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Archives of American Art

Oral History interview with Hope
Makler, 1989 November 28

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Hope Welsh Makler on November 28, 1989. The interview took place in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was conducted by Marina Pacini for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The original transcript was edited. In 2024 the Archives retranscribed the original audio and attempted to create a verbatim transcript. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose. Additional information from the original transcript has been added in brackets and given an -Ed. attribution.

Interview

[00:00:02.96]

MARINA PACINI: This is Marina Pacini interviewing Hope Makler for the Archives of American Art. It is Tuesday, November 28, 1989, and the interview is being conducted at Mrs. Makler's home in Philadelphia.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

My first question is, could you tell me a little bit about your family background, your parents' occupation, where you were born, when you were born, about your early life?

[00:00:30.02]

HOPE MAKLER: I was born March 24, 1924. My father's business was the shoe business. My mother was, I guess, what would be today characterized as a homemaker. I was born in Philadelphia and have always lived in Philadelphia.

[00:00:46.97]

MARINA PACINI: Did either one of your parents have an interest in art?

[00:00:50.97]

HOPE MAKLER: My mother was extremely gifted, both in the ability with her hands, and I believe she really had the capacity of what we talk about now "to see." She did—except for—her skills were more in working with her hands. She did not paint or sculpt. But I think anything that she touched had a sense of style to it, the way she dressed. Any kind of homemaking crafts bore an imprint, I think, of real talent.

[00:01:38.20]

MARINA PACINI: Was there any art in your home when you grew up?

[00:01:42.54]

HOPE MAKLER: I guess it was more in the realm of decorative arts than fine arts. Whether you can say a sense of style of coverings for furniture, or that furniture which was selected, I think showed great taste.

[00:02:07.85]

MARINA PACINI: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Where did the interest in art come from? When did it start?

[00:02:13.76]

HOPE MAKLER: As in my life, most of the things that have spurred me on have come from Paul. And Paul is my husband, has always been. His official title is Dr. Paul Todd Makler. He is a medical doctor, but a man of many, many interests. He went to the Barnes Foundation, and after he completed the two-year course, suggested that I attend also, which I did.

[00:02:47.48]

MARINA PACINI: What year did he start his studies there?

[00:02:50.55]

HOPE MAKLER: I think he was '53 to '55. And I was then '55 to '57.

[00:02:58.62]

MARINA PACINI: And had he—what prompted him to go to the Barnes Foundation?

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:03:07.99]

HOPE MAKLER: I don't know how he does it, but he seems to have more hours in the day than other people. Because while he had one of the busiest practices in Philadelphia, he also succeeded in making the Olympic team, and then decided to take piano lessons. He took piano lessons with an artist by the name of Ralph Berkowitz, who had a year sabbatical from being the accompanist of the cellist Gregor Piatigorsky.

[00:03:35.35]

Ralph decided to spend his year going to the Barnes Foundation. And when Paul would go for his piano lessons, it seemed a pleasanter thing to do to discuss art rather than to listen to Paul play the piano. And Paul would have that wonderful question of, there has to be more to it than "I like it." And Ralph suggested that Paul go to the Barnes Foundation and find out the answer to that question.

[00:04:03.98]

MARINA PACINI: So Paul hadn't really had any sort of art training or studies before this point?

[00:04:12.89]

HOPE MAKLER: No.

[00:04:13.99]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. Okay. Can you talk about your experiences at the Barnes Foundation, what it was like to study there, the kinds of things you were taught, what Ms. de Mazia was like?

[00:04:29.17]

HOPE MAKLER: I guess I've met two truly remarkable women in my life. One is Violette de

Mazia and the other is Stella Kramrisch, the curator of Indian Art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, who was Paul's and my teacher in graduate school at Penn [The University of Pennsylvania -Ed.]. The Barnes Foundation simply opened our eyes and opened our world, and obviously has influenced our world. And without it, I certainly would not have had the courage to go on to graduate school or to open the gallery.

[00:05:10.58]

MARINA PACINI: How many—all right, you said you studied there for two years?

[00:05:13.19]

HOPE MAKLER: Yes.

[00:05:13.76]

MARINA PACINI: And can you describe how the program works? I believe the first year, one studies with Ms. de Mazia?

[00:05:20.63]

HOPE MAKLER: Right.

[00:05:20.96]

MARINA PACINI: And then the second year, one works with someone else.

[00:05:27.91]

HOPE MAKLER: It's a course in aesthetics and learning to see. The second year—I consider myself lucky—I'm sure all three teachers are equally competent, but I was fortunate to have Angelo Pinto. And the reason I say I have a little preference for him was because he was there when Albert Barnes was alive. And he went to Europe with Ms. de Mazia and Albert Barnes, and really was more closely connected with the beginnings of the Foundation.

[00:06:07.75]

MARINA PACINI: And what was—was the second year also aesthetics?

[00:06:12.49]

HOPE MAKLER: It followed art tradition a little bit—I mean, art history, as a course of art history, but so interwoven with what she was doing and absolutely following the theory of the Barnes Foundation.

[00:06:32.84]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. Is there anything else that you would like to say to sum up your experiences at the Barnes Foundation?

[00:06:42.75]

HOPE MAKLER: It was a totally remarkable opportunity to be able to be a student there.

[00:06:50.67]

MARINA PACINI: Who were some of the other students in the class with you? I don't even necessarily need names. Were there young students, were there professional people, were there artists?

[00:07:03.42]

HOPE MAKLER: It probably was heavily weighted to early middle-aged women, simply because they then had the hours to be able to devote to it. Because it was every Tuesday, I think from twelve [p.m.] to five [p.m.], although we just came and looked from twelve [p.m.] to one [p.m.], and then one Friday a month. So that was a big commitment in time.

