



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Mary J. Gruskin,
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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Mary J. Gruskin on October 27, 1992. The interview was conducted by Gail Stavitsky 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

MARY J. GRUSKIN: -- job, and he did [inaudible] during the Depression. And so, I don't feel that I deserve all the credit that people want to give me.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And the gallery was started in -

MS. GRUSKIN: I'm a little deaf, so -

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, the gallery was started in 1932?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, it was. My -- as I said, my late husband started the gallery at that time.

MS. STAVITSKY: And what were the -- his -- the circumstances in his interest in starting it?

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, as you can imagine, it was the Depression. And at that time, he started the gallery without a penny. Actually, without any money. And, finally, they rented a gallery that had very, very low rent. But -- and he was able to collect some money from the family, I suppose, at that time, just a few -- and I helped him, too, because I had a job at that time.

MS. STAVITSKY: What was your -

MS. GRUSKIN: I was working as a -- in a department store. And, let me see, I was with the china department. That's right. And the reason I was there -- I got this job, \$25 a week, believe it or not -- was to get familiar with the chinaware, because I had a possibility of going to England to do research on patterns for Spode.

Now, I wasn't an American citizen, because I was born in Italy. And they said, "Well, get a permit. What we want you to do is go all over Europe and get all the ideas you can, so we can have some new patterns." What finally happened was, after I got my permit and everything, the whole thing collapsed because of the Depression. In England it was dreadful. And, of course, America, 1929 and the 1930s, just went under. So they had to put it off, and I never got there.

But, in the meantime, I took this position in the department store to learn all about chinaware, which I didn't know too much about, to tell you the truth. But I wanted to learn, and get to know the different patterns and firms. So that's where -- how I happened to have a job at that time, during the Depression.

MS. STAVITSKY: And is that also where you met -

MS. GRUSKIN: What's that?

MS. STAVITSKY: Is that also where you met Mr. Gruskin?

MS. GRUSKIN: No.

MS. STAVITSKY: How did you two meet?

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, then -- yes. What happened -- one of the girls -- it was in 1928, 1929, when everything went so bad, and a lot of the wealthy girls from wealthy families had to get jobs, and so they were getting the department stores, and places like that.

So, one of the girls one day, who was -- became very friendly with me, said, "You know," she said, "I just met a young man who is very much interested in art, and I told him about you." And he said, "Bring her along." So the next time, we had a date. And that's how I met him. And so we went together for a long time before we got married. In 1940 we were married, and that was the time when I joined the gallery. But in the meantime, I was with him a great deal. We went to all the artists' studios, climbed the stairs to the top floor to see their work.

And now, Mr. Gruskin was getting some little help from the family, but not much. But he didn't have a job when I met him at all, he didn't even have the gallery, so that when he was out of work -- he had been working for a -- [inaudible], he went to Harvard and studied at the Fogg museums. And what happened, he got a job with an art gallery in New York, an old master gallery, and he left them, because he felt that they weren't very ethical, they were selling old masters that were not really old masters. So he quit. And so he was without work for quite a while.

So, one day we thought -- well, heard about this floor being rented very cheaply, so he wrote home and got some money, and was able to start the gallery. But he didn't have much money. And so, the time came when the banks closed and what little money he had all disappeared. And the marshals came in to take everything out of the gallery.

Well, now, he had a friend that also was a friend at Harvard, a lawyer, and he called him immediately to tell him, "Look, Jim [phonetic], I am in a terrible fix here. The marshals are going to come here tomorrow and take all the paintings away." And Jim said, "Hold on." He said, "Don't worry. They can't touch anything, because they don't belong to you." So that relieved him a great deal, of course. So when the marshals came, they didn't take the paintings. They couldn't. So that saved his life, and that of the artists, too. So -

MS. STAVITSKY: Now, was that because the gallery --

MS. GRUSKIN: What was that?

MS. STAVITSKY: The reason that the paintings belonged to the artists was because the gallery was a cooperative?

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, it was a cooperative gallery. What happened, the artists who joined the gallery were paying \$5 a month, I think. And if they weren't able to pay, or couldn't afford it, then they would need to work with him, you know, as a -- in place of the money, which ends up by my -- today, I [inaudible] many of these paintings around in the 1930s and 1940s -- not the 1940s so much as the 1930s.

And so -- but his whole object was to promote American art. And people were not so interested in American art in those days, mainly because they -- the Industrial period, and people were more interested in that side of it than the paintings, you see. And so Mr. Gruskin said, "Well, my whole idea is to promote these."

So, we would work together. I mean, he would ask me for ideas, so I had some thoughts on it, on the work of art. And so the whole idea was to promote art. And his first object was to -- I think what he first did was to have -- to put various people on the radio, and talk about art. He would invite museum directors, artists, actors, business people, and that was really to educate the public on what was going on in the art world.

And, you know, at that time there weren't many art galleries that were containing American art. I think there must have been about maybe eight or nine galleries. If you read, for instance, O'Connor's [phonetic] book, which you probably have read, have you not? Do you know that book, the -

MS. STAVITSKY: On the New Deal, or -

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: Mm-hmm.

MS. GRUSKIN: Mr. Gruskin is mentioned in that. He worked -- he had another friend that came with him that did the publicity. My husband wrote all the script for it. And they had these people on the air to talk about art, and all that sort of thing.

And then, after that, he began to think of what he could do with these artists. He opened shows, and we didn't sell -- he didn't sell very much, but we carried on -- or he carried on, rather, because I was just not still -- I mean I wasn't really with the gallery at the time -- and he -- but we did have certain ideas to put art in advertising, as we went along, to have art exhibited in traveling shows.

And, as a matter of fact, I remember at one time -- and lending paintings to, perhaps, clubs and other outfits here in New York City. And what happened, at one time he loaned a half-a-dozen paintings to the Atlantic Beach Club and The Lito [phonetic] Club, which was outside of New York, very fashionable, wealthy club, and he lent -- after a month or so, when they were to be returned, they were missing.

Now, whoever stole the paintings, thought they were going to be able to get a lot of money for them. But what happened, the people called and said, "We will return the paintings if you leave so much money at such-and-such a place," and they picked out Grand Central Station, where a telephone booth was, and said, "Put the money, wrapped up, in a package on top of the booth," you see.

So, they did. They put the money on the top -- a bill on the top, and the rest were all not real money, you know. So they never showed up, because they had -- my husband had detectives working around there, you see. So they tried it again and again, and still they didn't trust what was going around that area. And so that was the end, and we never saw the paintings again.

But in 1950, my husband found a note on his -- in his -- I think the elevator man gave him the note, and he looked at it and said, "If you want -- there is a package for you at such-and-such a number." It was right next door to the gallery. We were then on Madison Avenue at that time, but we started on 5th Avenue, to begin with. So we were there, and he picked up the paintings, brought them upstairs, unwrapped them, and found that they were the paintings that were missing, every one of them.

MS. STAVITSKY: That's amazing.

MS. GRUSKIN: So that was part of the early experience. And -- but we had traveling shows going on throughout the country, promoting the artists.

And then, he also had -- in 1939, he put on a big show. I mean, everything in order to get people interested in art, because it was really a time when people were not so interested as they are today. It's developed so highly today than it was then.

So, he -- what he did, he put on a big show in the Corn Belt of America, called -- I forget the name of it, but *Life* magazine did a little spread on it, and -

MS. STAVITSKY: Was it that show in -

MS. GRUSKIN: It was a show of paintings, yes. Master paintings and contemporary paintings. And it was -- got a great deal of publicity out there, in the middle west. And school buses were brought in to see the show at this particular building -- I think it was the Masonite Building, or something. Masons, not Masonite. Masons, I think. I can't remember exactly what the name of the company was, but I think that's who they were. But there is material. I'm sure you will find it in the archives, a lot of this stuff that I am talking about.

And then, in the meantime, we -- he wrote a book during the war years, in 1914. Am I going too fast? Did you want to ask another question?

MS. STAVITSKY: That's fine.

MS. GRUSKIN: Really?

MS. STAVITSKY: I can jump in, or if you want to -

MS. GRUSKIN: I am kind of jumping -

MS. STAVITSKY: I can ask some more questions.

MS. GRUSKIN: -- into 1940, when I started with him. And he started -- he decided to write a book on painting, American painting, called *Painting in the USA*. And as a matter of fact, I think I kind of inspired him to do that, too. Because, at that time, it was the war years. And the young people who were coming into the gallery were coming in uniform. And they were coming in in crowds.

So, I finally asked one or two of them, "What brings you here? There are so many of you, all coming here," and they said, "Well, we've been in Europe, and we found there is so much wonderful art there, we wanted to know what was happening here, in America."

So, finally, that inspired us to do something about it. And so that's why the book on painting in the USA came out. And most of the painters that were illustrated in that book -- have you seen it, by the way, this book? I have it here, if you want to look through it. Most of the -- many of the paintings were illustrated in *Life* magazine because they were doing a good story in the 1930s, too, on the American artists of the time. Margaret Varger [phonetic] was the art director. She was one of our painters, by the way, too, who thought of -- who worked with Luce [phonetic] on this particular project, which was very, very wonderful, I think, in bringing art to the public, too.

So, let's see, what happened there now? With Mr. Gruskin, she worked together with him, and many of our artists. And other artists of that period were illustrated in the magazine. And my husband used some of their color plates for his book. That's why I bring it up. And this book, *Painting in the USA*, came out in 1940.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, I would like -

MS. GRUSKIN: But in the 1930s -- beg your pardon?

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, I said I would like to look at that book.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, I have the books here that he has done. He liked to write. And he did that book, he also wrote a book on Don Kingman [phonetic] -- or thought of it, he thought of a lot of things like that, you know, to promote the artist. That was the main idea, to bring art to the average public, who weren't too familiar with American art.

And I think the Depression had a lot to do with it, because once the artists were involved in -- with the New Deal and people went to see their shows, where they were held, you know, at the -- I don't remember exactly where they were -- I think Rockefeller Center, with the [inaudible] and so forth -- and Mr. Gruskin then put on shows, and artists began to be interested in joining galleries, too, so that we had quite a few people come to the gallery to join. And people were -

MS. STAVITSKY: Who were some of the first people that came by to the gallery?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. There -- well, Isabel Bishop, Edward Lanning [phonetic], William Palmer. I have a list here, on one of the catalogs. Milton Avery was another artist we had. I can't think of -- Waldo Peirce came a little later. Paul Cadmus came a little later. Oh, it was great fun. We had a lot of fun meeting all these artists, too, you know, going to their studios.

Some of them were pretty poor, like Paul Meltsner, who was really coming to us for help when he had so little. But he managed to help them pay the rent, and get a lawyer -- who was our lawyer, by the way -- to help him out, and that sort of thing went on.

We had two other Japanese artists, by the name of Meomoto [phonetic] and Fuji [phonetic] -- I will have to show you the catalog, because I can't remember their names, offhand. And Ethel Katz, from the Art Students League. Then, later on, we took on -- oh, Maurice Freedman was another artist who was -- and many of these artists stayed on with us, you know. Some of them didn't, but many of them stayed on, like the ones I mentioned at the beginning, and -- which is -- people felt was a rather unique thing, to find artists staying at the gallery so long. But because we worked so closely with the artists, they stayed on, and they were happy to be with the gallery.

MS. STAVITSKY: And you were also socializing with the artists, too?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, we did. We socialized with them, we took them out for meals, and we visited their studios, and so forth. And, of course, we went to the studio to find out what they had, to see if we liked what they were doing. And that was one way of choosing their work, too.

