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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Herman Maril,
1965 September 5

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Herman Maril on 5 September 1965. The interview was conducted in Provincetown, NJ by Dorothy Seckler for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

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

Interview

DOROTHY SECKLER: This is Dorothy Seckler interviewing Herman Maril in Provincetown on September 5, 1965.

Mr. Maril, I gather that you spent a good bit of your boyhood around Baltimore, in Maryland. But were you born there? And where did you spend your childhood?

HERMAN MARIL: I was born in Baltimore and spent most of my childhood there, and went to the public schools there, and graduated from the Maryland Institute of Fine Arts there [Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD].

I was always interested in painting. I cannot remember any period of my life in which I was not interested in painting, and upon graduating from high school immediately went into the art school, having supported myself at nights working in department stores, making signs in the show cart.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Can you remember anything that you had seen as a child that started you - did you look at illustrations and copy things, or any of that sort of thing, that so many people did?

MR. MARIL: Well, I did very little copying, but was always interested in going to the museums. And I guess we all are a little lonely - I guess this was a way of fulfilling -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Were you an only child?

MR. MARIL: No, the youngest of six children. And a rather low-income family.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And found that my greatest pleasures were looking at pictures and taking walks, and drawing.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Where did you - at the Walters Art Galley [The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MD], I suppose?

MR. MARIL: Walters Art Gallery.

MS. SECKLER: Was that opened - some day -

MR. MARIL: That was opened once a year for public school children.

MS. SECKLER: Yes, I remember that.

MR. MARIL: That was a great thrill. And I'd get over to Washington [D.C.] occasionally.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: Had the Corcoran Gallery [Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.], the Freer Gallery [Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.].

MS. SECKLER: Yes. Good.

MR. MARIL: Yes. And the Maryland Institute, as a matter of fact, I went to at night. At first, while I was going to high school, I enrolled at the night school. I lied about my age in order to get in.

MS. SECKLER: Did you also go to Saturday classes at the Institute?

MR. MARIL: No, just the night school, and then immediately went to the day school.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: One of the greatest influences, at the age of 16, I read Roger Frye.

MS. SECKLER: Oh, yes.

MR. MARIL: So that I was interested in modern painting at a very early age, and was somewhat of a rebel in the classroom for that reason -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative] -

MR. MARIL: - because of the teacher, who was a liberal.

MS. SECKLER: Which teacher are you talking -

MR. MARIL: Henry Roben.

MS. SECKLER: Yes. Yes -

MR. MARIL: He was a liberal and a very fine person. He was somewhat conservative in his point of view -

MS. SECKLER: Yes, you're right.

MR. MARIL: So in reading Roger Frye, and learning about [Paul], and then hunting [inaudible] and going to see pictures, I think I had the advantage perhaps of being a little ahead of my contemporaries in that area.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Yeah. Besides Henry Roben at the Maryland Institute, another painter by the name of Charles Walther, W-A-L-T-H-E-R.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yes -

MR. MARIL: He was one of the first really non-figurative painters, abstract painters, in this country.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And he and I, though I was somewhat a rebel in his class, became very good friends. And we visited each other, since we lived close by, at least once a week.

And though he was a much older man - I was in my late teens, activity - the relationship was a supportive thing -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative] -

MR. MARIL: - in my own searchings. So that I thought I had fairly good influences as a young man. And actually I was able to take trips to New York.

And one of the greatest, most surprising, most encouraging things that happened to me, at the age of 20, was receiving a special delivery letter from a gallery, asking me to come up with my work. And I hadn't even saw the gallery.

MS. SECKLER: Hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Someone had shown a photograph. It's a gallery called 144 [Pratt Manhattan Gallery, New York, NY?], it's right across from the [inaudible] Gallery. They asked me to bring my paintings up. When he met me he was surprised I was so young. They wanted me to bring my work in every year.

MS. SECKLER: What year would this have been, Herman?

MR. MARIL: Jeez, 1929 or '30, I guess.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: So eventually the gallery closed up, and I never had a show there.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: But the activity itself was excellent.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: The man is now a painter himself. I think I'd better not mention his name, because he's still got my paintings. But I was always interested and aware of what's happening.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And I think the influence of Cézanne, the study of the work of Cézanne and the post-impressionists, Cézanne I considered one of the giants of painting in the last century.

I think it's a good foundation upon which to have built.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And I personally believe in a solid, slow growth, rather than seeking for what will be popular.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And I felt like to me, Cézanne was like [Johann Sebastian] Bach in music, incomparable.

MS. SECKLER: You came out of school at the depth of the Depression?

MR. MARIL: Yes, it was the depth of the Depression, and in order to have a studio, I had to sort of be a janitor of a building for a year, in order to get studio space. You see?

And things were tough. As a matter of fact, at one period, I didn't have enough to even buy paints, you know?

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Let alone paint. But luckily, President [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt came into office. And the first thing that he organized was the Treasury Art Project.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: And I wasn't put on the project immediately. But strangely enough, Mr. Edward Rowan, who became the head of the Treasury Project, saw some of my paintings, which were on display at the Phillips Gallery [The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.], and wrote me to come over to see him.

He acquired one of our paintings. And - I was not on the Treasury Art Project. He notified Mr. [Roland Joseph] McKinney, Director of [inaudible] Museum, to put me on.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: Well, he put me on a project, like a large painting of the old Baltimore waterfront, which was to go into the Peale Museum [also known as Municipal Museum of Baltimore, Baltimore, MD]. But Mrs. [Eleanor] Roosevelt, upon the completion - and well, to go back, when the paintings were completed, they made a selection from all over the country to hang in the Corcoran Gallery of Washington temporary exhibit.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And I was one of the Marylanders selected. And out of that group, several were selected to hang in the Museum of Modern Art [New York, NY], and mine was selected for that.