[00:07:33.42]

MARINA PACINI: When you say that for this hour, you were allowed—you were supposed to be looking, were you looking at the works that are up in the Foundation building? Or did you have access to paintings someplace else?

[00:07:46.27]

HOPE MAKLER: I never had access to paintings any other place, until I then took, recently, the three-year horticulture course. And our classes were held in what was the old house. And when I was there, I don't think the farm was available. It could have been, but I never visited the farm until I took the horticulture course.

[00:08:15.15]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. Now, I know that the Barnes Collection has the work of many Philadelphia artists. So were you—did they make a point of exposing people to the work of Philadelphia artists?

[00:08:30.72]

HOPE MAKLER: No. As far as I can remember, it was the uniqueness—of course, Philadelphia artists would in a way make it unique. But they were really such a small part of the collection that for their teaching purposes, they use the Cézannes, Renoirs, Matisses, Rousseaus of the collection, and of course all the other people who are in the collection.

[00:09:09.27]

MARINA PACINI: So the next thing is when you were finished with the course of study at the Barnes, you went and enrolled in graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania.

[00:09:19.29]

HOPE MAKLER: Yes.

[00:09:20.80]

MARINA PACINI: Can you tell me about who you studied with there, and what courses you took?

[00:09:26.38]

HOPE MAKLER: It was a general art history survey. We were, at that point, allowed to choose whatever subjects or credits I think added up to 24. And I had a Schuyler Cammann for Chinese and Japanese art, Stella Kramrisch for Indian art, George Tatum for classical art, Professor Hansom for architecture. I believe his name was Dr. Smith for furniture. I guess Renaissance was also George Tatum. Dr. Robb had been injured, and he had broken a leg or something. And he did not teach during the time that I was there, so I did not have him. [Pause.] Sometimes I had a course twice, such as one would be iconography, and then one would be tradition, say, for instance, with Schuyler Cammann.

[00:11:02.52]

MARINA PACINI: You've spoken, and I've read in *Prometheus*, you're very open about the importance of the Barnes Foundation education. Are there any experiences from Penn that you feel had an equally great impact on you?

[00:11:23.33]

HOPE MAKLER: I don't think they would have been as—they were not as monumental. They were reinforcing, but they were not as monumental, really. Also, Joe Sloan at Bryn Mawr for late 19th century painting, painting more than sculpture. But certainly the Barnes Foundation was the pivotal experience.

[00:11:55.83]

MARINA PACINI: Once you were done with your studies at Penn, did you have a particularly strong affinity to one particular period of art? Were you most interested in 20th century art, 19th century, or nothing as specific as that?

[00:12:15.63]

HOPE MAKLER: I graduated in June of '59. And then by February of 1960, we had opened our gallery. I think because we were opening the gallery, we had to look around and see which artists would be possible for us to have as inventory. And certainly, the art market had moved to New York. The vital part, for us anyway, was post-World War II art, and available.

[00:13:07.17]

MARINA PACINI: Where did the interest in post-World War II come from?

[00:13:10.34]

HOPE MAKLER: Paul and I had been buying things from about 1955. I guess we started to buy things in 1955. And we went to Perls Gallery on whose gallery we would like to think we patterned ours. I mean, they are much more important; they're much more worldly, scholarly than we are. But we like to think that in style and in relationships, that we have used Klaus and Dolly Perls as our mentors.

[00:13:51.84]

We bought a [Jules -Ed.] Pascin painting, and that was influenced by the Barnes Foundation because we simply looked around to see who would be available and through them established lovely relationships with such people as Jacques Lipchitz, the Philadelphia painters Luigi Settani, Angelo Pinto, Biagio Pinto, who were represented in the Barnes Foundation. And actually, the collecting of the Barnes Foundation influenced our early purchases.

[00:14:33.32]

MARINA PACINI: How were you meeting these artists? Were you buying the work of Settani and the Pintos through a gallery? Or are you going directly to the artists?

[00:14:41.51]

HOPE MAKLER: They had no gallery, so we had to go directly to them.

[00:14:45.79]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. And you got to know them because they were teaching at the Barnes? Or did you just feel, having seen their work at the Barnes, that you liked it, and then approached them?

[00:14:56.37]

HOPE MAKLER: Having seen their work at the Barnes Foundation, we liked it and approached them. Luigi Settani did not teach at the Barnes Foundation.

[00:15:10.69]

MARINA PACINI: Who was the third teacher teaching there? Was that Harry Sefarbi?

[00:15:15.83]

HOPE MAKLER: Barton Church, Harry Sefarbi, and Angelo Pinto.

[00:15:25.35]

MARINA PACINI: Now, how did you come to find the Perls Gallery? Somebody recommended them? Or did you just go to New York, and you happened to like what they carried?

[00:15:42.20]

HOPE MAKLER: I really don't remember how we lit on Pascin because we were not really gallery-goers.

[00:15:54.91]

MARINA PACINI: So it was looking for Pascin that sent you to the Perls Gallery?

[00:15:59.15]

HOPE MAKLER: I think so.

[00:15:59.91]

MARINA PACINI: Oh, okay.

[00:16:00.34]

HOPE MAKLER: It wasn't that we went to Perls and they had a Pascin. I think that probably we thought about Pascin. And we knew—this was when Paul was fencing very actively. And I remember being so naïve that we tried to call Perls Gallery on a Sunday. We were in New York for a fencing competition. And we didn't even realize that galleries weren't open on Sunday.

[00:16:27.98]

MARINA PACINI: What about Ms. de Mazia? Was she helpful in terms of, once you made the decision that you were interested in collecting, in recommending a gallery for you to approach? Or did she even recommend artists' work for you to look at? Or did you not develop that sort of a relationship with her?

[00:16:48.24]

HOPE MAKLER: I don't think we would have asked her that kind of question.