MS. STAVITSKY: Now, it seems that Isabel Bishop, she was one of the first people that you had a one-person show for?

MS. GRUSKIN: One of the very first artists, yes. And we gave her a show, and one of the shows was a painting show -- a drawing show, and I think then a painting show. Isabel was very, very slow with her paintings. She did many, many drawings, but her paintings -- I don't think she more than about 100 paintings all her life, if that many -- maybe a little more, 165, I think. About that. I'm not so sure.

And William Palmer was another very -- and these two people who studied -- and Edward Lanning -- who studied under Kenneth Hayes Miller. You remember, he is the early teacher at the Art Students League.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: And then, Isabel Bishop also taught there. So did William Palmer.

MS. STAVITSKY: Now, I understand that you studied -- you, yourself -- studied at the Art Students League -

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, I did.

MS. STAVITSKY: -- for a while?

MS. GRUSKIN: I did. Yes, I did. I studied at Cooper Union, and I also went to the -- several other schools -- I can't think of the name of them -- the New York School of Design, and then the Art Students League. I studied under George Gross. And I also, at the New York School of Design, studied with Gorky one week. That's -

MS. STAVITSKY: One week?

MS. GRUSKIN: One week. I'll tell you why. That's his painting, there, by the way.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes. Oh -

MS. GRUSKIN: And the reason I didn't stay with him, didn't like him, is because I was doing the nude, which was one of the subjects, as the nude looked to me. And he came over, and he looked at it, and he says, "Bah," he says, "that's not the way to do it," tore it off, and then he did his own nude, which was so abstract that I said, well, I wasn't going to be able to do anything like that, you know. So -

MS. STAVITSKY: Sounds like him.

MS. GRUSKIN: I should never have thrown that drawing away, should I? So, I decided not to study with him any more.

MS. STAVITSKY: And was this in the 1930s, that you -

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, in the early 1930s. At the Cooper Union I studied design there. And at that time they didn't allow women to draw from the nude. But there was a class next to my -- the class I went to, where they had nude figures going on. And we would lean -- peek through the top of the window, you know, to see what they were like. But we -- I didn't get anything like that until I went to the Art Students League. That's where I studied the figure more than anywhere else.

But I never -- I had -- what I did with the art work that I -- as I told you, the -- Spode wanted me to do designs for their plates, or research on designs. And then I also worked for the John Day Publishing Company, interviewing artists for them, and also they gave me work to do. I did some book jackets, I illustrated a very simple book, and then some advertising work.

So, there I was doing really commercial work at that time. And then I went into the -- I got myself into this department store, because of the Spode thing. And then, from there, I went into the dress department, and decided that I would be a dress designer, and started in with the [inaudible] school. So I kept moving like that, wanting to make money, because I was the head of the family at home, seven of us, and I was the oldest. So I had to help there. Well, anyway -

MS. STAVITSKY: When -- you had mentioned that you were originally from Italy.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, I -

MS. STAVITSKY: I was wondering where, and -

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. I was born in Trani [phonetic], Italy. It's a city on the Adriatic, a small town, where my mother was born, and her family. And her family came from Naples. They were part of the Bourbons. And my father's family came from that part of -- we're Italians all the way through -- and he had, oh, a cousin who was very well known there as a philosopher and a writer, and they were -- and that's the kind of background.

In other words, my father didn't -- went to college, didn't have to come here as an immigrant, came here first class on mother's money, I mean, and was so discouraged about the way they treated him, expecting him to dig ditches and things like that, which he didn't want to do, and he ended up starting a little Italian paper that didn't work. Everything he tried didn't seem to go through. So, finally, he went back to Italy. And at that time, I was about 15 years old.

MS. STAVITSKY: And you had moved here as a small child?

MS. GRUSKIN: Beg your pardon?

MS. STAVITSKY: You had moved to America as a small child?

MS. GRUSKIN: I was four years old when I came here with my mother and two other children. My father came first, and then we came. And we were asked to come over. And so we moved from -- came to New York, then we went to Baltimore, and more children were born, and then he decided to go back.

And I was about 18 then, when he -- when we heard from him again, and he said he would like us to -- he left when I was about 14 -- and wanted us all to go back. And I said to mother -- and mother said, "What do you want to do, you children?" And I said, "But Mother, we're all Americans. We don't want to go to Italy and live there. What will we do?" So, we didn't go. That was the end of that family, and we just carried on alone, Mother and her children.

MS. STAVITSKY: And were you already very interested in art by that time?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, I was. As a matter of fact, my father was very, very encouraging. He used to doodle himself,

you know, and I remember he would bring home color reproductions of artists, and so forth, which interested me.

And one day, I was not feeling too well, and I was put to bed. But on my wall there was a picture of a calendar. And I had paper -- I asked Mother if I could have some paper while I was convalescing, and I drew what I saw. And when my mother and father saw what I did, they got very excited. They said, "Oh, that's wonderful. She's an artist," and so on and so on. And so that's how it all began.

And I really was encouraged from that point of view, and I took part in these little competitions that Wanamaker used to have. And I remember giving one to my sister, one of my drawings to my sister, to send in -- which wasn't fair, but I did -- and I sent one of mine. And she came out with the first prize, and I only got a silver medal, she got the gold medal. They used to give medals for this kind of thing. So she won the first prize. Well, that's how it all began, but that was very encouraging, of course.

MS. STAVITSKY: And I was interested about your interest in American art and also Mr. Gruskin's interest in American art. That was somewhat unusual, then, to be interested in American art, rather than European -

MS. GRUSKIN: Well -

MS. STAVITSKY: -- and I wondered how you both -

MS. GRUSKIN: He studied -

MS. STAVITSKY: -- developed that.

MS. GRUSKIN: -- with Paul Sachs at Harvard. And the reason he was interested in promoting American art, he saw the need of it here in this country, because there were so few galleries, and he felt that something ought to be accomplished in that order, to bring out the American art to the public. And so, that's what encouraged him to do it.

MS. STAVITSKY: Now, did he also come from a background of being encouraged about art? I mean, he -

MS. GRUSKIN: No. Just -- not at all. The family had a department store in Pennsylvania, in the little town of Kittaning [phonetic], PA. And they expected him to go on with the store, you know. But he wasn't interested. So, he left -- when he went to school at Harvard, he came to live in New York. And the family were very disappointed, I'm sure, because he didn't carry on the -- with them.

And so, he went on with this idea of -- and since he had this course at Harvard with the -- in the Fogg Museum, he wanted to carry on with his art. And, as I told you, he had his position with one of the old master galleries here in the city -- I'm not mentioning names -

MS. STAVITSKY: Okay, I won't ask, then.

MS. GRUSKIN: And that discouraged him. And so, then with that in mind, he said, "Well, instead of carrying on with old masters" -- and, as a matter of fact, you know, in the gallery, the first gallery on 59th -- on 5th Avenue -

MS. STAVITSKY: It was at -

MS. GRUSKIN: I think -

MS. STAVITSKY: At 559 5th Avenue?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, right. Have you a catalog there? You --

MS. STAVITSKY: I was -

MS. GRUSKIN: What -

MS. STAVITSKY: I actually wanted to ask you about the different spaces, and I had information saying that the first one was at 559 5th Avenue at 49th.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: And I was wondering what kind of space it was, because we didn't have any photographs of it.

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, we had the whole floor. This was the gallery that he was able to take -- to rent at a very, very low price. And it was a huge place. It went from the front to the very back. And the people -- the person who had that gallery, I think, was selling antiques. And in that gallery, they -- he had -- he put up all these -- oh, I

think it used to be a gallery, too, before that. And the old monk cloth was still on the wall.

Now, because things were so tough, he found that the only way he could get along was to stay in the gallery, and sleep there, believe it or not.

MS. STAVITSKY: Wow.

MS. GRUSKIN: And so, what he -- they finally -- what he was finally able to do with his friend was to get a day bed. And they paid \$.35 a week, or something like that, for it -- and I don't know what it came to -- and they were able to carry on.

Now, and this couch was in the back, a big desk that was back there, and all his friends would congregate there from school, and so forth, and artists. But when we had the first -- one of the first exhibits, I think -- not Isabel's, but -- you see that sculpture over there? This -

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, the kneeling figure?

MS. GRUSKIN: That's by Oronzio Maldarelli.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: And Maldarelli had just come back to America. He had won a Guggenheim fellowship, and so he was given the first exhibit at the Midtown. Now, it was prohibition time, and liquor was hard to get. So, what they did was make this bath tub gin, believe it or not.

MS. STAVITSKY: Wow.

MS. GRUSKIN: And that was being served. And, in the meantime, they had a big crowd. And they even had the -- invited the policemen on the beat. And everybody was having a wonderful time. I don't think they sold anything at the time. But the word was getting around, you know, that here was this exhibit.

So, when the party was over, we wondered where the policeman -- what happened to him? They finally found him dead asleep on that daybed, and they had to get him out. So that was one of the delightful things of the time. But that's how they carried on. And so -

MS. STAVITSKY: Now, was -- his partner was named Francis Healey?

MS. GRUSKIN: Francis Healey, yes. And he didn't stay very long. He went on. He was very articulate and good as a publicity man, but I don't think the two of them got along too well after a while, so they split. And they didn't last very long. And so they -- actually, that was in 1932, and then the gallery was originally established after he was gone.

Now, Lanning was one of the artists that we had at the beginning, too, and he did some of the murals -- some murals for the WPA, and some of them were the -- were exhibited at the gallery, some of the mural sketches. And William Palmer, too. And I think we had a few other artists whose murals were shown at the time.

MS. STAVITSKY: Were you helpful in getting them the mural commissions, or -

MS. GRUSKIN: Not at that time, no. I was only a sidekick, so to speak. I just went with Mr. Gruskin and helped him in the gallery. After work I used to type for him, and do his letters, and things like that. And not until 1940, then I came into the gallery.

But I spent a great deal of time in the gallery during -- after work, or days when I had off for vacations, and helped him to try to get a little activity going on for him, and give him ideas. That was all.

MS. STAVITSKY: How was the critical reception of these early -

MS. GRUSKIN: What's that?

MS. STAVITSKY: I'm just curious about how the reaction, the reception of these shows on the part of critics and the public when you started -

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, you know, in those days, we had more than one paper. The critics were wonderful. I mean, we had very, very good response to the work of the artist, and the -- at that time, there was a little magazine called the art digest with Peyton Boswell [phonetic], who did many -- who had many critics -- he had two or three critics who would come in. I don't know that they got paid, or what, but anyway, there was his sister and others.

And then, we had the *New York Herald Tribune*, *The Sun*, *The New York Times*, and the archives has a lot of these clippings from the early days. I think I gave it to him, and worked with him on that.

MS. STAVITSKY: Mm-hmm.

MS. GRUSKIN: So that we were glad there weren't too many papers like today, you know, you have so many papers and so many galleries and only one paper. But there, we had all these wonderful papers and good critics who came in, like -- well, we had Zoal [phonetic], too, but in the early days we had Burroughs [phonetic] and -- who were the others?

MS. STAVITSKY: Henry McBride [phonetic]?

MS. GRUSKIN: Who?

MS. STAVITSKY: Henry McBride?

MS. GRUSKIN: Henry McBride, yes, of course. And DeVrie [phonetic], and so on. So, it was really quite exciting. And we were friendly with the critics, too, as a matter of fact. Not like today, you don't -- it's so different.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: So different, absolutely.

MS. STAVITSKY: That's true.

