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Oral history interview with Hubert Leckie and Alexander Giampietro, 1992 Feb. 13

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Hubert Leckie and Alexander Giampietro on February 13, 1992. The interview took place in , and was conducted by Liza Kirwin for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

LIZA KIRWIN: I'm Liza Kirwin, and it's February 13th, 1992. This is an interview for the Archives of American Art, and I am talking with Alexander Giampietro and Hubert Leckie. Mr. Giampietro teaches at Catholic University, and Hubert Leckie is the designer of the *Archives of American Art Journal*, among other things. They both attended the New Bauhaus in Chicago in 1937, and they both also taught at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in Washington, DC, and today I want to talk about those two schools and their impressions of them. First, Mr. Giampietro, how did you learn about the New Bauhaus in Chicago, and what drew you to that school?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Well, it came about that the Commander [ph] School of the Arts, Alexander Schawinsky was teaching there at the Black Mountain College, where I was at present, came to the Commander [ph] School of the Arts.

LIZA KIRWIN: Okay, let me make sure I got the name right of the teacher—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Alexander Schawinsky.

LIZA KIRWIN: Schawinsky. Okay.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: He was a theater man from the Bauhaus, and so I was very enthusiastic about what he told us, and then I went over to see the Albers [ph]—if I could stay with them. They said, "No, you go to Chicago where we want to open a school." He wanted me there with Moholy [-Nagy]. "I recommend you. Don't worry about it." So I took off for Chicago. And this was the most exciting year of my life, '37-38, to be not only with sculptors like Archipenko or painters and photographers like Kepes and Moholy himself, plus a lecturer from Chicago University would lecture on physics like Eckart; philosophy, Carnap; and Morris on languages. This was really another world, so, so—they had another guy who was music, I forget his name now. Dushkin—or was it Dushkin? [00:02:01]

LIZA KIRWIN: Dushkin. Yes.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: And we made recorders and we played him, so—it was the most exciting year in my life—as far as a coming in touch with your hands, your brains, everything to your head, and you really did—lived in a place. I lived in Bauhaus from about eight o'clock in the morning to 10 o'clock but I didn't have any problem.

LIZA KIRWIN: And Hubert, how did you hear about the new Bauhaus?

HUBERT LECKIE: Almost by osmosis. [They laugh.] Because at the time, I didn't know the Bauhaus from Gerbracht [ph] graphique. [They laugh.] And, uh, I had, uh—Carl Binder [ph] had been giving seminars on poster design, so I went to that. But the main thing was that at the time that the Bauhaus opened, Ernst Detterer was going to give a seminar on calligraphy at the Newberry Library, which was going to be attended by the top 10 or 12 lettering men in Chicago. So my problem was: Do I go to study Italian calligraphy of the 14th, 15th, 16th centuries? [They laugh.] And become a calligrapher? Or take the Bauhaus and become a designer? And that was a change, also, because I had had three years of Beaux-Arts training in architecture.

LIZA KIRWIN: Where was that?

HUBERT LECKIE: That is a—that is a—

LIZA KIRWIN: Where was that that you—

HUBERT LECKIE: That was in Chicago.

LIZA KIRWIN: Oh, it was?

HUBERT LECKIE: All in Chicago. And Bauhaus, classic, neoclassic, designing in the classic manner. But I was living in Wash—in Chicago. [00:04:03] Frank Lloyd Wright. Louis Sullivan. The Fine Arts Club had a show of

Brancusi, *Bird in Flight*. Well, there was no question. [They laugh.] I, you know, paid attention to calligraphy and all of that, but I had to go to the Bauhaus at night because I still had to work. And it was a very interesting night class, too, because the man next to me was the art director of Container Corporation, and he was 30 years older than me. [They laugh.] But he was there to learn about the new approach to design. Well, it was very exciting, you know. It was in the middle of the Depression, or towards the end, but there was—even during that time there was a kind of a hope to do something better. Even the Works Project [Works Progress Administration] was some form of hope, which we need right now, incidentally. But there, at night, I learned about space. I learned about graphic design—although we didn't call it graphic design then.

LIZA KIRWIN: What did you call it?

HUBERT LECKIE: It was design.

LIZA KIRWIN: Design.

HUBERT LECKIE: Design, uh, two-dimensional design or three-dimensional design. Moholy [Nagy] gave us three-dimensional design. He started us off in the workshop, and we had to take a piece of wood and make something out of it. Find out what the wood felt like, meant, smelled, shaped, and so on. And make what eventually was called a "feely," sculpted so that you'd get various tactile sensations in running your hand over this piece of design sculpture. [00:06:17] So one thing after another, it was great excitement. Also, uh back—Pietro, while on the subject of visiting lecturers, you know, there was one English scientist who spoke on Edison. He spoke of Edison as a social phenomenon, an inventor—a new insight into Edison that I'd never heard of before. And well, this was the part of the school, there was—along with learning about form, texture, space, energy of lines, uh, there was this thing that they were going to do something with worthwhile. Socially worthwhile. And, well—

LIZA KIRWIN: That was very—that you consider to be the most revolutionary aspect of the curriculum that—

HUBERT LECKIE: Yes. I'll tell you—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Could I—

LIZA KIRWIN: Yes, go ahead.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Something interesting—mentions the Beaux-Arts Institute. I was at the Beaux-Arts Institute in New York. [They laugh.] And I studied sculpture. But at that time we were working with the architects, so the sculptor worked together with the Prix de Rome—from Milan [inaudible]—on that. But soon after, in '34, the school changed. Shut down at the Beaux-Arts. And a man from Austria—Eugene Steinhof, I think was his name—started a design institute where he did everything. He could work with whatever he wanted to—he could carve; he could do this and that—carve on patches and so on. [00:08:01] He was using an intuitive method, which—[inaudible]—was intuitive for in Austria, which was parallel with the—at the time, there was a kind of search for new approaches—

LIZA KIRWIN: Yes.

HUBERT LECKIE: Yes.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: —all over the place. And New York was no substitute. So I was ready to move in any direction that gave me more life and being part of the world I was living in, you see. So—and the Beaux-Arts went one part—[inaudible]—in effect, with the futurists, you know. [They laugh.]

LIZA KIRWIN: And how were the classes set up? Was it an apprenticeship-workshop situation? Or—

HUBERT LECKIE: No, not—well—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: We did. I don't know [inaudible]—

HUBERT LECKIE: Without a night school, we had a class. Moholy would come in, he would talk a while, and then he'd leave and we'd get busy. And the next time he came in, the—he'd make some comments and we'd go along. On the other hand, I had sculpture with Archipenko.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: At night?

HUBERT LECKIE: At night.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Oh.

HUBERT LECKIE: He sat in the corner and smoked the whole time. [They laugh.] I think all he did was show me

where I could work. [They laugh.]

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Wow, don't—[inaudible]—

HUBERT LECKIE: He never made any comment on what I did.

LIZA KIRWIN: Nothing?

HUBERT LECKIE: No.

LIZA KIRWIN: What were his—what were his assignments like?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: He grunted.

HUBERT LECKIE: He'd grunt and, "Uh, you'd take some clay and do something."

LIZA KIRWIN: Oh, that was it? [They laugh.]

HUBERT LECKIE: That was it. With Archipenko. On the other hand, with a man named [Hin] Bredendieck, who taught lettering—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Woah—[inaudible]—Bauhaus.

LIZA KIRWIN: I met him. I met him in—

HUBERT LECKIE: Oh, did you?

LIZA KIRWIN: —he teaches at Georgia Tech now.

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Oh, is he?

LIZA KIRWIN: Yeah. Uh-huh [affirmative].

HUBERT LECKIE: Well, I had an immediate conflict.

LIZA KIRWIN: Oh, tell me about that.

HUBERT LECKIE: I had worked and been apprenticed to one of the finest lettering men in Chicago—a man who could do anything. [00:10:01]

LIZA KIRWIN: What was his name?

HUBERT LECKIE: Raymond De Ball [ph]. And Raymond De Ball, among other things, turned out to be one of the major telegraphic influences in this country, uh, because he had absorbed what Detterer had given at the Newberry Library, and he knew all of the people who were involved in calligraphy. It was a small group at that time. It had not become a weekend activity for bored housewives. [They laugh.]

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah.

LIZA KIRWIN: Now, I don't know.

HUBERT LECKIE: Because it was a very—it was a very serious—serious pursuit.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Here's what I would—what the part—what you did at night was quite different. In the daytime, we were very formal.

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah.

LIZA KIRWIN: Oh.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: We would have a lecture on cubism with Moholy. We'd have photography on Tuesday morning or Tuesday afternoon. We had sculpture Friday afternoon. It was all set up—especially Bredendieck—on the machine tools to learn how to work machines. So it was very formal. We got exposed—but all day, all day—it practically—every day we got through these things. And there were exhibitions of Moore and Giacometti who brought over their—it was very exciting. [Inaudible.] Then the lecture from this professor from Chicago. On a more extensive problem, I think they broke that down in the end of 1938 because they weren't meeting

practical results; it's what I imagined before, see?

