When you talk about how the exhibitions originated, the first one is "Thirty-seven Works by Thirty-five Artists of Los Angeles."

MR. HOPKINS: Okay, that's the one that I did at U.C.L.A. I did not get into exhibition origination that much. I co-originated with Jim on the Reuben Nakian exhibition in the first year. Then I got into the Education position and was originating things like the Animated Film Festival, but not exhibitions. Then when I came around the loop again-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -let's see, "John Paul Jones" in 1966, and Albers's "White Lines Squared" in 1966.

MR. HOPKINS: I was getting some curatorial experience, a lot of installation experience, a lot of publishing experience, a lot of administration experience. That was a good period of time. I was beginning, about 1966, to feel I could be a director. I was not, in my own mind, I'm sure, and in his mind, getting along that well with the director at that moment.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I gather you didn't get along with many people.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, whatever. I began casting around for possibilities. I heard about the position at the University of Iowa. I went back to talk about it. It was interesting. The one time that I was interviewed by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Rene d'Harnoncourt asked me to come back. I didn't really know or had not spent time with Rene d'Harnoncourt. So he was talking to me, and various patrons were talking about this and that. He helped me by talking about my interest in education. I got talking about that, and I thought because they weren't talking about a specific position that this was what they were offering. I thought maybe they were talking about an education position. So we got all embroiled. I heard later that they wanted me for a curatorial position. I was so interested in education that they thought it wouldn't work out. It was one of the problems with being too broad. At the College Art Association, in 1967-68 in St. Louis, Rick Brown approached me again, who was in the process then of getting ready to build the Kimbell Museum. He asked me if I would come to the Kimbell Museum and take essentially the position that I had at the L.A. County Museum.

LK: LOUISE KATZMAN

KL: KAREN LEE

MR: MIMI ROBERTS

MR. CHAMBERLIN: We're going to begin with a working session with Louise Katzman, Karen Lee and Mimi Roberts talking about the Edward Ruscha show. The main reason I wanted to talk to you first of all was to get the story on what happened about that painting from you, since I've already heard it from about three other sources. And then, depending on how detailed your memory of that early period is, I have a bunch of questions I'd like to ask.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, let's talk about *Sweetwater*, which is a painting done by Ed Ruscha in about 1960, which is a time in my life when I was running a gallery called the Huysman Gallery on La Cienega Boulevard in Los Angeles. Ed was at that time a recent graduate, or maybe not a graduate but recently out of Chouinard Art Institute, along with Joe Goode, Larry Hell and a number of other young artists who turned out to be very interesting artists. The first person I contacted at that time was Joe Goode who wandered in one day with a series of star paintings, as I always called them. They were somewhat Abstract Expressionist, small paintings with a star image in the center, and painterly around the edges in greens and reds and so on, that kind of centralized image he used pretty much since that time. One of his closest friends was Ed Ruscha, whom I had not yet met. The next time that Joe came to the gallery he brought Ed with him, who at that time was a shy young man, and still is a shy man. My recollection is that he brought with him a number of little wooden objects that at that moment in time were, they still are, I think, very interesting. Where they are, I don't know. I don't know whether Ed even has them. My recollection was that they were little cruciform shapes, maybe sixteen inches high and fourteen inches across. Or just little slabs of old wood, found wood, that had words worked, drawn, painted, or cut into the surface one way or another. They were interesting, too. Ed and Joe had both come from Oklahoma to the West Coast, and they were both travelers back and forth, taking the old Route 66 back and forth like Jack Kerouac between the Midwest and the West Coast. But also right at that moment in time, 1960-61, Ed Kienholz was starting to work on his constructions in Los Angeles, which eventually became the tableaus. He had been doing a lot of work with painting on wood and things of that kind, and Wally Berman was doing his kind of constructions here in San Francisco. Well, he floated back and forth between San Francisco and Los Angeles, and Bruce Conner was doing his, in my mind, most important work at that time, the early feather and rubber objects,

and collections of esoteric material in box-like configurations which were vaguely reminiscent of Joseph Cornell, apparently that was the source, but they were harder objects. Then, also, George Herms was doing his wooden slab objects, out of found pieces of things. In the very beginning of his career, Ed was cognizant of other things going on around him, but bringing a very independent hand to it. Well, we got to know one another and enjoyed each other's company along with Joe, Larry, and some of the others. Larry, at that time, was painting like an Abstract Expressionist. And the next time that Ed came in, or shortly after that, he came in with two paintings. One, which was called *Sue*, was in my recollection about two feet by two feet square, essentially a white canvas with the word *Sue* painted on it in a typo-graphical style, the style he was using at that time. The major feature was a triangular piece of blue and red striped cloth that cut a diagonal in the middle of the painting. It still belongs to Jerry Rosenzweig, and it's a piece we're going to try to see if he'd like to have in the exhibition. The other painting was *Sweetwater*, which is a big painting. I notice that it says here on the back, "About forty-six by sixty inches." I think it was at least that scale, if not even bigger, which was the first big painting of Ed's I had ever seen. It was an interesting configuration because, again, it was essentially a white canvas of rather large scale. At the bottom the word "Sweetwater" was spelled across the base in typographical form with two very fine lines, one above the word and one below the word. Then, the full bottom half of the canvas, other than that, was completely blank. In the top section it had a series of splotches of color where he had obviously put a pile of paint on and dragged across the surface, maybe with a wooden stick or a piece of cardboard or who knows. Although I can't place the colors exactly, the recollection clearly is that they were rather pastel-like shades. I vaguely remember cerulean blue, ochre and a green, just simply dragged across the canvas in a very thick, impasto way. It's a very funny painting. The top is very rich in pigment, and like an Abstract Expressionist painting, the bottom half is pure and clean, with the one word, "Sweetwater." We talked a little bit about that. I wanted to know what "Sweetwater" meant. Sweetwater is a town in Texas along Route 66. Other "Sweetwater" things occur in his imagery as he goes along. But it was still for that moment a very unique painting. I liked the painting and I liked Ed a lot, so we talked about this and that and I agreed to buy it from him for \$200. Jerry Rosenzweig bought *Sue* for \$100-150. I can't remember exactly. Since I couldn't pay for it totally, we set it up on a basis where we were paying \$10 a month. They gave me a photograph of the painting and chopped off [inaudible] at the bottom quarter. He would chop one off each month that I paid him the \$10. So, anyway, the painting was mine, and I carried it around with me wherever I went for quite a period of time. I was a T.A. at U.C.L.A. in art history, and had therefore a little office that I worked out of, over at the U.C.L.A. campus. Since I was moving with some frequency at that time, I put it in my office back-to-back with the back side of the canvas out. I came there one day, and the painting wasn't there. I asked any of the other T.A.s if they knew where it might be, and they didn't know and hadn't heard, so I asked around the whole Art Department if anybody had seen this painting and where it was. It was still at that moment in time no more valuable than \$200 as far as that's concerned, but it was a painting I had become incredibly fond of because of the circumstances. Finally, nobody said anything. But I came back about a week later and in my office there was a little note on my desk from a young woman whose name I've fortunately forgotten, that indicated the fact that she wanted to talk to me. So I went to find her and she said that she was an art student at U.C.L.A., a painter, and that she had seen that canvas sitting there, and it didn't look like it was finished to her and, therefore, she took it and used it as her own to paint on. So I asked to see her work, thinking conceivably something could be done, it could be cleaned off or something. But she was a person who was painting kind of like Joan Brown at that moment, with two-foot thick pigment and a few other things. So it was totally gone, and that was the end of *Sweetwater*, which is now only in photographs. I think it took me something like fifteen years to tell Ed finally what had happened to it. Now he knows, so my conscience is clear.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: How did he respond?

MR. HOPKINS: Sympathetically. We've been good friends over the years. I'm sure that it's at the point now where getting a retrospective show is even a much greater disappointment, at least in my mind, kind of the classic first picture, classic first painting of the group.

?: What year was that in?

MR. HOPKINS: Roughly 1960.

?: Was it destroyed the same year?

MR. HOPKINS: No, it was not destroyed until probably 1962. That's the story of *sweetwater* and *Sue*.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Even though he wasn't in the "War Babies" show, he feels himself sort of an honorary member of that group, so maybe you could talk a little bit about how he fits into that whole group.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, the reason he was not in the "War Babies" show was because he had gone off on his first trip to Europe. He has always been more adventuresome than some of the artists of that particular group. The four artists in the "War Babies" show were Joe Goode, Larry Bell, Ed Boreal, and a young Hawaiian-Japanese American, Ron Miyashiro, who had been doing very interesting things that were small scale. They had more or

less vaginal shapes in the center, pre-dating Judy Chicago's butterflies, but out of a male imagery. Almost all of them were black, very dark in color. Black with a little blue, black with a little yellow, very handsome small objects, and again consistent with what was going on. There was a painter in Southern California named Richards Ruben, who was very much devoted to Clyfford Still and Clyfford Still's ideas. Ruben was teaching at Chouinard, and a lot of Miyashiro's imagery came out of this, but it was richer in a funny way, even than Ruben's work. Larry Bell, who had been painting really Abstract Expressionist paintings. You would mix them up with Michael Goldberg or somebody of that time. Then he went to a series of what he called saddle paintings which were somewhat cleaner. My recollection is that they were squarish paintings, about four by four feet. They had an indentation at the top, not the actual canvas, but the painted form. It kind of dipped down at the top like the seat of a saddle. He was in the exhibition, and the fourth artist was named Ed Bereal, the big black artist, who was involved at that time in making really weird fetish objects. He would take a leather purse, or leather sack of one kind or another, small, like a marble bag or something, then he would put objects in that, God knows what they were, like an African fetish piece of one kind or another. Then he would permeate the whole thing with oil, so the bag was filled and kind of seeping out, and then attached to it, on the top, various metal attachments, like small pipes. They were like conduit piping but very tiny, copper piping. That kind of thing stuck out of the top of this thing like a periscope. He would paint on the surface a giant black swastika on a light brown field, very aggressive, very mean, obviously black-white relationships in society and things like that. He made about a half dozen of them. Ed has not done as much since that time, although he continues to function as an artist. But he was in the exhibition. So it was quite an extraordinary show and Ed would have been in it with the exception of the fact that he had gone off to Europe. If he'd been in the show, it might have been a little harder, because of my recollection of the poster, which was designed by Joe Goode, called "War Babies." I think that was 1961. I know it was the last exhibition I did in the gallery because it closed right after that, having a lot to do with that exhibition. The idea of the four artists was to present themselves as individuals, while Joe Goode was a painter primarily, and a very nice draftsman. His piece was to be nailed to the wall of the gallery, which in those days we'd spent a great deal of money making pristine white and pure. He nailed it to the gallery with about ten penny nails. A configuration of cardboard boxes, some with the flaps open, some with them closed, and from the backside around and so forth. It made a shape on the wall about ten by twelve feet. There isn't, I think, a photograph of Ed's painting. It would be very interesting if there were, because then it could figure later in relation to Rauschenberg's cardboard figures and cardboard doors. A lot of people have worked with cardboard since that time. In retrospect, in 1961, it probably was one of the first environmental sculptures, if you think of it in that funny context. It took a full wall of the gallery. As I said, Larry painted with the saddle paintings. Ed had Bereal's and wanted me to show those little drawings. The poster created the greatest furor because it represented the four of them, Ed Bereal, black, eating a watermelon, Ron Miyashiro, being Oriental, eating with chopsticks, Joe Goode, being Catholic, eating a mackerel, and Larry Bell, being Jewish, eating a bagel, sitting around a table with the American flag draped over the top of it, crumbs on the table. A very strong photograph taken by Jerry McMillan, as a matter of fact, who was a friend of Ed Ruscha and Joe Goode. He may still have a copy of that photograph, as a matter of fact, which might be worth looking into.

?: Oh, in fact I know I have.

MR. HOPKINS: I have the poster.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I have a copy too, I think.

MR. HOPKINS: I have the poster, but there are not very many of them left. That happened to be right at the time of the John Birch Society. When we put it up in the window all hell broke loose over a period of time. My backers at the gallery were not very enthusiastic. I had lunch with one of them the other day. He's now an ambassador, working out of Washington, and ambassador without a portfolio with the Carter administration, working with starving people in the world. We reminisced about those days. He was much more sympathetic now than he was then, since they have all become interesting artists. Anyway, to go back to Ed quickly, he was part of that group, he never did show at the Huysman Gallery although we were close friends. His first exhibition was, I think, at the Ferus Gallery which picked him up the next year or the year after that.

?: Do you recall what was in that show?

MR. HOPKINS: Which one?

?: The first one at the Ferus.

MR. HOPKINS: I don't remember. Isn't that bizarre to say? I really don't remember. I think the only person that could answer that would be Walter Hopps, or maybe Irving Blum, because Irving was with the gallery at that time. I remember at about that time two things were going on in Ed's life. One was the publication of his first book, the Gasoline Station book [*Twenty Six Gasoline Stations*, 1962], that was self-published. I don't know how many he made, but I know that it was not a very popular item at that time. He came by and brought me a copy. Years later I was visiting him at the studio. There were stacks and stacks and stacks of the first two or three

books. Maybe thousands of them, I don't know. I teased him about being-what were the two brothers, the Collier brothers, who let the roof fall in on them with newspapers. It looked a little like that at that moment. But then they caught on, I guess we knew that they would. Now they've sold something like seven or eight editions, incredibly popular all over the world. He was working on that project which was very interesting to me at that time. Other people would think that it was such an off-beat thing to be doing, and it's a prototypical approach to art, a major manifestation, but really rare for that time. I remember he moved from one studio to another studio where he was working on the bird paintings, the ones you were looking at yesterday. So those things were all coming along from 1960-61, although the bird paintings didn't really show. My feeling is that first Ferus exhibition, the painting *Annie* and probably *Boss*, and it would be that group of work, because I think they probably were in that first show.

?: I think *Boss* was in 1964. Are you sure?

MR. HOPKINS: I can't be that specific, but I'll tell you Betty Asher can answer that.

?: I asked her. She didn't remember.

MR. HOPKINS: Where she got the painting *Annie*?

?: She got it from Ed.

?: *Annie* was 1962, wasn't it? And *Boss* 1961?

MR. HOPKINS: There was a very nice painting, it seems to me it was one of the Noise paintings, that belonged to Betty Friedman; does that still belong to Betty Friedman?

?: No.

MR. HOPKINS: There was a very nice lady in Los Angeles, whose name has been Betty Friedman. I think she's recently remarried, but she's well known in the collectors group there. She supported Ed for a while. I know she gave him some money. She gave Larry Bell some money. She was a good supporter of young artists without any hope of return at that point. So she still has one.

?: Yes, she does still have one.

MR. HOPKINS: But she might recollect exactly what was in that show too. He did show *Boss* in a 1964 show according to-

MR. HOPKINS: -in a 1964 show. Well, all right, his first Ferus Gallery show was not, when was it?

?: No, the ones by Betty Friedman-

MR. HOPKINS: It was in 1961, I mean it came later. In 1965 he showed the Birds.

MR. HOPKINS: Okay, all right.

?: But nobody remembers what he showed in 1962.

MR. HOPKINS: When Huysman folded, there was a question of the Ferus Gallery. They had a very tight relationship amongst the artists that were there, and the artists had a great deal to say about who came into the gallery. Both Larry and Ed were brought in. They were really like a blackball situation amongst the artists, but in a positive sense. They didn't really want to show anybody other than somebody they thought was really super in their mind. So it was kind of a day of heroics both for Larry and Ed, who were one generation removed from Robert Irwin and Craig Kauffmann, Billy Al Bengston.

?: Do you remember the things that were shown at Ferus? In 1961 or 1962 there was a show of Jasper Johns sculpture and paintings of [inaudible] and Schwitters collages simultaneously.

MR. HOPKINS: Not, in my mind, not simultaneously. Well, there's talk about that. I'm not going to be accurate about dates, but it was an interesting period and it was in 1961 and 1962. Ferus Gallery did first of all an exhibition of Joseph Albers, of small and larger paintings, from eighteen inches square to forty-eight inches square. It seems to me that the small paintings were \$400 and the big paintings were \$1,200 or some bizarre amount like that. And through those paintings of Albers's which was a taste of-actually it was a taste of Walter's-

?: -a closer taste to Walter's wife at that time.

MR. HOPKINS: Shirley Hopps; and Irving Blum had come to work with the gallery, and that exhibition had a very

salutary effect. Albers hadn't even been seen that much in the museum, although the L.A. County Museum owned a very beautiful Albers, a blue painting, about the only one in the whole area. Only one or two paintings, I think, were borrowed for the show but had a great effect on the arts, especially Billy Al Bengston, in the early *Boss*, stars and stripes painting, square on square on square, with the symbol in the center. Then, it seems to me, after that they did a little [Giorgio] Morandi exhibition. I don't think there was a single painting in that exhibition bigger than eight by twelve inches, all of them very tiny but very special paintings. I remember Henry Seldis, who was a critic at that time, put down the art of Morandi as dumb, funny stuff. But they were beautiful, beautiful paintings. I don't think anything sold out of the exhibition. They were something like \$600. That had a real impact on almost all of the artists there, because of the scale, the intimacy of the subject matter and scale. Walter owned one of the best of the Joseph Cornell boxes, it was a parrot box which had parrots on the inside and a glass front. Cornell had broken the glass front and put another glass over it. It had you looking through it like you were looking through a broken window. It is in the Cornell show right now in New York, and it was one of the very best boxes. All of those things were feeding into this group of very tightly knit artists. There was a moment in time when they were each trying, in the nicest sense of fellowship, to knock each other off. Could one be better than the next when they had their exhibitions? It was right in that phase that Kenny Price did his second exhibition, the exhibition where the cups were boxed. It was the first cup show and they were all in beautiful little boxes, almost like Cornell boxes. Robert Irwin did a series of tiny paintings, six by eight inches, but in very rich, heavy impasto, kind of a sweep, like an eye shape almost in the middle of it, and with very soft pastel color. There probably are two or three of those around. Billy Al Bengston, to top that, painted his whole show in a week. They gave him a month, but I think it was a very short time, which was the motorcycle show. They were feeding and fighting off of each other, using these esoteric resources that had never been available in Los Angeles before, which is the difference, I guess you'd say, between the West Coast and New York. It had real impact on that whole gang, especially some other people as well. It may have been a combination of Johns and Schwitters, I think you're right. There were not too many Schwitters. I remember when I went to Fort Worth I bought the last one from that group at the Fort Worth Museum, which was a very beautiful one. The Johns show was there, and there was also a Johns show at Everett Ellen.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I heard about that one.