[00:16:54.45]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. Because she just—that's not the—one just didn't ask Ms. de Mazia those sorts of questions?

[00:17:01.11]

HOPE MAKLER: Oh, no, she was so—she was witty. And I mean, she could handle herself. She would know what to do with that kind of a question. But I don't think I would have put her on the spot that way.

[00:17:20.05]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. So once you established a relationship with the Perls Gallery, you just worked exclusively with them? Or did you look to see if there were any other galleries in New York handling—

[00:17:29.94]

HOPE MAKLER: Oh, of course. By that time—I don't think we ever expected to own more than a very few objects. I don't think it ever occurred to us to own more than just a few objects.

[00:17:49.71]

MARINA PACINI: Now, when did you decide to open the gallery? Because you mentioned you finished school and within eight months—

[00:17:56.96]

HOPE MAKLER: Yes. We went to Europe for about—well, for the whole summer, two and a half months, or something like that. And I guess my thought was to work in a museum because I had four children. And it never entered my mind that I would be able to have a full-time job with having four children.

[00:18:28.97]

And the museum job—I was offered one, but told that if I went away, somebody else might take my place. That was by Henri Marceau, who was then the Director of the Philadelphia

Museum. And of course, somebody took the job while I was away. I really don't even remember what I did between September—or maybe we decided to open the gallery after I found out that I didn't have an available museum job. And maybe we started to collect inventory. I really don't remember. But we had to get a house in about—I guess we were busy just getting a house for the gallery, which we probably did in about November. And then—at 1634 Latimer Street—and settled on it in January, and then opened I believe it was around the 21st or 22nd of February, 1960.

[00:19:41.91]

MARINA PACINI: Well, from hearing this scenario, you obviously then didn't have any previous gallery experience when you—

[00:19:47.60]

HOPE MAKLER: No, I had never worked. I got married when I was in my junior year in college, when I was 19. And I graduated in June, and had my first child the next January—January of '46, and then had four children in five years. So I had some things to do. [Laughs.]

[00:20:12.98]

MARINA PACINI: That sounds—that would be enough to keep most people busy. Okay, so the museum job didn't pan out, and you just thought "gallery."

[00:20:22.68]

HOPE MAKLER: Well, that was Paul. I mean, he said, "You don't have a museum job, so why don't you open a gallery?"

[00:20:27.83]

MARINA PACINI: Where were you living at that point? How close to Latimer Street was—

[00:20:33.06]

HOPE MAKLER: We lived in Marion.

[00:20:36.03]

MARINA PACINI: Oh, so then it was—this wasn't—you weren't living close by.

[00:20:40.89]

HOPE MAKLER: No.

[00:20:40.95]

MARINA PACINI: It was quite a hike to come into town every day.

[00:20:42.93]

HOPE MAKLER: Yes. And from really trying to decide whether I could possibly manage a maximum of three days a week in a museum environment, we then had our gallery open six days a week. And many, many times on Sunday, there was something that could be associated with the gallery, some social event that, in truth, was gallery-affiliated.

[00:21:18.90]

MARINA PACINI: Well, did you have help? Or did you just all of a sudden go ahead and dump yourself—jump into this, six and seven days a week?

[00:21:26.09]

HOPE MAKLER: Well, Paul is a complete partner in this. I mean, there would be no gallery without him, although he didn't man it. Every decision about it, either scheduling or philosophy or financial or anything at all, he was absolutely the full-time—the full partner, but not an actual physical presence in manning it, because he was a full-time doctor at this time.

[00:21:56.49]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. So then it was just the two of you. You didn't get somebody else with some previous gallery experience to come in and help you manage it.

[00:22:05.49]

HOPE MAKLER: No. We really figured it out each day by day.

[00:22:07.77]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. What about your decision to open the gallery on Latimer Street? It seems like a slightly—there weren't really any—were there any other galleries in that vicinity?

[00:22:21.93]

HOPE MAKLER: All galleries, of the ones that were there. There was—his name is slipping my mind. There was a gallery on 16th Street that had French Impressionists.

[00:22:44.31]

MARINA PACINI: Let me help you out. I brought *Art in Focus* here, a couple sheets from March that lists all the galleries. This might make it a little easier for you.

[00:22:55.42]

HOPE MAKLER: There was Robert Carlen, Newman, The Little Gallery, which is now Janet Fleischer, which was west of here on some small street. Then—I don't want to tell you the wrong—

[00:23:16.71]

MARINA PACINI: I know that there were not that many at that point in time.

[00:23:22.92]

HOPE MAKLER: Of course, the Print Club existed. Oh, maybe that man's name will come to me. It should be here. But it was a single last name. A man and his wife had it.

[00:23:48.43]

MARINA PACINI: They were selling French Impressionists, huh?

[00:23:53.04]

HOPE MAKLER: I remember a little Renoir. And we bought Henry Moores from them. We bought a Prendergast, Maurice Prendergast, from them. I'm very sorry, but I cannot remember that man's name.

[00:24:13.86]

MARINA PACINI: That's okay. So then you very carefully went and selected a location that was around other galleries?

[00:24:21.06]

HOPE MAKLER: Oh, yes.

[00:24:26.01]

MARINA PACINI: How did you envision the gallery working? Did you envision that you were going to do rotating exhibitions with artists that you were not going to have any sort of specific set relationship with? Or did you go out and buy works of art in order to have an inventory on the premises?

[00:24:45.45]

HOPE MAKLER: It was very easy in those days to get things on consignment. But from just deciding that we were going to have a very few objects, we had gotten more objects so that we had more and more contact with other galleries in New York. And they were very willing to give things on consignment, which bolstered up our inventory. We had one-man shows, and we had group shows. But the overall, ever-riding abiding thing for us was, it had to be first rate. It had to be—it was a question of taste.