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: We were [ph] told to design a cup. They said, "No, you—you can't do that."

HUBERT LECKIE: Design a chair. [They laugh.]

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: We would design—no, nothing [ph] do it. And they would come—after two years of basic fundamentals that—[inaudible.] You choose the workshop you want, you don't do it before. That's where the conflict came about. Nothing else. The sculptors wanted to be sculptors, and eventually you meld the two together in this person by the various experiences, and you decide which of the workshops to choose. [00:12:02] In theory, it was good. The practice—with pressure, I mean, that's the only way—I mean, they were designed to come to the front. They want to cash in on design, I mean—

HUBERT LECKIE: Applied. Applied design.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: —applied design. They wanted that, and they thought we were just fiddling with our money.

LIZA KIRWIN: Who wanted—who wanted that? Um, the backers for the—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: The backers for the school, the way it was. And very—yeah, I think that's what it was.

HUBERT LECKIE: But I forget her name. She was very much a lady in the arts.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Who is this? Penelope?

HUBERT LECKIE: The one who helped bring Molly over—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: I do not know that, no.

HUBERT LECKIE: And, uh—

LIZA KIRWIN: Uh-huh [affirmative]. The Association of Arts and Industries.

HUBERT LECKIE: That's right. She was the head of the—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: That's it. That's—[inaudible].

HUBERT LECKIE: But I—I don't remember her name. Yeah, being at night school I wasn't concerned with—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah, sure.

LIZA KIRWIN: With that—

HUBERT LECKIE: —who started—

LIZA KIRWIN: Well, what was your conflict with Bredendieck?

HUBERT LECKIE: With Bredendieck? Uh, he had studied the alphabet that Bayer had developed.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: With a compass—

HUBERT LECKIE: And with compass, uh, a simple sans serif letter. Well it was like bringing coals to Newcastle. [They laugh.] Except that he wanted to do it with a T-square and triangle, and there was a formula for the space between letters. And to me that was utterly from dullsville.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: That's the artist in him, trying to defend; that's what I'm saying. [Laughs.]

HUBERT LECKIE: And there was—I paid practically no attention to him. There were other things I could do. With Kepes, I would go into his class, every time he opened his mouth, it was a revelation.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah, he was very good.

HUBERT LECKIE: And—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: This is bringing the [inaudible] of what it is: the conflict with immediately being practical, which they were doing with the furniture and everything else in the Bauhaus, and sensitive people who

felt that more poetry about the whole thing. [00:14:08] Well, saying [ph] now, "You leave us alone. Let us learn first things first, then we'll come back to that and choose."

LIZA KIRWIN: Well, what was Kepes—his teaching methods like? How did he go about conducting a class?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: It was a photography class [inaudible] with him.

HUBERT LECKIE: He would—well, spoke of the picture plane. Well, this is the thing that scares everybody.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah. Yeah.

HUBERT LECKIE: From this high—as my daughter is finding out now. She's teaching kids in kindergarten—you put a piece of paper in front of them and say, "Draw," and they're frightened. Just like that French artist who would go before a canvas on an easel, look at it, and—and he'd go berserk. He had to scribble on the—he had to kill the canvas a little bit before he could start painting.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: That's what Da Vinci used to do. Big blotches all over it. He could see battles and everything else, he could let his imagination work with it.

HUBERT LECKIE: And—well, then he put a line on. He would demonstrate on the board. Put a line on it. I didn't realize that at the time, he was teaching me the picture plane the way the Chinese do. I remembered reading a novel about a Chinese master giving a class to a group of students. He comes into the class. No words. Takes a brush. Puts it in a pot. Goes up to a piece of paper. [They laugh.] Puts a spot on and leaves. And—students had to sit there and think, "What did he mean by all that?" [They laugh.] Well, Kepes wasn't quite that mystic about it. [00:16:05] He—he'd put a—he said, "There's energy on a picture plane." Energy on a picture plane? Well, you'd stop and you'd think, and then, "Where is it on the picture plane? How big is it on the picture plane? Is it drawn to the edge of the frame, or is it pulling in?"

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: The canvas—

HUBERT LECKIE: And yeah. Well, this is—this is making you aware of what line is, and then what a shape is—what a plane is. Step by step, I was getting the basics of design. And with a rational approach. You're still not designing, but you're finding out what these elements of design do on a picture plane. So one of the things I took back when I taught my first class at American U[niversity], I'd put a large sheet of paper on the wall, and I said, "Here's an egg. Hey, Joe, can you hit that? Can you hit that egg?" It splashed. It got on the lower part and started dripping down. I had two things. I had a shape on a picture plane. It was dripping so that it connoted an image and a reaction, and I said, "What does that mean? Somebody's throwing eggs. What does that mean? Somebody's getting teed off at you." Well, so—it was an extension of—of what every element in—on a graphic, uh—on a two-dimensional surface does and makes you aware of it, so that then, you can control—when you're designing a poster or a book or a page or a stationery, whatever—you're working with space, which can be either flat or infinite. [00:18:28] Space. Flat or infinite.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: That's a very important distinction. The whole is a revolution from the box construction perspective, eh? Which is an intellectual exercise in perspective points. To go back to the most primitive with actually a flat plane or a plane against plane are working is what cubism does, you see? You don't have a—[inaudible]—for what you're looking at—forms playing against one another in a flat plane; whereas in the Renaissance perspective, you construct the same dividend [ph] as it were as recession point or varied perspective points, but it was a constructed image.

LIZA KIRWIN: I'd read that, um—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Not that the other was a deconstruction. It was a different kind of construction. [Laughs.]

LIZA KIRWIN: I'd read that Kepes was also—he was in charge of drawing and light studio?

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Photography.

LIZA KIRWIN: What does light studio mean? Photography?

HUBERT LECKIE: Well, well, the first step—again, this was a—one of the qualities of the early Bauhaus in Chicago, was that they started at the beginning. If you were going to be a photographer, where do you start?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Photogram.

HUBERT LECKIE: You start with a piece of photosensitive paper. What can you do with it? Well, you can do many things with it. And, well, as a designer—I hate the word "graphic designer"—as a two-dimensional designer, a photogram to me was fabulously interesting. [00:20:08] You can't do—can't use it all the time or even most of the time. Once in a while, the photogram is the answer to the design problem. But if you haven't worked with it or seen it or become aware of it, your vocabulary is limited. And in the Kepes—I didn't have this with Kepes—I saw the results and I observed them, where they would have paper constructions, they would light them and photograph them.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Two things—two things [inaudible]. On the paper directly, we used to put our hands on it and make a handprint and develop and then we see that. Or any other formula—and then also to learn to use the camera indirectly in the exercise of another class. So we learned fundamentals all the way down the line—how to develop, how to print it. And I'd go walk around the city, taking movies in various parts of the city. So it was quite the exciting course to take with him, you see. And it was always—

HUBERT LECKIE: You learned to see, too.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah. You looked.

LIZA KIRWIN: Did Moholy-Nagy also teach photography there or not?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: No, he was the chair essentially more about intellectual forms, of cubism, of planes—and things like that. More into the [inaudible] at the time. Plus, the poetry of the whole man [ph] and what went with it.

LIZA KIRWIN: Uh-huh [affirmative]. And was he teaching in the evenings as well? Or just during the day?

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah, well, that's where I met Moholy, yeah.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Right, so that—he wanted to—

HUBERT LECKIE: He sort of introduced the workshop. And he said, "Here are the tools, and I want you to find out"—well, he didn't say the spirit of the wood. The potential of wood. It can be smooth. [00:22:03] It can be—have a texture. Some of the students began to put tacks in them. Combine sandpaper with the wood so that you modified the wood in many ways. You could do it by sawing ridges in the wood. You could take a chisel and take nicks out that would have little curls on them, and when you run your hand over them, you—well, this is making you aware of this—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: The potential. The potential, yeah.

HUBERT LECKIE: —the potential of—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Make a light. Put holes in it.

HUBERT LECKIE: —a texture. Yeah. Texture of feeling, because when you're—if you're designing a—something that—a potholder or whatever. You're dealing—in fact, I had an experience with it just a month ago. I came out of the hospital; I had a friend of mine who had let me have his Walkman, and I was preparing to give it back to him. So I took it from the box; I was going to put it on the table, and the damn thing slipped out. Well, a basic thing with contemporary product design was not taken into account, that the thing could slip and if it fell once, you had to buy a new one. Well, the—

LIZA KIRWIN: They probably want it to fall [laughs] and break so you can buy a new one. [They laugh.]