MR. HOPKINS: Which was a little bit later on.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It would have been 1962, or not later than 1962.

MR. HOPKINS: That's right because the Ferus show had the flashlights. I don't think it had the coffee cans, but I remember seeing the flashlights and the light bulbs. And Irving Blum still has one of the lights from that period of time, the flash-light, but somebody bought them. That show had some impact on Ed, for sure. It drove him off to New York and Europe, if I'm not wrong.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: What about the Braun Gallery? It was showing New Yorkers too at that point. Henry and I were working together at the time. They were showing Rauschenberg. I remember the show with Reinhardt's black paintings.

MR. HOPKINS: Yves Klein came and did a body performance, having this model roll on the canvas.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: That was almost more avant-garde than Ferus. Ferus was seen like a local-

MR. HOPKINS: The Ferus Gallery was driven by one person's taste, it was pretty much Walter Hopps's taste. When Irving Blum came along, he brought his hard, clean taste. The gallery was a composite of the two for a while. When Walter left and went to Pasadena, Irving's taste came forward. The key is that it was totally shoestring. They didn't have a dime. I think when Irving came to work his salary was \$200 a month, and Walter didn't make a dime anyway. The only money behind the gallery was Shirley Hopps, who was a teaching assistant at U.C.L.A. She had a little bit of family money. She's the one that essentially kept the doors open. It's amazing when you think what they did do, how they ever convinced anybody-. The history that Walter has worked out was based on another romantic moment in Los Angeles art which was back in the 1950s, when a man named William Copley became a major collector of Surrealist art. William Copley is the brother of the man who runs Copley newspapers in San Diego, which are exceptionally right-wing newspapers. Bill Copley was the black sheep in the family, totally left wing and totally art-oriented; he is a painter himself. He did ten shows in ten months. They've now been documented. They were all Surrealist. One was Ernst, one was Tanguy, one was Man Ray. Not a single painting sold from any of those shows, so that's where Bill Copley's collection of paintings came from. It was also a moment in time when Walter, who was a very young person, saw those things. That's what turned him in that whole direction. His attitude about show-making came out of that sensibility-with no money. Virginia Lawrence, heiress to the 3-M Company, opened a space in Westwood over by the U.C.L.A. campus, and they moved to another location. When they opened they did an Yves Klein show, which was very rare to do.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: The Tinguely show.

MR. HOPKINS: Right. They did a Franz Kline exhibition. They did a Philip Guston exhibition, a Robert Rauschenberg exhibition, and Everett Ellen did Johns. He was Everett's-I don't know if Everett was the lawyer. It was a moment when some gallery had more money behind them than Ferus. So it was more avant-garde. I remember the San Francisco criticism, that they were too rich, too wealthy and, therefore, it wasn't a serious exhibition. Ed and Joe were the funny beneficiaries. Now Ed went off to Europe. On that trip he gave Rauschenberg a little painting called *Ace*, which would be in the exhibition. And the question as to whether that little painting is a tribute to Rauschenberg's painting called *Ace*, or whether Ed's giving the little painting to Rauschenberg is because of the little painting of *Ace* that was painted by Rauschenberg. That would be very interesting to get straightened out accurately. I can't pinpoint which it was. The reason it was interesting is that here were these young artists in Southern California, Ruscha and Goode, although there were others, who were linked to the Pop artists in New York, linked to Warhol and Lichtenstein, and obviously the generation preceding that, the Johns and the Rauschenbergs were the key feed-ins for both the East Coast and West Coast people. But Ed and Joe knew nothing about Lichtenstein and nothing about Warhol when they started doing their Pop art or common objects painting, and certainly Lichtenstein and Warhol knew nothing about Goode and Ruscha, and [inaudible] didn't know anything about Ramos and Thiebaud up here in Northern California. So six kind of different, there were many more, manifestations in Pop Art all occurred in 1960 and 1961, totally without any relationship between the artist, and all spinning off of Abstract Expressionism, and then Rauschenberg and Johns translating, especially in Johns early targets and the early drawings. Ed's earliest print, *Gas*, and Joe Goode's earliest print, *Screwdriver*, are both in the nicest sense rip-offs of Jasper Johns's *Coathanger* print, which was at Everett Ellen's gallery along with some other things. They're drawn the same way, the tusche is worked the same way. The image is different than Johns's image, but the whole feathery line of the litho print. Ed did a couple of other prints at that time, one called *Division Street*, and one with a sign that then broke away and became more word oriented. With the gasoline print, all a grey field, there is a little gas can at the bottom, with the word "gas" across it, so the word part was set very early.

?: Just one last question on that Johns show at the Ferus. Was the painting *Tennyson* in it?

MR. HOPKINS: The painting *Tennyson* was probably in the exhibition because it went into the Don Factor collection. I think it went to Don Factor, in fact, I'm sure it did. Don was buying really only from Ferus. It could have been that Don bought that painting and lent it to the exhibition. There was that kind of relationship, it's very possible. He might have bought it from Leo and showed it there. And then there was another-Des Moines Art Center-

MR. HOPKINS: That's now. They now own it. Des Moines Art Center bought it in about 1969 or 1970. When Don and Lynn Factor divorced, and sold the collection, it was Don Factor's. And then there was the four-fold canvas of Johns. He took the can-vas and the four corners that fold over to the Center. I've forgotten the name of it now. That was probably in the exhibition. But I've never really talked to Ed about how strong an influence Johns was, but obviously there's a lot of imagistic overlap.

?: He's very open about it, and he said he's discussed it with Johns, and Johns doesn't believe him.

MR. HOPKINS: It's funny because they were-it set those patterns, for the grey paintings especially. The Joe Goode milk bottle painting behind you is right out of Jasper's. There's no question but the color sense and everything else comes out of that, even the ringing around the little bottle at the bottom. But Ed and Joe, I can't make it a defined art historical situation, but Thiebaud and Ramos were doing one thing with comic book material and lollipops and so forth and so on up here, and Lichtenstein and Warhol took off in their flat-painted direction and Goode and Ruscha both came more directly out of Johns. But their subject matter was more human. That's why Walter Hopps, who was working at that time, did a lecture called "The Common Object," which he preferred to the title "Pop Art," which is more drastic.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Why did Franz Kline seem to be the most popular of the Abstract Expressionist painters, of that group of artists? And the other thing is the infatuation with Hollywood, is it from living there?

MR. HOPKINS: I can answer the question about Franz Kline because I know it isn't the truth. De Kooning was thought to be coming too much out of the European base. There were strong Still aficionados, also I mentioned Richard Ruben who was painting in Southern California out of Still. Still was in Northern California. The word floated down, mainly through people like John Altoon, Craig Kauffman, and some others. Diebenkorn was a young hero to all of them at that moment. But Franz Kline was the most purely basical American, and that was the issue. It had nothing to do with patriotism or anything else. It was just that it didn't have a European link or base, and it was aggressive, straight-forward, black and white.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Even the titles.

MR. HOPKINS: Actually the artist of that group most affected by Hollywood imagery is really Ed. All of them are

Southern Californians, though whenever you talk to them, and ask how much influence has that had on you, they all deny it had any. Many of them in that period of time, Bengston, I know, Irwin, I know, Bell, I know, went off to New York to live for a while. They all put their tail between their legs and came right back home almost as fast as they got back there, to an environment where they could function well. They weren't terribly well received, either. Even more than Hollywood, the influence of the beach area around Venice, and the fact that most of them were involved in one way or another, if not actually in bike racing like Bengston was, going to events like that. Many of them were involved in surfing, the high shine of the surfboard, that kind of fiberglass surfacing. I'm sure it's had a real impact on artists like Kenny Price, Billy Al, Irwin to a certain extent. The Hollywood sensibility, or Southern California sensibility, certainly affected lifestyles not only of that group, but a lot of other artists that lived and worked there as well. They all had very elegant studios even though they might not have had fifteen cents. They lived the Southern California life in terms of the outdoors and indoors, and so forth. In Ed's case, I don't want to go too far out on a limb, but I would say, from a purely personal observation, that a young man coming from Oklahoma and undoubtedly steeped in movie lore and everything else under the sun, the fact that he had close liaisons with one or more movie starlets along the line, and that he had off and on had a big car, like a Rolls, I'm sure it's just a young country kid adapting to that very exotic world. To his benefit and detriment, he was more drawn into it than almost all the rest of them. I think now he's reached a level of different maturity, he seems to be shifting. But I'm sure he will be Hollywood star-struck.

?: Are there any things which come to mind, having to do with those early years, especially the late 1950s and early 1960s, that were important? There was a lot going on. When I asked Ed about it, he goes, "Nuhhhhh."

MR. HOPKINS: Let me jump ahead, if I may. There's one other thing that I think may have information of, and only Ed may be the other one. That has to do with the chocolate room, the Venice Biennale. That was in 1970, which was the worst conceivable year for the Biennale. I was asked to do it, and the desire was to present a major representation of American printmakers, and to take over a lithographic studio, and take over a silkscreen studio and take over a lot of other things, and really emphasize America's printmaking. Well, it was a nice idea, but it was during the Paris revolts, student revolts, the American Vietnamese revolts, and anti-government period of time, and the tradition of American exhibitions in relation to the Venice Biennale in the past was to show one, two, three artists, and it was an honor. If we had selected one artist, then perhaps it wouldn't have been a problem because it would have been very hard for him or her to say I'm not going to do it, but because the exhibition was made up of fifty different artists, then many of them said no, we're not going to participate in this government sponsored thing. It was never really government sponsored, but that wasn't the issue in any case during the end of the Johnson years and the beginning of the Nixon years. So many of the artists simply said, no, they didn't want to come. One of the processes that we had hoped we could work out would be that once each month, during the time of the Biennale, an artist would come and produce interesting and major work. It would be a demonstration as well as an exhibition. Since Ed was a good friend and I hadn't seen Ed in a long time, I asked him if he would be interested. He went through the same moral dilemmas that all the other artists were going through, because it really was a national scandal. I was getting called on the phone at two or three in the morning, don't go, don't go, do this, do that. I felt an obligation to go ahead and do what I could do. So I asked Ed if he would be the first artist. He agreed to come, but it was only out of personal friendship, because morally he would have liked to have not done it for any variety of reasons. So he came. Without my going into incredible details of the complexity of getting it all set up, he was to be able to do what he wanted to do, and to fill one room, which would be about twice the size of this office, with whatever he did, a series of prints, a new print, the process of prints and so on. But he had just recently gotten involved in working with natural materials, like cherries on moire and things of that kind. So he decided that he would do a chocolate. He went downtown in Venice and bought hundreds of tubes of Nestle's chocolate tube stuff, you squeeze out the end like a paint tube, but there's chocolate inside it. He squeezed that out on a silkscreen thing, and then screened, I don't know how many, maybe a thousand sheets of that pale chocolate and pinned them all up on the inside of the room completely covering the inside of the room. It looked like a Berkeley shingled bungalow on the inside, the color comes flapping loose at the bottom, and it had a very strange effect. Again, it was one of Ed's more Surrealist-there were very strong Surreal stages that go along with the work, it was an environment. That high chocolate odor, after about a week in that room, you'd be totally out of your mind.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It got stronger rather than weaker?

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, and then after about the second day of the Biennale people realized what it was, and they began to lick their fingers, and then wipe the paintings and dirty words and things. And then the end came when the ants came. The ants came by the billions, and were climbing up the wall, and that became a totally different piece. It was very much in the 1970s and 1980s style in terms of a piece that changes itself by virtue of the impact of nature. I've never asked Ed. I've always wondered if that had anything to do with the ant piece and the ant prints and the fly prints and the bug prints that came along after that time. It was really wonderful to see how aggressive an ant was, and how far it could climb up the wall. That was a unique piece. I hope we'll have a photograph at least in the catalog. It opens up two kinds of avenues. One to its Surrealist statement, and one to its environment situation, which nobody had really been working with that much in Southern California, plus being a really dumb piece. It's hard to go back and comment on things that were having influence, because it



was a very lively time in the whole Los Angeles area. About 1962 Walter Hopps went off to work at the Pasadena Museum, and I went off to work at the L.A. County Museum, and we became very immersed in our work. So the really close, day by day, Barney Beanery contact came to an end at that point. We kept close tabs on each other, but I wasn't following everything that went on.

?: I asked Ed if that chocolate work had anything to do with Duchamp's and he just said, "How could you be so wrong?" It never dawned on him.

MR. HOPKINS: Is that what he said? Well, I don't know either. When did he do *Mews*, *Pews*?

?: 1970, the same year.

MR. HOPKINS: Did he do it after the [inaudible] *Balloon*?

?: I don't know. Wait, I have the month. When was he in Venice?

MR. HOPKINS: He was in Venice in June, in fact, he was going on up to London to work on that.

?: Okay, then he did them after.

MR. HOPKINS: The next question would be whether he did those organic things before that time.

?: Yes, *Stains* was 1969.

MR. HOPKINS: *Stains* was 1969, the little book *Stains*. That kind of set the pattern.

?: I was surprised to hear you say that he considered not going for political reasons. It's the most colloquial thing I've ever heard about.

MR. HOPKINS: He's not very political. It's interesting because, speaking of that same thing, of all the artists who chose not to go, for example, Rauschenberg and Sam Francis, who were good friends, we had a long, hard, wrenching conversation on the telephone, but I understood. I made it clear at that time that I felt I had to go, but I would abide by any decision they made, I would fully understand that. But strangely enough, Jasper Johns decided to go, and Ed did come. We did show Ed's prints, also the Standard Station prints. In fact, the show didn't look too bad. It would have been much better if everybody had been there, but of the people who were there, the European audiences responded to Ed. They knew the Standard Station prints, and were very interested. It didn't have to do with Ed so much, which is a thing I've always wondered about in the art world generally-prints got out of hand at about that same period of time, too many of them were being done. But when you take somebody like Ed, he developed a strong international reputation just on his prints and was certainly selling his books. Nobody in Europe had ever seen a painting, never, but he was a very well known artist, simply because his prints were getting seen in London galleries, Berlin galleries, and all over the place. I've often wondered in terms of an artist who was getting started, and worrying about what to do and how to proceed and where to go, that prints had this wonderful capacity of being shown in a lot of different galleries without having to have a dealer as such. I think it has a very salutary effect on an artist's career after that time. I think that was true of both Ed and Joe, and some of that younger group. Ed was not really political. But it was such an issue, as I say. The group in New York especially, the Artists Coalition was very politically active at that moment, justifiably, but they were on the phone at midnight, two in the morning, trying to get anybody who was going to stop from going. So Ed got in the midst of it. He said no and then he said yes, so I assumed it was for political reasons. For personal reasons he said yes.

?: I wonder. Do you know a story about a letter that he was going to have his mother write to you? He saved the letter from his mother to you, which he never sent to you when he decided to go. "Eddie can't-

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, that's right. In fact, the first Newport show, I remember his mother wrote an introduction to the catalog. And I never knew whether it was his mother or not.

?: I wonder. I don't know. And then Mason Williams did a foreword to that.

MR. HOPKINS: Ask him a little bit about his creative showing at the Surrealist gallery in New York. Iola's Galley. Because Ed has always, to me, been an enigma in one sense, because you see the Johnsian association, you see the wonderful word association, the Hollywood phenomena, looking at it from the West Coast. There are many things that are really an extension of the Surrealists. I would say that Ed probably, whether intellectually or intuitively, has more and more a European sensibility than a lot of the other Southern California artists. Maybe that's why he was received so well outside, even though the words are in English.

?: The only thing I've ever seen in print that he said about that, in hindsight, he said that he saw a real strong connection to Surrealism, that it wasn't anything he was absorbing or working on developing.

MR. HOPKINS: If you go back to the old Ferus Gallery, I don't know how much day-by-day conversation with that group of people Ed would have been privy to, but I know that he spent days, weeks and months making lists on yellow sheets: who is the most important artist in the world, what are we going to do about it, how are we going to work, all this and all that. It's formal thing, too, that funny working at the edge as well as the funny Surreal. If there was a subconscious thing that was there, it would have come from the fact that much of what they saw was influenced, and much of what they heard about would come through Walter Hopps, by way of the kids' adoration of the whole Surrealist phenomena. At that moment in time, Oldenburg came on with his parking lot, what did he call it, I've forgotten.

?: Happenings.

MR. HOPKINS: Happenings, a major phenomenon. And Micky St. Phalle came out, for shock. She did that piece, painted rubber dolls white, but then there was paint inside the rubber doll.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: She had a show at Duanne.

MR. HOPKINS: She would fire into this, and then the paint would come out like blood, red and yellow, and drip down in front of the white surface of these dolls. Yves Klein probably had more influence than any other single individual, just as a phenomenon. He died very shortly after that and became kind of a cult hero. Then you have the people on the other side who are equally influential, artists like Dennis Hopper, for example, somebody who was in the movie colony, who were art collectors and strange surreal people at the same time.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Henry, the first question today, to pick up after the Ruscha interview, was why Fort Worth? Why leave L.A. when you had pretty much the kind of job that you were interested in, and the control of your own programs?