MS. GRUSKIN: We were very friendly with Peyton Boswell, who was -- we socialized with them, they came to our dinners, and we planned the parties for them, and all that sort of thing, which you can't -- you don't do today, any more.

And they were curious, because they were interested in what the gallery was doing, which was unique, from the point of view that we were doing all these traveling shows, and so on. So then -- maybe I keep on talking, but you may have other questions.

MS. STAVITSKY: Sure, I have a lot of questions, but everything you're saying is so interesting, so I will just keep jumping in.

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, well you ask me. Don't let me go on.

MS. STAVITSKY: Okay. Yes, I did have a question about the fact that there -- as you mentioned, there were very few other galleries showing -- focusing on American art at that time. And I wondered what your relationship was with, for example, Edith Halpert [phonetic] at the Downtown Gallery.

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, right. Well, we kept very much to ourselves. Edith Halpert was not very happy about Midtown, and I will tell you why. Because of the name. It absolutely made her sick, I think, so that people would come to us and think we were Downtown, and people went to her and thought it was Midtown. So that got her very annoyed. But we managed to get along, because we worked with the artists.

When we were planning so many of these advertising campaigns using fine art, well, I went around and chose the art, helped to choose the art and had them brought to the gallery. So I would go to Edith Halpert -- and she was all right -- and Rehn, and Price [phonetic] and ACA [phonetic], the Kraushaar, of course, and all those galleries that were in existence at that time. I have the book here, which will show you what we had been doing. Now, that book came out later, in 1946/1947.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, *Painting in the USA*?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. And, as I say, we did get along with the dealers. I mean, there was no problem, we just didn't socialize with them. And we -- today, we find that so many dealers work together in shows. We didn't do that so much. We got our own people, you see. Only when we did these advertising campaigns -- and we did, you know, use other artists besides Midtown.

MS. STAVITSKY: When were you doing these advertising campaigns, which I understand were very progressive, that you were the first gallery were try to -

MS. GRUSKIN: Say that again, I'm sorry.

MS. STAVITSKY: I understand that -- I was wondering when you were working with the fine art and advertising. I understand that you were among the first to try to do -

MS. GRUSKIN: We were among one of the first, I think, that -- what followed, I think, in the long run, was that the Association of American Artists began to do the same thing. They were pumping a great deal of advertising people to take on [inaudible] to do their ads, you see. But that was another way that we -- the reason we did it, was, again, to bring art before the public, you see, carry it.

Now, I will tell you some of the other things that we did -- and that was part of my project with Mr. Gruskin - we decided, with a silk firm, to -- suggesting to them that they use fine art in -- for reproduction in their prints. In other words, a [inaudible] by Waldo Peirce's apple pickers, or William Palmer horses, or Gladys Rockmore Davis ballet, or things like that, scarves and silk dresses.

And, in addition, they were very open to this. And they went ahead with it. And then, also, they, in turn, asked top designers to make clothes from these very beautiful prints. They were really lovely. And then, we planned an exhibition of the prints with one of the top stores in Atlanta -- I think it was called Richards [phonetic] -- in Atlanta, and the museum in Atlanta, Georgia. That's where it began to -- the exhibit began. And they showed the painting, the fabric, and the dress. This all went with the museum and the department store, which helped to promote the department store merchandise, and the museum brought out the artist's work, you see, at the same time.

MS. STAVITSKY: Was this the High Museum in Atlanta?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, yes, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: And is -

MS. GRUSKIN: It's bigger today than it was, then. It was just a small museum.

MS. STAVITSKY: And was this somewhere in 1940, or -

MS. GRUSKIN: Let me see when we did that. Yes, it was in the 1940s, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. And we did that in the 1940s.

MS. STAVITSKY: So that kind of goes back to your early interest, as well.

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, that's where I come in, in the 1940s.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: Because I helped to get these ideas through, you see, and connect with a big public that would come in.

And then, we -- then, to go on from that point, we also carried on another campaign a little later, where we tied it with a drug company, where they used paintings to advertise a particular drug which had to do with either cancer or pregnancy, or something like that. Now -

MS. STAVITSKY: Was this Upjohn, the -

MS. GRUSKIN: Upjohn, yes, exactly. Now -- and then, the same thing was carried on, where these were shown. They put out a big catalog on these, which they had in every doctor's office, all over the country. And also, an exhibit was held of these throughout the whole country in museums with the painting, and so on. And that was another way of, again, bringing the art before the public. And so, things began to develop in the 1940s, really, when we were able to sell more work.

And then we went on to do still another campaign called "Art in Interiors." That was a really -- that lasted 10 years, I think, and it really meant a great deal to the public, I think, because we selected, every year, different designers like Paulman [phonetic], and architects -- Ed Stone [phonetic] and other people, to do little vignettes in the gallery, maybe a half-a-dozen of them. They were just lovely. And with them, they were to introduce paintings to go with that interior. And we got tremendous publicity, magazines, newspapers. And you may have seen these in the archives, I think I have them all there, I hope. And if not, Bridget still has some of the photographs.

MS. STAVITSKY: They are still being microfilmed.

MS. GRUSKIN: They might be.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: And we had hundreds, hundreds of people that came into the gallery, and selling paintings off the wall, and it was really a very exciting period. But -

MS. STAVITSKY: I know there is -

MS. GRUSKIN: I must go back, now, if I can, to 1936, when we took on Paul Cadmus.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: Paul Cadmus [inaudible] gallery, is probably the only living active artist in the gallery of that period. And we put on that show of his, the actor -- the WPA turned down his painting, "The Fleet's In?"

MS. STAVITSKY: Mm-hmm.

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, of course we couldn't show the painting, because it disappeared. They were against the painting, took it down, and the painting disappeared. In the meantime, Paul did an etching of this particular painting, which was shown with etchings and other things in the gallery at that time, and thousands of people came in, because of the news that the -- that this painting was turned down by the WPA.

Now, years later, this painting was found in the Alibi Club in Washington, D.C. And we had -- they -- I think we were able to get it out, and I think the Smithsonian is going to get a hold of it now and show it. But it is out of there. We had borrowed it, we showed it for exhibits in the last show here, in New York. We showed it again.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: And then, when I put on that big show at Oxford, Ohio, the Miami University show at the Miami University -- it's in Oxford. And they have a museum. And I put on this show of canvases there that started all this excitement all over again about him, until this day. Yes.

And then several books have come out on Paul now. I worked on some of the books later on. I got to work with the publisher on the first Cadmus book that came out on his work. And then Bridget, who is now the director of the gallery, has brought out other books.

And the same with Isabel Bishop, the first book that came out, I worked with the publisher on that, and I still have a copy of it.

MS. STAVITSKY: Now, did both Isabel and Paul -- they found you? I mean, they walked into the gallery, and wanted to be represented by you, or -

MS. GRUSKIN: Isabel came to the gallery, yes. We found many of the other artists. But she came to the gallery, having heard about it. So I thought my late husband had discovered her in a show, but she claims she came to the gallery. But I had not heard that side of it. I had heard that Mr. Gruskin saw her in a show, and wanted to have her come to -- and invited her -- or was in touch with someone that knew her, and brought her in.

Now, she stayed with the gallery up until her death, you see. She was one of the few -- well, there are so few people around who are ill, like Etting [phonetic]. And, Etting, you know -- have you see him lately, by the way?

MS. STAVITSKY: No.

MS. GRUSKIN: He has Parkinson's, you see, and I don't think he is painting at all, poor thing. And he is still around. He came in 1939, I think. And -

MS. STAVITSKY: He came to you?

MS. GRUSKIN: Into the gallery in 1939 or 1940, and was very active and did very well. He did some very, very handsome things, and good shows. And Mr. Gruskin, we -- it was suggested that he, you know, gave these artists ideas to illustrate things, and -- if they wanted to, because he did do quite a few illustrations for *Town and Country* magazine, I think.

MS. STAVITSKY: Mm-hmm.

MS. GRUSKIN: It was *Town and Country*? I'm not sure. And then we had another artist later on, Don Kingman [phonetic], whom we started from the very beginning, then Don went his way. We had -- oh, let me think -- Philip Guston was another one of our people.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: Fletcher Martin. And those men decided to go their way, and particularly -

[End of tape 1, side A.]

MS. GRUSKIN: -- the early, early people. This is Mr. Gruskin when he first started the gallery. This is [inaudible], you see. I don't know if that -

MS. STAVITSKY: That's -- oh, in 1932?

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, easily, 1933 maybe.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: Now, Ary Stillman was another artist. And I meant to tell you, in order to make some money, they put out -- they had a life show in the gallery in the 1930s. And so these artists that belonged to the gallery would come -- those who could afford it -- would pay a little sum to come to draw this little nude that they would all hire to come to the gallery. So that was every week, every week. And Ary Stillman was one of the artists, and he did a portrait of me at that time. And this was one of his catalogs later on, that he joined the -- what's that gallery in Houston?

MS. STAVITSKY: The Museum of Fine Arts Houston?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. He joined them. And I remember he did this portrait.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, this is a -- Stillman's portrait of you?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: And this is in the -

MS. GRUSKIN: At the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, and they go to take a portrait of Mr. Gruskin that Waldo Peirce did at the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, because they have given the name of a scholarship fund under the name of the Mary and Alan Gruskin Scholarship Fund. And that's what they wanted these photos -- here is another photo of Mr. Gruskin.

But he was the starter of this wonderful gallery, I think that he deserves the credit. I have this sculpture over there, in the corner -

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: It's [inaudible] --

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: And I think it is, isn't it?

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: Done by Arlene Wingate.

MS. STAVITSKY: Arlene Wingate was one of the artists?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: In the gallery?

MS. GRUSKIN: And so was Minna Harkeby [phonetic]. That other piece of sculpture you see there is by Minna Harkeby.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, the female?

MS. GRUSKIN: The head.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, the head.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: Okay.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, the other female with the cigarette, and this, and the sculpture you saw down there is by Fred Meyer [phonetic], who studied at Cranbrook [phonetic]. He came later, in -- I don't remember, 1950s, I think he came. Maybe it was a little earlier, I'm not sure.

Let's see, now what else do I have here? Anyway, these are photographs. But Waldo Peirce was really one of our -- I think this is Mr. Gruskin again. If there is anything you want of -

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, that's Mr. Gruskin

MS. GRUSKIN: It is?

MS. STAVITSKY: Mm-hmm.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: It says, "Associated News" -- oh, that's the people who took the -

MS. GRUSKIN: What does it say?

MS. STAVITSKY: "Associated News Photographic Service."

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, it may be hard to -

MS. STAVITSKY: Did he have pictures taken when he was giving his radio broadcasts, some publicity things?

MS. GRUSKIN: Those early ones, but I don't have any of them with me. No, I don't. I just have them in the gallery. I don't -

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, these are pictures of -- this is him next to the bust by Wingate, Arlene Wingate.

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, the Wingate? Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: And a picture of you and -

MS. GRUSKIN: This?

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, this is you and Paul Cadmus, it looks like.

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, this is -

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, these are a number of years ago.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: Maybe at an opening of -- oh, I see.

MS. GRUSKIN: I was just 91 -

MS. STAVITSKY: December 1979?

MS. GRUSKIN: I was 91 yesterday.

MS. STAVITSKY: Ninety-one yesterday?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: Happy birthday. Glad to celebrate.

MS. GRUSKIN: But I can't imagine that I'm not old. I don't know where the years have gone, except that I don't feel the same way as I did when I was younger.

MS. STAVITSKY: You have an amazing memory.