HUBERT LECKIE: So, it was an awareness of looking, seeing, becoming aware of the fundamentals of design—at least in the night class. [00:24:06] Because you got—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: It was the physics of it. In other words, if you design on paper, on drawing something, eh? It's still an eye image. But if you're going to pick up that cup, what's missing besides the sense of touch, the sense of feeling that gives it a proper weight so you can drink from it. And this is not there, draw on it—we had the experience at the—I mentioned before that they did at Corning—glass. We were designing glass, the student. Alright? We were not allowed to use the blow pipe to blow glass—this was in '48. And within six years, everybody blew glass all over the place. But when you design for them—we had to make a design in the imaging [ph] room—and the specialist from Austria would come over and blow the design, eh? Then we could learn from his blow—it would take 15 years for you to learn how. [They laugh.] Where this cuts through all that—makes you immediately in touch with the materials, and the tools, and the flexibility—the visual part, the technical part—of the whole person reacts to the material before you design something. [Laughs.]

HUBERT LECKIE: So that was one of the exciting things.

LIZA KIRWIN: Did you take anything from Henry Holmes Smith? He taught photography.

HUBERT LECKIE: No, I didn't get any photography.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Maybe that was later. I don't even remember—

LIZA KIRWIN: That was later? It was only a year long, wasn't it? [They laugh.] It was '37 to summer of '38. And you mentioned that—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Was it summer of '38? [Inaudible.]

LIZA KIRWIN: Yeah, you'd mentioned David Dushkin.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Dushkin was a musician.

LIZA KIRWIN: Could you talk about that a little bit? Music and building musical instruments, and what was the philosophy of that?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Well, he came from a very progressive school. He believed in improvising music together and someone to play with. An organ was made at school for us, and it was made under his direction. We made a recorders, so we played recorder music. Somebody played violin. And he really—playing music and making instruments at the same time. It was very, very good. Enough to get you active in hearing things and making things—all part of the same structure. [00:26:01] To the other [ph]—to the Gestalted whole man, not as parts going in different directions. See? Yeah? [Laughs.]

HUBERT LECKIE: But I had my conflict with some of that. I had classic training in music—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah. That's right.

HUBERT LECKIE: —and a recorder. [They laugh.]

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Oh, come on. [Laughs.]

HUBERT LECKIE: There—it was primitive, charming—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Oh, sure.

HUBERT LECKIE: —and, uh, for people who had no musical training at all, it was wonderful.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Of course. First steps.

HUBERT LECKIE: But for me, I didn't need it. And as far as making a violin it, uh—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Laughs.] Quite a job, yeah. You were very sophisticated, that's the thing. [They laugh.] Way up there in the symphonies. With an organ, hey man, first play the pipe [laughs], the mock organ that he enjoys it so. It's part of the training.

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah, that's true. Yep. Well, my brother used to play the ocarina.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Right, right, yeah, exactly.

LIZA KIRWIN: Did you invent new musical instruments? Or were you setting out to make a recorder, a violin—what was—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: No, we made the recorder. An organ of some kind was made by another student—otherwise, the regular violin player played the violin anyway and improvised something together.

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: But other than to make sound, rhythm, and to understand those things musically, it involved that way. So as an—again, part of the experience in knowing through all of your senses. Of the type of thing that Moholy used to say, if you were an idiot, walking the forest, you die of starvation, you can't smell what she eat [ph]. You won't smell the enemy that was on your back, right? It will devour you. [They laugh.] So you see, you wouldn't mind walking. And what we want to do is for you to get sensitive to all of your senses at the training we give you—and this was philosophy—

HUBERT LECKIE: And it's one of the things that was lost when the Bauhaus programs were sort of taken into the universities. [00:28:00] Uh, they saw it as a series of isolated things—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Exercises.

HUBERT LECKIE: —uh, go into the art department and you'd have a design department. A design course going along.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Visual. Visual design.

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah. And first semester, you would take a point, line, plane. Divorced from everything else. Not like the Bauhaus. You'd see it—you'd see it in working on wood. You'd see it in making your instrument. You'd see it in, uh—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Making a sculpture? [Inaudible.]

HUBERT LECKIE: Whatever. And they sort of—the whole ethos of design was sort of exploded, and you know, you'd take 101, 102, 103, 104, and you'd come out [laughs] maybe a designer. But—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: That's a—that's a very important point, because the tendency for us is to be analytic, like you do, and analyze a man's work. They take each operation in the machine to the—[inaudible]—of production. The philosophy could recoup the whole man, because he dreamed always in the Middle Ages when people worked together as a team to make a cathedral, eh? And so do we have a master craftsmen of an architect who would make—order somebody to work. And so you know intimately the procedure and the process of what you would make together as a community. And he goes, after the whole man had been trained, the whole creature in a sense would come to production or separation of elements and then they would put them together again. So the university took over the gospel, separated it out—this is design, a point, a line, planes, and color—and they pick everything apart. But the other philosophy that come through that was what the man in New York was running—uh, what's his name? [00:30:03] Hans Hofmann. He would take the whole picture of a Cezanne and make you to feel the push and pull of the space, like you're talking about, and work on a different model [ph]. And then by that same pose all semester. It's not the experience of seeing the push and pull physically, identifying with the form to create things. Then finally you get the so-called New York School of Action Painting—it comes out of that energy that he was able to get into the students, actually—and they finally threw out all the past as inconsequential and became just a personal presentation in action, in movement. Where old Richman [ph] came from not only the cubists but also from Albers' theories and so on. It infused the individual as a whole person. This is what really changed the root of American art, in effect.

LIZA KIRWIN: Were these—were the students all as enthusiastic about the New Bauhaus or with—what is—were there resistance to this way of teaching art, there, did you think?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Not in my class. Hubert—

HUBERT LECKIE: No, we came to the fountain of learning.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Right, we just went there and soaked up everything. So we came from all over, I mean, my god, my roommates were from Brooklyn, Massachusetts, New Orleans, New Jersey—and Wisconsin. And myself from Brooklyn. Altogether in one room and we were living together. We came prepared; we wanted to touch the gospel that was coming out of the Bauhaus. That's really what it boiled down to. We were ready for changes.

LIZA KIRWIN: Well—tell me then the story about your assignment to design a cup, and why this was a problem.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Well, that's the difference. What Moholy was stressing publicly to everybody the gospel of preparing the total person to understand physically everything for two years of preparatory acts, the problems, and then he was ready to choose which one of these attractive workshop it would be to focus on. We felt that this was inconsistent with his philosophy to take on designing a cup in a middle of a class by actually bending sculpture. [00:32:06] That's what it was, really, yeah? We didn't want to be bothered with a sculpture class that was—being taught by artists, we want to soak in as much information as we can get from Dutch painters as possible, and Kandinsky was teaching also—also the old Bauhaus, you see? This is an art class. This is an art clearly around. Don't give us a problem that are not practical. There's nothing to do with it now. Save it for a time when we select to go into it. There will be a free choice then, of wanting to be into glass, into cups, into this and that, you know.

HUBERT LECKIE: You would go into the light room workshop—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: It's too soon, you see? Yeah.

HUBERT LECKIE: —the photography workshop, the graphic workshop, or the industrial workshop. Or the—they focused on chairs for a while. And they developed some fine chairs, but it was with all this previous workshop

training of sensuousness of materials, the potential of it—do you—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Inaudible.]

HUBERT LECKIE: —was this against this? Is that the best thing? Bent wood, well, although we didn't pay much attention to what was going around outside. There was Alvar Aalto and people—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yes. He was a speaker as a matter of fact.

HUBERT LECKIE: —yeah. You saw the new thing, new forms handling old materials. And that was—this was part of the business of understanding the flexibility of materials. You'd take a solid block of wood and you'd cut it into thin slices and it can fan out.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: I made the basis for an exhibit I gave at the institute—[inaudible]. It was precisely that, and a piece of wood—let's say, four by four or three by three. [00:34:02] Split it four ways but solid, open it up on top of a platform, on the top [inaudible] four ways. But that came out of the Bauhaus. In other words, what he was—what he wanted us to sensitize the person as a whole person to all of these possibilities there in the material by exploration. And so sculpture would do it another way, a visual problem, do whatever you want to. It kind of—you see, but eventually you make a choice, because the directed [inaudible]. And [inaudible] society—you work in society for society's needs. But first with a common [ph] vocabulary in the basic fundamentals, and then you took a different route, but uniting principles to do the same thing—we collaborate together like that, yeah?

LIZA KIRWIN: There were also people—teachers, there, Carl Eckart? Who taught physics and mathematics?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: That's right. Yeah.

LIZA KIRWIN: Ralph Gerard, biology and physiology. And Charles Morton, semantics, and what was called—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Morris. Morris. Morris, yeah.