MR. HOPKINS: Well, probably as much as anything else, the thing I mentioned before, I had begun to feel that I should become a director. It was a period in time, about 1967-1968, right at that moment, there was a great deal of confusion in Los Angeles. I mentioned that the director at the time, Ken Donahue, and I did not see eye to eye on a number of issues. I felt an indebtedness and had a certain admiration for Rick Brown who had been the previous director at the L.A. County Museum of Art. He had gone on to Fort Worth at the Kimbell Museum. The Pasadena Art Museum was going along, having some difficulty, and I remember quite vividly, it goes back to those early days, but it was a situation where Tom Levitt, who had been the director of the Pasadena Museum for an extended period of time and had done a very good job, left to go to Santa Barbara, and Walter Hopes had been working as a curator of the Pasadena Museum. The issue then was what would happen, would they bring in a new director, would Walter be the director, what would happen? We had a long conversation about that, and he did not want to be a director, he wanted to be a curator, but he felt that if he didn't take the directorial position, somebody would come in that he would not be able to work with, or that he could be responsive to, or some-thing else, and he would not be able to carry on the program that he was interested in. So he stepped into the directorial role, and simply didn't handle it very well. Obviously, he is a better curator and always has been. I felt differently about myself. I felt that the grounding I had had at L.A. County was very good, and very complex in a big institution, and was really leading me towards directorial ranks. Since I was in a position to go any number of places, anywhere a position existed, it didn't matter if it was a little place, a big place or whatever else. I decided that if an opportunity came for me to be a director, I would take that opportunity. Well, why Fort Worth?

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Let me rap about the director for a minute. There is in many professions, certainly academia is one, museums another, nursing is another, a situation where you go into it for one function, love of that function, whether it's teaching, curating, nursing, and as you go up the ladder, you often get further and further away from it. To go to the top of the ladder, you go into administration where you may be doing none of it, and yet one has the dilemma, do you lose what you love to go higher, it pays better, has more power-

MR. HOPKINS: That's it. I would answer that two ways. One, the fact that I went to Fort Worth, instead of holding out for a directorship in a big institution, wherever that might have been. I was very cognizant of the fact that if I was in a big institution, I would be called upon to be fundamentally an administrator, and that's not what I want to do, you're quite right. I did not want to lose the curatorial contact. That partially answers the question, why Fort Worth, be-cause, as I had mentioned, I went to Fort Worth at Rick Brown's request, with the possibility in mind of being Head of Publication at the Kimbell Museum. Now the thing that was wrong, it was the same position I held at L.A. County, I knew that the new Kimbell Museum was going to be wonderful because Lou Connolly had been selected as the architect. I also knew that for the first time Rick Brown would have a chance to build the building with the architect that he responded to, rather than the relationship in Los Angeles with Perreira and the trustees and so on. There was a great deal positive about that. But when I went to Fort Worth with him to look at the plans for the building, it was very exciting and very stimulating in a lot of different ways, I recognized two things clearly. One, that the museum was not going to be dealing with twentieth-century art, my area of interest and my love, and secondly, if I were to work with Rick the second go-around-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: You were in the same position.

MR. HOPKINS: I was in the same position, and I was learning from the same mentor. Although Rick had a great deal to give and gave a great deal to me after that, it still was a situation where I wasn't really growing. I was standing still although in a different institution. So we communicated back and forth by letter and I expressed these concerns and I expressed some other concerns, and I think a year went by, a year had gone by, until 1968. He chatted to me about a variety of things, so I went to Fort Worth for a second time to visit Rick with two things in mind, and this was, I suppose, a little calculating on my part, having no idea what would happen, but the job that he had offered was there and was open. I was increasingly disgruntled in the Los Angeles situation, and the scene that he'd set about the Fort Worth being without a director was an interesting scene, because I could see in that a possibility where, since he was at the Kimbell Museum, Mr. Wilder was Director of the Carter Museum of Western Art. Nick Wilder was a man whom I knew also.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: From L.A.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, he used to be the dean of Chouinard, and I respected him and his knowledge of American art. I said that's kind of a wonderful soup to be in, if you're going to be in a soup, with two very good people in the field. But I didn't know anything about the Fort Worth Art Museum. So I went to Fort Worth, and I talked to Rick a little bit about the Kimbell Museum and went to the Fort Worth Art Center Museum which was a funny little building on a hill. It had a very scattered past. It had begun in the 1950s as the one art museum for the city of Fort Worth, which was a city of about 300,000 people, with surrounding territory of another couple of hundred thousand, and very much a cow town, and referred to as such. It was not very exciting or invigorating or visually stimulating.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It was always seen as second rate to Dallas, wasn't it?

MR. HOPKINS: Well, it certainly played second fiddle, certainly smaller than Dallas, but in Texas terminology nobody plays second fiddle to anybody, there's strong people in every town. But it was a true Texas city, there was no question about it, with strong families and strong people. But the Art Center had never had any sense of direction, and that's one thing, of course, when it was there alone. When Amon Carter came along in 1960, that changed some of the roles, and it was collecting Early American art. With Kimbell looming on the horizon, which was to be an art history museum, the pattern was there. It wasn't a question of filling out all of art history or trying to make a straight-forward one, two, three, four, five, six, seven-all the way through time, it was financially impossible. It was to be a collection based more or less on the Frick model, an extraordinary grouping of works. It was not a question of how many there were, but just simply trying to emphasize the qualitative sense. It would range all the way from, as Rick Brown typified it, cave painting to Cubism. Well, this left the Fort Worth Art Center out in the cold in a funny way. It was the only city-sponsored museum. It had a few objects of nice quality. They had just at that moment, in fact, to make a little play for recognition, had purchased, as I remember, at an international auction, where they auctioned a Picasso painting, given by Picasso to help the foreign flood relief, collecting and salvaging works of art during that period in Europe, the flood period, and they had bid for that and had just gotten it. They had a couple of Mannerist paintings, and a couple of Dürer prints, and a few other things. The things that they had the most of, of reasonable quality, were early twentieth-century, a nice Georgia O'Keeffe, a nice Dove, they had a number of nice things. In the middle of all that they had that extra-ordinary painting of Thomas Eakins called *The Swimming Hole*, a real hodge-podge. The building itself had been designed, the story at least, initially by one of the Bauhaus architects. It was a nice clean little building, but apparently when the design was submitted to the Board of Trustees, the man who was then the president smashed the model with the back of his hand and said, we don't want anything of that sort here. He then died or something happened, and the Board picked up the plan and refigured it and built a bastardized version. It was not a big space, but it was okay, a clean space as far as that's concerned. The interior, I'll never forget, was totally done in pegboard, which was an idea in the 1950s, to hang works of art by using hooks. I saw that and I just cringed. The floor was cork, and half of it was coming up. I thought, my God, coming from the L.A. County Museum which was a brand-new building, what does this mean, what could I do, how could I do it? So I kept thinking to myself, that if they would accept the idea that they should become a twentieth-century museum or a modern museum, and not compete with the Kimbell Museum, and not compete with the Amon Carter Museum, that would be a very interesting challenge, at least for a period of time.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: And if they also would allow you to shape it the way you wanted it.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, without their getting too much of that because, as you know, on the job interview there are a lot of things you can hold in your head and others you can say out loud and hope they will work out for the best. I had a feeling from talking to the people that were there, that they were open and they understood when I talked about the cooperation between the three museums, and how unique in the United States it would be if they could function that way, because they were really only about a hundred yards apart. They were all together in a little park-like setting.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I may have forgotten and missed something here. Did they approach you, or-

MR. HOPKINS: Well, because it's a very tight community, there was this thing where, yes, they were very interested, and Rick was interested and said, come down and just feel it out and see what happens.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: By word of mouth.

MR. HOPKINS: I was then being interviewed formally. As I say, the one kind of resounding moment, I don't know why they ever gave me the job, because I sat down after being through the museum, at the country club, and I said, "Well, if I came, I would like to see it be a twentieth-century museum," and I explained the reasons for that, and that the first thing that I would do would be to get rid of all that pegboard on the inside, get rid of the cork floors and try to make a more presentable space out of it. Everybody nodded their heads. I had been asked to come and have cocktails at the house of one of the board members, and the whole living room was done in pegboard. Imagine! I had stepped on a toe, I had been speaking of the oddities in the museum world. I had never felt myself to have extremely long hair, or an extremely untidy mustache or what have you, but I know that one of the considerations was whether they should ask me to shave off my mustache if I came down to be a director. They didn't raise that issue until much later on. You never know what's going to get you a job, or what isn't going to get you a job, for whatever reason. However, they agreed to what I thought was interesting, and I waited in my own mind and went back to Los Angeles and I really fretted a lot about those things but made the decision that I would go there to just simply see what would happen. Now that linked, too, as long as we're doing a personalized tape, with the fact that I was having at that moment marital difficulties, and had made a decision to-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I thought they were pretty much over by this time.

MR. HOPKINS: My wife and I made a final decision to separate, so that was a different thing than taking off on my own and various other things. It was a combination of things. I've seen that happen several times in museum people's lives where they're starting a new life. I went to the Fort Worth Museum. We had not much money, I think our annual operating budget was about \$300,000 a year. But one rather nice thing, a man named Benjamin Tiller had died, yet he had nothing to do with the museum, but he left it a chunk of money, over a million dollars, a very enlightened beginning. It was one of those rare, rare situations where the man wasn't even involved in art and had left a major gift to the museum, and had left it to buy art rather than a building. It gave us about \$100,000 a year to buy things, which even then was not a lot of money, but in 1968 it was a lot more than it is now in 1980, both in terms of prices of works of art and value. I think one of the first things that I did do, I remember, which shocked everybody, but which fortunately worked out. A very good woman named Ruth Johnson was the daughter of Amon Carter, and was essentially the whole power in control behind the Amon Carter Museum, and was not on my board. But she had given to the museum a very nice little Renoir painting called *Jean with a Hoop*. It was not a lush Renoir, but it was a good Renoir painting, and the value of it at that time was somewhere around \$150,000 - \$160,000. I had the opportunity to trade it straight across for a 1909 Picasso Cubist bronze head, the original casting, and a 1925 Kandinsky painting. We negotiated, and I made the trade. It was really right there, as much as anywhere, where either my ideas were going to have some impact of worth or-and a lot of people had balked and gotten upset-but she helped to smooth that whole transition.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: She didn't mind.

MR. HOPKINS: She didn't mind, and that made the trade, taking one of the earlier twentieth-century objects, and translating it into two extraordinarily good twentieth-century objects, began to give a little bit of cohesion to the collection. So at that moment we were pretty much off and running. I had a good young staff there, the museum was small enough so I was the director and chief curator as well. I felt very happy to be able to get back into exhibitions. It was not that hard to administer with that kind of budget, and I tried to weigh certain things about the community; it was very different from one section of the country to the other. One of my favorite stories, when I first got down there, I went with the young president of my board, a man named Ed Hudson, to visit a number of people who lived in Fort Worth, and the idea was to go to each person and to try and get \$10,000 from each of those people to help operate the museum. We started around, we were having success and everything, people were anxious for something to happen, and the fact that the Kimbell was happening helped stimulate, but I remember going to the home of the Fullers who were collectors of the early [Peter] Prendergast, and I was thinking so hard about the \$10,000 that I wanted that I was concentrating on that. At one moment they asked me if I liked to hunt, and I said, well, I don't like to hunt game, deer and things of that kind, but I do like to bird shoot. And they said, wonderful, we love to bird shoot, we have 800,000 acres out in West Texas, come out and shoot with us sometime, and I didn't even hear it, because I was concentrating on getting the money. So we ended up and they did agree to give us \$10,000, and I was walking out of the house and he [Ed Hudson] turned and said to me, "You know, they don't have 800,000 acres out in West Texas." And I said, "Oh, what do you mean?" And he said, "No, we have two 400,000-acre plots that butt up against one another." I realized at that very early moment that in Texas there are very tight interpretations of such things, all kinds of things, that you learn and you adhere to and you accept, and that's the difference between-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -between the rich and the rich.

MR. HOPKINS: The other thing I was told about a month after I got down there, was never say anything about anybody because everybody was related. Essentially that was true, and it turned out to be good advice all the way along the line. It's especially true in Texas in a social grouping, where everybody is first cousin, second cousin, third cousin, cousin once removed and uncle or something, so you have to be a little careful with your comments. The third bit of advice I was given was that you could do anything you wanted to do in the confines of your own house, but don't do it out in the street, so those three maxims essentially were the ones that guided me.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Texas life.

MR. HOPKINS: As a matter of fact, as it turned out, I stayed five years and I took great pride in the last six months because I was told then I couldn't even consider being a Texan unless I had been there at least five years. It took five years before you could even be thought of as being a Texan. I knew it was very different from California where, if you were there for three months, you could vote and so forth and so on. And that became a guideline as well, what is a neophyte, what isn't a neophyte and how it all functions.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: There was an interesting program recently on PBS. They were talking about how there were more newcomers going into Texas at this point than any place else in this country. Several hundred thousand a month.

MR. HOPKINS: I think that is true because I was very conscious of that while I was there. Having been in Southern California, I was used obviously to comfortable warm weather, and much of Texas weather was very pleasant, some ice storms in the spring and intense heat, which I wasn't used to, in the summer. There were days and weeks that were over a hundred degrees. I don't know whether I had filled you in much with Dr. Henderson. He was the psychiatrist of Jackson Pollock, and I understand is one of the best psychiatrists, analysts (Jungian), one of the best in the country.

JOSEPH HENDERSON: I am a psychiatrist and a Jungian analyst.

MR. HOPKINS: And at the time, I guess it was about 1948-

MR. HENDERSON: Oh no, it was much earlier than that, it was 1938-1939, and 1939-1940.

MR. HOPKINS: When Pollock was seeing Dr. Henderson. He did a series of drawings at that time, which were not part of the therapy, but things that he did during that period of time. They've since that time become quite renowned, as a matter of fact. There was an article, I don't know whether you saw it or not, in *Art in America*.

MR. HENDERSON: Yes, the man who wrote it sent it to me. No, it wasn't he, it was somebody else, some editor of a magazine.

MR. HOPKINS: In fact, I remember when they were first shown there was that furor about-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -whether they were art or not.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, whether they were breaking a confidence or not, I guess is what it was.

MR. HENDERSON: Yes, I was accused of revealing confidential material and that, however, has all subsided and the less said about it, the better.

MR. HOPKINS: It has not only subsided but has subsided favorably. The fact that they were works of art, that they were not-

MR. HENDERSON: It was decided legally by a jury and it was duly recorded by Frankenstein. The result of the hearing was that the California Medical Association found that no revelation of confidential material associated with the paintings, and the trouble with it was it was one of those awful East-West conflicts, where people in the East don't know what's going on. I had the misfortune and the stupidity, I guess, to give an interview to a thing called, *World Medical News*, in which I hoped to inform my colleagues that there was a revelation of confidential material, but that I felt that Pollock's paintings were of such value that they should be seen. Indeed everybody agreed that they should, including Mrs. Pollock, and the Pollock estate, and the New York Museum of Modern Art. But that did cause even more trouble to me. Mrs. Pollock then decided that I was worse than she had originally thought, and so I was accused of having-to the California Medical Society. So that dragged on for four years, but that's all settled, and it might never have happened, if I hadn't given that information. That's why I'm very afraid of interviews, and so with your tape you will be very careful.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: This tape is confidential, archival-

MR. HENDERSON: That's a comfort.

MR. HOPKINS: But it's just very interesting because I remember that very well, and I was very pleased then to see when they came out with the solidly documented Pollock history.

MR. HENDERSON: Yes, I was delighted with that. I thought that was exactly what should happen. Then, you see, the next thing, the most recent thing that happened was that Fred Whitman came to me. He bought up all these paintings, as many as he could get. I was pleased with that when I first heard about it. My original idea was that they should be all kept together and not sold piecemeal. I had only kept two small ones myself and sold all the rest of them, and hoped that they would be a collection. That was what Mr. Nordland, who was then the head of the gallery of the museum, thought too. If it had all worked out according to that plan, it would have been very nice. So then I thought, well, maybe it's still going to happen, if Fred Whitman would give the whole collection to the San Francisco Museum that would solve the whole problem of where they would be.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It would be a wonderful solution.

MR. HENDERSON: I told him my cousin, Harriet Henderson, was the best informed woman in his social circle about art that he could possibly find, and that he should talk to her about it, which I'm sure he didn't do. If he did, I don't know how he did it or what came out of it. He's a slippery character, and having built up a great idea of what I was going to do to help promote this thing, he then vanished, and I never heard anything more.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, I can fill you in a little. Harriet may have filled you in some. Again, at the urging of Al Frankenstein, of course, again, who felt it would be very good, obviously, that the drawings could remain here in San Francisco and could be a part of the collection of the museum. And my recognition of the fact that from whatever period, whatever scale, or whatever else, they had significant value, and indeed they do now that they are part of a body of work. When you have that many together, even though each one individually is not so much, it gets to be a pretty hefty total. While I don't pretend to know the whole background or history of Mr. Whitman and his involvement, he is in the process of getting them valued now and a guess-if it's not anything else, it's a guess-the total collection of what he holds would be somewhere in the range of \$800,000, roughly \$30,000-50,000 a drawing. He made a proposal to us, which was not an unrealistic proposal, where essentially he would give half, we would buy half, but that's an amount of money that the museum just doesn't have, \$400,000. It was a question of working that over an extended period of time, and during this doing some other things. And we did discuss it at our November Board meeting, and there were mixed emotions because, obviously it would be the biggest commitment the museum has ever made toward anything, and people were afraid of it, understandably, because of the longevity of it, and would we have the money, could we do it, couldn't we do it. Then a great deal of information which I had not known prior to my meeting with Mr. Whitman, whereas many people, Harriet and others on the Board, know him well, and there's no point in going into detail about that, but I wouldn't say it's hopeful, but it would be my hope that it wouldn't be just simply closed off, that we could continue somehow to work out something, but we couldn't act that speedily. He was anxious to have it happen right away because it would have been advantageous in terms of some giving he needed to do. Then Harriet called you, and I understand that in addition to the two little drawings you also had a painting at one time or another.