MS. SECKLER: Which show in there? Is that -

MR. MARIL: It was the Treasury Art Project.

MS. SECKLER: Treasury, this is still Treasury?

MR. MARIL: Yeah. And mine was selected.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: Mine and a man named Frank Meshaw [phonetic].

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Then Mrs. Roosevelt acquired the sketch for that for the White House.

MS. SECKLER: Isn't that interesting?

MR. MARIL: Yes. She was a phenomenal thing. And my large one is now hanging in the Senate Office Building.

MS. SECKLER: Hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And Mrs. Rifkin [phonetic] tried to get it for the Baltimore Museum for the [inaudible] collection, but they wanted to keep it there.

But when that happened, I received a lot of offers, teaching offers. Different areas of the country. And I had never taught before. But I accepted -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And you hadn't had a teaching course at the Maryland Institute.

MR. MARIL: No, I was just taking -

MS. SECKLER: But -

MR. MARIL: Yeah. Well, I never - I took straight painting. And the only job that I accepted was in Massachusetts, in the Berkshires, to teach the school called The Cummington School of the Arts [Cummington, MA].

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Chaim Gross was the sculpture teacher, and I was the painting teacher.

MS. SECKLER: Hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And some of the students were older than I was. I was 25.

And it was a growth experience for me, because the school was a very fine school. The painting, sculpture, the dance, music, and literature.

And when I had the time, I would attend the classes in literature, play reading.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: But as I say, it was an education for me. And some of my students in painting have really been going further.

MS. SECKLER: How long did this go on?

MR. MARIL: I did it for six summers. It was -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: But after that first experience teaching there, I took private pupils during the rest of the year.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And just enough. I didn't much, I was single then. I took private pupils. And pretty soon I started selling.

My first exhibit actually was given to me, it was sponsored by Marie Sterner. The first exhibit in New York, that is. Marie Sterner. The Sterner Gallery, on Fifty-Seventh Street [New York, NY].

She was one of the leading impresarios, and she saw a painting of mine in someone's apartment in New York, and she put on a very successful show for me, even though I didn't know a soul in New York.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. What year was that?

MR. MARIL: 1935.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: My actual, the first show that I ever had was in '34, was at the Howard University [Washington, D.C.], the first one. The Howard University in Washington, D.C.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And strangely enough, the French cultural attaché brought two paintings to take back with him. And he is now a well-known collector. Claude Debois Selegy [phonetic] in Paris. And there, *The Magazine of Art* noticed my exhibit, came to see it, 40 paintings.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And assigned Olin Dows to write a six-page article about me for *The Magazine of Art* [*American Magazine of Art*].

MS. SECKLER: Hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: It was the feature article. I had about ten reproductions.

And so that all happened. I wish I had the article here to show you. It's a July 1935 of *The Magazine of Art*.

MS. SECKLER: *The Magazine of Art*.

MR. MARIL: Yeah, July. Practically half the issue.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Marvelous. That was a wonderful magazine.

MR. MARIL: Yes. And I forget who was the editor. I think he died.

MS. SECKLER: Robert Groller was for some years.

MR. MARIL: I forget who it was at the time. But that was a terrific break, and -

MS. SECKLER: By this time, by the way, the Treasury Project must have changed into the WPA [Works Progress Administration]. Had you been on WPA?

MR. MARIL: No. I always stayed on the Treasury, until - no, the WPA was something different.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: WPA came afterwards, as a relief measure.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: But Treasury stayed on and ran these competitions.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: So once I completed my project, which was the original, I started competing, and I received two little mural - so it lasted for a few years.

MS. SECKLER: So that went right on parallel -

MR. MARIL: That went right on parallel, the government buildings, yes. It was under the Public Buildings Administration.

MS. SECKLER: Yes. Where were your two murals -

MR. MARIL: I'm afraid to look at them now. One of them is in West Scranton, Pennsylvania.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: The other is in Alta Vista, Virginia.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And it was a good experience going out to these places. They both were similar in nature, in the sense that West Scranton is a depressed area, or it was at that time, in 1939 or '40.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Nineteen thirty-eight, '39. Depressed. So I've got a lot of material for paintings, myself.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: And Alta Vista, Virginia, this is the one main industry, that also struck me as a depressed area.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Well, we haven't gotten much of a picture yet of how your painting had progressed. We know you were strongly influenced by Cézanne. Did you go through a social realism period of any kind?

MR. MARIL: Well, I was always interested in the abstract. As a matter of fact, my early paintings were much less realistic than my paintings today.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: They were almost completely abstract, or semi-abstract. And I had difficult time showing - I was showing mainly an independent exhibition.

As a matter of fact, I won a prize in the National Independent Show for the most unpopular painting.

[They laugh.]

MR. MARIL: And that is why coming to the attention of Mr. Phillips and Mrs. Sterner and this 144 Gallery was important to me.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: I got most of my consideration from other artists. You see?

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: So I started primarily from the abstract.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: And worked up. And I was interested in Lorsa [phonetic] at that time, early time, Lorsa.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Of course, Cézanne. [Henri] Matisse. And some of the early Italian painters interested me.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Piero della Francesca.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: The geometry in his painting.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And [Mino] Argento. And I was interested always - in the beginning in the problems of space, the concept of space, arriving at simplicity of structure, in which breaking your things down to basic simple areas, and evolving like I'm trying to do today into color areas - of course, today I'm trying to eliminate line as much as possible - into color areas, and giving the greatest concept of terms in terms of the flat plane of the picture, you see?

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: But my earliest paintings, there was a struggle for that, and lots of comments were made regarding my painting to the effect that there was a loneliness.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Well, that made me feel good. It made me feel that they were feeling some kind of an interaction of space there. You see.