LIZA KIRWIN: Oh, Morris—and what was called semantics and intellectual integration. What did you think of these topics being included in the main curriculum? Or were they included in the main curriculum?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: I think that—I think that was good insofar to us in class, because you developed a principle of physics—the balance, including all this stuff about attraction by magnets and so on.

LIZA KIRWIN: So you actually took a course that was called physics. Okay.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah, the general use that we get to feel this phenomenon, that we're experimenting also, but see it also in principle of how they operate, you see?

HUBERT LECKIE: It was one way of making a bridge between—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah. Arts and science.

HUBERT LECKIE: —art and science. And uh, the—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: And linguistics.

HUBERT LECKIE: —with Kepes, he made you aware of new forms, new shapes, new textures that come out of science. You know, you blow up an electron 5,000 times, you've got something that is new. [00:36:03] And it's not just taking a leaf and making a pattern or a series of patterns with leaves, or—the least you would have to do is put it on a piece of photographic paper and make a photogram of it, so you have the leaf but you have something more than the leaf or less than the leaf or in—in place of the leaf to serve a particular function. I influenced a friend of mine—one of the best photographers in town—I had him do some photograms for me because I didn't get involved in spending half a semester doing photograms. I came in the night school —"Photogram? What is a photogram?" You see it, you talk about it, you see many—you learn about the process. So I wanted to have a new quartet design for a program—quartets. You put a violin, a viola, a cello—photograph it. Well, this character comes along and decides to make X-ray prints of these. [They laugh.] Well, it's a new view—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Of the same thing, yeah.

HUBERT LECKIE: —of the same thing, and it could be used with Bartok. As opposed to taking a nice photograph of a Stradivarius and see the texture of the wood and so on, and you use that for a Pergolesi or some Renaissance music. But science was made a p—you know, you're going to an art school? [00:38:08] They were

smart enough to get some of the best people to talk about science.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: That's the problem. [Inaudible.]

HUBERT LECKIE: But you'd become aware of it, and then the curiosity would be aroused about other things, in science.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: It kept the imagination open and capable to go beyond the ordinary, eh? And it's very [inaudible]. It's like a child, almost. You open up in many, many ways.

HUBERT LECKIE: Let the—that to me was the big thing. You know, I could go to the school and take lettering with Bredendieck to listen to him for a couple hours and then that's enough for me—I know I don't want it. But I've been exposed to it, and when I had to teach, I said, "Well, let's go back to basics. We'll study the basic alphabets—we first start out with not Bayer's assumption that you have a series of symbols that you can manipulate any way. You learn your ABCs. You learn certain patterns. Then, what can you do with them?" And I gave them one problem, which was design a series of symbols that are recognizable but that you can do with one continuous motion—no backing and forwarding and crossing and dotting. Well, it wasn't necessarily a practical problem, but you became aware of one more aspect of communication by symbols with a different point of view—that you hadn't taken up before. [00:40:14] So, it was the same as—when [laughs] I went to the Art Institute previous to going to the Bauhaus to take up layout. Well, I go to the class, "Well, we're going to design a cigarette ad." You start out with a lead-in caption, you have an illustration, you have some text, you put the cigarette package pointing to the name, and you arrange that around a little bit.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: And that's about it. [Laughs.]

HUBERT LECKIE: And I said, "That's enough. I don't want any of this." I went into the modeling class and I spent the rest of the semester making a copy of a model, but I was working with the clay. And fortunately, the Bauhaus came along. [Laughs.]

LIZA KIRWIN: Well, you alluded to this—both of you in different ways—about what the philosophy of the Bauhaus was. How this—what this meant for the artist in society. Could you talk about what you might consider the ideology behind the new Bauhaus and not only the integration of the artist in society but the embrace of new technology?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: That's a pretty stiff question. I'll let you start first.

HUBERT LECKIE: Well, the—with the Bauhaus training, you started with a much greater awareness of things. Montage. You knew what montage was, you know. [00:42:03] It's only today that montage is big stuff with the computer. Only today. Television. Montage. Like mad. The only thing is that it's the thing that the Bauhaus would have liked the montage with movement and color. Well, we didn't have the technical know-how, the machines to design with. I'll give you one example of the difference. At the end of my navy career, World War II, I was in Washington. And a friend of mine who was with me, we were both seamen third class working in visual aids, and he did some moonlighting. And there was going to be a competition between the three or four agencies in town about who was going to get—what agency was going to get the Connecticut Avenue Association account. And this friend of mine worked with one agency, and they said—he said, "Leckie, how would you like to take a crack at this? Come up with something new." Well, in this town the advertising agencies knew nothing about abstract shapes. They knew nothing about the texturing of abstract shapes. So [laughs] I took my Frisket knife, my textures from the Zip-a-Tones; I cut out abstract shapes, made my compositions, put the signature—sometimes at the bottom, sometimes at the top, sometimes in the middle. [00:44:11] Well, it won, because among other things, I was applying a Bauhaus approach to the design of an ad, which was exploited from every possible point of view. The shapes that are used, not just rectangular shapes—not just butting together, but overlapping—and free shapes. For a while [laughs] in Chicago after the Bauhaus was in, there was a fad: kidney shapes, being the hot shape. Everybody in the advertising business was doing kidney shapes and using it in the ads. Well, that was the first thing that became very diddly-doe very quickly. But, uh, it was a case where regular training, which at that time was limited to commercial art schools—this was in '45, '48-50. They weren't teaching design in universities; it was commercial art schools. There was an Abbott Art School here, and there was another art school. And there was the—put a headline. Put a photograph. Put some text. Put a logotype at the bottom, and that was it. Well, this was not what you got at the Bauhaus. [00:46:02] You had to excite a person visually.

LIZA KIRWIN: It was much more than just pushing a product.

HUBERT LECKIE: That's right.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Actually, the way I look at it is somewhat different. I would consider 19th century, with the invention of photo—the camera. The artist was unemployed, in effect. [They laugh.] So it became

experimental, and the scientific approach became more important, see? They began to develop things in color. And the pointillist and the Color School in France is about that. Changing the way you do things—that is the first revolution in the 19th century. First in color, then in form, through the cubists. Because you want to get away from all the set patterns of the past—you're refusing the past as it were, to feel fresh with the phenomenon in front of you. Now what happened with the futurists is they gave it the—put the nail in the coffin, saying "To heck with the past. We've got to go forward with the future." And then all kinds of revolutionary things came into play. You have the con—

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ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: —as book in the origin, as a fine [inaudible] picture of a church from the Middle Ages, you know, that sticks to my mind as crazy as can be. When you work as a group to make the cathedral, and everybody was looking for [inaudible] total, to take a void of that experimental and what you got rid of the past, what you going to do, put in its place? Aggrandize war, you're going to revolution—any, any—moves art forward like that. The success of the Bauhaus is the fact that it was at the beginning of this revolution, to be cohesive as an answer to be in rhythm with all of the coming forward and give us some form, eh? But the idealists—stealing [ph] art to ideals—then they start to take the pure art for the Russian revolution. [Laughs.] In Russia, they were thrown out [inaudible] the rich—Kandinsky—and they went on to the Bauhaus, you see, because they were looking for something to give it a scope, eh? Each trying to find a way—and actually now we don't want that. That's no good for the people, with big photographs of marching with the people, to march with the flag and that's it. That's what we got after that, didn't we? So you get this kind of overlap between which way do you go with it? Should it be this way or that way? This continues. It arrived in a bag [ph] with the Bauhaus, eh? Because it had been thrown out by Hitler for his own philosophic reasons, eh? Fresh and new territory with a root for somebody to know how to design in a way. They were so successful in Bauhaus, we had one here [ph]. So that was correct, because that was the time when the school shut down in New York—Beaux-Arts—and gave way to the Intuition School from Eugene Steinhof and then finally to the Bauhaus in Chicago. All the experimental trying to find another way to make this cohesive and structural, huh? So you can see that the artists we used to quarrel with, what is, uh, should we work for a cause or should we work independently? And this was the basic problem in the '30s. We want to be engaged socially, eh? But then we want to be free at the same time. So when we rebelled against not doing a cup in the sculpture class, there was still a vestige of the old thing in that the artist must be free and individual with his own poetry to move forward, you, to boil down to it, eh? [00:02:11] It was sort of Archipenko, but—so we want to be left alone on this little package. We'll take anything to be [inaudible] out, and eventually it would come together as one, but that's too soon for us to do, it's really—basically is what it is. Now the ones who didn't see the in and out of that, didn't resist and moved along with it. But it's significant that Moholy spent a whole night with us in the apartment [ph] trying to convince us that we had to do it. I said, "Moholy, we can't do it," talk about one thing about the Bauhaus [inaudible] was put it in another frame of reference. He'd say one thing; he'd probably say it was something. "We're not going to do it."