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, thank you. Now, here -- I think I have lost a lot, really -- now, you know, he took on [inaudible] in 1946, I think. Bill Thon was one of the painters -- have you -- that came later. And another thing that Mr. Gruskin did, he would try to promote these artists, to be sure they would prizes, and send the right pictures to the right -- to the galleries, or to the institutes. And in this case is where I think he won the fellowship at the

American Academy of Arts and Letters. And then he won -- to go to the Prix de Rome, which was very exciting.

MS. STAVITSKY: Very impressive.

MS. GRUSKIN: For Bill Thon, yes. And there is a wonderful story about that. Oh, I don't know what these are. They're not so hot. Oh, that's the same thing. And these are more of Mr. Gruskin. Well, anyway, you want to look through here?

MS. STAVITSKY: Thank you.

MS. GRUSKIN: I think you've seen everything. Is this Friedman [phonetic]? This is the gallery on 11 East 57th Street.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, I wanted to ask you about the different spaces and the history of them.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. All right, well do -

MS. STAVITSKY: I know that we were talking about the first space, and -

MS. GRUSKIN: The first space was the huge gallery on 5th Avenue. And then, from there, we worked -- we went to 605 Madison. And there we had -- it was very reasonable in those days, too. We had the second floor with a window on the street, a third floor, and then later, the fourth floor. So it was just wonderful to store the paintings in the top floor, where we had a lot more room.

Because another thing that Mr. Gruskin did, was he made sure to have these traveling shows, in order to have more room in the gallery, you know. If the paintings went out, it meant that he had more space in the storeroom. So that was another advantage, from the point of view of finances and money spent.

He -- I'm just trying to think what else he did in those days. Well, I will have to think.

MS. STAVITSKY: Well, I -- let's see, I have a note here that it was actually in 1935 that you moved there and stayed there for quite a while until -

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: Into 1951?

MS. GRUSKIN: Exactly. And then we moved to 11 East 57th. Have you got that?

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, I have that in 1951 you moved to 17 East 57th?

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, I forgot about that, right, 17. That's where the Finley [phonetic] Gallery may still be today. I don't know if they are.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, yes. I think they are, actually.

MS. GRUSKIN: It's a very narrow building, and we had the second floor -- again, with a window.

MS. STAVITSKY: From front to back?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. And then we went to 11 East, where we were on the third floor and had a window.

MS. STAVITSKY: And that was in 1962?

MS. GRUSKIN: That was later on, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: And you stayed in that -- the gallery was really there until recently.

MS. GRUSKIN: Until 1985 -- no, until -- well, until -- I stayed there until 1985, and sold it to John Payson in 1985. He has the gallery now, as you know. And Bridget Moore is the director of the gallery, and doing a very good job, I think.

And it's quite different than what it was in my time, but they're using the same artists [inaudible] gallery.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, I know they have an Isabel Bishop show that's up right now.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, that's right.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: Isabel Bishop and Paul Cadmus and another artist -- well, the only living artist, of course, that is showing anything is Hans Moler [phonetic], who came later, and Paul Cadmus, the early artist. And I'm trying to think. Ethel Magnifan [phonetic] is very sick, she isn't able to show, and Etting isn't able to show. And I'm trying to think who else.

MS. STAVITSKY: And Minna Sitron [phonetic]?

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, Minna Sitron was one of their early -- did I give you the catalogs at all? Let me give you a catalog that has all those names. Maybe you can bring them out for me.

MS. STAVITSKY: Okay.

MS. GRUSKIN: Because I can't remember.

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, indeed. Oh, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: What were your experiences with her? Were you on friendly terms, or -

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, we were friendly. We -- she was rather difficult at times, and with a lot of people besides us, but we got along very well, and we had a lot of shows. A lot of our artists showed at the Whitney Museum, and they won -- they bought several painters from the gallery.

This is the O'Connor book, here. Yes, we -- but she was very set in her ways, you know, and had a great feeling for the artists of the WPA period, and tried to help them. And with the money of Mrs. Whitney, who, by the way, is -- Gertrude was a cousin of John Payson, because John is a Whitney, you see.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, yes, that's right.

MS. GRUSKIN: I don't know, I put some notes down, but I can't read them at all. But that's all right.

MS. STAVITSKY: Now, the -

MS. GRUSKIN: I think I brought out something here. This was a show that the gallery put on on the early painters and mural painters, and quite a few of our people are in there. But I wanted to bring -- to show you something that was very interesting that Mr. Gruskin had the vision to have an artist do a mural in Philadelphia, by the way, for Meyer Madway [phonetic], who had a hardware store. Did you ever hear of that store at all?

MS. STAVITSKY: Uh-uh.

MS. GRUSKIN: I think it's before your time. It's no longer in existence. But the mural, it's here, that Janet Markesi [phonetic] found somewhere or other. And -

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: And the name of the mural in here is by Bertram Goodman [phonetic]. I thought I put a slip of paper in there, or a clip.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, in the murals catalog, or -- because this is -

MS. GRUSKIN: Not in the mural catalog, it's in this catalog.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, in this -

MS. GRUSKIN: Isn't that -

MS. STAVITSKY: This is one that's called *Romantic Realism: Visions of Values*, and then this is the *Painting America*. This is a catalog about murals.

MS. GRUSKIN: Hmm?

MS. STAVITSKY: This catalog actually is about the murals. Maybe if I look under Goodman [phonetic]. Let's see.

MS. GRUSKIN: Let me see. If I weren't so -- which is the one I just gave you?

MS. STAVITSKY: You gave me one called *Romantic* -

MS. GRUSKIN: This is the exhibition they put on at the Midtown, right?

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, well, that is not the one that I am talking about, although it has quite a few artists in there from Midtown. Did you find it?

MS. STAVITSKY: Not yet.

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MS. GRUSKIN: I don't know if she has an index of it or not. The mural was the first mural ever commissioned by Midtown. In a hardware store in Philadelphia, it was a big hardware store, and that was the beginning of one of the first commissions that was given to an artist at that time by the gallery.

MS. STAVITSKY: And that was in --

MS. GRUSKIN: In 1933, I'm sure, 1933.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh. Sorry I can't find it. I will keep -

MS. GRUSKIN: And now you asked me who some of the critics were at that time. Emily Genauer was one of the first critics of that period, too. We were very friendly with Emily at that time.

MS. STAVITSKY: And I think she is still in New York.

MS. GRUSKIN: She is still living, yes. I don't -- she said she was going to do a book on the 1930s. I wish she would, but I sent her a lot of material about 5 or 10 -- 6 years ago. But I don't know what's going on. So -

MS. STAVITSKY: I did actually want to ask you a question before I forget that relates back to what you were saying about Philip Guston, Fletcher Martin, and I believe also Herbert Ferber was one of your early artists -

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, yes. Ferber was, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: And you were mentioning that a lot of these people were -- not a lot, but some of them left around the time abstract expressionism -

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: -- came in?

MS. GRUSKIN: Especially when people began to feel that they wanted to change their way of working, and they felt that Midtown -- they wanted to join the group, the avant garde group, you know. Guggenheim was having that exhibit with Pollock and all that group, and so they got right into the swing of the avant garde period.

MS. STAVITSKY: I am wondering if, for example, if Philip Guston had chosen to stay with you, would you be interested in showing -

MS. GRUSKIN: Today?

MS. STAVITSKY: Would you have been interested in showing his abstract work?

MS. GRUSKIN: We would have been interested, certainly. But I think he wanted to join the crowd that was all doing the same thing. In fact, you wanted to see that book. Did I bring it out, the *Painting in the USA* -

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MS. STAVITSKY: -- paintings, and -

MS. GRUSKIN: They are in there, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: -- in the book, *Painting in the USA*.

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, they were wonderful paintings.

MS. STAVITSKY: "A *Sentimental Moment*," and "If This Be Not I."

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: So, even if -

MS. GRUSKIN: I liked -- he was really a wonderful painter.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, yes, that's great.

MS. GRUSKIN: Isn't that beautiful? Look at the color. Of course, he was known for his color in his abstract work, too.

MS. STAVITSKY: It's interesting. This painting, Sentimental Moment, really looks a lot like Picasso.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, so realistic. Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: But the other is less realistic.

MS. STAVITSKY: The other is less.

MS. GRUSKIN: More imaginative, and very beautiful.

MS. STAVITSKY: If -- oh, I see. *If This Be Not I*, yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: I love this group. He didn't want to show those, after a while, you know, when he went -- left the gallery. And we had -- I don't know what happened -- I think those paintings went to the Neuberger Gallery, I'm not sure.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh. Actually, speaking of the Neuberger Gallery, that brings me to another question. I understand that Roy Neuberger -- was he one of your main clients?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, he was. Yes. We sold him some paintings. We -- I don't know what he bought, actually. I think you might find some of those in the archives. I'm not so sure that I remember.

And, also, the gallery in Washington, D.C., the -

MS. STAVITSKY: Joseph Hirshhorn?

MS. GRUSKIN: Exactly. Yes. Joseph Hirshhorn. Now, I met Joseph Hirshhorn in, oh, it was in the 1930s, 1934 or so. And he lived in Great Neck at that time. And a friend of ours wanted to help us out, and said she would -- she had a big home, and said she would have a large -- would like to have an exhibition, and asked Joseph Hirshhorn over.

So, the exhibition was held, and we had Waldo Peirce, and she was trying to push Waldo Peirce on Mr. Hirshhorn. And he turned around and said, "No," he said, "I go to the artists' studios to buy paintings," and that was the end of that. But he did buy paintings from the gallery, as a matter of fact. And when he came in, he would buy three or four at a time, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: I think he has -

MS. STAVITSKY: That's how he operated.

MS. GRUSKIN: He bought -- I think he had some Thon paintings, he bought his, and I forget who else.

MS. STAVITSKY: Milton Avery? Would he have bought -

MS. GRUSKIN: He started -- where is the catalog? Let's see. Well, Avery didn't stay very long with the gallery.

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MS. GRUSKIN: -- a year. So I've had to guess when these shows were. When I got into the gallery, I saw to it that the year was placed on the catalog, on the brochure, so that you would know when they were done.

And I will go back to the book, that *Painting in the USA*. I had a very interesting experience in getting the paintings for that book. And Mr. Gruskin said, "I would like to have an O'Keeffe painting for the book. He said,

"Will you go and see [inaudible]?" And I was thrilled, because I did -- I was young, then, you know, and all these things were very exciting for me, too. And I said, "Oh, I would love to go," and I did.

And I went over to Stieglitz Gallery, and no one showed up. And I went through the gallery, and then to the back, and there was Mr. Stieglitz, sitting on an unmade daybed -- it was a couch, really, you know -- but there he was. And I told him who I was, and I said, "I am Mary Gruskin, and my late husband is doing a book on painting in the U.S.A., and he would very much like to have an O'Keeffe reproduced photograph to be reproduced in the book."

He said, "I never heard of the Midtown Galleries." And I said, "Mr. Stieglitz, the gallery has been" -- I think it was 12 years old, or 10 years old. He said, "I never heard of them." He said, "The galleries come and go, and you can't trust any of them."

And I said, "But, Mr. Stieglitz, my husband doesn't have that reputation. He is well known for his ethics, and so forth," and I told him all that.

"Well," he said, "I am not feeling too well," he said, "and Georgia is at Lake George, and I haven't -- I don't" -- and on his desk, there were piles of mail, and he said, "And I am waiting for her to come down to go through this mail.

Well, anyway, finally, he looked around and found the photograph for me. And I thanked him very much, and I said I was delighted to have it, and so that was the end of that situation.