MS. SECKLER: Yes. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: But I only wanted the type of space, type of structure to be based, not on literary factors, but on the units and elements of pure painting.

That is what I started off basically with the abstract – of course, in school it was more realistic.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: But when I got out, I started off like a primitive in that sense. And – been trying to get it with still alluding to nature, because I'm a nature lover.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: I'm a nature lover. I just am a tremendous –

MS. SECKLER: Yes, I felt that in your work. And of course, you were a city boy.

MR. MARIL: Yep.

MS. SECKLER: But somewhere or other you developed –

MR. MARIL: I'm a nature lover, yes, I really always was.

And now in regard to the question of social realism, no one escapes that.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: During that period, no one.

MS. SECKLER: Yeah. I'm sure –

MR. MARIL: No one. I mean, you had to, if you were alive. Everything – as a matter of fact, that was the greatest impetus to painting then. The fact that the government was involved, was interested.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: You couldn't help but – and I was trying to interpret that in the terms of – it was rather hard –

MS. SECKLER: Yes –

MR. MARIL: – to have – I think even painters like Max Webber, who tried it, found it difficult.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: You see?

MS. SECKLER: And to what extent were you able to take, I mean, did you do things like, well, these people from depressed areas that you had been visiting; you had workers, or was it factory scenes? Or what sort of –

MR. MARIL: Factory, mining areas, depressed mining areas.

MS. SECKLER: Yeah. The scent of the area itself –

MR. MARIL: Scent –

MS. SECKLER: More than the workers.

MR. MARIL: The people to me were small elements –

MS. SECKLER: Yes –

MR. MARIL: Victims of the area, in a sense.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And rather than depicting the man as the power, I depicted the man as being the victims of the area –

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative] –

MR. MARIL: As part of the area, you see?

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: I felt I'd like to get the presence of man, without hardly even putting a man in it. You see?

MS. SECKLER: Yes, yes -

MR. MARIL: You see. No, I think a man who, of course, was one of the greatest exponents of social activity - Rashka [phonetic].

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And he does it in a strong and abstract way. I think he's a -

MS. SECKLER: Did you see his work at that time, or -

MR. MARIL: Yes. But of course, my work is entirely different.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: But I felt he was a man who knew -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: As a matter of fact, I heard him speak in New York, you know. And, no, that was an exciting period, and we all were involved in -

MS. SECKLER: I suppose your friends were on WPA -

MR. MARIL: Well, everyone, everyone was on WPA -

MS. SECKLER: Yes -

MR. MARIL: I didn't have to get on it, because I was fortunate to -

MS. SECKLER: [Inaudible.]

MR. MARIL: Well, no, to get these commissions.

MS. SECKLER: Yeah -

MR. MARIL: The government - so that was - and my - as a matter of fact, after I finished my painting, which was to go into the museum for the Treasury Art Project, they gave me someone else's project to take over, who had failed on the project. They didn't accept it.

I took his over, but started fresh.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: A little mural in the public school under the Treasury. So I really had four different projects that kept me going for several years.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: A small salary. Now the mural things didn't have any set time. You were paid a certain amount for the whole project. So I'd let it go, so I would have time to do some of my other paintings.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: So they kept you going for a year, and I probably made \$20 a week out of them.

MS. SECKLER: Mmm.

MR. MARIL: But at least I could buy materials.

MS. SECKLER: Were you married by this time?

MR. MARIL: No. When I went into the Army, I got married after I got out of the service. I went into the Army when the war broke out.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: I was told to go to – I went into the Air Corps, would stay out of ground school.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: But when I went down to enlist, they said, "No, we could put you up." So they drafted me a month later, anyhow.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And I was put into the first camouflage battalion.

MS. SECKLER: Oh.

MR. MARIL: It was one of the first [inaudible] artists.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And from there, I went into a tank battalion, and never had time for painting. And then we were – but then I was put in the special service – during the whole three years and four months in the service, I was only able to do two paintings –

MS. SECKLER: Hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: – and one of them was bought by the *Encyclopedia Britannica* during the war.

MS. SECKLER: Was that a painting of a war scene?

MR. MARIL: It was called *Playing Soldier*. [Laughs] So.

And the other was a small painting, it won an award for soldiers, and it was hung at the National Gallery [National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.] of Washington. And that was an interpretation of *Pieta*, you know, Michelangelo's.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: But it was actually a contemporary small painting. That was the only thing there –

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: But I had all that time for contemplation.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And thinking and seeing, which is invaluable in the long run.

MS. SECKLER: Yes. When you came back after the war –

MR. MARIL: Yeah?

MS. SECKLER: – the whole situation, I suppose, had changed somewhat. And did you find it very difficult to pick up the threads again?

MR. MARIL: Yes. I lost all my private pupils that were angry at me. They all went to someone else. And I didn't have a dime, outside of about \$35, which I was mustering out.

But Mr. Phillips was very nice in Washington. They immediately, as soon as I got out, offered me a temporary job as a sort of a docent in the Gallery.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: Some of their men hadn't come back yet. So I should keep it until I got on my feet. But I only had to keep it ten days, because I immediately got a teaching job in Washington.

MS. SECKLER: Hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Yes, with an adult education program, the King-Smith School [King-Smith Studio School, Washington, D.C.].

And then I taught at the Washington Workshop of the Arts [Capitol Hill Arts Workshop, Washington, D.C.]. With

Morris Lewis, I think -

MS. SECKLER: Yes -

MR. MARIL: Like Jack Canaan [phonetic]. I don't know if you know about Jack.

And then the following year, I immediately got a job at the University of Maryland [College Park, MD]. They were organizing the art department, and so I went with that.

MS. SECKLER: That would have been about '47, '48?