LIZA KIRWIN: He came to your apartment?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: It was across the street from the [They Laugh] Tony—

LIZA KIRWIN: To convince you?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: —Tony Smith—Tony Smith and myself and Van Goslin [ph] and the other from—[Fritz] Bultman—were from New Orleans lived across from the engineer's apartment.

LIZA KIRWIN: Could you say those names slower? Bolton?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Boltwood—

LIZA KIRWIN: Boltwood?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Bultman. Bultman.

LIZA KIRWIN: Bultman?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: He was the son of a rich man from New Orleans—

LIZA KIRWIN: New Orleans.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: He lived with me. And Tony Smith the sculptor lived with me—

LIZA KIRWIN: Tony Smith.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: He knew a lot about art so he could tell it to anybody else. And so did, uh, someone from Brooklyn; I forget his name now. And one from Wisconsin. We argued with him. We said, "You can't do it.

You can't talk about the greats and now you want us to make a cup as a sculpture. We can't do it." So they want you to do it, eh? We're not doing it. It shut down.

LIZA KIRWIN: So that—that, you feel contributed to the end of the school?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: That June, yes. They—they withdrew their support. They were forcing an exhibition in the Museum of Modern Art. Bayer helped to master the experience sculpture [ph] in there, in the basement [laughs] of the Rockefeller Center, in fact, and was in fact [inaudible] Gropius, in fact. But Gropius and his wife had a [inaudible] photograph in the exhibit [inaudible] eh? [00:04:01] Because they want to get the thing moving again. And he did move to start in Chicago in the middle of Chicago to start a new design school. And he wanted to go back there—and I decided to go back and teach at Brooklyn College and get on with—[laughs] [inaudible].

LIZA KIRWIN: So when did you leave Chicago for Brooklyn College?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Well, the same fall—

LIZA KIRWIN: Oh, so 1938.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: —'38—[inaudible]—I got a job in Brooklyn College. I made [ph] it.

LIZA KIRWIN: And what about you, Hubert? Did you stay in Chicago or—

HUBERT LECKIE: I stayed in—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: He was there in Chicago, man [inaudible]—

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah, I was in Chicago and, local, at, uh—I carried on in graphics—

LIZA KIRWIN: Did you—

HUBERT LECKIE: —but, uh—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: His [inaudible] was more extensive than mine, yeah.

LIZA KIRWIN: Did you go to the school its later reincarnation as—

HUBERT LECKIE: Oh yes, uh, in the Chez Paris. Yes—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Laughs.] Did you accept the college that were there?

HUBERT LECKIE: Uh, well, it was called the—uh, the School of Design.

LIZA KIRWIN: The Institute of Design.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Institute. Exactly.

HUBERT LECKIE: Institute of Design. Yeah. I went along then, and I taught a class in lettering. And—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Mies van der Rohe's new building there?

HUBERT LECKIE: Pardon?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Mies van der Rohe's new building—

HUBERT LECKIE: Well—no. It was an old bakery, actually.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Down in downtown, yeah. Alright.

HUBERT LECKIE: Down in downtown. And it was in some ways more exciting as a building then the Prairie Avenue place, which was just a house. Here you had large open spaces and little cubicles and the whole works. And a friend of mine who I had studied architecture in high school with, graduated from Armour Institute and was teaching architecture in the New School of design, and I was a part-time teacher. [00:06:06] I would come in to teach one class and that was it. And I tried to get students interested in drawing letters, not just with a compass and so on, because in the commercial field you had to do everything. [Laughs] And several years later, I had met one of my students, and she said, "Hey Leckie, you know, I wish I had done the problems you gave us." [They laugh.] Because she took it lightly and she didn't get the experience.

LIZA KIRWIN: Did it have any of the character of the new Bauhaus?

HUBERT LECKIE: Uh, oh yes. Yes. It's the sans serif typeface was a—well.

LIZA KIRWIN: I mean the school in general. The Institute of Design.

HUBERT LECKIE: Oh yes. It—oh sure. It carried on in having the workshops where you have to have all go through the various workshops. You had to have the light workshop. You had to have the paper-cutting workshop where you took paper and cut it, and folded it, and made shapes. Why? You had to have something to photograph. So the one thing tied in with another and you became aware of space and you could think in terms of doing exhibits. Now, I—for my limited experience in the Bauhaus because I didn't do any of the space problems except on paper—I came here, and I was working with a group. [00:08:05] We had to design an exhibit. Well, at that time in this town, an exhibit was a series of flat panels. And posts. If you're adventuresome, you might put them—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Laughs] skew them.

HUBERT LECKIE: —like that. Well, my experience in Bauhaus, I—I wanted a curve plane. I wanted a serpentine thing. Well, first of all, that required, uh, more complex handling of material. But fortunately, there were a couple of ex-Bauhausers from a school who were at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. What was his name, the fat fellow?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Uh, Aaron.

HUBERT LECKIE: David Aaron.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: David Aaron, yeah.

HUBERT LECKIE: And I got a hold of him. And so he made the panels so that they—

LIZA KIRWIN: Oh, so now you're talking about—oh, you're talking about—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: One of the teachers over there—

LIZA KIRWIN: —you're still talking about Chicago, aren't you?

HUBERT LECKIE: Well, yeah. Showing that the New School—

LIZA KIRWIN: —the Institute of Design.

HUBERT LECKIE: —the Institute of Design carried on without the "make a cup" right away. You'd have to go through the basic workshops. And since a number of the students had been through the first school and were still over in the New School—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Inaudible.]

HUBERT LECKIE: —carried over, yeah—they were ready to start doing things, and, uh, I forget the names of the guys that went into doing chairs. The Boma chair. The special, relaxing chair that rocked and was made—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [00:10:03] [Inaudible.]

HUBERT LECKIE: That's right.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: And then went over to New York, also, the Pratt Institute. Moholy's wife herself was to teaching there too.

LIZA KIRWIN: I want to jump ahead now and talk about the Institute of Contemporary Arts in Washington, which—in a way—shared some of the same principles as the new Bauhaus and the Bauhaus in Germany. And I wanted to talk to you both about, you know, what brought you to the Institute of Contemporary Arts, just to begin with.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Well, I was teaching over in, what now—or not teaching. I was working as a potter in Massachusetts. And I had to leave, and then I wanted to work to the—glass designer. And—Ida [ph] called me up, saying there's a job in Washington, and—

LIZA KIRWIN: Who called you?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Charles Ida is the director of the ceramics school in Alfred University.

LIZA KIRWIN: Oh. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: He knew what I was doing. He knew that I was very successful with the freeform that I made. So he said, "Why don't you go to Washington? They need someone like you to take care of sculpture." And I say, "Sure, I'll go." And I came over to join Richman and the other one. That's how I came here. And I was finally just in the same way liked, you know? I was happy with it. We had musicians and the theater. And we had the, what do you call the [inaudible] exhibitions, poets always coming over, to me was a confirmation of all of these things.

LIZA KIRWIN: How about you, Hubert?

HUBERT LECKIE: I was here.

LIZA KIRWIN: [Laughs.] Again, you were here. [They laugh.]

HUBERT LECKIE: I was working and, uh, it's a small town.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah. [Inaudible.]

HUBERT LECKIE: And at one point they needed somebody to teach a night class in graphics because of the GIs who wanted to get prepared for doing commercial work and so on. [00:12:06] Well, again, parallel to what's going on during the day, you have what's going on at night. You have Noland floating around the place. You have Alex floating around the place. [They laugh.] And they were talking about glazes and, uh—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: It was very [inaudible].

HUBERT LECKIE: You go to the various concerts and so on, here. Madame, speak the rains in Spain, and whatever—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Well, that was a very good exhibits at that time. We had a Calder exhibition, for instance. [Inaudible.] And I saw the exhibit for it. Beautiful. The broad—what's her name—the space. Nabo.

LIZA KIRWIN: Naum Gabo.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Naum Gabo, yeah. There was that exhibition—

HUBERT LECKIE: Naum Gabo.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: —and then you have a Giacometti thing and then, uh—we brought Leach. Bernard Leach, the potter. And [inaudible] come on out to the Institute. It was a very important thing.

LIZA KIRWIN: What was Robert Richman like as the director?

HUBERT LECKIE: Robert Richman? He's a hell of a nice guy. [They laugh.]

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Butterfly [laughs].

HUBERT LECKIE: He just was probably not strong enough.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah.

HUBERT LECKIE: He had all of the best intentions—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Inaudible.]

HUBERT LECKIE: He had all of the connections, but there was two things lacking. One, there was no corporate support.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: That's right.

HUBERT LECKIE: And in America, let's face it, if you don't have corporate support or government support, you're limited to two, three, four years. Or you become so wedded to the school that the individual becomes the school. Saarinen in Detroit—uh, I'm sure had some Ford money.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [00:14:05] Oh, sure.