Two days later, headlines in the paper, Stieglitz dies. And so, I just saw him two days before he died.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, my God.

MS. GRUSKIN: But it was a wonderful meeting him, you know, that gruffness of his, was there, you know -

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: -- that I had heard so much about.

MS. STAVITSKY: Legendary, yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: That's amazing.

MS. GRUSKIN: So, any other questions you wanted to ask me now?

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, no --

MS. GRUSKIN: Because I think I'm going --

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes --

MS. GRUSKIN: I'm jumping from one thing to another, am I not?

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MS. GRUSKIN: And what happened -- this house was done by Angela Raymond [phonetic], who worked with Frank Lloyd Wright on the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, and did a lot of buildings in Tokyo -- as a matter of fact, Japan -- that is, Raymond did. And this particular house burned down to the ground, and I lost a lot of paintings, including this wonderful polymer here.

Luckily, I saved this Bishop. It wasn't there. It's called *Ice Cream Cones*, I think, or *Lunch Hour*. Yes, *Lunch Hour*, I think, is the title of it. I sold it to John Payson. He has it at the gallery now. And there it is.

This, I don't know when this was taken. Does it say the date on the back?

MS. STAVITSKY: Let's see.

MS. GRUSKIN: Mr. Gruskin was alive when I took -

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, 1969? No, no. Oh, destroyed by fire in 1969. So it's probably --

MS. GRUSKIN: 1969 it was -- yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: So it's got to be maybe right before that.

MS. GRUSKIN: But that was done -- I think that's the 1950 photograph.

MS. STAVITSKY: Really?

MS. GRUSKIN: We built the house in 1946, 1947. Had the house built then, rather.

MS. STAVITSKY: You know, I find it interesting, the juxtaposition of Isabel Bishop's work, and then the totally abstract paintings -

MS. GRUSKIN: The Palmer.

MS. STAVITSKY: It seems to -- the Palmer, mm-hmm.

MS. GRUSKIN: That's a later Palmer. The early Palmers were not. They were very much like Kenneth H. Miller's [phonetic] influence in his work. He was a very fine artist, by the way, you know, Palmer was. And he didn't start working that way until the 1950s.

MS. STAVITSKY: And you -- but, of course, you were showing his abstract work in the 1950s.

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, absolutely, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: I mean, the reason I'm asking that is I think that a lot of people may have a misconception -

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, we -

MS. STAVITSKY: -- about the artists that you show, that they're all realists, and they're associated with that.

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, they probably do, because it wasn't the fact that they were abstract or realistic. The fact was that they were good paintings, and well organized, and rich in color and rich in design, and so forth, and so that Mr. Gruskin would not hesitate about abstract painting at all, nor would I.

And we took on Edward Betts [phonetic]. He was quite abstract at the time. And I'm trying to think who else was -- we didn't have too many abstract painters. I think many of the abstract painters of that time were really going their own -- in with the group that was together. Of course, (inaudible) stimulated that group a great deal. I think many of the galleries were upset that this was going on, and that the paintings of the more realistic school were being ignored at the time. And they were. But not as far as sales were concerned. People were buying paintings, and we were doing extremely well.

MS. STAVITSKY: But I'm just wondering, in terms of how you see the history of your gallery, in terms of the different decades, the 1930s, where you discovered many artists who were in the avant garde, the forefront of American art, and then, in the later 1940s, when the -- after the expressionists came in, do you feel that the role of your gallery changed sort of in relation to the American art scene, or -

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, it changed for every gallery at that time, I think, that were dealing in the realistic school, or the kind of paintings that we were showing. But we didn't let that bother us. We went ahead and the artists painted what they wanted to paint. And we didn't say -- give them any idea to go on with the different -- with an abstract painting if they wanted to. It was up to them. But they didn't.

I think some of the artists may have had that in mind, like Palmer. Now, Palmer changed, you see. This is one of Palmer's right over here, of that period. He -- from realistic painting, he went into more of an abstract type of a painting. And I think -- I'm trying to think who else was doing that sort of thing. Not very many. They -- Cadmus didn't want to change at all. He said, "This is what I like, I want to do, and I will continue doing what I feel, and not change my -- the routine of the kind of work I like to do."

So, there it was. But I'm trying to think who -- I can't remember any other painters that we may have taken on that were doing abstract.

MS. STAVITSKY: You know, of course one of the artists who comes to mind -- I did actually, by the way, find a list of names. I just remembered I brought this along, that I think you might have provided, *By the Decades*. It has Midtown gallery artists of the 1930s, and there are 2 pages full of names. And I even see not only, of course, Isabel Bishop -

MS. GRUSKIN: I can't hear you.

MS. STAVITSKY: Not only Isabel Bishop and Milton Avery, but Ilya Bolotowsky.

MS. GRUSKIN: Who is that?

MS. STAVITSKY: Ilya Bolotowsky was apparently -

MS. GRUSKIN: Was in our gallery at the time?

MS. STAVITSKY: Well, according to this list.

MS. GRUSKIN: Well -- Bolotowsky?

MS. STAVITSKY: This is a list that the Archives has.

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, really?

MS. STAVITSKY: I think they might have gotten from you -

MS. GRUSKIN: I see, yes, okay.

MS. STAVITSKY: And I'm amazed --

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, that's why I pulled out that catalog. I don't think we did much with this particular artist you're talking about now. They went their way. I don't know what happened to them.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, he is -- the reason I ask is it's another case of an artist who was -

MS. GRUSKIN: Went abstract?

MS. STAVITSKY: -- kind of abstract, even in the 1930s, and I didn't know if -

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, but he was abstract at the time.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, that's right.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes. And -

MS. GRUSKIN: And he was with Midtown?

MS. STAVITSKY: Right. Well, according to this list.

MS. GRUSKIN: Listed -- he was with Midtown, you say, according to this list?

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, I'm sure it is.

MS. STAVITSKY: It's a long one.

MS. GRUSKIN: The Bishop catalog has a whole list. I don't know -- I don't remember many abstract painters. Maldarelli was a little bit -- doing some abstract work, too. But he went into this kind of thing, too, that you see here. He was doing both, at the time. His influence from Paris with Rencussi [phonetic] and people like that, had a lot to do with the feeling that he was putting into his work, I think, at the time. And Miehl [phonetic] is another artist that he admired a great deal.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, oh -

MS. GRUSKIN: Rodin -

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: Not Rodin as much.

MS. STAVITSKY: They seem to be the real -

MS. GRUSKIN: What is this?

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, this is a catalog of William Palmer, the early years, and Julian Binford [phonetic] --

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, yes. We took Binford in the 1940s. But is that the screen?

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, maybe this is -- yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: That's the -- yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: I think this is it.

MS. GRUSKIN: That's the very, very early screen that he painted when he was in Kenneth Hayes Miller's class.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh.

MS. GRUSKIN: You see?

MS. STAVITSKY: Mm-hmm. Let's see, there is a Washington Square -

MS. GRUSKIN: That's right.

MS. STAVITSKY: -- New York City, four panel screen, 1929. And it looks a lot like -

MS. GRUSKIN: Exactly, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: -- Kenneth Hayes Miller's work, yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. We didn't show that until we had his exhibition here in later years, not too long ago.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, in 1986, it says.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, 1986.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, that's great.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. And who is this? Binford?

MS. STAVITSKY: "Julian Binford, 50 Years of Painting," it says.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, we -- he joined the gallery, and we took him on in the -- I think in the late 1940s. But during the war years, you know, *Life* magazine commissioned many of these artists to go to the war zone in Europe to do paintings. And many of the artists of Midtown were taken over. Fletcher Martin went over, and Julian Binford was here, in the United States, doing the boats as they came into the harbor to be repaired from the bomb damage. And then, there was a -- Gladys Rockmore Davis went over.

MS. STAVITSKY: Was one of the artists also Henry Kerner [phonetic] who did war paintings, as well?

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, Henry Kerner, yes. He came into the gallery in the late 1940s, right after the war, because he was -- his parents were eliminated during the Holocaust over there. And we gave him his first show, here, in New York City. He was an illustrator for *Time* magazine, you know.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, did a lot of covers.

MS. GRUSKIN: He did the covers for them. And we put on that big show of his, which was a sell-out. It was really a great show. And that was it. I mean, then -- when he began to paint what he saw here in America -- and those paintings that he did earlier were of the war and the bombed out places -- as you remember, the one at the Whitney, and so forth. So when he came -

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, of Vanity Fair, right.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. That's the one, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: At the Whitney, mm-hmm.

MS. GRUSKIN: And then his things did not sell as much. People did not seem to like what he was doing. And so, Henry then decided to go to Pittsburgh and work there, and that is where he went on.

And then he wanted to come back. And there is one thing about the artists who did want to come back. Mr. Gruskin said, "Once they leave," he said, "that's it."

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, yes, yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, that's it.

MS. STAVITSKY: I understand that.

MS. GRUSKIN: He never was happy about taking anyone back. It just didn't work. But I liked Henry, and he came back to say hello. We would -- we gave him portrait commissions, and things like that. We had -- he did many of those things for us during the time he was with us.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, you mentioned -

MS. GRUSKIN: But he went his own way.

MS. STAVITSKY: You mentioned that, I mean, you were able to find a number of your artists book and magazine illustration, commissions of that nature.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. I brought some of the books out that we -- well, some of the books that Mr. Gruskin did, and some that were done through his -- oh, through his -- what do I want to say here? You see them here?

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MS. GRUSKIN: I mean, we were in touch with the publishers, especially Doubleday, Viking, and people like that. And we would meet with these publishers. And I went around a great deal with the idea of meeting the editors and speaking to them about the idea of doing books on artists at the time. So that was my -- I used to do a lot of the outside work, too.

MS. STAVITSKY: The leg work.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. Leg work, right. And I went to the advertising people. And you don't hear too much about Gladys Rockmore Davis. I think that's what you're looking at now, is it not?

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, it's her pastel painting book.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. She was a good painter.

MS. STAVITSKY: 1943.

MS. GRUSKIN: Influenced by Renoir a great deal.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: But a good painter. And her son is a painter, Noelle [phonetic]. And her husband was an illustrator. They both came from the Chicago Art Institute. He was one of the best illustrators in the country, Floyd Davis. All right.

MS. STAVITSKY: And another -- actually, another artist that I see that I find interesting, you showed Francis Chris's [phonetic] work?

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, yes. That's right.

MS. STAVITSKY: Good painter.

MS. GRUSKIN: He was with us for a while. We didn't do too much with him. We had a -- I don't think we -- it was group shows. I don't believe we ever had a one-man show of his work.

MS. STAVITSKY: And -- oh, this is the watercolors of Don Kingman, *How the Artist Works*.

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, yes, he was -- that's right.

MS. STAVITSKY: With the text by Alan Gruskin.

MS. GRUSKIN: He was from California. We put him up in our little apartment in New York. We had an apartment on 58th Street at the time. And he was staying with us until he found enough money to live with his wife here, in New York.

But these were wonderful. I think one of these went up for a lot of money not too long ago at Sotheby. And I think that after he left the gallery, I think they became completely different. They were just pot boilers, I was told. But they just had a wonderful sense of color, and they were selling like hot dogs at Midtown. We did very well at the gallery with our artists, I must say.

MS. STAVITSKY: Well, some of your artists, as I'm looking a little bit of Don Kingman, and think of Francis Chris and others, they were characterized as "magic realists."