MR. HENDERSON: I did have, but Fred has them all now.

MR. HOPKINS: Okay, so that one went to Fred too.

MR. HENDERSON: The signed painting that Pollock gave me as a present I sold along with the others.

MR. HOPKINS: Okay. Well, that's interesting. She didn't mention that she had bought that in addition to the drawings. She did indicate that you had sold that. I didn't know that it had gone to Mr. Whitman.

MR. HENDERSON: Well, it went into the general collection. It was part of the general collection when I sold the whole thing. It's on the front page of that-

MR. HOPKINS: -the book. I think that's it. It's right here in the hard bound. The crucifixion one, is that the one?

MR. HENDERSON: Yes, it looks like a crucifixion. That's the one, that was the signed painting.

MR. HOPKINS: Okay, so that's the one that you had too.

MR. HENDERSON: Yes.

MR. HOPKINS: But the thing was and remains of interest to us because of the wonderful Pollock painting that we own called the *Guardians of the Secret*, one of the first major paintings after that period of time.

MR. HENDERSON: Yes, I remember.

MR. HOPKINS: And looking through this book, and standing in front of the painting, much of the same kind of symbology as it plays back and forth between the two works, which you may not know and Harriet may not have had the time to mention, but we have been trying here at the museum to make our dedicated core or collection. A group of people of that generation, Clyfford Still among the few, who gave us a wonderful gift of twenty-eight paintings, Philip Guston, who was in Los Angeles, who has given us a wonderful gift of paintings, and Robert Motherwell, with whom I'm negotiating right now, as a matter of fact, and he's very favorable toward working on new things. And then Paul [inaudible]. So there are five great members of the so-called New York School, all Western boys, and the ones that are alive who I talk to are interested in reclaiming their Western heritage which is very nice-they've run off to the East Coast. I think that we've made some very good and very solid in-roads, we've built a lot of wonderful things into the collection that we hope we'll have the space to really deal with eventually. But the two hard ones that you would guess are Pollock and Rothko because they are gone. And Pollock prices are very high, yet even there, I hope-you know, fingers crossed in the Rothko case-we can get to it. So when I heard the possibility that you might be interested in having the two little drawings here, I would be delighted.

MR. HENDERSON: Well, I would. My wife and I are quite fond of them. We're a bit reluctant to give them up, but I do think that they should be seen and enjoyed by other people. Yet Harriet said that it might be possible to retain part ownership. Did she say that?

MR. HOPKINS: Well, there are two or three things that we can do-the legalities. Back in 1963 it was possible, up until that time, to give a work of art to a museum and hold it within your own collection, like you would any other time, until the time of your demise, at which time it would pass automatically to the museum. It was a very nice ruling before then. In a funny way it's the kind of thing I wish had never changed, because the person who bought them or who collected them, or whatever they had in the collection would have been [inaudible] used, and then ultimately they would be designated for a public collection. There would be no question about it and that was perfect. But that law was turned over or changed in 1963, so that now the situation is one where if you, for example, gave us half of the two drawings, they're legally half yours and they're legally half ours. That would mean that we would have them six months out of the year and you would have them six months out of the year. When you gave the other half then they would become yours in terms of possession. Where it's possible for us to legally work around the edges is if you gave them entirely or gave a larger portion, half of them-it has to do with your willingness to make them available, so that if we were using them for an exhibition and what have you.

MR. HENDERSON: You would have to ask for them then.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, and if, in fact, you might say it's your six months to have the Pollock drawings, then we might say, "Thank you, Dr. Henderson, we would really love to have them here but at this moment we don't have the space, so if you don't mind, if they could just stay there a little while longer." That can be done on a gentlemen's agreement. But let me just ask another question, because since Fred Whitman is looking to the Art Dealers Association for values, what I would propose that we do in that case-you said, "In the book," right?

MR. HENDERSON: Yes.

MR. HOPKINS: I would go to the Art Dealers Association and ask for an evaluation, because I can use the photos that are here in the book. They in turn can give us a value, and you can decide if you want to give half, a quarter, three-quarters, all of them, whichever.

MR. HENDERSON: So this one-

MR. HOPKINS: Oh, that's a nice one.

MR. HENDERSON: This one because, particularly, this is shades of pink and brown and yellow, and this is green and yellow and blue.

MR. HOPKINS: They might be about the same size.

MR. HENDERSON: This is a little larger than this one. This is about four by five inches, and this is about six by six inches. I had them framed by Gumps and put them in the same frame, one higher and one lower at opposite corners. I think they look quite nice but, of course, you can frame them any way you like.

MR. HOPKINS: There is no state income tax in Texas, for example. So that it's not to say they're not excessively rich and there are, especially among black families, excessively poor, but there is a giant middle class that is more comfortable on the same salaries than the middle class is in other states in the United States. It's a not unpleasant living condition.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I know every time the price index has come out, San Francisco is at the high end and Texas is

at the low end.

MR. HOPKINS: That's right, that's true. The other thing I think that always interested me, and it can be made a joke of or thought of as being a benefit, I have never seen people in my life who so much enjoy the money that they have. I mean they really use it, it's not there to be put away forever, to be hidden, to be sat on.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -or ashamed of.

MR. HOPKINS: Exactly. It's to be used and appreciated and all that follows. They do have a good time. So art became a part of their involvement. They glommed onto that just like they would anything else. They've changed the environment there in Texas a great deal. There have been an incredible number of museums built in every small town in the state, and they're all doing kind of interesting jobs. It was wonderful for me to hear, for example, that that little museum in Austin, Texas, originated a nationally circulating exhibition of Carl Andre. Ten years ago they would have killed that director.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Which show?

MR. HOPKINS: Carl Andre show, very avant-garde. They would have killed him ten years ago. Just in a very short period of time it just bubbled up and became very lively.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: But I think, particularly in Texas, it's become very competitive.

MR. HOPKINS: No question. Texas to Texas and Texas to the rest of the nation. For me it was a real learning process. I had never been in Texas prior to going to the museum and going on the interview. I realized how the Europeans who had never been to the United States, who had gleaned their information on the United States from movies, would misassess everything, because everything I knew about Texas I knew from the movies, like *Giant* and other western films. That's the way I expected it to be and, of course, here was this lovely, kind of greenish countryside, with lakes and puddles, pleasant like Southern California was, but I mean bigger lawns and trees. And the people are very house proud. They're extremely Texas proud. As I say, the young president of my board, Ed Hudson, went to Yale, and they held it a little bit against him that he had left the state for his education. They went to the University of Texas in Austin, because that's where all the good boys-though it didn't affect him radically and that's now changed a bit too, but at that moment it was a little backward. And then the first time that we did an exhibition, I guess it was the Rauschenberg show, I felt it was a very important exhibition and I felt that he would be getting more press, even though it was just going to be in Texas, and Ed Hudson sitting at a meeting said, "Don't worry about that. That's just the way it is." You know that the rest of the country, if they say anything at all about Texas, they say something bad, so it's better that they don't say anything at all. They really practice an isolationism almost as if they were a nation independent of everything else. Very self-protective of one another, and very self-protective of the people that work for them, myself included in that area. During the time that I was there we made some real inroads with young collectors, some inroads in terms of artists getting stimulated, and finally a very important regional exhibition. While we don't do an annual exhibition here, we're too big and too sophisticated and so on, I almost feel that's the wrong decision. We really should have some kind of annual exhibition, if not in this museum, somewhere.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It was a powerful force when we had them.

MR. HOPKINS: I think it's a different way of seeing and looking, and if you recognize that your better artists aren't necessarily going to participate, it's always proving ground for young people, it puts them in a competitive status. We're not going to get it from the Art Festival. That's just not the way to function. I keep drumming on that as a thought, but then I was able to acquire which, I gather, is one of the things that I still enjoy most of all, with the amount of money that we had, the first purchase after the trade thing, was a Clyfford Still painting, a major yellow Clyfford Still painting from 1956, which had been at the Los Angeles museum on loan from Still, and I bought it for \$35,000, which then was a rational price, and I was very excited that the Still painting had been accepted. The board had taken a stand. I got so excited about it that the other person that I had this long friendship with, Joseph Albers-I had written to Albers and asked him if he would give us one painting, and we could buy a painting. Did we discuss this before? I wrote to Albers because I had heard that he was thinking of giving a painting to the museum, he was elderly, so I wrote him and in my letter I asked if that might be possible. We'd pay the full price for one painting, and would he consider giving another one. We could have a variant and a square at the same time. I made the mistake of mentioning that we had bought a Clyfford Still painting. Joseph Albers and I didn't speak again the rest of his life. It was the end of the friendship. It was like a lead weight coming down. I didn't understand that for about two or three years. I thought, because I'd asked him a question about, you know, buying and giving, and I tried to get to the root of it, and the root was simply that if we could afford to buy a Clyfford Still painting we could afford-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -we could afford to buy both.

MR. HOPKINS: He hated Clyfford Still with a passion.



MR. CHAMBERLIN: I could understand that.

MR. HOPKINS: That's why it's so interesting-. It's wonderful that now here at this museum we have a wonderful Joseph Albers gallery and incredible Clyfford Stills. If they were both alive, we wouldn't have either one of them. At the same time, it was really because of that close friendship with Albers that, I think, made *Annie Albers* look favorably on us when we asked for the estate from the Albers collection. You just don't mention the name of another artist when you're talking to one artist, because you write to him and that's it. So we bought a Still painting, and then we had to buy a Rothko painting. We were able to buy a good Stella, *River and Pond*, one of the protractor paintings, a good Ellsworth Kelly painting, a beautiful Schwitters collage. We paid the highest price that has ever been paid for a Joseph Cornell box, a Medici Boy box. The price at that time was \$15,000, and I thought the board wouldn't accept it. It was the hardest thing for them to buy. It was so small and so much money. Of course, now they're going for \$50,000 or more. At the opening of the Cornell show in New York in 1980 I ran into my Fort Worth Museum friends who were there because they'd lent their Cornell to the exhibition.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: They must have felt very proud about it then.

MR. HOPKINS: They felt very proud. We had a great hugging match about the whole thing. And, well, I can't remember as a matter of fact all of those things that we did acquire, but slowly, getting rid of the pegboard, which we did with our own hands and feet, relining the wall and adding works to the collection. It became a very respectable collection. At the time, I guess, of the opening of the Kimbell Museum, and I'm going to forget the year, about 1972-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I thought it was later, but I don't know for sure.

MR. HOPKINS: I came here in 1974, so 1972 or 1973. All of us put on our best face for everybody coming down for that opening. It was wonderful, and it was unique in the United States to have three museums practically on the doorstep of each other, each funded separately and differently, and each working in a different area. And, for a city of, here in the kind of flat of Texas, to have three institutions that had been buying without competing, an incredible wealth, almost overnight, occurred in that area. You could do better art teaching, historically, in Fort Worth, probably than San Francisco. You really were looking at it that way after fifteen years of [inaudible] here. So it was an extra-ordinary moment, and then I decided I would leave at the end of five and a half years. I had enjoyed the time. I had never planned to be there for a lifetime. There was no reason to leave. The people were very good, they were very supportive. In fact, I guess, kind of a last victory in the program there, was the gift from the Richardson Foundation of a million plus dollars to add a new wing on the building. We were going ahead with that work, that was in progress when I made the decision to come to San Francisco. I think this thing finally, that made it hard for me to be there too much longer, was my own isolation. Even though we were bringing artists there on kind of a regular basis, to lecture at the university or to do this or do that, a fairly active scene in Dallas, a lot of good friends, and they are indeed good friends. It was a repetition of the same cycle, the same little circle, that didn't leave you mentally to grow too much. They didn't mean to stop you, but it was hard to grow, and one thing I will say about the Texas people in general, is the one thing that they did understand, was that it was necessary to get out and travel. So I had rather liberal funds to get to New York periodically and California periodically. They were more generous in that area than any museum structure that I've ever worked within. They recognized it because they themselves felt the same way. They had to get out during the heat of the summer or the depths of winter or something else. So it was a collection building time for them, a building building time for them, and the development of younger artists from Texas and an awareness of other things going on in the art world. It was a great personal victory for me, I felt, because really, as I say, it started with this funny little pegboard place showing Container Corporation of America exhibitions and ended up after five and a half years having a respectable collection and doing exhibitions like Oldenburg and Joe Goode and Edward Hopper. It was never overwhelmingly avant-garde, but they were catching up with the sixties and the seventies. Then the young man who followed me, Richard Koshalek, who has recently been appointed to be the curator of the new Los Angeles contemporary museum, came in. It was his first directorial stint, and he had a very hard time. My feeling is that seeing what was there and what had been done, he took the next step too fast into the avant-garde realm, and started doing an almost continuous program of performance art and video art and things that were *very* exciting to him, from his background at the Walker and working in New York and different places, and it overextended the capacity to absorb, so that-. It's interesting to talk about museum people and museum work. Every day, it seems like every day, or at least every week, you pick up one more teeny bit of wisdom that tells you something.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: A museum is an organism, just like a person, and I think it has a sense of growth and decline, stasis-

MR. HOPKINS: -and if it's instinct, it's wonderful, and if it's not, it's just hideous. The other thing I've found, which is always amusing to me, after Los Angeles and Fort Worth and here, I've come to the conclusion that every board is essentially the same people. They change names as you go from one place to another, but there are

lots of every type on boards in every museum.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I'll bet there is. That makes it easier then. You don't cut a deal with-

MR. HOPKINS: That's true. As I say, it's an exercise in psychology. I know the minute I was talking to people here, and I met X, and there it was him all over again or her all over again. They hold true to type.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Both good and bad.

MR. HOPKINS: Both good and bad. So that was a good, really good exercise in terms of the whole time. The year before I came here, 1973, Jan Butterfield, my present wife, and I were married. We were married in the Rothko chapel, which had just been completed the year before that. And a very interesting thing-maybe I can talk about the Texas temperament. The DeMenil family was incredibly wealthy, powerful family in Texas, and I'm going to be accurate. He invented a drilling bit for drills and patented it early on. Nobody can drill oil without using that bit, which obviously made him incredibly wealthy and they were linked with a family in France. So the two combined were extraordinarily well-to-do. But Mrs. DeMenil, and actually John, her husband, were both very interested in art and had a wonderful collection of Surrealist material: Magritte and Ernst, and an incredible collection of primitive African art. It was their ambition, her ambition, to build this ecumenical chapel in Houston, a building more or less based on early Christian chapels.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It is St. Thomas University?

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, it's on the ground of St. Thomas. Actually the grounds were added to it, but they've been involved with St. Thomas. They've been involved with Rice. They've been involved with a lot of other things. But they had Philip Johnson design it. An octagonal building, and then Rothko paintings commissioned to go in it, big glowering red paintings, solid field paintings. The whole interior section was to evoke this whole ecumenical scene. I remember on the opening night they invited heads of churches from all over the world, Buddhists, Episcopalians, Protestants, Catholics, Zen, Taoists and everything under the sun, and the incredible color of the costumery of various faiths going through this very simple ceremony, it was the most elegantly gorgeous night in any single institution I've seen anywhere, and probably will never be repeated again. So we decided that would be a nice place to be married, and rather than having the dispensation of the Pope, we had the dispensation of Mrs. DeMenil. So that was a treat.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Nordland left. Was there a gap, did they approach you directly or did you find out again, how did you end up here?

MR. HOPKINS: There was a gap, in fact, it was a very interesting time for me. We had more or less discussed between us our desire, if the opportunity came along, to go on from Fort Worth somewhere, no real destination. The San Francisco Museum of Art had always been of interest to me, ever since I came to the West Coast. When I was in Southern California at the Los Angeles Museum, when I had the chance I would come up here. It had a number of paintings that I found particularly friendly. I don't know why I say that, because it was not that they were big paintings or major paintings or this or that, but I enjoyed walking through the galleries. I remember going through the galleries and saying, isn't it too bad that they don't have enough money to buy about 500 gallons of white paint. There were times when it looked pretty tawdry. Now it looks as it should, but they obviously were operating on a very limited budget, struggling along. They had gone through a search for a director when they hired Gerry Nordland. I know they interviewed Maurice Tuchman at the L.A. Museum at that time. I wondered even then if I should think about it. That was 1966, and I wasn't ready to leave Los Angeles at that time. I'd just come to that position that I had. But then it was rumored that Gerry would be leaving. I suddenly found myself in the strange position of really wanting a job. Up until that time it had been things that had made sense to me, and this was the sort of job I really wanted. That's the worst way to get a job, obviously, if you really want it, you overreact, you do this and you do that and a whole variety of things. And there were a number of people interested in it, and there was a lot of concern about the trustees and how they had handled the thing with Gerry and so forth and so on. Actually, it was handled pretty well, as messy as it can be sometimes. As I began to test out bits and pieces of information and interest, Al Frankenstein visited Fort Worth. He worked quite often with Mitch Wilder at the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art. We had lunch together. I'd known him from clear back to U.C.L.A. days. He was the only one who did a nice review on the U.C.L.A. show I did. So we had lunch together, and he indicated they were looking for a director, and would it be something I would be interested in. I said, yes, I thought I would be. So I guess he carried word back. I know that about at the same time also Frank Hamilton and Mason Wells-Frank was a board member here at the museum, and Mason's brother, Cady Wells, had been a painter of some note in Taos, New Mexico, working like John Marin.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I never made that connection before.