MR. MARIL: That was in '46.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: '46, yeah.

MS. SECKLER: And you've been teaching there ever since?

MR. MARIL: Yeah. Never more than three days a week. And since I was promoted, they said they'd try out two days a week for me to teach, and so I'd have five days to paint.

MS. SECKLER: Oh, yes -

MR. MARIL: Well, but see, I had to go to meetings.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: Had to go to meetings. And of course, it's two full days, and then you have to be there a third day, to be sure, every once in a while.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Sometimes you have to go there - but teaching is the only way I feel that an artist could be - would have the time to work, and also feel that he's contributing to other people.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And I feel that it's more important to have working - working painters teach than people who are just professional teachers.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: You know?

MS. SECKLER: Well, I think that's been the growing opinion, understanding, in recent years.

MR. MARIL: Yes.

MS. SECKLER: However, do you live near the University of Maryland? Or do you live in Baltimore? Or how did that work out?

MR. MARIL: Oh. Well -

MS. SECKLER: You were married by this time?

MR. MARIL: Yes, I was married. And I lived in Washington for one year, tried it out. I lived in New York also for about a half a year.

I found that Baltimore - and I don't live right in the city now - is a good place to work. There's not too much happening to get you involved in other things. It has a quietude, and one can have the serenity to work.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And since I'm away so much of the week - I was away three days a week.

Oh, also - I left out one episode - I used to be a visiting teacher at the Philadelphia Museum [Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA].

MS. SECKLER: Mmmm.

MR. MARIL: And I'd go there one day a week besides the three days at the University. I accepted the assignment, because I thought it would be a good experience.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: You know? So I did that for two years. It was the same time that Franz Kline. He went one day -

MS. SECKLER: Yes, I remember you -

MR. MARIL: And he went on Thursdays. I think I went on Tuesdays. And I loved it, because these were serious students there.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And what I liked about it - and they painted all day long. In the average university, you paint three hours and go to another class.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Here, they painted all day long.

But it was just too much for me, that traveling. So one of the reasons why I liked to live in Baltimore, it's much more economical. I can live better on less. And I'm not disturbed too much.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Secondly, I can leave early in the morning, get to New York by 10:30, and have a full day in New York to see all the shows, and come back in the evening. And I do it quite often.

MS. SECKLER: You do?

MR. MARIL: Yes. I don't look up anyone. I just go see the exhibits.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Have my lunch or dinner there, and come back at night. So that's one of the advantages. Secondly, it's close to Washington.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And a lot's happening in Washington.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: But New York is almost like being, like you're in the suburb outside of New York.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: It doesn't take much longer than from areas of Long Island.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Maybe I'll settle down in Baltimore again.

MR. MARIL: I think - I know the poet, Ogden Nash, moved back to Baltimore. And I mean, he's a popular poet. But he moved back to Baltimore.

MS. SECKLER: Yes, but of course, Baltimore now has quite a few artists with reputations.

MR. MARIL: What's her name?

MS. SECKLER: Grace Hartigan -

MR. MARIL: Grace Hartigan lives in Baltimore.

MS. SECKLER: Lila Katzen.

MR. MARIL: Yes. So there's a lot of people there. But the thing about it, you could work undisturbed.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: When I lived in New York, gosh, there was so much happening, that you felt, unless you went out and saw what's happening, that you're missing -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And makes you a little jittery.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And in talking to a lot of the painters who live outside of the city, anyhow. They live in New Jersey and -

MS. SECKLER: Yes -

MR. MARIL: And LaGatch [phonetic], who was a former Baltimore, he's back in the woods there, yes -

MS. SECKLER: Yes, way back in the woods.

MR. MARIL: And quite a few of them now live outside.

But also coming to Provincetown [MA] for three months every year is a change. So I find there's a constant change.

MS. SECKLER: Yes. Well, you see all the painters in Provincetown. And you can sort of catch up on the gossip.

MR. MARIL: Yes. And then I occasionally run into them in New York when I go up.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: But I love Provincetown. As I say, when I taught in Massachusetts for six summers, I was in Massachusetts in the Berkshires.

The first time I came to Provincetown was in '34, 1934.

MS. SECKLER: What was it like then, Herman?

MR. MARIL: Oh, quite a wonderful place, wonderful.

MS. SECKLER: No galleries? No -

MR. MARIL: Gee, I think - the Art Association [the Provincetown Art Association, Provincetown, MA], I think, was -

MS. SECKLER: That was the Art Association?

MR. MARIL: Yeah. Most of the artists, seems to me that the old man [Heinrich] Pfeiffer's [phonetic] Art Supply Store, which was near the wharf. Very few restaurants, very few cars. Big hulking horses that would pull the nets.

And then a nice quiet there, which I liked. And that's what made me want to come back sometime. And the artists were all serious artists.

And you had good painters here. You had Karl Knaths, [Charles] Hawthorne. I don't think [Hans] Hofmann had arrived here yet.

MS. SECKLER: I think he came a little later.

MR. MARIL: A little later. But a serious group of people. I think Jack Twarkov was here then. Ross Moffett, who at that time was considered a modern, somewhat modern -

MS. SECKLER: Yeah -

MR. MARIL: Yes.

MS. SECKLER: Interesting man -

MR. MARIL: Yeah. And so that this place was inspiring to me.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: But also it was inexpensive there.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Know what I mean? Going out of state there, that's something we looked for.

MS. SECKLER: When do you think the big change came? I suppose it's come very gradually, for one thing. But I mean, was there a time, particular period, where you think it suddenly changed and became much more, you know, much more of a tourist place? Much more commercial?

MR. MARIL: I feel that I tied it in with the desire of the artists to buy the properties that they live in.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Because it was getting more and more difficult to rent properties, studios.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And that's because of the influx, many people. So I would say about eight years ago.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Eight or nine years ago.