LIZA KIRWIN: Well, eventually the Institute had Ford money, but it wasn't until years and years later.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: You're going to have a problem [inaudible].

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah. And it wasn't enough.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: There's a different problem, but—

LIZA KIRWIN: I have a photograph here.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: —about the care of the Institute, but yeah.

LIZA KIRWIN: Here's, uh—

HUBERT LECKIE: Oh yes.

LIZA KIRWIN: And this was from the journal.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: This is Greene [ph].

HUBERT LECKIE: Yes, this is Greene.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: And there was a problem between Richman and Greene, actually.

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Richman was supposed to get so much money to start it, and someone—I don't know who didn't [ph] [inaudible].

LIZA KIRWIN: Greene was.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: He was the one who didn't put the money order [ph] anyway. That was the problem. Uh, the beginning [inaudible] amount of money, we had trouble financially from the very beginning.

LIZA KIRWIN: Right.

HUBERT LECKIE: I knew Greene. I knew him fairly well.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Oh yeah, I'm sure you did.

HUBERT LECKIE: Because among other things, after the institute folded, I got him a job in my place.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Laughs.] Yeah [inaudible].

HUBERT LECKIE: Because he had a great facility with words.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Oh yeah. Very good.

HUBERT LECKIE: And he could write copy. And—

LIZA KIRWIN: Didn't he go on to be the editor of *Vogue* or something like that? Or maybe that was somebody else. Or *Esquire*.

HUBERT LECKIE: It—*Esquire*. Men's fashion in *Esquire*.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Well, they leaned on each other with different personalities—very different personalities, actually. So he was looking for more corporate help, and when Gabo was here, went of the dinner with the Phillips, to get money from the Phillips. And other people. You see, this was where his mind was at. He came here as a poet from another college in Long Island. And so the personality would come to that [inaudible] he was that [inaudible] thing, when the television was coming at the time—RCA—and then the wife of Roosevelt was an actress, so they would demonstrate on all of them, so they could see the color [laughs] they had for—on television. And he was able to do all those contacts [ph].

LIZA KIRWIN: So he wasn't—he was working to get financial backing for the school.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: I don't know how much.

LIZA KIRWIN: Oh no?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: And he was part of the problem.

HUBERT LECKIE: He may have taken part in it—

LIZA KIRWIN: He may. Okay.

HUBERT LECKIE: —but in the main, Richman was the one.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [00:16:01] The one with everything.

HUBERT LECKIE: And, uh, he—Richman's job was bringing—you know, hiring Alex. Hiring me. He was selecting the people, and he had a hell—he did a hell of a good job. It's just that there wasn't enough money—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: No backing.

HUBERT LECKIE: —to bank it—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: A thousand dollars a month for rent on that building—pay salaries for people.

LIZA KIRWIN: Where was the school? Do you remember?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: On New York Avenue. Next to the old—

HUBERT LECKIE: Fourteenth. Between—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: —14th and 15th.

HUBERT LECKIE: And 15th.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: There used to be a garage there on one side—a building right in the middle. All three floors were ours.

HUBERT LECKIE: Before 13th—between 13th and 14th, there was that white bathhouse front. A shiny, terracotta white. Used to be a paint company.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: That's right. You need—

HUBERT LECKIE: —[inaudible] thing.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Laughs.]

HUBERT LECKIE: You know—and it was a very interesting place to be, for starters, because on one floor, you'd had one thing. On the next floor, you'd have another thing. On the third floor, another thing.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: That's right.

HUBERT LECKIE: And, uh, the television and radio business going on in one place, and that was one of the wonderful things about it—that it was bringing in the new things. Radio, television, pottery, sculpture, architecture.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: It was very, very active.

HUBERT LECKIE: Graphic design. Again, it was an exciting place to be. Christ, what I made—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah.

HUBERT LECKIE: —teaching was—it was just the excitement of teaching again.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: And—and for the town itself it was very active, whereas I gave a show for the Washington Sculpture Group. And they were amazed and very happy to be there. They had a collect—they took me around to select the sculptures of different people, it was a really fun exhibit. And as a result of that, they wanted me to teach at CU because sculptures there, and so they wanted me over there—

LIZA KIRWIN: —at Catholic University.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [00:18:07] At Catholic University.

LIZA KIRWIN: Were the exhibitions held also in that building?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Which one?

LIZA KIRWIN: Were the exhibitions on the building—at the building on New York Avenue?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: On the first floor, yes. The first floor from front to back, the space—you could have theater in the back and an exhibit as well. The front and back. So that was—that's—theater man was the one who went to Broadway whose name—very important man in the theater.

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah, I can't recall names.

LIZA KIRWIN: I was up on—I was more up on this before.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Inaudible.] Yeah.

HUBERT LECKIE: And, um, well for instance, when they had a big meeting when this woman poet from England came. The meeting was held at a government auditorium, and there was a big crowd—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Oh yeah.

HUBERT LECKIE: —um, what is her name? The rain in Spain—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Harriet [ph]? [Inaudible.] If I'm mistaken?

HUBERT LECKIE: Harriet Moore? No. Well, in any case, she was, uh, one of the leading poets in England, and when she—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Ah, I know who you're talking about now.

HUBERT LECKIE: He had her, and of course, Richman knew Herbert Reed, and so he'd bring Reed over and—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Oh yes, he was able that way.

HUBERT LECKIE: —being something of a poet himself, he had the American expatriate T.S. Eliot—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah.

HUBERT LECKIE: [Inaudible.] Yeah.

LIZA KIRWIN: Now, uh—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Inaudible.]

LIZA KIRWIN: —I brought this too as maybe a visual aid. [Laughs.] This was in our journal, you remember? [Inaudible.] It was the aim of the goals for teaching an integrative approach to art at the institute. Do you know who developed that—

HUBERT LECKIE: No, I don't—

LIZA KIRWIN: —or, you know, designed it?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [00:20:02] Probably Aaron, wasn't it?

HUBERT LECKIE: It might have been David Aaron, yeah. Or his wife, the Japanese—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Or his wife. His Japanese wife. Both came from the Bauhaus in Chicago, right?

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah.

LIZA KIRWIN: Did they come here, like you did to teach at the school, or were they already in Washington?

HUBERT LECKIE: I think so.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: They came to teach here. Both Aaron and his wife were teaching, yeah.

LIZA KIRWIN: Gee. Well, there seem to be—I read through a lot of the letters of the institute, and there was, oh, you know, terrible conflict because no one was ever paid enough—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Well, it was because of the [inaudible]—

LIZA KIRWIN: —you know, they were running out of money. You were on the board.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah, so—

LIZA KIRWIN: So you know all of these internal problems. Um, there was also a student manifesto at one point. The students were very upset about the way the school was being run. And it seemed to be they were constantly dealing with one crisis after another, because—it seemed to me that Richman—uh, Robert Richman was a very creative mind but not a terribly good administrator, and—you know. What do you think about that? Do you think that—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Well, the part of the problem was [inaudible] and he had gifts of this own, and he make all this contact. I think he didn't quite as much support as what expected to [inaudible] and each was supposed to put $25,000 in this [inaudible]. And that started to [inaudible] right in the very beginning. And I frankly was worried about what was going to happen to my family because I thought I was going to get so much per month, and I finally back up to recommend to [inaudible] bank [ph] and make good. So you have to stop some of those conflicts. But in the end, it was my class, and—what's his name? Oh, the abstract painter that you mentioned before.

HUBERT LECKIE: Noland?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Noland. That was the only person who was active at night [ph], because we were really pushing to keep it going. And finally that was the end of it. The end of the year, it was finished. 1950.

LIZA KIRWIN: Fifty-one, I think.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: So he tried very hard. He tried to go over to the Corcoran to get some room to give us some room to work there, but they wouldn't even accept ceramics at that time. [00:22:04] Because they were art [ph], and that was [inaudible].

LIZA KIRWIN: So when the school dissolved, you kept the pottery equipment, didn't you? In that building.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Well, No. No. Part of the equipment that we bought from [inaudible], I took some of the things, though, at the start of—partly my own, partly a huge amount of money was being made. But that didn't work out. It was too far removed from the contacts in the city. Good space. [Inaudible] your money go up to that [inaudible] beautiful place. [Laughs.] So I was prepared [ph] to buy my own house and work there.

LIZA KIRWIN: And you began teaching at Catholic University then?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: I teach, uh, just ceramics at first. And then finally when I retired, I started sculpture. But university was not really open to the visual arts, and for reason of finances, and so you left to do what you can, and that's about as far as you go. And it's too bad. It took many years for him to get a [inaudible] that showed him some of the specialized in. Had a Fulbright to go to Italy at first, and finally I gave him a—[inaudible]. [They laugh.]