MS. GRUSKIN: Not -- Paul Cadmus was. I don't think Don Kingman was. And I don't know about Chris, because he wasn't with us at the time when they had that -- brought up that subject or that title for these artists. But the Museum of Modern Art started that, did they not?

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, yes. The American realists, and magic realists -

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: -- and realists in 1943.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: And this is a book on *The Painter and His Techniques* -- William Thon again.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: By Thon -

MS. GRUSKIN: Now, he won this fellowship at the American Academy in Rome, you know. Now, his first paintings were very much like Reiter's [phonetic]. You might see one there called *East Wind*, which got tremendous reviews. And it was shown at the Metropolitan Museum during their Artists for Victory show. They had hundreds of paintings on the walls.

And when Mr. Gruskin and I went to see the exhibit, we stopped dead in our tracks in front of his painting, because it was so rich and so beautiful. And he said -- Mr. Gruskin called me over to look at it, and he said, "What do you think of it, Mary?" And I said, "Oh, boy," I said, "I think it's a great painting," after studying it a while. And he said, "So, we take him on?" I said, "I certainly would." And he did.

And, from then on, he became a great success. He is in collections all over the country, and museums all over the country, and private collections. I have one painter who I had dinner with last evening who has about, oh, at least 24 of his paintings.

MS. STAVITSKY: Wow.

MS. GRUSKIN: I know.

MS. STAVITSKY: That's really -- did you -- and a lot of your promotion, then, would be contacting museums and collectors?

MS. GRUSKIN: What's that?

MS. STAVITSKY: You were often contacting museums and collectors -

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, we were.

MS. STAVITSKY: -- to try to place -

MS. GRUSKIN: We were. And museums were very much interested at that time. They used to come to the gallery all the time to talk with Mr. Gruskin, because of his background at the Fogg. And they had a lot in common, because they both studied museum work. And so, we were in touch with them, and we were able to sell paintings all over the country to museums from here to the West Coast.

MS. STAVITSKY: Actually, I have a question about the West Coast. You opened a branch in San Francisco?

MS. GRUSKIN: We had a little gallery which we opened in San Francisco. And it was a tiny -- it was a beautiful little gallery designed by the architect of this client that we had, who had bought some paintings from us. And she was the sister of this architect. And she wanted to open a gallery. And so, he designed the little gallery, she ran it. And do you know, they never sold anything but one Cadmus, all the time?

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh -

MS. GRUSKIN: They were not ready for art out there. They weren't buying anything. Then, in 1940, when we went out to California ourselves, before the gallery -- before we planned the gallery out there -- what Mr. Gruskin did was to bring some paintings out. We were on our honeymoon. And he said, "I'm going to take an apartment there in California, and have pictures show, and invite the people from Hollywood to come and see them."

And we did that, and they did come. And we sold a few paintings. And, again, it was an idea to bring art to the West Coast. And one of the paintings that we sold in that group was the Isabel Bishop *Smoke Rings*, which was sold to Mr. Feldman [phonetic], he was a producer. And I heard from her not too long ago, before I sold the gallery, that she had the painting, and was now divorced from Mr. Feldman.

And I said to her, "Well, I would love to buy that painting. Will you sell it?" She says, "Oh, no." She says, "I don't want to sell the painting." Then she came back to the gallery after I sold the gallery, and approached Midtown to buy the painting. And she had a terrific price on it, as a matter of fact. I don't think Midtown approached that price at all. So it was -- I don't know what happened to it.

MS. STAVITSKY: Did -

MS. GRUSKIN: But it was a lovely little painting. As I said, Isabel did so few, that it may be one reason that she didn't come through like [inaudible] that group, and -- well, Minnas Sitron didn't come through very well at the time, either. She stayed with us quite a long time. Minnas Sitron, too, studied under Kenneth Hayes Miller, you know. But she stayed with us for quite a long time, and then decided to go on her own. And that was the thing.

MS. STAVITSKY: I am also curious, when you're talking about California, if you met the -- Walter and Louise -

MS. GRUSKIN: I can't hear.

MS. STAVITSKY: If you had a chance to meet Walter and Louise Ehrensburg [phonetic], the collectors?

MS. GRUSKIN: From Philadelphia, you mean?

MS. STAVITSKY: Right. Although they -- I realize they were living out -- they were still in Los Angeles at that time.

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, yes, of course.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: They bought from us, as a matter of fact.

MS. STAVITSKY: Really?

MS. GRUSKIN: And they were friends of the Ettings. Isn't that -- aren't they the Philadelphia people you're talking about, are they not?

MS. KLEIN: [Inaudible.]

MS. GRUSKIN: I can't hear.

MS. KLEIN: You're thinking Annenburg [phonetic], right?

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, Annenburg. Oh, okay.

MS. GRUSKIN: Now, who did you say, then? Ehrensburg?

MS. STAVITSKY: Walter and Louise Ehrensburg. But they were collectors, mostly, in abstract art.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, yes. We did have something to do with them, but I don't remember. I can't recall what it was.

MS. STAVITSKY: Okay.

MS. GRUSKIN: I don't -- but you might find it in the archives, I'm not sure.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, okay.

MS. GRUSKIN: It's possible.

MS. STAVITSKY: I will have to look for that.

MS. GRUSKIN: I don't think the archives has the sales of paintings, you know, the receipts or anything like that. I don't know what they did with those. They might be there, but I'm not sure.

MS. STAVITSKY: I think they have some sales records. It's just they're still organizing all the materials.

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, they're still working?

MS. STAVITSKY: So it's not all available yet.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: But they -- actually, they -- another thing that I did -- let's see, I found, in addition to your San Francisco branch, which opened and closed in 1946 -- that's what the records say, is that -

MS. GRUSKIN: We opened -- what time do they have, that we opened?

MS. STAVITSKY: They have that it opened and closed the same year, in 1946, is that -

MS. GRUSKIN: It's very possible.

MS. STAVITSKY: Is that right?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: And they -

MS. GRUSKIN: Because they couldn't go on with the expense of it when nothing was coming through. It was about that time, yes. I remember now.

MS. STAVITSKY: And they also had records that you -- it was very unusual, that you had exhibitions of artists' work at both world's fairs, 1939 and 1964?

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, yes, yes. Yes, we did. I don't remember too much about the 1939/1940 world fair, but I did go there many times. I do know that we had work in that show.

As a matter of fact, I received a letter not too long ago before I sold the gallery, from someone who had remembered -- who was collecting paintings that he had seen at the world fair. And among them was one painter, Fred Nagler, which I did tell you about, who was painting religious paintings. And this particular man wanted to know if I had this print of Fred Nagler's, which he would like to buy. That was recent.

Now, Fred Nagler also was a WPA artist. And he was living in New York State, I think -- Massachusetts, I'm sorry, Massachusetts -- where he had a big farm, and did a lot of paintings of that landscape. He also studied at the Art Students League, as a matter of fact. And we were showing his landscapes.

So, when we were ready to get a show together, Mr. Gruskin and I went up to see him. He lived in Riverdale, with his wife, Edith Nagler. And we said, "What have you got to show us?" And we looked around. He had so few things on the wall, and very few things to show us. He used to paint in his bedroom, that was his studio. And Mr. Gruskin said, "But I don't think this is enough for a show. What else do you have, Fred?" "Well," he said, "I do have other things, but I don't think you would be interested." "Well," we both said, "but let us see them."

So, after a lot of hemming and hawing, he took us down to the basement of his house, and down there he had two bins with stacks of paintings. And he brought out one, two, three, four. They were religious paintings. And they were so beautiful, so rich in color. We said, "Why, Fred, why are you hiding these? These are extraordinary paintings, and we would love to show them."

Well, he was very happy about that, and we had a big show of his religious paintings. We also had them purchased by advertising firms, who tied them with a -- their photograph records, you know, to sell, and then we had religious organizations come to see them. And they were going extremely well in the very beginning. Then there was less interest in his religious paintings, and they didn't sell as fast. But he did a lot of drawings and prints.

And, finally, towards the end of his life, he sort of felt very unhappy, and he said, "Mary, I don't want to pay taxes on these paintings. If you will buy them, I will be glad to let you have them for quite little." And, of course, I bought them, bought all his paintings and his drawings and his prints. And in the meantime, he moved from Riverdale and went to Dallas. And there, the Valley House [phonetic] Gallery became very interested in his work, particularly in his prints, and said they would like to do a catalog resume on his work. Did I say that correctly? Raisonne?

MS. STAVITSKY: Raisonne.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. If I said, "resume," it was wrong. So, anyway, they are working on that -- still planning it and working on it now, to get a catalog raisonne on his prints, which are very beautiful. I have one here, you might

look at it later, if you want to.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, I would like to.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. But that -- it was very sad that his paintings didn't go very far. So I've been giving my paintings away to schools.

And I gave a big batch away to the Catholic church here, in New York, St. John the Evangelist. And I said, "If you sell them, you can take, you know, the profit on them." And, boy, believe it or not, they did. They did very well with the show. People in the congregation bought them. And one particular member of the church bought the painting called, *Up and Down the Ladder*, which they -- he gave to a museum, a Catholic museum -- I will remember it in a few minutes. Anyway, that's what happened.

So, I think that then I kept selling a few of these paintings to people who knew him, relatives. And many he gave away, all over the country. And then a whole batch of them that I gave to Northfield [phonetic] Seminary, where I went to school, and they are -- they have started a new gallery there, where they will be showing these for the school and other people. And that is that.

MS. STAVITSKY: Speaking of -- as you were mentioning museums, I was wondering about your experiences with the Museum of Modern Art and Alfred Barr, if you had -

MS. GRUSKIN: I can't hear you.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, I was wondering about your contact with Alfred Barr, and the Museum of Modern Art, if -

[End of tape 1, side B.]

MS. GRUSKIN: -- President, he came up 5th Avenue -- do you want to hear this on tape, or not?

MS. STAVITSKY: Sure.

MS. GRUSKIN: And we had a painting in the window at that time. And I remember how we were all looking out from the sides of the window, and he looked up. We had a nude, I think, in the window. And my husband said, "I'm sure he will look up, to look at the nude." And, sure, he did. And gave such a big grin, and waved, you know. And we were very delighted about that.

But that was the beginning of the WPA period, you know, when he became interested in -- you know the story of how he became interested in the WPA, do you not? George Biddle had a lot to do with that, beginning of that whole period, and interested Roosevelt in doing something for the artists who needed help, tremendously. And I think it was a great thing for American art, really I do, because it helped the artists get not only a job, but it encouraged them to go on. And dealers then began to look for them, too, and give them an opportunity to be shown in a commercial gallery, in commercial galleries. And that started a wonderful beginning, I think.

And I think it's a very important period for American art, anyway. I think it was a beginning. Some people have called it the renaissance of American art in America, which I -- which is very sadly neglected, though it -- there is interest coming up now and then.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: And I think the Whitney Museum has a very good show right now of artists of that period, I heard. Bridget was down there to see it.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, I've seen that.

MS. GRUSKIN: What do you think?

MS. KLEIN: Did you represent Philip Evergood [phonetic]?

MS. GRUSKIN: Hmm?

MS. KLEIN: Did you represent Philip Evergood?

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, right.

MS. GRUSKIN: I forgot about him.

MS. STAVITSKY: Someone else I was going to ask -

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, for quite a long time we gave him shows. I don't think I ever have a -- I may have a catalog of his work. And I remember going to his studio with Mr. Gruskin to choose paintings. And we sold several of his paintings to museums at the time. Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: Well -

MS. GRUSKIN: You will just have to remind me, because I can't remember.