MS. SECKLER: About when the big highway came through, probably?

MR. MARIL: The highway came through. And also, yes, it was probably a little before the big highway there.

MS. SECKLER: Really? Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And that's why I felt the necessity of buying a place, because it was getting more and difficult to rent a place with a studio.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And that's what induced me to get a place.

MS. SECKLER: So have you had this place -

MR. MARIL: Well, we had this place, this is the eighth year, I think.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: The eighth year. And this was the original post office of Provincetown.

MS. SECKLER: Really?

MR. MARIL: Yes. And it was floated over from the point, where the original town was, you know. Floated on the bay -

MS. SECKLER: What original town do you mean?

MR. MARIL: Provincetown. It moved gradually from the point, I was told.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Yes.

MS. SECKLER: Well, which point do you mean?

MR. MARIL: Down the -

MS. SECKLER: Where the Provincetown Inn is now?

MR. MARIL: I think even further down. I think the town was moved, you see?

[END REEL 1, SIDE A.]

MR. MARIL: Well, I've been coming to Provincetown now consecutively over the past 18 years. And I've found it a good place to work in.

I'm not bothered too much. And I get a lot of work done, a lot of ideas formed. Since I can paint seven days a week here, I could think a little clearer, and ideas can be developed further, and material for future use when I get back into the city come forth.

So that this is really an invaluable place for me. Hmm [affirmative], it's getting a little hectic now, of course, particular in the month of August, as you know.

Then I show here a little at the Art Association. And at present, I'm with the Wellesley Gallery [Jewett Art Gallery at Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA], . The Gallery that handles me a present in New York is the Forum Gallery [New York, NY].

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: At 1018 Madison Avenue. And recently I had a show there, and I had a show there in March. I hope you've seen there.

MS. SECKLER: Herman, I'm sorry, I was very ill during the time.

MR. MARIL: Oh, really?

MS. SECKLER: Not seriously, but I mean, I had a series of illnesses during that -

MR. MARIL: Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

MS. SECKLER: And I left out of New York, so - but I usually do, whenever I can, come and see your work.

MR. MARIL: Yeah. So many things are happening in New York -

MS. SECKLER: I know. But I did want to. I was interested in your paintings at the Art Association, and I was glad -

MR. MARIL: Yeah. The painting that's on exhibit now is more typical of the direction that I've been going into.

MS. SECKLER: Yes, broad, simple areas.

MR. MARIL: Yes, simple areas. And playing a little more with the surface. Thin, then heavy -

MS. SECKLER: Yes -

MR. MARIL: The tactility of the surface. And using less rigid line to separate the area.

MS. SECKLER: Yes, yes.

MR. MARIL: But depending more on the relationships of the color. In other words, trying to get the color use more functional.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Besides being decorative. But more functional in controlling the space.

And I think you'll probably ask me what I think about some of the movements.

MS. SECKLER: Yes. Well, I mean, we haven't talked about how you were - you had talked about how you were affected by social realism, and of course, the early formalist movements or points of view you encountered in school.

But now, of course, since the '40s, you've had to face the challenge of abstract expression and -

MR. MARIL: Yeah -

MS. SECKLER: - one way or another. So how did that change your ideas? Or did it not change them?

MR. MARIL: Yes. I was never really a social realist, because -

MS. SECKLER: No, I realize you weren't. But you -

MR. MARIL: It was just a small –

MS. SECKLER: But you incorporated –

MR. MARIL: I was always interested in the abstract painting.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: As I said, the early painters I liked were Piero della Francesca, Giotto [di Bondone] –

MS. SECKLER: Yes, you were more of a classic –

MR. MARIL: Yes, always was a believer in form, in form.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: And therefore, when I look at new paintings, I search for the form, the underlying form.

And I think my first contact with abstract expressionism was a little bit of a shock to me, because of the turbulence of the expressionism upon it.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: I was well acquainted with expressionism, per se. The German Expressionism; expressionism of [Georges Henri] Rouault, painters like that.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And there's a lot of form there. Of course, I was acquainted with [Wassily] Kandinsky's work through Charles Walthrop, who was a great admirer of Kandinsky.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: But his early paintings had a lot of form, or formal elements.

My first experience with [Franz] Kline was unexpected. I was walking down Fifty-seventh Street on a snowy night, evening, and I saw a little poster, announcing an exhibit upstairs. And I was quite fascinated by the big black thrusts.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: So I was curious enough to go up. It was in the [Charles] Egan Gallery [New York, NY]. I was impressed with that. I thought this was an expression of what I felt about contemporary America, in a sense.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And this was one bare room, with these paintings. And I was anxious to follow this man, follow through, see what he did with this.

Of course, he didn't go in the direction that I thought he would go. Because at that time, I was also doing some paintings using the steel structure of new buildings, buildings in progress.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: I think Morris Lewis has a little painting of mine – and so I was quite impressed with that. And naturally had a great opportunity to see other paintings, like [Willem] de Kooning, [Jackson] Pollock.

And I'm very catholic in my interests. I want to see what other people are doing. You can always learn something. And one of the influences they had on me was releasing me.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: From certain inhibitory factors. You know? And so therefore, in a way I was affected by this.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Had your work, up until this time, been extremely linear?

MR. MARIL: Well, not linear. But I used line to separate a plane.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: I'd put every once in a while, not altogether, but a little accent of line.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And was gradually eliminating that. It becomes almost a crutch.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: It became almost a crutch. And there was certain fervor, and there was a certain gusto that they have, that's good to see.