[00:25:41.02]

We sometimes thought that shows were wonderful, and they were not successful commercially. But we really stayed satisfied because we felt we had put on a good show. And strangely enough, the gallery always made money. And we never had to supplement our income with things—which were honorable—but we didn't have to do framing, or we didn't have to do some of the other things. It was strictly the selling of painting and sculpture and prints.

[00:26:18.97]

MARINA PACINI: So you were very early on, completely self-sufficient?

[00:26:23.13]

HOPE MAKLER: Yes.

[00:26:25.45]

MARINA PACINI: Because I've heard some stories of galleries opening and closing in Philadelphia very quickly simply because they were just not able to make it financially. They just weren't selling enough to make expenses.

[00:26:38.95]

HOPE MAKLER: We just thought we were in the right place at the right time. This was 1960. And we had defined—we were very clearly defined in our outlook, our position, what we wanted to do, the kind of objects we wanted to present, the things we would be proud to offer that we sold in good faith. It was—I am absolutely—I think I'm the world's worst salesman. But if you have something that you truly believe somebody would like to have, would be almost grateful for having, would thank you for—"thank you for bringing this into my life."

[00:27:30.23]

MARINA PACINI: Then you didn't set out to do something like work specifically with realist artists or with contemporary American artists. You didn't have a specific focus? You were willing to show—

[00:27:43.45]

HOPE MAKLER: The only thing was that in our opinion—it might not be anybody else's, but in our opinion, that it was the very best we could possibly offer. But at that time, we were also buying things in Europe, such as [Jean -Ed.] Dubuffet. And Dubuffet to us was a giant. And his things were affordable. We had many sets of—that set of 13, that "Carrot Nose" and "Personnage." Well, we were selling—we were selling "Carrot Nose" for \$200. And if you look up your latest auction records and see what "Carrot Nose" is selling for now, it will be amazing.

[00:28:39.78]

MARINA PACINI: Did you set up contractual relationships with any artists?

[00:28:46.74]

HOPE MAKLER: In the very, very first year, only with the probably three Philadelphia artists, Settani and the two Pintos. We had some arrangement whereby we probably guaranteed sales. But I think after that first year, we never had a contract with anybody.

[00:29:12.32]

MARINA PACINI: It was strictly on a show-by-show basis?

[00:29:14.98]

HOPE MAKLER: Show-by-show basis, and handshake, and honor system, and that sort of thing.

[00:29:19.13]

MARINA PACINI: Okay, so in some instances, you actually were buying and then selling stock, whereas in other instances, you were taking things on consignment, either from other galleries or from artists.

[00:29:33.02]

HOPE MAKLER: Yes.

[00:29:33.77]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. Was there any sort of rule of thumb as to how that worked or it just depended on what was required by that specific individual?

[00:29:46.16]

HOPE MAKLER: You mean, in terms of—

[00:29:47.88]

MARINA PACINI: Well, did you—well, never mind. Let's forget that question. [They laugh.] Let's see. Well, then you never had a stable of artists?

[00:30:07.86]

HOPE MAKLER: There were times when, yes, certain artists were committed to me and no one else—Elizabeth Osborne, Warren Rohrer. I guess if I had the work of—at the time that I had Luigi Settani and Biagio Pinto and Angelo. I'm trying to think of who else. I should have been better about going back on my records. We just had an honor agreement that I was their gallery, and they wouldn't sell out of other studios. Or if they did, that they then owed me a commission.

[00:30:53.18]

MARINA PACINI: Were you at all able to—or maybe you weren't even interested in this—but trying to get galleries in New York, for example, to do a show of one of the Pintos? Or that just wasn't at all what you were interested in?

[00:31:09.04]

HOPE MAKLER: No. And the galleries in New York had honored an agreement whereby I was their Philadelphia gallery. If I had a George Segal from Janis, Janis would not give work to another Philadelphia gallery. Or a Lipchitz from Marlborough, or [Alexander -Ed.] Calder from Perls. Or [Louise -Ed.] Nevelson from Pace. You know, that kind of thing.

[00:31:46.00]

MARINA PACINI: So you did frequently work through New York galleries?

[00:31:49.23]

HOPE MAKLER: Oh, almost exclusively, yes.

[00:31:51.85]

MARINA PACINI: Oh, okay. So most of your—

[00:31:52.90]

HOPE MAKLER: Eventually almost exclusively.

[00:31:55.10]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. So most of your relationships were with galleries, rather than directly with another artist?

[00:31:59.53]

HOPE MAKLER: Yes.

[00:32:01.35]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. Well, I know one of the early things that you got involved with was the work of CoBrA artists. How did you become acquainted with their work?

[00:32:17.94]

HOPE MAKLER: I remember going to the Guggenheim and seeing a painting. And I said, "I don't know who that artist is. I just know it's the next painting I'm going to buy." And it was Asger Jorn. I probably knew [Karel -Ed.] Appel much before that. In fact, we had I think a truly remarkable show in 1962 called "Sculpture '62," and filled three floors of 1634 Latimer Street with a show that I certainly wouldn't have the stamina now to put on. And whenever I see the names, I'm just really flabbergasted at who we gathered for that show. And there was work of Appel, sculpture—not assemblages, but there's another word. Or another word maybe was in vogue at that time, where slats of wood were put together to make an object that hung on the wall.

[00:33:31.33]

MARINA PACINI: I'm drawing a complete blank.

[00:33:32.65]

HOPE MAKLER: I'm drawing a blank, too.

[00:33:33.59]

MARINA PACINI: I'm thinking of things like kinetic, but obviously it's not kinetic.

[00:33:36.42]

HOPE MAKLER: No, no.

[00:33:38.95]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. Did you—were the CoBrA works coming again through other galleries?