LIZA KIRWIN: Were students at the institute encouraged to sample all of these various things, too? Or did you get the sense that they came to work only with learning lettering or only with—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: My impression [inaudible] you had a very solid group of students. People came out from different—for different reasons from all side. Plus, the [inaudible] with the actors, they came for sculpture, there was sculpture. So these things were all available. Some took more design; some took more workshops, and so on.

HUBERT LECKIE: No, I don't think it was as integrated as the—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Not in the beginning. Not [inaudible] as the Bauhaus was.

LIZA KIRWIN: Oh.

HUBERT LECKIE: I had—I had students—in fact, one of my best students was a GI Bill guy, and—very disciplined guy and he worked his tail off. [00:24:09] I'd say, "Bring in three or four designs." He'd come in with a half a dozen, a dozen. Another guy that I knew, uh, that worked at the printer that I dealt took classes with me, and he worked fairly hard, but he was a different kind of a guy. He was more introspective, and he was just taking my approach and that was it. He worked in a printing shop and his social, uh, world was much more limited. He had to make a living, so again, this circumscribes whether you're going to go to all of these concerts and lectures and what not—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: But that—there's another school before the institute which shut down and this [ph] would open, I think. Near the Cincinnati Building there. King's—I think? I forget.

LIZA KIRWIN: Oh, well, the King-Smith [ph] School—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: King-Smith School.

LIZA KIRWIN: Well, he took that over. It was very quick. Uh, Richman came to Washington head that school.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Oh, that—that's what I thought. Yeah.

LIZA KIRWIN: But, um, he reorganized it so quickly that, you know—I think it was only a few months before he had changed it—the name to the Institute of Contemporary Arts and had wholly adopted this idea of education through art that Herbert Reed was promoting.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Inaudible.]

HUBERT LECKIE: I think he overwhelmed the King-Smith.

LIZA KIRWIN: Yeah [laughs]. Probably. Because wasn't it—

HUBERT LECKIE: It was a girls' finishing school.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: But basically what I see is that they were leaning very heavily on money coming from GI students. I think that's the really the problem, eh?

LIZA KIRWIN: Yeah, they were very excited when they got—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: They thought they were going to make it with this.

LIZA KIRWIN: [00:26:02] Yeah, they got very excited when they were able to take in people who had the GI Bills, because that was a source of great income.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Inaudible]. Yeah. Yeah.

HUBERT LECKIE: That's where I came in. I had GI guys at night.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Sure. Sure. And it's unfortunate, because if they—if the people with money really got to—and made a real school out of it, you'd have a first-rate school.

LIZA KIRWIN: What do you think it meant for Washington at this time in the late '40s to have an active creative center like this? Do you think it made much of an impact on the arts scene in this city?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Oh, yes. I'll tell you one specific incident, that is the true or not [inaudible] came all the way from Paris where GIs worked with Zapkin [ph] there. And so he came—he became one of our staff. Well, every weekend he would go to New York to see what was on in New York. So public [ph] working, he'd come over—"Alex, come see what I'm doing now." He just experimented the whole time, you know? Then he met a very important personality in art in New York: Greenberg. He met him through his future wife in Bennington, because she was a daughter of [inaudible] I believe, and she was a student at Bennington; he'd go up to see his girlfriend and met Clement Greenberg, and Clement would come to our openings in Washington. And he suggested to him, later on, after he came to CU, that, "Why don't you take your basic design that you do and put it large [ph]?" So what was minimum became maximum. [They laugh.] Same as with the New York School, which was [inaudible]. So then they come apart to the action painter and the purist, and it was undecided [ph] that—no [ph] represent that. And they made it.

LIZA KIRWIN: How about other Washington artists who might have—you know—you met a lot of people—

HUBERT LECKIE: Well, I think—the whole Color School, I think—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yes. Oh, sure. There was from that.

HUBERT LECKIE: —was influenced.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Oh, sure.

LIZA KIRWIN: From the institute. You think so?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yes.

HUBERT LECKIE: Oh, yes.

LIZA KIRWIN: [00:28:00] Or what about the Washington Workshop Center for the Arts where Noland also taught with Morris Lewis?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Well, that came after that—

LIZA KIRWIN: Yeah, it came after that.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: —so they—they opened after the institute closed—

LIZA KIRWIN: That was early '50s.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: —and then they came over to CU, and I—he wanted me to come down over to that for workshop.

LIZA KIRWIN: Uh-huh. Did you ever work with the Washington Workshop—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: No, I didn't bother. I know Morris. I brought him over to talk about what they were doing at CU for his lecture. Thinking about [inaudible] and going on, I brought somebody from American U. I think it was, what's his name? One of the [inaudible] guys?

HUBERT LECKIE: Somerford?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah. Someford came to speak.

LIZA KIRWIN: Ben [ph] Somerford.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Somerford spoke there. Noland spoke there. Morris spoke there—enough to tell us—the people at the university—what they were about doing what they were doing. So there was that kind of image change that gave it kind of momentum, eh? And of course there what went onto the Meridian House. It [inaudible] important. Was also important.

LIZA KIRWIN: To the, uh—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Meridian House on 16th Street.

LIZA KIRWIN: Oh, yes. Uh-huh [affirmative].

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: And they issued lectures there. [Inaudible] came to speak there.

LIZA KIRWIN: Yeah, he had a lot of people.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Inaudible]. He wanted the thing to succeed, eh? And he kept shows going on at the Corcoran. His brains were there, and the design was there, but the backing wasn't, see?

LIZA KIRWIN: Well, it's a shame that they couldn't have kept the school going, because I think the school was—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Very lively. It was focused.

LIZA KIRWIN: —a very interesting thing for Washington. Some of those ideas, I think, were picked up again by Berkowitz when—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: That's right. [Inaudible].

LIZA KIRWIN: —you know, and the Washington Workshop Center. But that's, uh, that fell apart, too, so—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: A lot of those people involved came over to visit Bookatz [ph] and others [inaudible] and where they were cutting out [ph] and the motion. And then they—what do you call it—the association of artists in the area—[inaudible]—was president for a while. But the [inaudible] came at the tail-end of something else at the Corcoran. We used to have biennial for instance, based on the old ideal of first, second, and third prize, eh? And it was a social event. [00:30:01] We congregated [ph] to go to it. All of a sudden—[inaudible]. No more of that.

LIZA KIRWIN: When did those end? Do you know?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: What was [ph] been '52, '50 [inaudible] you see some kind of first prize, second prize [inaudible] sculpture show. The third prize Archipenko [laughs] judged it—three prizes that we could manage. [They laugh.] You could say that for second or third—[inaudible] more. And before long, no more biennial [they laugh]. And then all hell broke loose [inaudible] wanted to. I mean, it's a very critical transformation of what

goes on [inaudible].

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah, among other things, the abstract expressionists at the American U—at the American University.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah. They came to teach there from the Phillips.

HUBERT LECKIE: From the Phillips to—over to—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: —American U.

HUBERT LECKIE: —American U. And then they stayed there until they—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah.

HUBERT LECKIE: —they worked themselves out, and, uh, they're still floundering.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah, that's right.

HUBERT LECKIE: And the, uh, Somerford was the one then that got me to start a design department at American U. I started out with one course. Basic design. [Laughs.]

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: There was a sculptor there at the time, too—trying to think of his name.

HUBERT LECKIE: Oh, a skinny, lean [they laugh] Connecticut-type guy.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Inaudible] taught there for a while—for a [inaudible] I would say.

HUBERT LECKIE: Who loves cats.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Laughs.]

HUBERT LECKIE: He was a good sculptor.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Oh yes, very good. But I can't think of his name. It was fun for a while, see. American U, the institute, the King-Smith School—they were all [inaudible] around that time; they would make something important [inaudible] one or the other. But at American, you got more stable surrounded development—so you did—[inaudible]. And Noland. For infamous financial reasons. And conflict within the structure, there. I was of two minds, for example; I mean, this doesn't go on all the time [ph]. [00:32:03] But Albers was doing his analytics while [inaudible] there inaudible] elements what—on [inaudible] the state of New York was not that at all. He kept the poetic side of it. And 60 people were in his room who were learning from Hans Hofmann, and there—when they're—'39 or [3]4 [ph] [inaudible.] I wanted to see what he was doing. And you stuck with the one model in the same pose [inaudible] a quarter hour, eh [ph]. A picture of a billboard from—[inaudible] and you push and pull space with charcoal and nothing else for the whole damn—60 people in that room. And they trust for the whole thing in providence. Now I think that thing is the most central influence in American development of abstract expression—to shake off all civilization after the bombs of Hiroshima and the mess that Hitler left behind. He had a breathing spell—liberating [ph] of all that stuff. So he went individual. You did your own thing, and the meaning becomes the message and stuff. [They laugh.]