MS. STAVITSKY: Sure. No, there is such a long list. But he is certainly prominently on here, along with -

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, as you know, Evergood was interested in realism, and also, I think -- I don't remember what else he was interested in, but that was one of the things.

MS. STAVITSKY: His -

MS. GRUSKIN: And he left the gallery. I think he went to ACA [phonetic], because ACA was interested in the politics of the time, I think.

MS. STAVITSKY: Do you feel that -

MS. GRUSKIN: Communism, and that sort of thing.

MS. STAVITSKY: Well, was that -- I mean, was that an interest of yours, the -

MS. GRUSKIN: Interest of whom?

MS. STAVITSKY: Did you share that interest?

MS. GRUSKIN: No.

MS. STAVITSKY: In the politics of the period?

MS. GRUSKIN: No, no, not where our business was concerned at all. Not even in private life. We were interested in what was going on, but we did not let it influence us in any way. I mean, we were very democratic, and did not connect it with this particular period. Not connected with it, but interested.

MS. STAVITSKY: So, you mean your main criteria were aesthetic issues, rather than -

MS. GRUSKIN: Exactly, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: And -- well, also on this -- oh, you were talking earlier about Waldo Peirce.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. I think I should talk about him. What do you want to hear about him?

MS. STAVITSKY: How it -- one, sort of how he -- you brought him into the gallery, what it was like working with him, and what you -- you know, what you think of his work.

MS. GRUSKIN: I think that Mr. Gruskin approached him, and he was really a wonderful individual. And, as I think - I may have told you this, that he felt you did not have to go far to do a painting. It was right there, under your nose. Did I tell you this?

MS. STAVITSKY: No.

MS. GRUSKIN: Okay. And so, he painted his family a great deal, or friends, or people that came to see him, or the flowers that grew in the field. And they were so fresh. I have a Peirce here, on the wall. This was later -- on that side, a flower piece of his.

But American Artist, not the magazine, but American Artist Group -- they did the Christmas cards, eventually -- did a little monograph on Waldo Peirce, which I have here. And in that are quite a few of his paintings of the period. So that we gave him his exhibition, and Peirce was in -- had been an ambulance driver in Paris in Europe -- France, rather -- during the war years. Did you know that?

MS. STAVITSKY: No.

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, I see. All right. And a good friend of Hemingway's, too, at the time. And he came back to America, and wanted to exhibit his work. He did study there, in France and in Spain, and then, here, at the Art

Students League, and then came to us. And we started off with an exhibition of his.

And he loved painting his twins. And we commissioned -- we had books that he wrote on the children. Several books, as a matter of fact, that were published by Waldo Peirce. And also, we gave him these exhibitions. Then *Life* magazine came out with a story on his life with the twins, and so on. Because they became famous, you know, through these articles that were written about Waldo's paintings.

I have another painting inside of Waldo's, too, that you can look at later. I will take you around before you leave.

MS. STAVITSKY: Thank you, yes. I would love to. I mean, there are so many people -

MS. GRUSKIN: What?

MS. STAVITSKY: The Isaac Sawyer [phonetic]?

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, yes. Isaac Sawyer was a very good artist. And we showed his work. As you know, he was related to Moses [phonetic], and so on. And -

MS. STAVITSKY: Raphael Sawyer?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, Raphael. And we sold -- Isaac Sawyer at the Whitney was sold through us, the Midtown Galleries. We were very fortunate to selling paintings to museums in those days. Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: But how about -- actually, that reminds me, though, before I forget -

MS. GRUSKIN: What?

MS. STAVITSKY: The Museum of Modern Art and Alfred Barr, we were talking about. You mentioned that he came into the gallery sometimes. Now, did he buy work from you, or -

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, he bought some. I know -- I don't think much. I mean, he was very much interested in this avant garde movement, so that none of the paintings were -- what was sold to the Museum of Modern Art was sold through other curators, or whatever, brought to his attention there, and I guess he had to okay them.

But Cadmus was one of the paintings that sold there, and I think there were others. Doris Rosenthal [phonetic] -- oh, I forgot to mention her.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, yes, yes. Right, I have one of her -

MS. GRUSKIN: Doris Rosenthal, yes. The painting that is at the Museum of Modern Art they never show -

MS. STAVITSKY: Typical.

MS. GRUSKIN: -- they never show anything of the period, anyway -- was purchased through Mrs. Guggenheim for the museum. She gave it to the museum. And Doris Rosenthal was a high school teacher. She was on -- with the gallery in the very early years.

And her interest was in painting Mexico. She went to Mexico during her summer vacations. But previous to that, she did some paintings that were not of Mexico. I mean, she went to the Cape and did little paintings and etchings of that -- lithographs, rather, not etchings. But Mexico was her love. And all her paintings that she did throughout the years with Midtown were of that particular subject. And she would take off and go down there, and get on a burro, and be taken around by a guide, sleep in a hammock in the school rooms, painted a lot of the children. And I have quite a few of her things. And they were very beautiful, and we did very nicely with her work at the time, too.

They -- we sold to museums throughout the country. These artists are all in museums. They were easy to sell in those days. I have a feeling that -- I don't know how you feel about it -- what is your last name?

MS. KLEIN: Marge -- Ms. Klein [phonetic], Marge Klein.

MS. GRUSKIN: Klein?

MS. KLEIN: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: I don't know how you feel about the curators and directors at the museum today, what their interest is in the period, but they don't come in to buy. I know they don't have the money to buy today, that's one of the things. And I don't think they know enough about these artists. I mean, they -- I don't know whether they didn't have any interest in remembering or learning about the artists who began in the 1930s, but

somehow it seems like a lost case to me. I don't know, maybe I'm wrong. Now, you can tell me more about it, what the feeling is in the museums.

MS. STAVITSKY: Well -

MS. KLEIN: I think there is an appreciation, certainly, in the sense of history.

MS. GRUSKIN: That -

MS. KLEIN: I think there is an appreciation in the sense of history.

MS. GRUSKIN: You do?

MS. KLEIN: For the -- yes, sure.

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, I see it, you know, like you have, and both of you have, but I just feel there is still a lot to be taught. I still feel that about the period.

MS. STAVITSKY: I mean, I always wonder if it has a lot to do with this -- an interest often in the contemporary, the more trendy, the more avant garde.

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, yes. I think it does. I think fashion in art has taken over completely, in a sense. And I think the young people who are -- that collect today like this kind of thing. They like the Warhols, they like the -- I mean, today. I mean, when the avant garde movement was on, I mean, there were more serious thoughts about painting, I think, among the people of that period, and who were buying.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes. Actually, you know, I wanted to ask you about that, as you're mentioning pop art and Warhol. And as these different movements were going on, and you were running the gallery, I just wondered what your -- you know, what your reaction was, how that affected you, and what you thought of the art scene as these new movements kept coming up, you know.

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, I think that we felt that this period was taking over so completely, and ignoring the artists that were not in the same -- what would you say, in the same ring, so to speak?

MS. STAVITSKY: Mm-hmm.

MS. GRUSKIN: But the artists who didn't join the avant garde group wanted to paint what they were painting, and what they believed in, and they went along their own way. So that is very important, I think, because you take people in our gallery, like Isabel Bishop, Paul Cadmus, Maurice Freedman, and all that group that were with us, kept going, painting. They didn't want to get into the swing of avant garde at all, you see.

MS. STAVITSKY: Another one of those -

MS. GRUSKIN: They just -- I mean, this is the way they felt. And I think that's honest and fair, you know.

MS. STAVITSKY: And another one of those was -

MS. GRUSKIN: But I think that the avant garde was -- Barr had a great deal to do with it. He pushed it and promoted it all around the museum. People were very disturbed about it, too. They came and complained, you know, and they said, "Well, what are we to do? I mean, this is going on." I mean, a lot of the directors used to come to the gallery and feel very unhappy about it. And so that's what I remember.

MS. STAVITSKY: I mean, feel unhappy about -

MS. GRUSKIN: Hmm?

MS. STAVITSKY: Feel unhappy about -

MS. GRUSKIN: The avant garde being given so much promotion, and the others being just passed by, passed over. That's what went on.

MS. STAVITSKY: And yet, it seems eventually that a lot of the museums began only promoting the avant garde, too, then.

MS. GRUSKIN: Absolutely. Then they -- yes, they did. And it was just a tremendous promotion on Alfred Barr's part, really. He worked awfully hard on it. Rightfully so, but it was that and nothing else, you know. And that's what made it very difficult for a lot of people, a lot of artists and museum directors. And so they felt they had to get into this fashion, so to speak, of showing avant garde, and they were promoted everywhere.

MS. STAVITSKY: And then, in the meantime, you continued with the artists you had. And, oh, actually, one of them we were going to talk about was Emlen Etting.

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: I think you were going to mention him.

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, Emlen Etting came into the gallery, and he -- in 1940. Yes, a little before -- 1939 or 1940, I think it was. Let's see, how did that start? What do you want to know about him, and then maybe it will put my mind at ease.

MS. STAVITSKY: Well -

MS. GRUSKIN: And he showed at the gallery. Oh, he was -- I know. He was doing all these wonderful paintings of flying fruit, and flying flowers, things like that. They were very beautifully painted. And what happened was that we put on shows of his work.

MS. KLEIN: Looks like 1940.

MS. STAVITSKY: 1940, thanks.

MS. GRUSKIN: Is it 1940 when he joined the gallery?

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: Where did you find this -

MS. STAVITSKY: You -- this is a -

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, right. But he was a very serious painter. I don't think that he was taken seriously in Philadelphia, at all, except among some of his very good friends, you see, for the time being. But he was a -- working very hard at it, and I think he did some excellent, excellent work, which were shown here.

And then, I think he took off to Paris, and did some of the illustrations, as you may remember seeing, or maybe heard of, of the openings in the fashion -- oh, what do I want to say? Oh, I am just -- I can't think at this moment, but I have all that material somewhere. Do you recall the -- oh, some of the famous fashion houses.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, Dior, maybe?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, and all that group. And they were done for *Town and Country*. They were beautiful quick drawings. He also was very much interested in the ballet, and did several -- he did a little book on the ballet.

And you know, one interesting thing is that Emlen would be -- could do this in the dark, in the theater. While the lights were out, he was able to sketch these wonderful drawings. And they were so quick and so beautiful.

During the war years, he was with the canteen -- what was it called? The Stage Door Canteen. And he took great part in that, and did a lot of drawings and paintings of that period. And then he -- when he went -- he was, I think -- in the war, he was in Europe. And during that period, he did a whole series on the -- I think it was towards the end of the war that he was there. And he was -- during the -- when the war was over, he -- and riding from wherever he was, I forget, to Paris, he did a lot of sketches of what he saw on the way on newspaper. They were beautiful sketches, and they were a great success. And they were also illustrated in *Town and Country*. And we had an exhibition of them, and they sold extremely well. We sold to many, many people like -- I think -- who was it? Helen Hayes, as a matter of fact, bought one or two of his paintings.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, wow.

MS. GRUSKIN: And other people of the time. And the idea that -- the reason they were done on the paper was that -- newspaper -- that was all he could get a hold of at the time, you know. It was war. But -- and then, when he arrived at Paris, I believe he -- and I know, rather -- that he was recorded on what he had to say at the time, when he entered Paris. And he has a record of that, I'm sure. I had a record of it. No more. But maybe you might be able to get it from him. And Gloria might know about it. But his paintings were very lively and very, very rich in color, very well done.