[00:33:48.58]

HOPE MAKLER: We worked with Martha Jackson, who was a remarkable woman, and probably got our Appels from her. We probably—I don't even know if John Lefevre was in business at that time, but we might have gotten work from him. Then going to Europe, we probably bought some things.

[00:34:19.46]

MARINA PACINI: So when you took trips to Europe, they would frequently be—

[00:34:23.07]

HOPE MAKLER: Oh, they were almost always—in those years, they were buying business trips, yes.

[00:34:27.36]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. Okay. Can you discuss, and you sort of hinted at this, changes that happened in the gallery over the years, from when you first started with this group of artists, well, Philadelphia artists, and artists that you learned about through the Barnes?

[00:34:50.29]

HOPE MAKLER: I think that we felt that our position was that we could bring things to Philadelphia that nobody else seemed to be doing. And we seemed to be able to do it. And judging from the people who were nice enough to buy from us, what they were interested in, and I guess it was the concept of forming a collection. If they had an Adolph Gottlieb work on paper, then probably they would want a Motherwell work on paper. And maybe they would want a Rothko work on paper.

We got to the point where they would say, "Hope and Paul, you know what I have, you know what I want; what do you think I should be looking at next?" Lots of Hans Hofmann from André Emmerich Gallery. And then it was so nice, because people could buy a major work on paper for \$2,500, and then maybe somebody else could have a small oil, and somebody else might be able to have quite a major Hans Hofmann oil, so that there were categories of price opportunities. And the work was of the best quality at that time.

[00:36:27.09]

MARINA PACINI: What's interesting hearing you talk about this is that I can't tell you the number of times I've heard repeatedly "there are no collectors in Philadelphia. There's this lack of interest." I'm totally intrigued that you seem to have found a group of people who you're describing as collectors. And I've had people say there are no true collectors in Philadelphia.

[00:36:48.06]

HOPE MAKLER: [Laughs.] Well, there were enough to certainly keep us busy and sustained. And the reason I've become a—well, I've become a private dealer for many reasons. But I have enough solid ongoing people who seem, still, to want to have things and with this same thing—"Hope, you know what I have; what do you think I should be looking at?" And they buy throughout the year. Because they have objects, they are very specific, or they'll buy one or two or three quite—for me, quite expensive things, so that they're not gathering in an encyclopedic kind of way. They're very specific.

[00:37:48.51]

MARINA PACINI: Actually, this is jumping ahead of myself a little bit.

[00:37:51.63]

HOPE MAKLER: I know; I jumped. I did.

[00:37:53.14]

MARINA PACINI: I was about to ask you—so you are now working as a private dealer.

[00:37:59.50]

HOPE MAKLER: Yes.

[00:37:59.95]

MARINA PACINI: When did the gallery—when did you close the gallery?

[00:38:04.42]

HOPE MAKLER: I think in December of '85.

[00:38:07.39]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. Because while I was trying to do my homework, I was looking at *Prometheus*, and the last issue I found at the museum was 1983. So did *Prometheus* stop several years before the gallery?

[00:38:22.24]

HOPE MAKLER: Yes.

[00:38:22.93]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. We'll have to get into a discussion of *Prometheus*. What made you decide to close?

[00:38:34.36]

HOPE MAKLER: Really—I mean, I'm a different person than I was in 1960. And I saw that I did not really want to do the six days, maybe six-plus days. I figured that the gallery business has changed a great deal, too. And that with the changes in the gallery business, it suited my lifestyle to be able to not have the total commitment of time. I just had a feeling that there were enough, either new clients, or the loyal ones who would fill the role of a private dealer for me.

[00:39:26.36]

MARINA PACINI: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Can you describe what some of those changes were in the gallery scene that you felt at about 1985, from the day that you started?

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:39:42.05]

HOPE MAKLER: It's strange that I don't have a really specific answer for you. But as I said before, in 1960, when we knew that it was the right time and the right place to open a gallery—In 1985—and we had celebrated our 25th anniversary as a gallery—and I think perhaps I would have gone on just to have some seminal time period to do it. So when we had passed our 25th anniversary, it just seemed comfortable and right. And I cannot give you any truly specific reason. It was just the right thing for me to do at that time.

[00:40:30.71]

MARINA PACINI: Did you—have you noticed in the 25 years that you have been in business, are there a change in the attitude in Philadelphia towards art? Are people more receptive than they were? Are there more people collecting art than there were? Are the tastes more sophisticated?

[00:40:53.78]

HOPE MAKLER: Well, it has to change because those things which were available to us are not available now. You can't get an Abstract Expressionist 22-by-30 work on paper for \$2,500. I don't think there was as much concern or talk about money. Money, money, money, seems to be before art. And before, it was art, and then money. But even people who are not concerned with the whole world of art, talk about money—talk about money in relation to art.

[00:41:43.66]

MARINA PACINI: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah, the prices for things have become so astronomical that that seems to be all anybody talks about anymore. Okay, well, I guess I should ask you if there are any artists whose work you sold or that you knew personally over the years that you felt were particularly important to the gallery, that you'd like to talk about.

[00:42:12.88]

HOPE MAKLER: There was a kindness among the giants for me and for Paul that was simply extraordinary. There were personal kindnesses from such people as Jacques Lipchitz, Louise Nevelson, Alexander Calder, George Segal. I don't want to forget anybody who went far beyond the bounds of artist-dealer relationships and were just wonderful human beings. They all came to our parties. Our format was dinners in the gallery. And I think we almost always had the artist present. Mary Frank, Marisol. Oh, [Milton -Ed.] Avery. Avery was, I think, our first one-man show. Sally Avery has been a constant and true friend from the '50s. That was one—I'm sorry to have taken this long to mention the Averys.