Now, however, I feel that a lot of the abstract expressionist work that I saw was a little too anarchistic and lacking in form. But the men that I respected had a good understanding of form and structure, you see? And they worked a long time, and it wasn't as easy as it looked.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Were you bothered at all by the lack of reference to nature, since that had been important in your own work?

MR. MARIL: No. I don't expect everybody to have that, because I can see that a thing, without any reference to nature, has a content of its own in the painting itself.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: So it's not absolutely. Just me that likes nature. But I don't expect everybody.

As a matter of fact, anybody that I looked at, I look at the abstract elements. And I don't care how beautiful the subject. Doesn't make anything to me if it's a weak painting. Not as if we can hold it against someone to make something great into something sweet and -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: So, no. It's the abstract elements that make any picture, from time immemorial. So it didn't disturb me at all. As a matter of fact, some of these paintings had more of nature in them, than they realized.

MS. SECKLER: Yes, I think you're right -

MR. MARIL: Because memory it takes.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: So that didn't bother me. I was more disturbed, much more, by what happened next, in the artists. Pop art to me. Because I thought that was devoid of aesthetic structure -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative] -

MR. MARIL: And devoid of what, to me, is essential great work. Some of them claimed that their art is pure esthetics. I don't see it. I mean, they may have - I think it's probably more literary than they will acknowledge, the pop art.

MS. SECKLER: Well, so that this didn't really affect you in any way?

MR. MARIL: No -

MS. SECKLER: Even in your thinking, you didn't think about it.

MR. MARIL: No, it didn't affect me. As a matter of fact, I'm against what I call "literary art."

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: I feel literary art belongs in literature.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: I feel that art, painting, sculpture, has a plastic language of its own. It has a language that's purely its own, and therefore does not need to borrow from other languages.

And we haven't really - don't really completely understand the full possibilities that exist in the language of our

own area, painting and sculpture. And so to bring literature – however, a great painting can have a subject matter, which makes the subject even greater, if it's a great painting.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Look at the early painters.

MS. SECKLER: I suppose the literary content must have alienated you somewhat from surrealism?

MR. MARIL: Yes, I never was interested in surrealism, because I felt you had to understand the story, or the introspection, behind it. And I felt that belonged to literature.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: However, if a man did it in a great way, plastically, then that would acknowledge it as a good painting.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: You see? And so I wouldn't hold it against it. But I feel that abstract expressionism was certainly a greater contribution –

MS. SECKLER: Now abstract expressionism, of course, also had an element of emphasizing the unconscious. I mean, although it wasn't stated programmatically. But it was understood that this was something that came from other –

MR. MARIL: It was because a lot of the work was, as I say, highly subjective –

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative] –

MR. MARIL: – and spontaneous. and I'm sure a lot more comes from the feelings in contrast, say, to more formal painting, where thinking –

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Of course, I never know where thinking ends and feeling enters –

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: – in the mix. Personally I sit in front of my paintings for a long time, before I begin painting, so that I myself become physically involved, almost in the painting.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And that's the way –

MS. SECKLER: How do you begin a painting?

MR. MARIL: Well, I'm very aware of the canvas, the shape, the surface. I may have an idea before I start.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: You know, a sketch, an idea? And it gradually evolves. And sometimes a little accident happens, which makes me change.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: In other words, although you should be completely sensitive to the surface, so that I think it grows for me –

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative] –

MR. MARIL: – and may even change in its growth, so that it's felt through.

And I don't detach myself from the painting.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: I become involved in it. As I said, I spend three-quarters of my looking –

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative] -

MR. MARIL: - and feeling, and becoming involved. And very little time in the actual painting.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: I like the painting to look as if it was done in a moment, even though I worked a month.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: I like to look as if it was sort of breathed on, like it just had to be there, that's all. I don't like it to look worked on, overworked.

MS. SECKLER: Yes. Yes, that's true -

MR. MARIL: It depends -

MS. SECKLER: You succeed in that, I think.

MR. MARIL: Well, thank you. But if it becomes overworked, I start another canvas -

MS. SECKLER: Yes -

MR. MARIL: - and try to do it again, if I was interested enough in the idea, you know.

MS. SECKLER: So that abstract expressionism was at least an element that had given you release.

MR. MARIL: Yes.

MS. SECKLER: But you maintained your relationship to nature to the extent of at least you'd begin with something in mind, rather than just beginning with paint strokes, as they might have?

MR. MARIL: Yeah.

MS. SECKLER: But you felt free to change it -

MR. MARIL: Oh, yeah -

MS. SECKLER: And if your reverie led you in another - or if the formal structure suggested another image, you would shift -

MR. MARIL: Yeah. I felt free to shift.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: I felt free to shift. And sometimes a little accident happened on the canvas -

MS. SECKLER: Yes -

MR. MARIL: Which opened up something new for me - what I was working on -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative] -

MR. MARIL: It would go in that direction.

I believe that each painting should be more or less of an adventure -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And that the artist should be sensitive enough to the canvas to be willing to follow through, even if it ends in total failure, on the particular painting.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And I felt abstract expressionism opened up certain areas like that.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And that approach - in other words, in an area at a time during the earlier periods, when you'd see

painters had almost Old Master methods of starting and then building up and -

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: That disturbed me, because it meant you had to stick right to the big-door [phonetic] methodology of, you see?

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Which was very uninspiring to me.

MS. SECKLER: Actually, the pop artists stuck to pretty much the same kind of procedure -

MR. MARIL: That's right -

MS. SECKLER: Because they also have a complete sketch -

MR. MARIL: Yeah, yeah -

MS. SECKLER: And a complete way of coming out with the finished image they had in mind from the beginning.

MR. MARIL: Yeah.

MS. SECKLER: Most of them do.

MR. MARIL: Yeah.