MR. HOPKINS: And now that's interesting because Mason has been very interested in trying to get his reputation-not his, Mason's-he's a painter also, but Cady's reputation more established. So he was coming through that section and seeing if museums were interested. So although I didn't really associate that much with the

museum, I came out to interview at the time. At the time they were looking at a wide spectrum of people. They were looking at Irving Blum, for example, who was an art dealer. He was trying to decide whether to be a dealer or not be a dealer. He had a certain appeal as a very open, attractive, gregarious person with a collection of his own; And Jim Demetron who had then been in Des Moines for a period of time, a very good acquirer and good eye, Walter Hopps, who was then I think between the Corcoran [Gallery of Art] and the National Collection of Fine Arts in Washington. I can't remember who all else, but quite a long list of names. They were published back in the paper with Herb Caen. So I had no idea how it was going or what was going. Gerry then left. There was a period of about nine months when the museum was run pretty much by Mike McCone and yourself and a lot of other people who were here working at the time. As I understand it, although I've never seen any official document that would say that, their first choice was Jim Demetron, and I think Jim would be extraordinary wherever he is. You know Jim from our school days together, too. But he decided he didn't want to do it.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: He didn't want to leave Des Moines?

MR. HOPKINS: It was just a composite. He felt, I shouldn't speak for him, but I tend to think it's accurate to say, he was doing what he wanted to do in Des Moines. I think he was a little concerned about this particular city, and maybe some of the trustees. It's hard to say, but he had some reservations, and he decided not to do it. So then, I guess, the board went back to work and got going and quite a long time went by. I would call maybe once every two months and say, how was it going. I'd come out under the wing of Ted Nash, who was one of the board members. He would invite me out and take me around and chat. And then David Robinson who was on the board came to Fort Worth to see what was going on there. And so at a given moment I felt, well, you know, if they haven't made up their mind yet, knowing about Jim's saying, choosing not to come, that might be a very hard situation because obviously there was a lot of battling going on about this and that.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It's always awkward to step into something like that.

MR. HOPKINS: When the time came, I got a phone call asking if I would come, and we discussed salary and that was certainly all right, and we talked about not all right, but that it seemed all right, it was agreeable. So the determination was that I would come. I only asked one thing of the board that be on my letter of agreement which is, hits only a high point, that the decision for me to come would be a unanimous decision with the board. If it wasn't, I wouldn't feel that I could do that. So they reported back to me that it was a unanimous decision and hoped that I would-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -except for the two they killed.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, that could well be the case. But at least it started me off on the basis of believing that was the case. That's sometimes almost necessary. It's like you have it, you can fly, you don't have it, you can't. But I felt I could fly. So I came out, actually it was about seven years from now. The starting date was the 4th of January, 1974. And by the nature of San Francisco, which is very different than Los Angeles, which is big and brawling and new money and so forth, and Texas, which is big and brawling and old money, I guess, San Francisco is a town that loves to gossip itself to death. Everybody was ready to tell me about everybody and everything, and I made it a rule at that time simply not to listen to anything and try to avoid any gossip.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: The Texas rule kind of fell, didn't it?

MR. HOPKINS: I didn't want to know anybody else's feeling about a given trustee because I might react totally different to them than that person, and they might react totally differently to me. So there wasn't so much jockeying. As a matter of fact it gave Bradley, who was the president of the board at that time, and Bill Roth, who had been the chairman of the board at the time, sharing the leadership with-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -both the chairman and the president-

MR. HOPKINS: It was only during that one period of time. The reason why it was done, as a matter of fact, because Dave was certainly capable of handling all of it, but I think some feeling that Bill Roth had been involved with the museum for a long time and had been the previous president, that it might be good with the downtown, for fundraising-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -transitional-

MR. HOPKINS: -and the transition and so forth. Anyway, that was kind of the agreement. And then Bill was getting more involved in politics and running for governor. So Gay, who was the head of it, I found her then, and I still find her, an incredibly good and bright woman. I've really enjoyed her. She was open to a lot of ideas and a lot of thinking, and being concerned, of course, with budget. But they had been working hard in the interim to get the budget together, better than it had been, and had done a fundraising and had gotten a little endowment put together, and so we started right off. My assignment, my spoken plan for five years, and spoken only because I wasn't sure it would work, I didn't want to publicize it or talk about it too much. My reading was that

the museum had kind of lumbered along, and it had some nice highlights and some low-lights, and a lot of money involved in various other things, but that through the exhibition program to try and stimulate and generate interest in the museum and try for more membership and try to do this and try to do that, that would bring it back a little bit into national attention. So the whole first five years were devoted almost exclusively to exhibition programming largely borrowed from other institutions, to get a [inaudible] show here, to get the Picasso show here, to get this here and that here. And then in the interim devising a program which would allow us to maintain a balance of programs in thirds, where a third of the program would be—we are a twentieth-century museum, obviously that's the first point, and that a third of the program would be historical, important movements and so forth, like the German Expressionists and what have you, American and European. A third of the program would be better known artists, fundamentally American, but not exclusively American, like Rauschenberg and Johns. And a third of the program would be California related one way or the other, either historical or contemporary, and would run the gamut between all kinds of things. The minorities program, for example, with Orlando Castellon trying to deal with people like Lundeborg and some of the old-timers and some of the new-timers like Wiley and others as well. Kind of a third, a third and a third arrangement that made very good sense. I had never been in a position before where I was so inundated within a week of artists camping themselves on my doorstep, of wanting major one-man exhibitions. So I felt it was a very frustrating community somehow and I didn't know the basis behind that. Then I realized that it was simply part of the community for one thing, and the other thing was that it was not whether I was reading that rightly or wrongly, I reviewed back the program for the last ten years and I could see that very few Californians had been having exhibitions as such, other than the very best known names like Diebenkorn, Voukos and some others, and I understand that those were done even kind of under pressure in a funny way.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It's always been an area where lots of artists lived but hardly anybody bought.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, that's the old cliché.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: The old cliché, and clichés are always based on trusts.

MR. HOPKINS: It was obviously of interest to me then and remains of interest to me to beat down that cliché, because you do hear it all the time, and you don't hear it as frequently as you might have. But I think what was a shock to me, even though I knew it, was simply the density of the artist population, in San Francisco was incredible. Every third person was an artist at one time or another, not really, but it seems like that sometimes. And no single museum is ever going to be able to serve that mob of people who choose to work here. And then the other thing that was very hard, and still is hard, I guess it's probably my hardest job, is the simple fact that for some reason here, as opposed to New York, with a few very rare exceptions, this is such an egalitarian dream, that nobody had really made many judgments. I guess that relates to what you were saying, the fact that it's a place where a lot of artists live but very few people buy art. The implication of that, that there's not a very active gallery scene, and while there were a lot of galleries, they were dealing almost exclusively with artists of the Bay Area.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Well, it also goes back to when you were talking about Texas earlier. The money here has supported not the visual arts, but the performing arts. And they still do.

MR. HOPKINS: They still do. Yes, certainly that's true.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: And the money here that has supported visual arts has been private fortunes for private museums: the de Youngs, the Spreckels, the Oaks, the Williams, people like this.

MR. HOPKINS: As an observation, certainly, I would much prefer our situation to a private museum in the community than I do the city museums, because they're really having difficulty. Not that we're not, but it's a different kind of financial difficulty. I got angry shortly after I got here at the dealers. I went to an Art Dealers Association meeting and I said, "Look, you've asked me to come and talk to you and I don't know what you want me to say to you. The only primary thing I want to say to you is that I've been in Texas for five years, and I've been in Los Angeles for eight years before that, and I have never seen any of you in either of those places. Is it any wonder you're not selling your art and your artists? I guess what you're doing is sitting on your stool behind the counter in your galleries and that's essentially it, and that's not really representing what you're doing." And they got mad at me and we yelled back and forth, and we all became friends because now they're everywhere. You can't find Diana Fuller in because she's on the road somewhere. You can't find John Berggruen because he's out on the road somewhere. So they are selling art, some of it Bay Area. Some Bay Area artists are becoming, obviously you can't name great hands full, but nonetheless, Wiley, Tom Holland, Manuel Neri, Joseph Raphael, Bill Allen, to a certain extent, you can count a reasonable number without even thinking about it who are now making respectable-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -national names.

MR. HOPKINS: And are achieving more national notoriety.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I want to go back to when you came and you made a speech. There's a quote that you wanted this to be the best modern museum in the country or something of that sort.

MR. HOPKINS: The best modern museum in the Western United States.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: All right.

MR. HOPKINS: I may be egotistical but not that egotistical.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: The question in my mind was if it were the country, how were you going to do that when you didn't have the support base or the market that, for instance, the East Coast has.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, it's going to continue to be and will continue to be very difficult to be just the best modern museum in the Western United States, depending how far east.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: At that point you had Pasadena to compete with.

MR. HOPKINS: We should talk about that for one second, because one of the reasons that I wanted to come here is actually a very important point in my life. I knew that the Pasadena was going to fold. I had enough pre-knowledge and I knew what was going on and I knew the difficulties and so on and so forth. I knew it was either going to limp horribly, or it was going to fold, and that goes back to an earlier part of our conversation when I was talking about the fact that opening that gallery on La Cienega because a lot of people were leaving La Cienega and it was the desire to hold that together to do that, which was idealistic. In this case it wasn't all that idealistic, but I felt that it gave me a different, gave this institution and me, an opportunity that had not existed before. I also felt very strongly, and I think you would bear this up in your own experience, that if Southern California and Northern California both fell asleep at the same time and dozed off, that if you can keep the pressure on from one point to the other point, then the other point will always react to what's going on at one end or the other. And the Pasadena demising, that meant that obviously L.A. County had to bear the burden for everything that went on, unless some new thing came along and now it has.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Which they wouldn't-which would make this more important.

MR. HOPKINS: Exactly. The point is that if somebody who thought like myself, which could have been Jim Demetrian, or any number of other people, could recognize that all right, let's take the time to really work as hard as we can, to get as far as we can, to get as many exhibitions as we can, and that then will go to Southern California into some kind of reaction, and that's exactly what has happened-the response. Now, of course, they've gone so crazy down there. I don't know what the end result-I'm excited about what the next ten years will be because the whole West Coast is going to be much more lively and it will be more talked about and written about. But it becomes then a question of reassessing roles again which we didn't have to do for a while. So that was a major factor in my wanting to come to California, specifically to come here. One, an attachment to this museum for some reason that I can't define, over the years. And then, secondly, the fact that it had, I thought, the possibility, even though rather limited support, of doing something that it had not had a chance to do ten years ago. Then I've been blessed with very good board leadership. Gay Bradley, who I said was there, and Gene Trefethen, who came after Gay, are just really super people who really are not so art-involved that their whole interest is in an object, or objects, or this or that, or biased opinions or views, but they really want to make the museum function and get the money in, and that's been extraordinarily helpful. Our endowment has gone from zero in the late 1960s, 1970s, to about four million dollars, which is pretty good. I keep plugging away and plugging away at it. Our building refurbishment has been going along very well and we have indeed, I don't say this out of an ego-centered base, we have indeed had most of the major exhibitions done in the United States over the past five or six years. That's both good and bad. It's good in the fact that it creates a certain attention and provides audience and things of that kind, and bad in the fact that we weren't originating it. Now we're trying to correct that balance.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: When I first came up here, they were going to L.A. and not here. I remember one of my colleagues saying, as we were starting to travel down south, I think to see the Bonnard show, that it was so nice to live near a big city, meaning L.A. But then there was a period where they came here and not to L.A., and L.A. had a drought. And lately it seems to me now, it seems about even.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, it's still not even. It still is very much in our favor.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I'm talking about big ones, the Rothko went down there.

MR. HOPKINS: Rothko's the only one. I'm not intending to be argumentative. But the thing that's interesting about that is the fact that at the Los Angeles Museum when I went there with Maurice, it was a dedicated purpose on our part to get as many exhibitions away from Northern California as we could, because part of that time, it had been Northern California's turn in the fifties, it had become Southern California's turn in the sixties,

and we worked very hard in the new space to get a lot of shows down there. And we did get a lot, the Giacometti.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: The Sculpture of the 1960s.

MR. HOPKINS: And that originated there. So that was a purpose, really, to try to, if we could, convince the Museum of Modern Art and the Walker [Art Center] and various other institutions to send to L.A. rather than to come to San Francisco. Now because I knew that Pasadena was going to fold and because I knew that L.A. was a general museum, I knew that the board of the L.A. Museum had taken a much more conservative stance in ruling to allow a certain percentage to be modern exhibitions or whatever. They could only, in the best sense of that, do maybe two or three major modern shows in a year's program. So that it gave us here kind of a clear path to West Coast representation of exhibitions of the kind of scale and import, to have a West Coast office the way they do it in New York, and in the west, on the West Coast. So it provided the opportunity to reclaim for San Francisco in the seventies what had been the case in the fifties, and now whatever the battle, as you say, Los Angeles-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -the eighties.

MR. HOPKINS: The eighties will be a real battle. When I think about that battle, it will have two active centers, and it will be the first time that two centers are actively engaged.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It might, like Texas, each spur the other.

MR. HOPKINS: It's a hope. Obviously, it's a hope. People ask me all the time, how do I feel, and they expect me to feel badly. But I don't feel too badly because I honestly do feel that we can work out some very interesting compromises of sorts. We can do some exchanging, another thing that's becoming more necessary because of everybody's budgets, and hopefully also we can get into the kind of programming that would work in such a way. I think you and I have talked about this, where we'll all do our own exhibitions, what we originate is one thing. We'll be competitive for borrowing. If they're doing a major exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, but it will come here or there or both, it's going to be much more a question than the last few years. But it should mean now that one way or another we might have to fly a little bit more, but one way or another every major exhibition in the country should be in one or the other two cities in the next period of time, and that's good. That can't be bad. It'll also give us time to originate more, and certainly Pontus Hulten is going to originate things. Since that museum is going to be post 1945, not twentieth century, we won't be overwhelmingly competitive. My real dream in this is that we will be able to work out some kind of detente with them, where we have an extraordinary photo collection, it gets better all the time, getting better and getting better and getting better. [Inaudible] a collection and exhibition capacities and originating capacities. It would be my hope that L.A. would choose not to get intensely involved in that area, but that it would then choose to get intensely involved in architecture and design and build a great collection in that area. Then we could do photo shows, send them photo shows, they could send us design shows, and then we're-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: There's a history of that down there in terms of the L.A. County. They've done design shows, they did that Gill show in 1958. They've done shows, even though we've done some architectural ones up here.

MR. HOPKINS: We have done some here, and it wouldn't prevent either one's doing it. It would just mean that they would be the repository, so if you were a student-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: You would be complementing each other rather than wiping each other out.

MR. HOPKINS: If you were a student, then you would really get what you'd gotten out of one institution in New York, the Museum of Modern Art, none of us can compete with that total entity, but we can as a composite unit. So that's why it's basing my whole hope for the future of California in the next twenty years in that composite exercise.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Have you talked with their new director and have you tried to arrange this kind of situation?

MR. HOPKINS: Oh yes. Every time I'm down there I talk to somebody. It's getting heard, and good responses. Some people don't like the idea. They want the whole cage. But I think that once they get in business, then-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -they'll realize that it makes sense.

MR. HOPKINS: It will prevail, because we here, for example, we're now operating on a budget of two million a year. That's an identical budget to the University of California at Berkeley. It's funny when you think about it.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -for their museum.

MR. HOPKINS: For their museum, yes, certainly not for the University. And I think we can do a better job with our

two million than they can with their two million. We will go off in increments of \$100,000 a year, or \$200,000 a year or some-thing of that kind, based on the situation and everything else, but compared to the Museum of Modern Art's ten million a year or the Walker Art Center's five million, that's not much, you know, we've got to stretch every penny. And the new museum in Los Angeles, even though it's had a lot of support and enthusiasm, when it begins operating, it will be operating on a budget of somewhat less than that or somewhat like that, so it's not going to be-I'm afraid, too many people expect to see the Pompidou shifted to Los Angeles, and that's not the case. The attitude will be there, and I think the support will be enough to where over ten years it will grow. I don't doubt that it will grow much faster than we will grow.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: How is that going to compete for the area or activity with the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art. Will that continue?

MR. HOPKINS: Well, I would think it would probably try to, but it will take a certain reassessment of the role in the community. For example, the statement that I made recently that you quoted, that I wanted to make the best twentieth-century art museum, or modern art museum in the Western United States, that's already identifying our turf, being different than a post-World War II contemporary museum in Southern California. That's the term I'm identifying, we've redefined our-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -and not a Kunsthalle.

MR. HOPKINS: Not a Kunsthalle, although I would still love to see in the town a Kunsthalle, whether as a wing of us or independent or something. We'd still love to see a better one than the bits and pieces that we have. L.A.I.C.A. [Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA] will either expire or will take a different position. But so much of Pontus's activity and the artists who are involved in that museum and a lot of the other ones, it seems to me that much of what they are best at, is really duplicating what L.A.I.C.A. has done in its own limited way for the community of Los Angeles. I don't know what will be worked out at that time. To get back to the other track, because of the Los Angeles Museum, because of the funny economic situation in the country at that time, the first five years was essentially getting it back into the national limelight one way or another, and I was very proud of the fact that toward the end of that period we got the Guston show, the California show, we got the Judy Chicago show originated, whatever you might feel about that. We're beginning to feed back into the country some things that, from here, and I really had decided for the first time, being in New York two months ago when the Edward Hopper show was on at the Whitney Museum, which we are getting, the German Expressionist show was on at the Guggenheim, which we are co-sharing or originating with the Guggenheim, and the Judy Chicago show was at the Brooklyn and having its own monumental impact and controversy, and the Guston show was coming out to the Whitney Museum, so for the first time we're really playing our role on a national level and getting a lot of feedback in different ways. But the second five-year plan, to answer your question, and this is the five years coming up, is much more collection oriented. It doesn't mean we're going to stop exhibitions or slow down. We will try to do more exhibitions out of our collection, which is an economic result, but also bringing as much pressure as we can possibly bring on the limited number of objects that are available to us as gifts from the community, and try to get as many of them committed, either in reality or by partial gift, like the thing we were talking about earlier, the Pollock drawings, or by will or something, so that we can begin to calculate what the collection will look like at a certain point in time. If X collector says, "I'm going to give you this painting and this painting," then I don't have to worry as much about buying, but if I don't know that information, then I can be duplicating myself unnecessarily in that kind of area. So that's the whole kind of focus of the board and myself, and that's why George [Neubert] is now here to handle the exhibition part of the program. He'll be involved in acquisition, and will give me more time to really work on that collection.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: On the permanency of it.