[00:43:38.57]

But I guess Avery might have been the first famous artist we approached, which I'll show you in the other room, the watercolor which is a study for the Avery in the Barnes Foundation. And that's very precious. When we bought that, I believe it was \$125. And Sally Avery crated it for us and said that if we could not afford the shipping charges, she would just throw it in, just throw the shipping charges in. And she knew that that watercolor was so meaningful to us that she desperately—not desperately, but she was happy that we were going to have it.

[00:44:30.98]

MARINA PACINI: Now, how did you—

[00:44:32.08]

HOPE MAKLER: And we still have Averys, even on consignment. And that's almost rare these days.

[00:44:40.85]

MARINA PACINI: How did you get to know them?

[00:44:42.83]

HOPE MAKLER: We just called them up.

[00:44:44.06]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. Having seen his work at the Barnes?

[00:44:48.26]

HOPE MAKLER: Yes. And she told us—we went to some place on 11th Street in the Village, and the paintings were stacked outside in a stairwell, access to the street. I mean, anybody could have come up the stairwell and taken them out. The big paintings were there. And when they moved to Central Park West, they were very nervous. And they were scared to death that they had made this big move. And Paul and I came, oh, I don't know that day, but within that week, and bought some things. And they thought, all right, it's all right that we've moved here. We'll have a little cushion, or it's going to be all right. And they felt that because we had come and bought some things.

[00:45:37.75]

MARINA PACINI: And you continued to show his work.

[00:45:40.83]

HOPE MAKLER: Oh, absolutely. And to this day think that if somebody comes and is able to buy, financially able to buy, an Avery watercolor, I still sell it with the same enthusiasm and the same confidence. But we hopefully—we have access to the stacks, and we hopefully pick the best.

[00:46:10.44]

MARINA PACINI: Are there any other artists? Well, I think you've mentioned Lipchitz as somebody you became friendly with. Can you talk about him?

[00:46:17.75]

HOPE MAKLER: Absolutely. He came to Paul's 40th birthday party. He brought his family. And we would visit him many, many times. Whenever he was in Philadelphia, he would stop. Whether we were having a show or not, he would stop by.

[00:46:38.23]

MARINA PACINI: And again, he is somebody whose work—they have the fabulous Lipchitz sculptures at the Barnes.

[00:46:44.57]

HOPE MAKLER: Yes. Paul took him for the first time to see his sculpture. He had never seen it.

[00:46:52.28]

MARINA PACINI: Didn't he have a falling-out with Barnes?

[00:46:55.16]

HOPE MAKLER: I don't know about that. But all I know is that Paul drove him around the grounds to see his sculpture on the outside. He had never seen it.

[00:47:07.31]

MARINA PACINI: We're about to run out of—

[END OF TRACK AAA_makler89_5324_m]

[00:00:03.69]

MARINA PACINI: Any of other artists that you worked with that you would like to talk about?

[00:00:07.83]

HOPE MAKLER: Yes. I believe we had one of the very first shows of Calder gouaches, and probably had one of the very first shows of David Smith's works on paper. In the other room you might have seen two large paintings. They measure about 100 inches by 50 inches. David Smith in 1959 did 28 large-spray paintings, and I believe we bought twelve of the fourteen. We had a very large group of David Smith's sculpture. And because of that, Philadelphia is particularly rich in David Smith's sculpture.

And although it wasn't something we did too often, we truly said to our clients, "If you can possibly afford it, buy it." And many times we actually sold things with earning no commission, but we felt we owed it to our clients to say, "This is a giant. If you possibly can go for his piece of sculpture—" I mean, we did—I think commissions were probably ten percent on it. Sometimes we did earn a commission. But we sold a nice body of David Smith's work being totally committed to the man. And we personally had—oh, probably six or eight—maybe more than that.

[00:02:05.21]

MARINA PACINI: But you never met him? You bought these after his death—

[00:02:07.76]

HOPE MAKLER: The only time we ever saw him—and I actually saw him—was at the ICA [Institute of Contemporary Art -Ed.] show in Philadelphia. And then I decided to buy an Agricola I think the week he died. But we made many trips to Bolton's Landing. And I'm sure that at one time or another, we personally owned and felt that they were part of our holdings—oh, at least twelve David Smiths.

[00:02:56.02]

MARINA PACINI: Well, let's talk about some of the other activities that you organized along with the gallery. For example, I know in 1961 you did a lecture series. Was that something you did commonly, or was that one in '61 the only one? It was—you did sessions on tax, and insurance, and care, and display.

[00:03:21.07]

HOPE MAKLER: There was some group in Philadelphia that—oh, it's run by the Seven Sisters. I'm sorry, but I'm blanking on what it's called, but they run seminars, and I know we were a part of that. Paul speaks beautifully, and he's often asked to talk on art-related subjects. But it certainly was not a major activity.

[00:03:59.09]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. Well, let's talk about *Prometheus*, where the idea for that came about, and how that—

[00:04:07.72]

HOPE MAKLER: Well, if you see the symbol—I think it's in the upper left-hand corner, it's "Prometheus Strangling the Vulture" by Lipchitz, and the sculpture is in the front entry of our apartment. Paul likes to write, and he likes to talk. If you follow *Prometheus*, it is whatever he's thought about and whatever is on his mind. It can be economics, it can be travel, it can be sociology, or philosophy—or you just know what he's been thinking—what he was thinking about for the past three months because he would just sit down and write it.

[00:04:59.77]

MARINA PACINI: Where did the idea for it come from?

[00:05:03.52]

HOPE MAKLER: I think we always thought, what can we do that other galleries are not doing? Or what can we offer that other people are not offering? And Paul has great faith in the written word.