MS. SECKLER: So that's very interesting. You weren't at any point apparently much affected by primitive art? Except as it may have come through the Mexican -

MR. MARIL: The early Italians. Well, they were sophisticated primitive, in a sense, in a sense, in Giotto, Piero della Francesca.

MS. SECKLER: Yes, the Giotto and Piero - mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: I respect the primitive, and I respect it in the naive painters that I see, you know, the contemporary.

MS. SECKLER: But for instance, African or -

MR. MARIL: Oh, yes, I collect African -

MS. SECKLER: Do you?

MR. MARIL: Oh, yes, I collect African sculpture. I don't have many pieces, but I have one really fine piece. And I made a study of it. And I feel that they had a great influence on the - I think the before the cubists or during the cubists.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Because the African sculpture brought a lot of the painters and sculptors back to the basic forms of nature.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: The cylinder. As Cézanne. But they brought back the realization of things fitting together.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And accepting a form for itself, not for what it represents, but purely for itself. A cylinder, a cylinder. Not a neck, but a cylinder.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And I think it helped in moving all of the shallow, superficialities of the Victorian -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative] -

MR. MARIL: Into the basic, the basic. And, of course, that early period and that influence was in all areas of the

arts. Literature too.

MS. SECKLER: You say that very well.

MR. MARIL: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MS. SECKLER: Most of the time, I gather you've been interested, well, at least very often, in doing landscape or things from nature that maybe from more close up – nature.

MR. MARIL: Yeah.

MS. SECKLER: Were you ever involved with anything involving machines or industrial – well, you said you were doing skyscrapers, factories –

MR. MARIL: Factories. And I was interested in the building, the building, you know, the sheer structure.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: I was interested in the – I still am. I'm interested in architecture, actually.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: I was interested in the steel structure. And one of the things that disturbed me was the fact that they covered up those steel beams, you know?

MS. SECKLER: Yeah.

MR. MARIL: I'm fascinated. One of the things about New York, the constant growth that goes on and the changes. And what was your question?

MS. SECKLER: No [laughs], that answers it pretty well, whether you had been involved with, you know, I was thinking of machines – industrialization and all of that sort of thing.

MR. MARIL: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MS. SECKLER: Do you ever work with collage elements? Has that ever been a part of your –

MR. MARIL: I did it, but I've never shown it. I did it for myself to play around with at home.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And I've done a little carving, a little sculpture, that I never showed. Just to understand it better.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah.

MR. MARIL: I have a few pieces I've carried out.

And I tried things, which I don't show, you know –

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: Interests.

MS. SECKLER: What would you say is characteristic of your method technically today? I mean, do you do a good bit of underpainting, hmm [affirmative] –

MR. MARIL: No. Any underpainting is in a very small way. I work direct. And I try not to lose the surface, unless I have to. The surface of the canvas. I try to not to lose it.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And I feel the paintings hold up physically, because I don't built up to much.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: You see.

MS. SECKLER: You work thinly at first, and you –

MR. MARIL: Thinly, and then build up slowly, yes.

And because one of the things that disturbed me about some contemporary painters is the fact that not too much thought or consideration is given to the permanence of the material.

MS. SECKLER: Yes. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Some of the action painters' work is breaking down rather rapidly.

MR. MARIL: Yes. And I feel that if you have something to say, it's worthwhile keeping it. If you don't have anything to say, then don't say it.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: If it doesn't have any meaning to you, after you see it, destroy it.

MS. SECKLER: Well, I suppose that attitude went along with the point of view of the abstract expressionist that it was important to live intensely in the moment. Therefore, don't think about tomorrow -

[Simultaneous conversation.]

MR. MARIL: That's right, that's part of the philosophy, yeah.

MS. SECKLER: But it does seem rather sad, that, for instance, you look at the Franz Kline in the Chrysler Museum [of Art, Norfolk, VA], which is in rather bad shape right now.

MR. MARIL: Yeah. Of course, modern technology could fix that.

MS. SECKLER: No doubt.

MR. MARIL: Yeah. They could fix that, yes. Modern technology.

MS. SECKLER: Well, maybe it just arrived in the nick of time [laughs].

MR. MARIL: Yes.

MS. SECKLER: Is there anything we ought to put on the record, Herman, about your - I don't know, things that may have been - awards, prizes, special shows or?

MR. MARIL: Well -

MS. SECKLER: That we haven't gotten in -

MR. MARIL: Well, I've had, oh, I guess around 14 shows in New York. One-man shows.

MS. SECKLER: Now we don't have all of that on the record yet. You mentioned your early gallery -

MR. MARIL: The first show, yes, the first New York show.

MS. SECKLER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: It was Marie Sterner, hmm [affirmative], then I had - hmm [affirmative], this is only New York shows - about six at the MacBeth Gallery [New York, NY] -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative] -

MR. MARIL: About four or five at the Babcock Gallery [New York, NY], two at the Castellane Gallery [New York, NY], and one so far at the Forum Gallery [New York, NY].

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Hmm [affirmative], and I was shown several times in New York, once at the Boyer Gallery at Broad Street Station [Philadelphia, PA], once at the Philadelphia Art Alliance [Philadelphia, PA] in Philadelphia.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative], in Philadelphia.

MR. MARIL: Philadelphia. And then two at the Baltimore Museum [the Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD], one at the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: One at the University of Tennessee [Ewing Gallery of Art and Architecture, Knoxville, TN], one at the Wells College [String Room Gallery, Aurora, NY] in New York State.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And at [Franz] Bader Gallery in Washington [D.C.] quite a few, and the Whyte Gallery in Washington [D.C.].

And then up here in Provincetown [Art Association, Provincetown, MA], there are several one-man shows. And other places, in different areas of the country.