MR. HOPKINS: Exactly. That's very exciting. There's nothing I can even talk about yet, but there's some sign that things are going to break fairly nicely, really rewarding. I have set a pattern for myself and have talked to the Trustees about it, and that seems to be generally amenable if possible, that by the time of our fiftieth anniversary, which will be 1985, we will either be in the position to be providing some kind of new space in the city for the Veterans organizations who have access to the second floor of this building, or at least be set to do it, at least having the groundwork laid, an agreement set up and everything else, and we're working toward that end. And one of the catalysts toward that will be probably in 1983, although I think we might be near enough ready in 1982, to do the whole building, at least the space that we own, the whole fourth floor and the whole third floor, with permanent collection or anonymous gifts or things of that kind that would have the impact that would convince people once and for all that we should have that up all the time, and then do exhibitions beyond it. Well, if we're going to do exhibitions beyond it we're obviously going to need more space to be able to do that, because the biggest disappointment that I feel, and it's not anybody's fault, but nonetheless is a disappointment that I feel, is that our collection has in the last seven years doubled. That's incredible. From 1935 to 1974, in 1974 to now it's literally doubled, and in many instances with better quality. We have a major Frank Stella from almost every major period of Frank Stella, to use that as an example. We have the Still gift. We have the Guston things. We've been building Diebenkorn steadily. A brand-new one. We have that one Ocean

Park, kind of in dedication of Gerry. The new one is a milkier, creamier one. A very beautiful painting. Have you seen the catalog? It's different than the one we own, but it's kind of a step. So that essentially I know there are a lot of things in this building right now that, outside of the staff of the museum, we've never had them on public view, if we have, they've been up for three months or two months or one month because we can't show them in the right spaces, and they're too big for the gallery. The thing is these two galleries are for changing exhibitions, these two galleries for permanent collection, then we can help get our growth where we need it in the other areas. It really is a whole issue of space.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I have two questions on that. One, on exhibitions. You talk about the California exhibitions. Do you feel competition with Oakland here?

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, I will tell you quite frankly that I do, and let me define that for you right now. When I came here I made the point, and it was my personal belief that the Oakland Museum is the California museum, and that one of our roles in the community should be to get as many people to see the exhibitions in Oakland as can possibly do it, and that they should carry on a full and aggressive program of Robert Hudson shows, of Tom Holland shows, of this and that and so forth and so on, as well as an historical thing, and that the justification, obviously, we have to do something with California art so that we're here, we're in the region, and certainly we can both be collecting. There's kind of an unwritten agreement that if Oakland buys a major Sam Francis, and we are contemplating buying a Sam Francis, we would try to buy one that wasn't the same year and the same size, so we would kind of be spreading it out that way, and the justification for that is that when you go to the Oakland Museum you see a California artist in relation to his California peers. When you come here, you see a California artist in comparison to his New York peers, or his Chicago peers or European peers. So while you're seeing the same artist, you're seeing him in a different contextual relationship, and that's interesting. But we went through a go-around about a year ago, or a year and a half ago, where a number of the people on our board are very-I guess you might say they're pro-Californian and want to do more California programming. I have a very hard time with that because it is competitive with Oakland, but nonetheless that it was a strong enough push that redefined, and we will be doing more California activities. The justification which has some reality, as I said at the very beginning, is that there are so many artists in this area that for any one museum to try and serve them just isn't reality. That was the other point that I was making, the hardest thing for anybody working in this section of the country, is that since it was not done for such a long time, there is an incredible backlog to be thought about. Secondly, because the gallery scene was not terribly active, there were not very many judgments made, but that, I'm saying that right or wrong, in New York, because of the competitiveness and almost violence of the gallery scene, with the dominance of a given gallery like Castelli or somebody of that kind, artists are kind of, by some system, whether it's commercial or otherwise, pre-selected out, Stella moves up the ladder, Frankenthaler moves up the ladder, in ways more dramatic than one would wish, but then it becomes easy for museums to do a Frankenthaler show or do a Stella show or something else. Here that process hasn't worked that way. Very few artists have emerged beyond one another. You have this great number of artists who in reputation are about at the same level, even I feel. A few artists like Diebenkorn and Francis who have just worked their guts out and forced themselves to stick it out by virtue of history. But then you get to a certain level. We're now faced, for example, other than doing mini-shows like your show and things of that kind, and you say, all right, this is what this person is doing right now. That kind of keeps the old system going and equalized, but how do you in good conscience do-I'm going to ask you a funny question. If you have Bob Hudson, if you have Tom Holland, Nathan Oliveira, Frank Lobdell, you have Hassel Smith and this goes on forever. Which one do you pick out of that bunch to be first or second or third? So we try to devise a program and we try to deal with a kind of seniority and, as you know, we've had Hassel Smith, we've done Fred Martin, and then in the interim, Wiley was done, Roy de Forest, Arneson, Voulkos. We keep plugging away at it, and now we're even at a more difficult position because now when we get the next group of artists' names, they really are equal in reputation, and really tough even to explain to one artist and another artist, or this leader or that leader, or this person and that person, why zilch instead of something else. I find that my temperament, and it's terrible, my own perversity, I guess, I find myself being intrigued by the artists that don't have a strong commercial outlet, like Norman Stieglmeyer. At least the Hudsons and the Wileys all have a dealer working for them, so if you want to know something about it, there's no reason why you shouldn't have opportunity to see them. But there are other artists that don't have that prerogative who are equally respectable artists, but they're not in the commercial system somehow.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I've withdrawn from that totally.

MR. HOPKINS: Many of you have. So that's what George and I have to sort out for a while, buy what we hope we can set up, and I [inaudible] cooperative in Fort Worth, but I can propose and continue to hope that Berkeley, Oakland, San Francisco Museum will each, one each year, do one so-called major figure and a good solid catalog. I hope they'll do much more than that, but if they'd just say they'll do that, agree to do that, and then sit down in some consortium fashion and decide which artists for a couple of years. That begins to have an impact and I think it's a sensible solution. At least there's some vague hope that-you may not get around to somebody until they're dead and gone, but at least there's a hope that someday we'll get around to them. I don't see any other sensible way to get there.



MR. CHAMBERLIN: Gifts are certainly one way that any museum can increase its holdings in a spectacular way, in a time when both inflation and budget limit buying as they indeed do. But it seems to me that some gifts have such large strings attached that they prevent the museum from having flexibility. An example could be the Lehman Collection at the Metropolitan which demanded a separate wing to be built, and the whole collection to be kept intact, a condition I don't think other donors would particularly appreciate. Here, for instance, I see a big problem, certainly in flexibility, with the Still Collection, because it has to be up all the time, it automatically prevents you from using both the east and south major rooms for continuous exhibits now because you've got Still right in the middle of them.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, not really.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Well, it seems as though you do. And for somebody who doesn't know the problems involved, or the conditions of the gift, say the Lehman coming in, it makes it look like Still is much more important than any other artist in the museum, which, of course, was Still's idea.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, we won't have any problem because you've asked me a question that will take about forty-five minutes to kill. There are so many ramifications in what you are asking and what you are talking about, and your assessment, I think, is right in some ways and I would question it in others. Let's just start with the idea of gifting per se. You're certainly right. Almost every other museum in the United States today with the exception of privately held museums like the Getty or the Norton Simon Museum, the Kimbell Museum in Fort Worth, or a museum of extraordinary wealth in the area of accession funds, like the Metropolitan or the Cleveland Museum.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Now even the Metropolitan takes gifts.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, no question, they take accessions. The point is that so many of us as institutions rely almost exclusively on gifts. We have as an average \$100,000 a year to acquire works of art. Now when you have \$100,000 to buy things for your collection, that's a very small amount of money. We keep trying to push it up and we try and do this and try and do that. When a Braque 1910 Cubist painting, if it came on the market, would be \$750,000, a million dollars, something like that. It's quite apparent that we're not going to be able to buy something like that, and equally true of Mondrian and equally true of Kandinsky, or key works that we need in our collection, as a teaching collection, as well as an exciting twentieth-century collection. Since we can't buy those things, the question obviously is, what can we buy? It's not enough money to do the old Museum of Modern Art trick in the years when it was under Alfred Barr, which he called "shotgunning," where he would go out to the galleries and look at all the artists that were being shown in the galleries, buy the best of what you think is there, one by one by one, or make whatever deals with artists that you can.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Well, when he picked up three Johns, he was picking them up for two or three thousand dollars a piece.

MR. HOPKINS: Except they didn't pick up three Johns. The theory is right.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I thought they did, I thought he bought three from that first show.

MR. HOPKINS: I don't know that. He may have but essentially I think you have to have a reasonably good sized pile of money. You can, in fact, look at the scene and say, all right, I want one out of this show, one out of that show and make the best deal you can, as you were saying, the two or three thousand dollar level, which doesn't really exist anymore. And then you just simply bring those in and put them in a warehouse, and if those artists begin to develop and prosper and go beyond that you're well ahead of the game. If, in fact, the artist doesn't fulfill his promise, then they stay in dead storage or they're de-accessioned. If we had a million dollars we could contemplate that. What we find ourselves doing with a degree of consistency is to do one of two things, either wait until an artist has proven himself consistently, let's take a Bill Wiley or a Nathan Oliveira or something like that, and watching their price structure very closely, and when both things kind of jell, around the ten to fifteen thousand dollar level, then we try to get something. What I'm saying is that we can't shotgun at the two or three thousand dollar level because we're not going to add all that many pictures, but if we wait and we get a reasonably secure sense of what's going on, then we can take that step. It's more costly than the first thing, but theoretically the painting has a certain validity for its time and may have validity for a time after that, assuming mistakes, obviously. So that's one approach we use. The other thing we try to do when we can, with our limited funds, is to fill in an object that is crucial to the art historical nature of the collection, that may be at that moment a rather overlooked area. For example, we bought a Hans Arp string relief last month for \$30,000, less ten percent. It's a very beautiful historical example from 1924, not gigantic, but they weren't gigantic because it tells a lot about Surrealism, it tells a lot about Arp, and the transition from Dadaism to Surrealism, and Arp's prices just have not snowballed up except on some rare occasions to the \$100 thousand to \$200 thousand level. When we get a chance, that's what pleases me most, to pick up that little Arp, that little Irving Russell, that little this or that, because I see still, and will continue to see this museum, as being about the only museum on the West Coast at the present time that is devoted to the whole twentieth century. The new Los Angeles museum

will be contemporary. The L.A. County Museum is the full history of art, so that we have to add in those areas when we can. Now when you get to the gift thing, it really gets complex. It's a true problem and it's going to need a lot of revision in the near future. I see it in the sense that first of all, what do we have in the Palace of the Legion of Honor Museum? We have fairly good records on most works of art of quality in collections in the San Francisco Bay Area, above San Francisco and below San Francisco, but we know where most of the key works are. We know most of the people who are attached to the museum, and we know most of the people we haven't been able to fit into the museum whom we could coerce nicely one way or another to give those works. So when those are there in the hands of the members of our Board of Trustees, or allied with the museum, it's far from a sure thing, but we have to say, all right, Mrs. So-and-so has a late Matisse, Mrs. So-and-so has a Henry Moore, Mr. So-and-so has an early Franz Kline. Then if these things are there, chances are they will come into the collection sometime, maybe not in my lifetime, but they will come sometime in a will, or tax gift or something of that kind. So that again gives us a sense of what we should buy. It would be a little silly for us to buy something that we thought was going to come here within the next five or ten years, that's too short term thinking. When you have as many holes in your collection as we have, and when the collections in the San Francisco Bay Area have as many holes in them as they have, there are still great gaps. There is not an [inaudible] to this painting in the sense of a collection. There is not a Mondrian in the sense of a collection. There is not any Kandinsky in the sense of a collection. I sometimes wonder where everybody was when you could buy those things for five and ten thousand dollars. But that puts us in a doubly bad position, because when we are given gifts to the museum, though we try to use a reasonably qualitative standard, you are given things that you have no choice factor over, they appear on your desk. Somebody says, I'm going to give you X painting. You think, well, it would be nice if you have it, but it's not what I would go out to spend money to buy, and I don't think it's really crucial or critical to the collection. It is helpful here, in bringing a number of younger, well, I wouldn't say "younger," let's just say Bay Area artists into the collection. It helps to bring in occasionally a Roy de Forest, Bill Brown, or a Hassel Smith, or John Altoon from Southern California, things of that kind, because this is a region where we have some esthetic and monetary value, and they are great additions. But where the system has gone awry, even though I don't think I'd like to change this part of the system, because tax giving has become such an important part of things, and if somebody has a collection of forty works, let's say, and they must for tax purposes give away a painting, human nature says they're going to give the least important painting. But we're faced with a double dilemma, that if it's not too good a painting but the other forty are sitting there, will those come? If we say no to this work, what happens when the time comes when they want to give away a special work? Will they be mad at us and give it to Los Angeles or somebody else? It creates a lot of political friction in terms of making decisions of what to accept and what not to accept.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: And also your expectations are often thwarted. George Fitch on the Accession Board and Board of Trustees of the Fine Arts Museums, he gave his collection to Yale.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, exactly. Those are very terrifying moments, I agree. Here on the West Coast, we have a history of losing collections, which is really tragic in my mind. You know, the Ernst Collection, the major collection, and other things of that kind. Obviously we have to do a better job of holding those really important collections here. But the other dilemma is that because in the 1960s and 1970s especially, people, even though they enjoyed works of art, truly liked the artist they were buying, always had an eye to what would grow in value, and in many, many instances it did. The reason they went up in value is that many of them were buying the same artist. Let's use Frank Stella as a case in point. Well, we have now several Frank Stellas in the collection, most of them by gift. We've purchased one, and I think the other five or six are by gift. It's nice to have those Stellas. I happen to think Stella is an important artist and will remain an important artist, but we might very well get ten Stellas, three or four of which are about the same period and about the same thing, and get nothing of an artist of extraordinary quality that would make sense around Stella that nobody bothered to collect.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: We don't have any Poons, I don't think.

MR. HOPKINS: No, we don't. So you have those funny dilemmas. Now, and we're really talking about quality, because there are a lot of problems with giving that have very little to do with quality. We get a lot of things that are just on the edge of being acceptable for one reason or another. And because museums have an obligation if they accept that work into their collection, that they should be accepting it as a thing they would like to hold onto, not something you simply turn over immediately for cash. And the guideline, for whatever that means, is that if we bring something into the collection, we hold it for at least three years, then reevaluate out of the situation. Then, if we feel that we should de-accession it for one reason or another, we have to get the donor's permission, and I have to get the permission of my board, and then we can proceed with the accession. Whatever we get from income from that sale goes directly back into buying other works. That's why I think the flexibility will come, or where we need the flexibility. If somebody is giving specifically for tax purposes, it's a funny point, but let me try and make it, if someone like Mrs. Haas owns a great Matisse, which indeed she does, that Matisse is a very closely linked part of her life, and she's going to be very concerned before she gives it anywhere, we obviously hope here before she gives it any-where, that nothing will happen to that painting after that time. We're not going to turn around and sell it, we're not going to do this, we're not going to do that,

because it really is a part of her life's blood. But somebody else in the 1960s will buy a Frank Stella, and when they give it, they don't really care that much what happens to it, as long as they get their tax break, okay? So on the positive side, we don't bring much pressure on, in terms of demands, but on the other hand, we don't have the freedom to translate that into cash in a quick way within the gifting, percentage of the gifting, so we get a lot of things that we have to do. So I would hope the museum, the fact that you're seeing it already, that museums are doing more of the accession than they have ever done before. That's the reason for it, because collections have come in by gifting and now they're turning back some of the gifts on the market place to be able to buy with the proceeds of that a work that's important or meaningful to the collection. And that's questionable. It's practical, but then again-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: You mean it when you say it's practical. I don't think it's questionable, it's delicate. When you think of the problems the Metropolitan got into, the de-accessioning they were doing-

MR. HOPKINS: And that, of course, caused a great brouhaha, as you know. But where I'm saying it's questionable, it's not even too much an ethical issue, but it does change the attitude of the museums and the depreciation of works of art. I used the Lehman Collection as a case in point, a major, major collection of very, very nice things. That to come to the Metropolitan, they had to build this whole giant new housing for it, to make it look almost like a Lehman house. And when I go there, I go down and look at that and I regret the fact that I can't see those paintings in the context of the remains of the collection.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: And so does the museum, I'm sure.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, exactly. Almost every museum has something like that, or something that is important enough to the area, to the collection, that they can justify any means to get it to the museum. I'm sure every museum tries desperately to negotiate those things as well as they can, but at a given moment, it's really a tough one. If Mrs. Lehman says, all right, this is it, and that's it, and you can have the Metropolitan and if you don't do that, I'll give it to somewhere that will do it. Okay, what do you do with an institution? What is the Metropolitan's moral judgment in that area? Well, and you've raised the point, a valid point, whether it's the Lehman Wing, or if you build a new wing for it, that obviously means that when they need to expand the Metropolitan Museum again for the general collections, they're going to have a harder time. We really have to fight every time we use a square foot of park. It gets tougher and tougher. You refer to our case here with the Still gift, which was one of those gifts because he was a very important figure in the Bay Area, is an important figure in the Bay Area, of one of the primary artists of whom we are interested in collecting. It was a major gift, kind of unheard of gift from him other than the Albright one, and it seemed worth a justification. Now in reality, there is nothing in the gift that says that I must have that collection up every single day of the year. There have been three or four times that none of it has been on view, and that's exactly for the purpose you're talking about. If you're doing an exhibition, it has to go around that corner, like a California show or something of that kind, to make a sense of continuity. We can do that. If there's something that could not be housed comfortably anywhere but in that one gallery, you can put them away for a period of time, but certainly your obligation is to keep them on public view I'll say ninety percent of the time. And if we had had more space in the building, if I could not foresee that we would get another square inch in the building or expand some other way, then I would have had a different thing. We also have the agreement with him that it will be housed where it is now housed or at some comparable space in the building, if we do a revision of the building, so the thing is always locked into that one specific gallery location.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Of course, what I resent is from the art historian point of view. I see it as a falsity, because somebody goes to the third floor and they see, which is considered at least, seems to be less important, in space, in size, and they'll see what Abstract Expressionist paintings we'll have up. Here's a Pollock, there's a Rothko but not particularly big, here's a small de Kooning and our Baziotes, and then they walk to the fourth floor and here's a whole room of twenty-foot Stills. The implication is that he must be very much more important than all those other painters on the third floor, and it makes such an imbalance that I find it difficult to accept.