[00:05:18.64]

MARINA PACINI: In 1964, you moved to Locust Street. What brought about the move and—

[00:05:29.14]

HOPE MAKLER: I think our children were, by that time, growing up a little bit more. And I believe that our house in Marion used to be covered all the time by—

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

There was, during the week, a woman who took care of our house. Actually, there were two women, but one came one day and one came another day of the week. Unfortunately, both of them died in the same year. And it was quite difficult to have a business in town, and then try to have a house in the suburbs. And so it seemed—and it was indeed more practical to have a house in town that would have a gallery on the first floor and we would have living quarters above it.

[00:06:35.42]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. But at some point, you must have moved out of there because later you renovated—and your son's gallery moved in upstairs.

[00:06:45.23]

HOPE MAKLER: Yes, and that was about ten years ago.

[00:06:51.52]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. Yeah, I've got here, summer of '79. Although your son—well, you want to talk about your son's gallery?

[00:07:05.78]

HOPE MAKLER: Eric opened the Eric Makler Gallery on Spruce Street—I believe it was 1642 [Spruce Street -Ed.]—I'm not sure of that address—after having gotten his master's degree in clinical psychology. He was an extraordinarily talented young man. He was a sculptor in his own right. And from the time he was tiny, any gift that you got from Eric was perfect. It was exactly right for you, and it was beautiful or interesting or witty. You not only anticipated your own presents; you anticipated the presents he gave other people because you wanted to see what Eric had either done or made or selected.

[00:07:58.68]

And every house that he had looked like a Joseph Cornell. The objects were placed in perfect

accord, one to the other. He didn't go—he didn't set out to make a Joseph Cornell, but it's only to give you the idea of almost the perfect eye for the object, the placement, the environment. And these were not costly things. These were things which just appealed to him. In fact, the found object appealed—folk art appealed to him a great deal. And after—I guess maybe he was on—my years got very mixed up.

[00:08:39.93]

I don't know whether he was on Spruce Street one year or two years, and then three years on Locust Street—where we did not—we had such different fields of interest that one gallery was a complement to the other because we didn't have the same focus at all. His was younger, a bit toward folk art. He discovered many, many artists—or he had many artists who have gone on both to Philadelphia galleries and New York galleries. And then he decided that he wanted to go back to get his doctorate in clinical psychology, so he closed his gallery.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:09:27.15]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. Is there anything else that you would like to say in summation of your years with the gallery? About any of the artists that you worked, with or about the experience in general?

[00:09:47.97]

HOPE MAKLER: I think it's offered me a life that I had no anticipation that would be this rewarding, exciting. When I opened the gallery, I wanted certain things. I wanted something that would include Paul in a business. I wanted something that would interest my son, something that would change all the time, something that would be an intellectual experience. And it proved to be all those things. I met [people -Ed.]. I had the chance to move in a world that I really didn't have any idea—because of the '60s, it was such a rewarding place to be. It was almost like a fairyland to be able to have the opportunities that we did.

[00:10:55.10]

MARINA PACINI: I have asked you a few questions about the Philadelphia gallery scene over the years. I know from having read *Prometheus* that there were a few galleries that you particularly respected, including Gallery 1015, Gladys Myers' gallery.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:11:21.03]

HOPE MAKLER: Yes, that gallery—it's a shame it didn't go on. They definitely were pioneers and tried to present good shows in a very professional way. I think somebody who's made a real contribution is Marian Locks who started—who created a niche. Again, she was bright and courageous, in her way, being the right person at the right time. Philadelphia was ready for a focus on Philadelphia, and with great foresight and courage, she created that market, made it, and made it respectable.

[00:12:13.69]

MARINA PACINI: Well, did you feel—I know that in the '60s, you were handling the work of Philadelphia artists. I'm assuming that you would not have continued to do so for such a long period of time if you hadn't been successful, that there were people buying the works of Philadelphia artists from you.

[00:12:30.85]

HOPE MAKLER: Well, I thought it was—I thought she was a better gallery for the opportunities because corporations wanted to buy, for a while, only Philadelphia art or concentrate or have a large part of their purchases be Philadelphia art. And she had the wall space; she had the—really, the focus of her gallery was that.

[00:13:00.95]

MARINA PACINI: Were there any other galleries—or are there still any other galleries that you felt were particularly good at what they did or made a strong contribution to the Philadelphia scene?

[00:13:16.40]

HOPE MAKLER: It seems—well, The Print Club was always a very special place in Philadelphia. Probably Lawrence Oliver is doing a good job these days.

[00:13:41.30]

MARINA PACINI: Let's talk about the collectors that came to you over the years. Well, not just necessarily to you—just in general, do you think that there were any generalizations you can make about Philadelphians as collectors?

[00:14:04.86]

HOPE MAKLER: I would like to think that they really like the things they bought, if I can categorize them as my people. I really didn't get involved—maybe it was an example of the times. We didn't hear, "Well, will it appreciate?" They kept them for all time. There was no idea of buying it this year and selling it very soon again. They kept it for themselves and their children. And because—maybe because of the style of our gallery, our clients got to be friends of each other, which, I guess, was reinforcing, too. But there was no buying for flash; there was no buying for publicity. It wasn't used for social climbing. They just bought the objects because they liked the objects.

[00:15:16.51]

MARINA PACINI: In the January 1967 issue of *Prometheus*, your husband wrote on the Philadelphia art scene saying that it was losing force, that Philadelphia was not a flourishing city, and that the local galleries were limited in what they could do to remedy the situation, and that the local institutions did not have supporting local artists as—or just supporting artists as a primary function. Would you like to comment on that?

[00:15:48.70]

HOPE MAKLER: As a primary function, I don't see how they possibly could. The money situations at the Pennsylvania Academy—I mean, I am not "in on" their budget. But I think they have always had money problems. And so I don't imagine that they could have a concentrated effort to really promote Philadelphia artists. I think the Philadelphia Museum from time to time has had a Philadelphia show.

[00:16:35.13]

MARINA PACINI: Now I see—

[00:16:35.79]

HOPE MAKLER: They have so many other things that they want to do. It would be difficult for them to push in that direction.