I've been in the World's Fair, the first one in '40.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And this one going on now at the San Francisco Golden Gate [Exposition, San Francisco, CA].

MS. SECKLER: Oh.

MR. MARIL: And it was shown in the Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery [inaudible.]

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Shown in Chicago [Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL] and the Carnegie [Institute, Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA] - "Hard Times."

I mean, and then I'm owned by quite a bit of - a little movie was made of my work for educational purposes of me painting a picture -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative] -

MR. MARIL: Which was produced by Elliot O'Hara, who has made about 30 movies. And this was called *Restraint*. And I was the subject of *Restraint* [laughs].

And it was made about five years ago. I don't know who has bought the film -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative] -

MR. MARIL: But he usually sells his films either to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, or UNESCO.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: So I don't know if anyone has both.

MS. SECKLER: Is he in New York?

MR. MARIL: He's in Washington and New York. He's practically - in different sections of the country at different times of the year.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I was thinking we might - of course, we always hope where there's a film existing that we can eventually get a print to add to the artists' archive.

MR. MARIL: Yes. Well, he is in Washington [D.C.]. His permanent residence is in Washington. And I think, if you write to Elliot O'Hara, care of the Corcoran Gallery, if you don't know, that please forward, I think he'd get it.

MS. SECKLER: All right.

MR. MARIL: Yeah. And I've been in a number of the books, Sheldon Cheney's books.

MS. SECKLER: Oh yes.

MR. MARIL: And Florence Watson's, and.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: There is a book coming out in March - I might've left it here - I think - *Fifteen American Artists* [*Fifteen Americans*. New York, NY Museum of Modern Art, Dorothy Canning Miller. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1952], different types of approaches. And I represent one of the approaches, I think. So I think it's coming

out in March, each one of us has a chapter -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Who's publishing it? Do you know?

MR. MARIL: He wouldn't tell me a thing.

MS. SECKLER: Oh.

MR. MARIL: He'd only let me know when it comes back [laughs] Did he tell you?

SPEAKER: No, he didn't want to tell me.

MR. MARIL: He interviews me an hour a week or ten weeks.

MS. SECKLER: Oh.

MR. MARIL: But he got some -

MS. SECKLER: - not to know where it's coming -

MR. MARIL: Well, he told me who the others were, so I felt - [Jacques] Lipchitz and [William] Zorach, and Larry Rivers, and Adolf Gottlieb and Jack Levine, and so.

So engrossed, so I felt that it was legitimate. And he showed me their signatures [laughs]. So I don't know why he wouldn't tell me who's publishing it.

MS. SECKLER: One thing I forgot to ask you - and I don't know if it's relevant or not - but did you ever stay in Europe for any period of time, studying?

MR. MARIL: No, no. that's one thing, I'm not proud of it. It's just that I felt there's so much for me to do, there's so much I wanted to do, and I've had many offers, that the only time I want to go, I'd like to go for at least one year with my family.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: I don't like to travel around, flit around. I just - I'm not that type of person. I don't like moving, almost.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And so that strangely enough, I never took advantage of my opportunities.

MS. SECKLER: I'm sure you could have gone on the GI bill -

MR. MARIL: Oh, I could have gone on the GI bill and I think I could have had a Fulbright if I -

MS. SECKLER: Great -

MR. MARIL: Because I had written letters for other people.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: But I just would like to go for a long period, having a headquarters somewhere, and study -

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: Maybe we'll go for a couple weeks just for a little lark sometimes [laughs].

MS. SECKLER: Wonderful.

Well, is there anything else, then? We have - to finish our tape here.

MR. MARIL: Oh, yes, I had very interesting experience last summer. I was invited to be the guest of a big collector. He wanted an artist to see his mountains, the Adirondacks.

So I was his guest last summer for a period. I made a lot of sketches up there. It later turned out that this man has a very serious illness.

And he asked me to have a show of these sketches at Johns Hopkins University [Baltimore, MD] last spring. And

having found out about his illness, I agreed.

And I later developed a few of the paintings which went into his collection. And his whole collection is being given to the Johns Hopkins University, and to show a history of art, from the earliest period up until today.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And he's very sick. His diagnosis was bad.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: So this was an unusual experience going up to the mountains there, and seeing his mountains.

MS. SECKLER: How many paintings did you do up there?

MR. MARIL: Well, I did just sketches, didn't do any paintings.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: But I like to develop, after I react six months later.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: He acquired one large oil called *Lower Lake No. 2*, which is going into his collection. But then I did three or four other paintings.

And he acquired the sketches for these, from which I did the paintings. But that just happened recently.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. What is the name of the collector?

MR. MARIL: Mason Lord, Dr. Mason F. Lord.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: I don't know whether you've heard of him.

MS. SECKLER: Was he a physician?

MR. MARIL: He's a physician. Yes, he's Chief of the Department of Chronic Diseases of the Baltimore City Hospital.

MS. SECKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MR. MARIL: And a young man, it's very sad. So -

MS. SECKLER: One other thing we hadn't really put on the record. And that is, of course, your family.

MR. MARIL: Oh. I have a wife and two children [laughs].

MR. MARIL: Boy and a girl, David and Suzanne. And a Labrador retriever. And we hope to have a little kitten -
[They laugh.]

MS. SECKLER: Well, it's a very happy home for you here in Provincetown.

MR. MARIL: Yes.

MS. SECKLER: Okay. I'm very pleased to have been able to wind up - this interview. I hope to be able to see some more of these paintings very soon.

MR. MARIL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yes. You know, I packed up half the things and shipped them already. I have a few here.

MS. SECKLER: I'd like to, yes.

MR. MARIL: Yeah. We'll go upstairs -

MS. SECKLER: Why don't you bring it down? Are you going to pack any more?

MR. MARIL: No -

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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