MR. HOPKINS: You're raising another point that's really a very valid point, because while I might know in my head, and some of my trustees might know in their heads, and my staff might know in their heads, what we are heading for four years down the line, the visitor does not know that. And there's no way they can, there's no way we can be accurate.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I realize you can't grow evenly. You grow like topsy. You grow here and holes there, that's always going to be the case. But by judicious storage and exhibition, it seems to me that the showing can level that out.

MR. HOPKINS: You're quite right. The reason that it balances out is that we've tried on several occasions from the time I was here, there was the Still gallery, and we wanted to retain the Main Gallery and let's say the South Gallery, three connecting galleries, as being galleries for the presentation of the permanent collection. If we simply did that, that would already bring in a certain balance. It would at least bring the Rothko and the Pollock

which is of extraordinary quality up to that physical level where maybe some of the context would be. In other words, there would be more Stills, but that's part of the thing. The difficulty we have with that, another gigantic contemporary museum problem, we're not a contemporary museum, but a contemporary problem for all museums, is the fact that we have developed a syndrome, I'd guess you'd call it, of revolving around and changing exhibitions, and when you have a collection that's not very strong, you do a lot of exhibitions. The tendency in recent years is that we've been doing more and more and more exhibitions, not only here but almost everywhere else, the justification, obviously, if you don't own a good German Expressionist picture and we do a good German Expressionist show, at least for three or four years to let people at that moment have a chance to educate themselves more broadly than they might just from the permanent collection. So we overextend ourselves in a number of ways in the exhibition area. This is a-we're weighing now very carefully in our own mind, using too much of the limited space that we have for that purpose, and therefore show on the third level, inadequate space, and certainly not desirable space. I feel very badly when I walk up to that incredible Braque hanging in what is essentially a redeveloped corridor. It doesn't mean you can't see it. It's no question that it's better to have it up, than to have it in storage somewhere. Where we have that kind of problem, I certainly won't argue with you, but on the long ranging side, it's based on the fact, I'm convinced in my own mind, that over the next four or five, six or seven years, one way or another, we're going to solve those space problems, either by being forced to build an addition to the building, or by getting more space in this building, somehow reaccommodating the Veterans on the second floor, which we can't do without their permission. I'm convinced it will happen, and I'm convinced that the reason it's going to happen, ultimately, is that the collection is going to be strong enough to justify being seen on a regular enough basis, and enough people will say it is, and then we'll have that leg up.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Ideally, would you have a floor that's just permanent collection?

MR. HOPKINS: That's exactly what we're shooting for. If the best of all possible things could happen in this building, if we had the second floor right now, which is actually our main exhibition floor, it has good high ceilings, and everything else, it has no skylight, but it could be a beautiful gallery space. That whole second floor would be permanent collection.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: That makes me wonder. What's in the middle here on the third floor?

MR. HOPKINS: Well, that's the well for the theatre on the first floor. It has to have that space to go up. The fourth floor is the only one that has the central rotunda. But if you had the second floor just for permanent collection, the third floor was offices and then use the corridor intelligently for works on paper, let's say drawings and things of that kind, the right kind of intimate scale, and the third floor will probably always be the office floor because it's the one floor in the building that has low ceilings. This is still a relatively high ceiling, but it's physically less desirable for big painting presentations. The fourth floor would be changing exhibitions, and I would visualize it as being also specialty collections: photography, a better space for a permanent collection of photography, hopefully some of the architecture and design, works on paper, clay, a whole variety of specialty from the permanent collection gallery that would still leave us three galleries to do changing exhibitions in. Then we would be in very good shape. The handicapping part is that since we are limited in space, and we go to somebody for a major painting, we can't promise them that we're going to put it on public view for a very long period of time. Obviously, if somebody gave us a Cubist Braque or a Cubist Picasso of 1910, 1913, I would stand out there as a guard myself to be sure it was up as much as it possibly could be up, but that would be a very rare situation. What we are heading for, again, since we're chatting over this, the way we are trying to build the collection right now, this is our ambition, it has been for two years and it will continue to be for another few years depending upon our successes, a collection of painterly painting and related sculpture. We were able to negotiate the gift and purchase arrangement with Philip Guston. We have seven in the collection, four in the area, and about four drawings, so it's not huge, but it's a comprehensive sense of his life. We are right now negotiating successfully with Robert Motherwell for a similar grouping. We have quite a few Motherwells, but we want to do some trading and upgrading and he seemed amenable to that. I think that within the next year, or year and a half, we should be able to announce the tidings of the Motherwell collection. I should stop and say the reason we're interested in Motherwell, specifically Guston, specifically Still, and Pollock, and Rothko, is that they are major members of the first wave of American Abstractionists, but they're also western in origin. It doesn't mean they worked here and grew up in their mature lifetime, but they all grew up in California, Oregon and Washington, and therefore had more philosophical input in a funny way, in terms of life. It also has to do with pointing out as strongly as we can that the New York School was a pretty big misnomer for that group.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Did you add Pollock to that group for-

MR. HOPKINS: Well, Pollock and Guston-Los Angeles, Still, Motherwell, San Francisco and Washington State, Rothko, Oregon. Now it can be very hard, as you can imagine, trying to build a Rothko holding, excessively difficult to build our Pollock holding, even by one. But that's our ambition, again. With my fingers crossed, we'll get somewhere with it. I can't be specific, but there is some indication that we will, we've had reasonable suggestion. Now the second phase is that we would like to have from each of the major figures of that school at

least one good work. Kline, de Kooning and others, at least one, hopefully more than that. That is an area where there is reasonable density of objects in collections in the Bay Area related to our trustees. There are two very good Klines in San Francisco, either one of them about as good as any other museum Kline you will find anywhere. Our job is to try and get them in here. Having taken this first step, it gives us more leverage to ask with a stronger voice when the right moment comes. There are Baziotes, there are in fact a couple of other Rothkos in private collections.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I'd love to see a major late Baziotes here.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, it would be very high grief, and I almost had one for you, Wesley. I almost had one about two months ago, and then they changed the price on it. It was the one that was in that show that Maurice did of American abstract paintings of the New York School, a very handsome, handsome late Baziotes painting, good scale, a beautiful painting, beautiful condition. Thirty-two thousand dollars, which we could have swung, and I went practically with cash in hand, and they raised the price to \$45,000. I got angry, but that's-. We will get Baziotes as well as I can get the others. We've added Tworkov, we've added Mitchell. In fact we're working on Baziotes at the moment. We do not have Gottlieb.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: That's all right.

MR. HOPKINS: We have many de Koonings but no real strength.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: They're small ones, nice ones.

MR. HOPKINS: The point is, that's why it's getting going. Now that works back in time and ahead in time. That's the focal point. Because back in time are the Matisse's, where some day, if everything works the way it's supposed to, we'll have one of the best Matisse collections in the museum of the country, but of the earlier, painterly ones, okay? Coming up this way, obviously we're building Diebenkorn, we're building Francis, we're building Hassel Smith, we're building Lobdell, we're building other things, plus the fact that there's quite a bit of David Smith in the region, of the sculptural era of that period. So that becomes a focus collection. Now the reason that we chose that area, it does not mean, obviously, that if an opportunity and a rational situation would arise that we could bring a Mondrian collection, we'd junk everything and do that if we could do it because ballast is the key. The reason we picked that period of the 1950s is that people were buying those paintings, they were buying them out of a certain affection for the work of art, okay? And when they turn them over as a gift, there's a certain affinity for them. And, of course, some of the artists are alive, but when you get in the 1960s, when you get to Nolan and Olitski and Stella and Kelly and so forth and so on, most of those are at one time or another going to be coming to museums because of their investments, until they've increased greatly in value from the time they were purchased, and they won't all go to New York, some will get here, some are getting here. And so that will be building along side by side. Now if we can bring that all together, [inaudible] promised gifts that I hope would be wonderful, obviously. When you see it and when I see it, we'll both say, gee, this really should be here all the time, then that will give us, we hope, some space. It's a very calculated plan, but to go back to gifting again, another way that has worked in some ways, let's take Motherwell as a case in point, we have in our collection of Motherwell two and a half, three, good Motherwells. We have three other Motherwells that are not as important which have come in as gifts. But we could work with Motherwell because he's living, because he would like to see a better representation here. We can work on a trade basis with him, to trade two for one or whatever else it might be, to upgrade the quality of the things that are in the museum section. That's the way the giftings we use legitimately can improve the quality and make things more interesting, even though the original gift given is not the one you'd like to have.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: What do you do with somebody like Nolan, for instance, let's say in buying? When in the 1960s his prices were very high, you wait until the late 1970s and then the reputation has been inflated greatly. I don't know if they deflated, but I imagine they did. Do you then buy something to fill in historically to go along with the early Stellas? Or do you at this point feel that it was, in a sense, a flash in the pan, and we already have it in Stella, or we already have it in somebody else, as again, say, the early optical Poons, when I don't think he ever was better. Those were classical paintings.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, I have to answer that from a personal perspective because you can talk to ten million people and you get ten different answers. I would simply say that we have in our collection at the present time two Nolan paintings.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: One of the best ones is greison-like.

MR. HOPKINS: We have a small target, a blue and yellow target which is about maybe sixty by sixty. And then we have a later one, a horizontal line with a large-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It's a diamond shape.

MR. HOPKINS: No, it's square, rectangular.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Well, you had one. Maybe it was a loan.

MR. HOPKINS: That was a loan. But given my choice, I would like to have a really good Nolan early target, to match the early Stella, because that's when the input came. They were good, they were painting well, the idea was sound, there were new innovations in technique. I would certainly sacrifice the two that I have for the one good target plus a little money, if we could find one, and could make it work. It's unlikely that I would add four more Stellas. I would be hard pressed to suggest to my trustees that we spend money to buy a new Nolan. But nonetheless I would like to have Nolan represented with at least one good work. He deserves that. The same with Kelly. We have one good Kelly. I'd like to have one more Kelly, maybe a Kelly sculpture. Jerry Nordlund, when he was here, had a great affinity for the Washington Color School, and he brought into the museum during that time artists you don't see so much of anymore. Nonetheless it was an era, the Downings, that group, and of Davis, some of which he gave us and some of the other ones. We had fairly good examples of them. We're getting nice pockets of stuff that we can do special shows of, and over the next ten years, because fortunately we've been able to grow a nice collectors group around the museum, and it's growing and expanding. The museum director following me will have more things to pick and choose from collections within the Bay Area, at least of this period, the 1970s and 1980s, so that it won't look quite so bleak. When I look back on the 1930s and 1940s and wonder where, as I say, the Mondrians are, with everybody sleeping on those things that were available for \$5,000. It will be better from that point on. As long as we're going to pretend to be a twentieth-century museum, we have to have a coherence in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. I'm sure we'll be competitive to almost any other museum collection in that area. But trying to get those few holes filled up in the early twentieth century. It just terrifies me to think that-well, Jan Buttefield and I were talking about this. She teaches at the [San Francisco] Art Institute, and a young woman had turned in a project for her Art History class on Cubism. We were looking at the thing she turned in, the drawings. They were supposed to be Cubist analysis of painting. We had to laugh, because they really were pretty pathetic in terms of the misunderstanding of that particular student in terms of what the Cubist movement was. I just said, well, look, it's a little hard to be excessively critical when there's not a single major Cubist painting from that period in the area that she could go to look at. You're never going to get the same feeling from a reproduction, no matter how good, to the way that a painting looks. A Picasso painting from that period, or a Braque from that period. If you don't have that balance, where do you go? Certainly a young person would say, I'm not even interested in that time. But I guess that's where museum people become museum people. You do feel a certain watchdog responsibility to pick up those droppings and keep putting them together, and people put them together differently later, but if we let them disappear, they are gone. It is very funny to me that in a city like San Francisco, where on the one hand there is a great extended hundred-year reputation, which borrows on it in every conceivable way, where every restaurant looks like it was done in 1890 instead of 1980, and yet the younger people who live here have about as much interest in history, even their recent history-I have a hard time coping with that.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I think that's a normal thing of the young.

MR. HOPKINS: It certainly is, to an extent, but I know that when you and I were in Art History, if they even taught the Abstract Expressionists, they were reaching way out there, because it was about fifteen years before the time. And just in the twenty-year period since that time, if you take a Modern Art course, and you learn anything before de Kooning, it's pretty remarkable.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Well, when we try to teach about Abstract Expressionism now, our students get very angry.

MR. HOPKINS: Too old?

MR. CHAMBERLIN: No, they think it's all a sham. They can't believe it was real, and they see nothing in it.

MR. HOPKINS: What are they committed to?

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It's hard to say. Often, conceptual things, or Realist vision. That kind of abstraction is as alien as a moon landing.

MR. HOPKINS: That's interesting to speculate about, because one of the things about the Guston show was that there was a lot of resistance in my generation to Guston's new paintings, and a lot of affection for his old abstract paintings. The youngsters were really excited about the new paintings, and couldn't care less about the old paintings. I guess we do all run in our own generations, and somebody like Guston can override this, because suddenly he's a young person hero again. It's pretty bizarre. Jerry Nordlund, when he was director, built the Washington Color School; he got some beginnings and some of the Abstract Expressionist people, the Los Angeles people, and Grace Morley at the beginning, Still. We have one of the best Rivera collections of any museum.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: And you have a very good small Surrealist collection.

MR. HOPKINS: It's getting better.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I don't know who brought that in, but they're first class.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, that has come in a composite fashion. Everybody has an affinity for that area. So we keep adding a little along the line. I'm very pleased. We were given by Joseph Brantzen, when he died, a nice little Miró. It's not gigantic. It's about half the size of this table top, from 1926. But we don't have a Miró from that period, it's really nice to have. We bought the large string relief, so already we can say something more about that period than we've ever been able to say before. But Grace Morley had an affinity for the Mexican-Latin American, which was very important in the 1930s and it's getting important again. It really takes a long time and a number of personalities of directors and curators and people of that kind to finally get a composite picture. We will be fifty years old in 1984. I hope we can look remotely comprehensive.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Do you see it as equivalent to writing a history of modern art?

MR. HOPKINS: So you mean in a museum context?

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Yes, the permanent collection.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, it certainly is.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Like visually trying to do-

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, no question. I think from a vaguely historical perspective, because that's my attitude. We were talking about doing the Fauve show and the German Expressionist show and, in my mind, as long as I'm here, what we'll do is go through that series of exhibitions, and when we're done we'll go back and start over again, if we can. It's like painting the Golden Gate Bridge. You do the job and then you do it again and again, because we don't have enough of it really in the collection for people to see and glean information from. Now each ten-year span we not only have to do the Fauves, the Cubists, the Surrealists, the Futurists, and the Expressionists, but then we have to do the Abstract Expressionists, Hofmann, and the other things that have come along too. Depending, obviously, on how well those hold. You so rarely hear the term Pop Art, which was a big term, and somebody sooner or later is going to go back and review that whole thing, pick the best out of it and do a very interesting show. It will probably take off again in another five or six years. One of the things I mentioned to you before we started taping, Van Coke's exhibition of avant-garde photography in Germany. The stunning thing about the exhibition, there are photographs which look like they were done last week by a young student at the [San Francisco] Art Institute, or from the California College of Arts and Crafts Studio or somewhere else, with all of the richness of detail and all the richness of ideas. Yet, we've never seen these. There are photographic George Groszs, photographic Magrittes, photographic Arps, photographic Kandinskys, all in a body of work that has never been seen in the United States before. Where do we get these funny gaps? You were talking about whether this was art history. I was talking to Van about it and he got really interested. His view is that Mr. Newhall, who is the primary photographic historian for now, is a very definite Francophile. This is Van talking, because he was a Francophile. He went to French sources, just like he went to French sources for painting, and ignored the German sources. And the one brilliant photo art historian in the immediate post-World War II period, who happened to be German and knew Germany, was a German Jew, and he wanted to forget that and stay away from it. So he looked to French sources and British sources and other things of that kind. So the whole history of modern photography is, in Van's mind, at the moment built pretty much on a false premise.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: A one-sided premise.