LIZA KIRWIN: Hubert, when you were—when you were at American University, did you—you know, ever again—try to implement some of these teaching principles from the New Bauhaus of getting the students involved in looking at the whole picture of art making?

HUBERT LECKIE: I could only do it within my class—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: That's right.

HUBERT LECKIE: —to make—to make the students aware as much as possible. You know, you start with throwing the egg, and I'd take them—oh, one of my great successes. I had a problem—third semester: design a book. And it was average American kids. No working stiffs—they can't afford going to the university. [00:34:02] But they're some very bright kids that came into class. And designed a book. One girl was going to design a Bible.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Laughs.] Nice little book.

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah. Nice little book. Oh, well, I'd talked about sensual things—textures, and so on. I'll be damned if she didn't come in, her Bible had a fur cover. She wanted a cuddly Bible. That—is this, uh—you know,

fantastic idea. She combines a Bible with all of the toys that one could imagine that's something—cuddly. You know. What was this—I felt I was a success as a teacher in design. She came up with a design like that. [Laughs.]

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: You can't—you can't help bring in those [inaudible] because it was central. When they were—when they were drawing the wheel, for example, in—[inaudible]—teaching at CU, the question of that, what object you make, but to learn that you center yourself as you center the clay—get involved in it, to get the movement to really develop by the action that had [inaudible] action in [inaudible]. It's in there, one way or another.

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah, well, another example in the Bauhaus training. Uh, we spent, uh—it was Bauhaus and anti-Bauhaus. Bauhaus in the sense that the problem, which was, pick a piece of African sculpture and look at it as design, and so on. And study it. Well, we'd go to the African Museum. [00:36:05] I knew the head—what's his name? Robbins? We borrowed pieces of sculpture. We took them back, discussed them, made—some made posters. One made a film, you know, with a handheld—8mm film. I said, "Okay. Just don't shoot it in the class, here." So he ended up going in and taking the sculpture and putting it in the woods.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah.

HUBERT LECKIE: Taking it out of the museum context, and what could possibly be some relationship of this totem to—since he didn't have a jungle, he had some leaves, trees, weeds—whatever. And his was a five-minute film of the thing. Well, the—you know—what's this got to do with flat design? It doesn't. It's the end result of speaking about design in a broader context than just what's on a drawing board. And, uh—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: I put most of that time to—on the question of design or the question of fine arts and applied arts, you see—which is what led me to make free forms when I'm doing ceramics, was besides this observation of things. Before I began to make free forms in ceramics, I studied shells, and the way they build—I studied birds' nests and they ended up [inaudible] spiral. [00:38:02] [Inaudible] and made shapes that way. That's because you were open up to observation and free to do that. Now I could make my own molds. I could make my own ways—I could make my own kilns—and could bring all those things together—doesn't make any difference if you use hand tools or machine tools. Whatever value you had came through the work, see, eh? There were many, many influences. And this was very central. You try—and you train, and you're the whole person. You're not a segment of a person. And one of the reasons you have to have arts in the university is precisely that. You're not a specialist in parts of things, and the—what the arts will do is keep the whole damn whole, and that's a very important thing. That's what we lost.

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah—we, uh, as a result of teaching, we—I began to get different ideas. First was to find out the limitations of the school, American U. Uh, I said, to Somerford or somebody in the class, there, "Why the hell don't we get Ellington to get a doctorate in music? He's a Washingtonian. He's a great contributor to American culture." And he said, "Well, you ought to see the head of the music department." Well, I go and see this redheaded guy, and how about giving a degree to Ellington? This was a shocking thing to bring up to this guy. He said, "Well, maybe to Brubeck or somebody—" I said, "No, Ellington. Think about it." And, uh, then nothing happened. [00:40:01] Nothing happened. Two months later, Yale gives Ellington—[They laugh.]

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: And then I go, "Aye-yai-yai." [Laughs.]

HUBERT LECKIE: I wasn't crude enough to go over to that son of a bitch and say, "Why didn't you? You—I had raised it three months before." But along with that, I began to think—try to think in relation to the Bauhaus, what would be the central thing today around which you would build a design school? And I mentioned it—well, first of all, peripherally, by saying we—at the school—AU [American University], we ought to have, uh, a film section. To at least do documentaries. This is art. And, well, they had an art department. They had a photo department as a part of the journal—journalism school. And he was politically stronger, and he kept the photography in the journalist—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Laughs.] [Inaudible.]

LIZA KIRWIN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

HUBERT LECKIE: So I kept thinking further, you know, what would be the ideal thing today? During the Renaissance, architecture was the mother of the arts. It encompassed the sculptures, the baiters, the craftsmen, the manuscripts, writing—the whole works under architecture. Well, Bauhaus came along later and—under architecture, but industrial.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [00:42:06] Well, that's the problem. That's—you put your finger on the problem. Before you're a cultural whole—or the stability of that to refer to yourself to the Greeks, and so, "I am the church." And give it some kind of meat substitute [ph] to refer to. There's no problem for Archipenko to make—I mean, an idea—but Michelangelo to make a suit for a guard, or make a building or a painting, you see? He was

a maker of things that needed to be made. There was no high or low. And we're in a situation where we talk about high art, low art, and middle art, and it's ridiculous. But what the Bauhaus was doing, in effect, to go back to being a working workshop. All this "I am an artist and can't do that" was a load of bologna, as far as Bauhaus was concerned.

HUBERT LECKIE: Well, I put the question—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah, you make it.

HUBERT LECKIE: —somewhat, somewhat differently. Is it—what is the art form today that encompasses all art forms?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Inaudible]. Music? [They laugh.]

HUBERT LECKIE: No. Film.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Film. [Laughs.]

HUBERT LECKIE: Film encompasses music. It encompasses art.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Oh sure, it encompasses everything.

HUBERT LECKIE: It encompasses scene design, architecture, the whole works.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Sure. Sure. Okay—[inaudible].

HUBERT LECKIE: Well—how about thinking in terms of an art department that is going to use this as a kernel to build an interrelated series of—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Yeah, of forms that work together—

HUBERT LECKIE: —workshops that work together, including writers, painters, actors—the works. After all, they do have an acting division. They do have writing. But they're all separate—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: That's right.

HUBERT LECKIE: —one doesn't talk to the other. So—but if there were this sort of overall, uh—the magnum Bauhaus idea brought up to date that one could—think in terms of a school or institute. [00:44:13] It could be at the Catholic University. It could be at the Corcoran. It could be an entirely new building.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: That's not what you need for that [ph]. That's missing, really. You saw dancing with the wolf?

HUBERT LECKIE: The what?

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Dancing with the wolf?

LIZA KIRWIN: *Dances with Wolves*.

HUBERT LECKIE: Oh. Dancing with the wolf.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: You know, the Indian, the white man, versus the bison. And [inaudible] the work around you, it won't work. It's a kind of instrumental thing that you can't imagine [ph] without a sense of regard for the environment around you, eh? First you have to the love the world, love the people, love the place you live in and take care of it, eh? Then you can get integration that is meaningful, eh? [Laughs.]

HUBERT LECKIE: Well but this is the thing, that either a university or a museum has to be the—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: —focus.

HUBERT LECKIE: Focus.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Oh, sure.

HUBERT LECKIE: And it—it brings in poets, philosophers. Religious thinkers. The technologists. And put the computer in its place—not on a pedestal. And—

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Right, yeah. The integral part of society that we gather together again. [Inaudible.]

The integral part of existence. The sensitivity [ph] of that—

HUBERT LECKIE: Yeah, and I'm waiting for that.

LIZA KIRWIN: [Laughs.] Well, that—maybe we should end on that. [They laugh.] That utopian—that utopian note that it would be wonderful to have such a place in the future.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: Exactly one thing [inaudible] but maybe you could make it one of these days [inaudible].

LIZA KIRWIN: Yes.

HUBERT LECKIE: It's the dream.

LIZA KIRWIN: Well, thanks very much.

ALEXANDER GIAMPIETRO: [Inaudible.]

LIZA KIRWIN: Thanks very much for participating. Would you like to say anything more?

HUBERT LECKIE: Well, I hope this gives you some basis—

LIZA KIRWIN: [00:46:03] Oh, I do want to ask you—I can't let this go without asking you something about our journal since you are the designer of our journal. And if you'd like to just put down on tape, your design philosophy as it expressed in our journals since it's, um, it's important for our own history as an organization to understand that.

HUBERT LECKIE: Well, uh, I tried to—I start with the idea that it should be simple without any tricks. That, uh, the content of the magazine determines what I can do with it. If we had corporate sponsorship where I could pull photographs from wherever we wanted, we could make it more exciting, but at the present stage, I try to keep it as simple—

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]