[00:16:47.44]

MARINA PACINI: But is that—one of the things I thought interesting was his comment that Philadelphia was not a flourishing city, and that the art scene was losing force in '67. I mean, is this—that may have been his perspective in '67. Obviously you're looking back on it from 1989, but does that ring a bell?

[00:17:15.49]

HOPE MAKLER: I really don't know what—I'm afraid I was a little insular in my outlook, and really just paid attention to the Makler Gallery. And I really don't know what was going on in other galleries in the city. I don't know anything about their financial status, I don't know how many dealt with—I mean, there's one gallery—and I'm sure there are more galleries—who are quite dependent on decorators, or art consultants, or art advisors, and that kind of thing. I really don't know that aspect of the business.

[00:17:51.52]

MARINA PACINI: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:17:52.13]

HOPE MAKLER: But I guess it would be interesting to know—I used to be on the Art Dealers Board of the Art Dealers Association. And I remember when the threat of auctions first started to loom. And we don't have that auction-gallery relationship in Philadelphia, which really sustains or invigorates or glamorizes, and—if there's such a word as "sexisizes"—sexes up. [They laugh.]

[00:18:29.56]

MARINA PACINI: Makes it sexy.

[00:18:30.67]

HOPE MAKLER: Makes it sexy. [They laugh.] In New York.

[00:18:35.72]

MARINA PACINI: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Did you ever think of opening a gallery in New York? Opening a branch, or moving there?

[00:18:42.73]

HOPE MAKLER: No. I think that galleries are one-person, one-owner businesses, and when people come in, they want to see the boss.

[00:18:51.35]

MARINA PACINI: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Okay. One of the other complaints that I've heard over the years is that there's been very little coverage of the arts in Philadelphia, that the newspapers have not been very good at covering Philadelphia arts scene. There has not been a firm commitment. That's not—I mean, that's not to in any way demean Victoria Donohoe and her efforts. It's just that the papers themselves were not allocating much space, or the fact that she seems to have been one of the few even out there working.

[00:19:37.53]

HOPE MAKLER: Oh, she was wonderful. I really admire her a great deal. I like her writing style. And it took courage for her. I mean, she would go out on a limb, she would express her opinions. I really liked her. I liked her as a person, and I liked her as a critic. One of our great friends is Ed Guthman who used to be the editor of the editorial page of the *Inquirer*. And I guess it would be what makes newspapers sell. And if art is not really a hot topic in the city, the papers judge how much space they want to give in relation to its value of selling newspapers.

[00:20:32.89]

MARINA PACINI: Well, that does say something about the Philadelphia art scene. [Laughs.] Well, let's see. Another interesting comment somebody made was the fact that predominantly, the galleries in Philadelphia are run by women.

[00:21:11.27]

HOPE MAKLER: [Pause.] I can think of Ben Mangle, Richard Rosenfeld—I don't know who handles Newman. Lawrence Oliver, Paul Cava, Charles Moore. I mean, there—

[00:21:34.52]

MARINA PACINI: Janet Fleischer. Helen Drutt. [Telephone rings.] Marian Locks. Yourself. Sandy Webster. Estelle Gross. An awful lot. And aren't most of the men that you mentioned rather new to the gallery scene? Aren't most of them having opened, I'd say, within the last five years? Well, with the exception of Newman's.

[00:22:03.12]

HOPE MAKLER: And Ben Mangle was out in Bala Cynwyd for years and years. And I don't know how long Richard Rosenfeld has been in business.

[00:22:13.18]

MARINA PACINI: So you don't see there's any sort of—

[00:22:15.39]

HOPE MAKLER: No, I think there are probably—one would get the—a weighted impression toward women, mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:22:23.49]

MARINA PACINI: Do you feel that—is there anything one can read into that?

[00:22:30.41]

HOPE MAKLER: There might have been an era in the Gladys Myers, Pearl Fox time. And some of these galleries opened in women's houses when it was a secondary income. There was a primary income, which—because it was there, it was possible to have a gallery. And the secondary income—I mean, the primary income would likely be a man, so the second person would be a woman.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:23:18.96]

MARINA PACINI: I forgot to ask you at the beginning about Dr. Makler's background, his parents, and where he was born and when he was born.

[00:23:28.05]

HOPE MAKLER: He was born October 22, 1920. His mother graduated from the—I guess it was called the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy. His father graduated from what was then called Medical Chi, which I think has become a part of Penn. And his father was a general practitioner who, during the war, saw something like a hundred patients a day. He was really a busy general practitioner. That was pretty much seven days a week.

[00:24:14.13]

But he had one—besides being an avid reader—avid reader of history, he had one little thing that he liked to do, and that was, from time to time, attend Freeman's auctions. But I guess doctors took an hour off on Wednesday, and he would—that was his treat to himself. But they really were not collectors in any sense of the word.

[00:24:43.67]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. So which is then—which leads to our story about the piano lessons. [Laughs.] Is there anything else that you would like to say to wrap up this discussion?

[00:25:05.91]

HOPE MAKLER: I can't think of a more rewarding field to have entered. One is dealing with beautiful objects, nice people. They're happy in their situation. It's not like going to the doctor where you're frightened. It's a happy time, and an intellectual experience, because most of the people I deal with want to know more—I mean, if they start to become interested, they want—"Where can I get books? Where can I find out about this? Where does it fit in art history?" They're very much interested in finding out. So it's both an aesthetic and an intellectual endeavor. And then has very nice—you become friends, so it has social advantages, too. And a way of life. I mean, what do you do when you go on vacation? You go to museums. [Laughs.]

[00:26:22.40]

MARINA PACINI: Okay. Thank you very much.

[00:26:24.41]

HOPE MAKLER: Oh, you're welcome.

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]