MR. HOPKINS: If you look at these photographs, it's stunning to see examples of photography that you just don't see in the Photo History books, yet they're wonderful to see. I'm not wildly excited about photography as such, but it's the first time I've seen an exhibition of photography that really got me excited because it's obviously going to add new information in the history books. I'm delighted also that a lot of the younger curators in the country, Barbara Haskell, Neal Evans at the Whitney Museum, [inaudible] of the Philadelphia Museum, Karen Tsujimoto here. I won't say all of them, but many are doing a whole review of American painting in the early twentieth century, whether it's Dove or it's O'Keeffe, or whatever their area of special interest. We've seen the Dove show already, we've seen the Hopper show already. We'll see a lot of those works in four or five years. That's going to change thought processes of older and younger people. So it's flushing out, history is flushing out. I feel positive about that. I've commented several times that every-thing I knew about Modern Art was given to me by osmosis through what the Museum of Modern Art wanted to give me. I didn't even see the Museum of Modern Art until I was twenty-five years old. At the same time, they were the only ones sending out information on a regular basis about what it was.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I remember getting those books, drawings.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, little exhibitions, and special educative shows, and what have you, so that painting as I knew

it was a Museum of Modern Art painting. Every reference I made was to a Museum of Modern Art painting. Slowly, because more museums are getting more active, and some different attitudes, European attitudes, West Coast attitudes, Oriental attitudes, feed into it. We're getting a more rounded picture of the whole thing, and some artists that were super heroes are not quite so super, and some artists that were not very interesting are more exciting. That, I guess, has happened all the way through time. One of the things we used to be taught is that El Greco was a forgotten figure until the beginning of German Expressionism, and that brought him back into vogue.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Grunewald was the same way. Now, a question on exhibitions. We were talking about temporary exhibitions and the in-creasing rate of them. There is also, not so much here, but around the country, an increasing demand on those exhibitions which necessarily can be funded by industry because of the cost of exhibitions, and those exhibitions that can be funded that way usually are the ones that are in high public demand, the so-called sexy ones, Picasso at the Museum of Modern Art, the Tut show. The closest thing we've had here is "The Dinner Party," which was funded by us. But I see increasingly with the Fine Arts Museums here a bread and circuses attitude, going toward the big blockbuster shows which get more and more people, therefore, more and more numbers at the turnstile which can be presented to supervisors for more and more of the city budget. There are big problems there, obviously.

MR. HOPKINS: There are big problems.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: One of the arguments is that they can then fund the small shows, but it doesn't seem to happen. The small shows get cancelled, they get eaten up, they get ignored.

MR. HOPKINS: I've heard this a hundred different times, it's obviously a great discussion point at museum meetings in connection with other things, and there is a redefinition of that coming on very rapidly. We are as guilty of it as anyone with the big Expressionist show, the Edward Hopper show. I can't be defending it, but I would make these observations, that certainly you're quite right. If the Philip Morris Corporation or SCM Corporation or Xerox are going to fund a major exhibition, they want two things out of it. One, they want something that will give them a lot of exposure, which could be interpreted as popularity, and they also prefer exposure in cities where they have major resources, so that if Philip Morris is fairly widespread, most of it is cigarettes, liquor and things of that kind. In the case of SCM, who are in a funny way more generous and less demanding, at the same time, they like to have it in New York, they'd like to have it in Chicago, home office bases of their activities. Now that happens to parallel in a funny way, if I do an exhibition on the West Coast, where I would like to see it go to because they are major centers of art activity at the same time, but it does set up two different possible compromises. One, the fact that the corporations begin to dictate where the exhibition goes, and to a certain extent it begins to dictate the kind of exhibition that you do if you want funding. Not so wildly popular as Norman Rockwell, but nonetheless they-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -seventeenth-century Albanian ceramics.

MR. HOPKINS: When they're looking at seventeen choices, which one to fund, you're quite right. It's not going to be seventeenth-century Albanian ceramics, or Tiepolo ceiling drawings, it's going to be Picasso or El Greco. I happen to think, certainly when that funding comes in, it's kind of wonderful, but the ideal situation would be for the museum to have the idea that they're going to do the exhibition hopefully anyway. They go to the corporation, the corporation agrees to do it. They can't affect your thinking. They can affect your choices, you know, you were talking about that. I have the same reservations about the National Endowment for the Arts, I've always had that. Obviously, if you're spending public funds, it is desirable that those funds, major chunks of them, go into exhibitions seen widely throughout the country. So if I'm doing here an exhibition for this museum only of an artist of either regional consequence to us or for some other reason, that we haven't seen here before, my chance of getting funds is really very limited, either by corporate funding, NEA funding, or if it happens to be an artist out of the state of California, state funding. It's very hard. Now you've raised the specter of an argument that we use frequently, which is that the super show allows us to do the non-super show. And yet, you'll have to verify this, but I have been told by the Fine Arts Museums that they cannot do an exhibition in their museum now unless it is fully funded, because of their bad budget situation. So essentially if somebody wanted to do a Roy de Forest show at the Fine Arts Museums, and they couldn't find enough local funding to do the exhibition, they couldn't do it. That's really at the edge of desperateness. When they did the blockbuster shows, and I must say that I'm delighted to have them in the city, but the Chinese Treasures at the Asian Museum or the Expressionist show here, the Hopper show here or the Russian show or the Tut show-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I think sometimes they're blockbusters and they're not sure they're going to be. I think they ebb, like a sleeper almost.

MR. HOPKINS: You mentioned Judy Chicago. It could have drawn two people and instead it drew 250 million. Those things you really don't know, and obviously since that time, as Judy's show has gone on to other sections, let's say the Brooklyn Museum, and Boston, and it's going on to Canada, it's picking up some support, corporate



support, because it's a proven thing and before that it wasn't. But though I'm happy to have those shows here, because the Fine Arts Museums don't have enough depth in their collections, just like we don't have enough depth, so we're all getting more information from them. The thing that is a problem is that even though they are blockbusters and draw an audience, they also have tremendous costs attached and, as I understand it, the Dresden show lost \$80,000. The Tut show made several hundred thousand.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I heard it was much bigger than that, the loss.

MR. HOPKINS: And then a gain on the Tut show. That whole idea of thinking of exhibitions set in your head is resolved, that's our own time talking, it is box office. You begin to think about what is it that will bring 100,000 people to pay their few dollars. We begin to think of exhibitions as a profit-making venture, that's really, first of all, a rarity. Secondly, you get the same situation with movies, where you are trying to guess what the public wants, and if you hit it, it's fantastic. If you miss, you're out of business.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: The Rainbow show.

MR. HOPKINS: That was misguided. I can foresee a time where an institution could put incredible faith, and a lot of money, into a given thing, and it turns out not to be a blockbuster. They're going to be suffering for years afterward.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: There are also overtones of Roman bread and circus, a decadence that bothers me. It's as though the traditional function of the museum has gone awry, and entertainment has become-

MR. HOPKINS: Well, it has. I mentioned to you that I can take both sides of an argument. Because it's certainly the museum that we knew when we were younger, where you go and there would be a pleasant number of people there, and you could take a date and walk through the galleries and hold hands and sit on a bench, and do this and that and the other thing, they were really wonderful days. You wonder how museums operated at that time. But about a month ago when I was in New York, and the Joseph Cornell show and the Hopper show and the German Expressionist show and the Viking show were all on at the four major museums, you were literally walking through museums with your elbows to your chest.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: And this was on a weekday?

MR. HOPKINS: Because of the throngs milling through the museum. It's very hard to take a negative position about that many people looking at art now. It's really hard to say, gee, that's bad, it shouldn't be that way, and yet for sure-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It's very hard to have an esthetic experience when you're aware of being hemmed in, and the guy next to you smells.

MR. HOPKINS: It's very true, and that's the other side of the coin.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: The thing they had, when we were at the Metropolitan, did you see that lovely little show on Japanese lacquer-ware?

MR. HOPKINS: I did not see it there, but I know the one you mean.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: An exquisite show, a private collection. It was in just one room, not a large room, maybe half this size, maybe smaller than that. There probably were more people in that room than we would have in this museum on a weekday.

MR. HOPKINS: Everybody trying frantically to read the label and see in the dim light. I like to think maybe there are answers to that. Obviously it's nice that people are interested in the visual arts, though I understand that according to the most recent national survey art museum attendance is off somewhat, and other things-dance is up. And it obviously goes in waves. There is certainly a legitimacy to think about some different approaches. For example, the Expressionist show that we are co-originating with the Guggenheim, that's 350 works of really wonderful paintings. But do we need 350 works? Would 50 good works do the job maybe even better than those 350? If it were the 350 that the people respond to, and if we were reasonably sure that when we send out our press release 350 will be mentioned prominently, essentially what you're saying is you're really going to get your two dollars' worth, I guess. That's too bad, because if we could hang 50 paintings with more space between them where you could accommodate those great numbers-the Hopper show was 300 and something works, while I did not feel it so much with the Expressionist show, because obviously that's a diverse number of paintings, a large group of artists, and nobody represented by more than 14 or 15 different works, it would be wonderful to see those apart. But in the Hopper show, 350 works by one artist can have, in my mind, a debilitating effect on your appreciation of that artist.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I didn't find that with Hopper. I have found that case happening, where thirty paintings by one artist is being diluted by thirty, rather than added to.

MR. HOPKINS: I think it's really true. In a funny way, it's kind of a wonderful dilemma, because you're dealing with an audience of larger proportions than you've ever had before. It's equally true that what is carried away by the general public is of entertainment value, and not a humanistic value. So I went to the Picasso show, I saw the Mona Lisa.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It becomes often like a cultural duty. Have you done that Picasso show?

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, pleasant duty. But you don't come away enriched in the way that you would if you went there, and you had a good docent tour while you were there, this is assuming you were a layperson, where you had a good brochure you could read while sitting on a bench looking at a painting, or you were in tune with the looking.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Well, I'm not sure I resent the crowd so much as the hype. I'm remembering 500 people waiting in line to see the Tut show, with thirty-five objects, or fifty-five, or whatever it was, while six people were walking in at the same time to see the Korean show, which had 300 objects, which was a gorgeous show.

MR. HOPKINS: It is true in that sense. We could get into a long, long discussion, because the Korean show was an exhibition originated by the Asian Museum here in San Francisco. Now you'd think, how wonderful. Certainly they did all the right things, they had this and that, and they had good reviews. But there's no way that an exhibition from San Francisco is hitting the major art periodicals, the major newspapers. By that I mean the *New York Times*, the major news magazines, *Time* and so on, before it leaves San Francisco. At least in San Francisco, tragically, it's the things that have been hyped out of the East that come West where we have a wonderful audience. If it were to originate from here, the Guston show is a case in point, the Guston show is drawing bigger crowds everywhere than it drew in San Francisco because all we have in San Francisco is the *Chronicle*. By the time it gets to Chicago, it's been in *Art News*, *Art in America*, *Artforum*, and *Newsweek* has written about it.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Ironically, the Korean show didn't do well in either Boston or Chicago. It did better here. Of course, you've got a stronger Oriental-

MR. HOPKINS: A different constituency, a chauvinistic constituency. But you could use the Tut show as an example, because I remember when we were both in Los Angeles, the L.A. County Museum, before it moved into the new building, did a Tut show. The gold mask was in it, and a lot of the gold pieces. It was not quite as big. There were about fifteen pieces, but many of the same pieces that were in the Tut show. It was in Los Angeles, it was in Detroit, maybe somewhere else. It was okay attendance, but slim attendance. The main complaint of the visitor was that there were no mummies. But as you say, it wasn't hyped. Now a lot of things have happened, there's a lot of interest in chronology, a lot of interest in visionary thinking. One of the things that you should have done, or I should have done, I'm sure somebody could collect every bit of media around that show they could find, every T-shirt, every palm tree, every reproduction and put them away in a box for a few years.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: then it wouldn't be a box. It would be a warehouse.

MR. HOPKINS: It would be a warehouse, too. But I suspect that someday it will have incredible value, as Tutmania swings along with us. But it was amazing, and obviously because it was so amazing, that's what kicked off "The Age of Alexander" and kicked off a variety of other shows that we're going to see now. That's misleading too, because you would-or I would prefer to see a situation, an Egyptian show that gave us something of the first, second, third, fifth, ninth, seventeenth, eighteenth, twenty-second, twenty-fourth dynasty, extraordinary objects in each of those periods, including jewelry and stone statues and so forth and so on, but the phenomenon about Tut is that it's not even the best Egyptian material. It's lovely, individually quite beautiful, but you're not going to learn much about the whole sense of Egyptian history from that exhibition. The Viking show at the Metropolitan right now, what a wonderful title, Vikings, and every childhood romance and fantasy in the world lived up-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: I hear it's not a very good show.

MR. HOPKINS: No, and you're probably looking at the best Viking show that exists as a matter of fact. But you're looking at tiny carvings on bone, you're looking at little rondels of stone, you're looking at-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -the big ship isn't there!

MR. HOPKINS: You're looking at some brass materials that are off the end of a ship mooring or something like that. If you went to that exhibition as an enthusiast about Viking art with some pre-knowledge of what it was, and you went with your eye-glass and looked at all that medial carving, it would be a wonderful scholarly experience, I'm sure. It's additive in terms of information, but for the general public it's just nonsense. They

hyped it all out of proportion. What you get is an exhibition that we should be seeing in the lower section of the Field Museum of Chicago or-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -as an academic exhibition.

MR. HOPKINS: That's the terrible dilemma of the time, if you don't do that, then your trustees will give you, well, why are they doing it here, why are they doing it there-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: -we're being left out.

MR. HOPKINS: It's even worse than that, because if you are a reasonably good museum and reasonably energetic, your share of what you can participate in one way or another, whatever it happens to be, whether it's a thing like the Wiley show or something else-. There are hundreds of smaller museums in the country that don't get in on it at all in any way, by virtue of budget or this or that. And there it's truly frustrating for the personnel with the museums, because the trustees want it and obviously nobody's going to send it to them, and they can't afford it.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: A way it can be done is, I guess, the backdoor. I'm thinking of the Egyptian show. About middle seventies somewhere, the Brooklyn Museum I think it was who had a wonderful collection was changing the space and cleaning the space or something and they had to store it, so they sent it out here and combined with the Lowie Museum collection, and showed it at the de Young. A couple of hundred pieces. And I happened to go the last day out of duty and was enthralled. I wish I had gone before.

MR. HOPKINS: I know that's true.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: It was a marvelous exhibition.

MR. HOPKINS: As I say, it's so hard to knock the fact that there are hundreds of thousands of what seem to be happy people participating in something that you obviously would love to have deflated, but conscious of the fact that they're going away with, as you say, an entertainment device, a brochure in their hands like they were leaving Disneyland or the libretto of an opera, and how much of it should be entertainment I don't know. We've had terrible imbalances because of-

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Entertainment's a good medium, but when it's the message, that's the problem. How do you differentiate?

MR. HOPKINS: I haven't thought about it before, but it's very interesting to think about. The fact that probably right now, of the contemporary artists, the most widely known artist in this country is Christo. If you asked a thousand people in different places the names that they know of a contemporary artist, Christo probably you'd hear very frequently. Judy Chicago is very well known, because they are, at their level of performance, art performance, competitive with the blockbuster syndrome of an earlier age. When you're dealing with a gentle artist, who is not of wide, wide reputation, people really don't come, they really don't come. We try here, as you know, using the money for the big shows so it can help you do the money for the little ones. We don't put that up in terms of finances, but we do usually try to schedule along with an exhibition that we think has some drawing power. We try to schedule something that doesn't have its own drawing power, so that by the time you're in the museum and look around a little bit, then hopefully the lesser known artists-. But we find here, which feeds your argument, if we have a museum exhibition of artists of some note within the area, with some input in the area, that that would draw, one or the other of them would get people here, and they would all see the other show and we'd all feel good about it. But, boy, the attendance just literally bottoms out unless there's something now that stimulates you. It isn't bread and circuses you're liable to be doing, it's got to be, it doesn't have to be, but increasingly it is the kind of situation that says, let's get it over and on with and let's get out. That's the tragedy when I say, we, as museum people, should care because I can foresee a situation in this museum where, if we got in a hideous budget problem tomorrow, we could reduce our staff by thirty percent. It's already too small, but we could reduce it by thirty percent, put our permanent collection up, treat it well, write about it, wall-label it, present it, and we could exist on probably half the budget we exist on at the present time. And all our lives would be easier. And then we wouldn't ever worry about whether there are two people in the gallery or 250 people in the gallery. But we are not a public institution. We can a little better set our course that way than the Fine Arts Museums. You're dead right when attendance is the only thing, that a city body, the supervisors and so on, will look at that in justification of increased use, to give a few more dollars. Usually they see it in terms of pure [inaudible] and it is a false floor. Now whether the shift over is going to be a crash, or whether the shift is going to be gradual. It's already happening. At a NEA [National Endowment for the Arts] meeting, if NEA is not impaired radically or changed radically with the new Reagan administration, there is now a very strong move afoot for more NEA funds to go into conservation, collection maintenance, collection development and away from exhibitions for exactly that reason. They recognize it as different, that they have been part of the culprit, shall we say. And, strangely, not so much the NEA, it's really been the NEH that has funded the Tut shows and the Age of Alexander show and things of that kind. They fund more out of that basket

than the NEA does. And I get concerned on occasion because I think it's interesting we open the doors to new China and suddenly we have a monumental exhibition with China. We have a wonderful exhibition from Egypt. We are trying to rebuild our friendship with Western Germany and we suddenly have a wonderful Expressionist show. There's a little implication of politics beyond art that isn't necessarily desirable either. Well, maybe ten years from now we'll sit down to review this tape and see what's happened in that period of time.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: Many of the same problems will still exist.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, I think they will. I can remember years ago hearing said by any number of people in the museum profession that in five years, this was ten years ago, there just won't be major circulating exhibitions the way they are now. And I more or less believed that. It was reaching a point where too many works were away from their museums too frequently.

MR. CHAMBERLIN: The cost of insurance too.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, that's exactly the problem, transportation and the cost of insurance and everything else. And we're still saying that. But still the shows go on, and still they're gigantic. It would be hopefully the role of groups like college artists, and AAM [American Association of Museums], and a few others, to start pushing some of these views of less is more. I guess by that I'm saying fewer objects, and less peripatetic, and a different approach to sharing. When I was in Dallas last week, I was expounding on exactly this, and the man in the car with me was a representative of an architectural group in New York. He said, "You're wrong, you're wrong, you're wrong! You want all those millions of people in the museums, you want all this, you want all that," and so on and so forth. It's a very divided position. But I feel so strongly that if someone is going to really benefit, it should also be a deeper experience. One of the reasons that I went into this business, one of the reasons I think that all of us did, was that it was essentially a pacific occupation. We hope we're not doing any excessive harm to anybody, what-ever it is we're doing. But sometimes you wonder if we're not being just as bad as anybody else in this business.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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