Now, in -- I gave him a retrospective in -- in the 1980s, I think it was, 50 years of his paintings, and it went extremely well. And I sold quite a few of his ballet paintings, and also paintings of the Stage Door Canteen, the sailors playing at the juke box, you know, that -- that's a wonderful painting. And that went on. But it was great in those days. It was really very exciting, because things began to build up after the -- in the 1940s, you know.

MS. STAVITSKY: I think one of the other collectors who really became active in the 1940s, who may have come to Midtown, was Milton Loewenthal [phonetic] .

MS. GRUSKIN: Who?

MS. STAVITSKY: Milton Loewenthal.

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, yes. But they never bought anything. I think they may have bought one thing from us. You know, I don't know whether this is for publication -- please don't include it, but I will tell you.

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MS. GRUSKIN: We sold Neuberger and Loewenthal. And another -- oh, so many people, I can't think.

MS. KLEIN: The Greenfields [phonetic], Albert Greenfield?

MS. GRUSKIN: Greenfield?

MS. KLEIN: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: No, I -

MS. KLEIN: Yes, from Philadelphia.

MS. GRUSKIN: I don't think so.

MS. KLEIN: No?

MS. GRUSKIN: I don't remember Greenfield at all.

MS. KLEIN: Really?

MS. GRUSKIN: No.

MS. STAVITSKY: How about Abby Aldrich Rockefeller?

MS. GRUSKIN: He came in once with Barr, to look at Kerner's -- Barr brought him in to look at the Kerner paintings.

MS. STAVITSKY: Did his mother ever come in, Abby, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller?

MS. GRUSKIN: We sold to his wife, I think, Mary. Was it Mary? I know we sold some things to Rockefeller. But, no, I don't think his mother came in, no.

MS. STAVITSKY: Okay.

MS. GRUSKIN: But when Barr brought him in to look at Kerner's, he didn't get around to buying one. He looked at it, and Barr did want him to buy it, but I think he hesitated.

MS. STAVITSKY: Wow. Well, there is -- you know, I think we are probably pretty much done here. I thought I would -- I did want to ask you -- I see the name Betty Parsons on the list.

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, yes. I can tell you about -- she joined Midtown in the early -- in the 1930s. She was one of our painters at that time, and had a couple of shows, and did quite well with the watercolors.

And then, finally, she decided to -- things weren't going too well, and she decided to work in a book -- Wakefield [phonetic] Book Shop, I think. And then she went on to -- finally, to -- oh, I forgot to tell you that she -- Mr. Gruskin allowed her to run our gallery, too. He taught her to -- and she appreciated that so much, she mentions it very often in the articles, that Grus -- they called him Grus, you know -- was responsible in getting her interested.

And so, she then opened her own gallery, which was completely the opposite of anything that was shown in our gallery -- abstract paintings, of course -- which was fine. And that's what happened. And we were great friends. I mean, I liked Betty, and she was a lovely person, indeed. And a good artist. She did abstract paintings after a while, too. She dropped doing the realistic sort of thing that she was doing, and began painting abstract. I don't know what happened to that particular group of paintings. She was also a sculptor, you know.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: She was very good as a sculptor, I think.

MS. STAVITSKY: Well, it seems like you knew everyone at some -

MS. GRUSKIN: What?

MS. STAVITSKY: You -- it seems as if you knew everybody at -

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, we should, I guess. We were friendly with all the artists, of course. You know, you can't help it. I mean, you're working with them.

MS. STAVITSKY: And I see that -- you know, as I just go over the list -- you kept on taking on new people, like Robert Vickery in the 1950s?

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, yes. Yes, we did. I remember my husband asking me to go see his show, and to see what I thought of it. And I said yes. He was showing it at the IBM gallery, right across the street from where we had our gallery. And Vickery did extremely well after we took him on. And after Mr. Gruskin passed away, I suppose he didn't trust me too much, maybe. But don't say that, I don't want this to get -

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MS. STAVITSKY: Also -- oh, this is something about Mary Frank [phonetic] . Is she one of your artists?

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, that's new.

MS. STAVITSKY: No, no.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, I had nothing to do with Mary Frank.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, I see. Okay.

MS. GRUSKIN: She's a good artist, I think.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: I'm glad they have her on. Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: But I think one of the newer artists that you began handling was Richard Mayhew? Was he -

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, he was a black artist, yes. We -- I took him on at the time. I was with Mr. Gruskin, but I saw his work at an exhibition, and suggested that Mr. Gruskin take him on. And he is still with the gallery, as a matter of fact.

MS. STAVITSKY: And this was in the 1960s, that you became interested in his work?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: Okay. And he does do some abstract work, as -

MS. GRUSKIN: Well, no. I don't know what he is doing. He did landscapes, and they reminded me a great deal of Innosen's [phonetic] work. Yes. Do you know his work?

MS. STAVITSKY: No, I don't.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, but they're very lovely. Very lovely landscapes.

MS. KLEIN: Do you have any?

MS. GRUSKIN: I do, but not here.

MS. KLEIN: Oh.

MS. STAVITSKY: Okay.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: Would you say that, in general though, you feel that -- do you feel that, in general, through the decades, you have usually shown the work of artists who tend towards realism, and that that's your -

MS. GRUSKIN: We didn't look at it from that point of view, as I told you before.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: No, no.

MS. STAVITSKY: Okay.

MS. GRUSKIN: We only looked at art, no matter what it was -- we never saw enough abstract that we liked, or -- they were already in galleries, as a matter of fact. There were very few that came out way. But if we saw anyone that -- who were painting good paintings, that's all we were interested in, not -- it didn't matter.

MS. STAVITSKY: Okay. Well, that sums it up, I think. I don't -

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MS. GRUSKIN: -- from that point of view, really.

MS. STAVITSKY: You mean the whole movement of American art?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, absolutely.

MS. STAVITSKY: Was started in the 1930s?

MS. GRUSKIN: Absolutely.

MS. STAVITSKY: And -

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. I must tell you something very interesting. You know, when I first met Mr. Gruskin, we used to take walks. We went to the museums, and we went to exhibitions, and all that sort of thing. And we were walking down the street one day, and saw in one of the windows the French Impressionist School, a few painters, Renoir and Matisse, and maybe a Cezanne or so. And my husband said -- I took a course with my husband, by the way, in American art, and that period, the French Impressionists, so -

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh -

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: Where was he teaching?

MS. GRUSKIN: He gave me -- he taught this -- personally, with me and another friend.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh.

MS. GRUSKIN: So, anyway, we were walking down the street, and we saw these French artists, and he turned around and he said, "Look, Mary. Look at these beautiful paintings." And I had been studying with him about the French Impressionists. He says, "You can't buy them for any" -- he says, "They don't sell, and when they do sell, they sell for \$200 or \$300 or less." And that was in the 1930s, before he had the gallery.

And so, and he had such a great love for art, that I think he felt it. He was so saddened by the whole thing, I could see it in his face, you know. He was really -- and I think he had another thing that artists liked him about, was the way he would look at a painting for a long, long time, and study it so carefully.

So, one day, when he was -- brought this artist whom I -- William Thon's work into the gallery, Bill brought his work and Bill put the painting on the easel. And I studied it and saw it quickly, you know, I suppose because I had this background. And my husband didn't say a word. He was a very quiet man. He said very few words. He only spoke when he found it was necessary. So I said, "Grus" -- that's what we called him -- "why don't you say something?" I said, "I think the painting is absolutely delightful, and wonderful, and so rich."

He said, "Look, Mary." He said, "It took the artist a long time to do this painting, and I am not going to make up my mind in a hurry." I have never forgotten that. And Bill has never forgotten it.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, such respect.

MS. GRUSKIN: He always brings it up. Very interesting. Yes, we spent a lot of time with our artists. We visited them at their homes, and their studios. And we went to Maine to see Peirce, we went to Maine to see Bill Thon. We went to Richmond to see Julian Binford, and it was just great. We lived with our artists. Our whole life was our art world, our -- that's what it was.

MS. STAVITSKY: Did you have the equivalent of a salon, where you would have your artist friends come over and discuss the issues of the day -

MS. GRUSKIN: Exactly. They came to our apartment. The only thing that I regret, in a way, is that we finally found it so -- at times, the artists would come up in the morning with their paintings, on Sunday morning, when we wanted to have some rest, to see what Grus thought about this painting or that painting. And I really put my foot down. I said, "Look, Grus, this is the only day we have to ourselves."

MS. STAVITSKY: Right, a day of rest.

MS. GRUSKIN: And I just don't think it should be -- go on this way. I said, "We could always go to their studios and tell them what we think."

And then, in the meantime, we -- he thought we ought to move, find a house in the country, and -- which we did. He had -- we had it built, so that I think we missed an awful lot by being out in the country.

MS. STAVITSKY: Where were you living?

MS. GRUSKIN: Stockton, New Jersey, just 10 miles outside of Flemington, where Perot spoke recently. But, you know, we had people come out there, museum people, and the artists visited us out there. But I do feel that, in one sense, we should have been in -- here, in New York.

MS. STAVITSKY: Was this from about the 1940s onwards, you were -

MS. GRUSKIN: 1946 on, yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, I see.

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes. We visited the Ettings a great many, many times, you know, and spent time with them, and stayed overnight. And, as a matter of fact, Gloria loves to talk about the fact that in 1940, my engagement was announced at their dinner party. She loves to talk about it. I think she brought it up. She said, "Are you engaged?" You know how Gloria is. "Mary, are you going to be engaged?" And I said, "No. Gloria," I said, "I am going to be engaged right now." And so she announced it right then and there, in a big crowd of about 10 or 15 people. It was so cute.

MS. STAVITSKY: How -

MS. GRUSKIN: She's a great person, isn't she?

MS. STAVITSKY: Mm-hmm.

MS. GRUSKIN: I enjoy her. How is she, by the way? Do you see her?

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MS. GRUSKIN: -- about his life and his work in Paris, and all of -- and his work here, in Philadelphia, and all about his background. He has a very interesting background, and interesting family background, too, and so on. I would like to see that book published. Well, we will see. Are you all -

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MS. GRUSKIN: -- portraits, self-portraits and portraits in photography and in paintings. But there is, I think, one -- maybe some by French, Jared French [phonetic] was a friend of Paul Cadmus's.

But Waldo Peirce's son -- I think it's Michael Peirce -- is a photographer. And he's one of the twins, you know. And he is now probably in his fifties. And he went down to see Paul Cadmus to do a photograph of Paul. It's going to be eight feet by something, and it is done in sections -- Bridget was telling me about this last night -- in different sections, and then put together to form the portrait. And it's a fascinating piece of work, I understand. And it will be fun to see their show, and I hope you have a chance to see it.

MS. STAVITSKY: At the gallery?

MS. GRUSKIN: At the gallery, at Midtown. They're on 5th Avenue now, you know.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes. Actually, wasn't there -

MS. GRUSKIN: Have you been there?

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, I have been there a number of times.

MS. GRUSKIN: It's a beautiful gallery, isn't it?

MS. STAVITSKY: And wasn't there a Jared French show there, as well, recently?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, there was.

MS. STAVITSKY: Jared French was one of your artists?

MS. GRUSKIN: No, no.

MS. STAVITSKY: No?

MS. GRUSKIN: What -- at that time -- I will tell you why -- we had Paul Cadmus. And Mr. Gruskin felt that they were too similar. I think that was the reason that he didn't take him on. I think that Jared would have liked to have been at the gallery. But he was very disappointed in his whole lifetime about his work, you know. It didn't get the recognition that it should. And he did not -- when he died, these paintings of his were to go to a museum, and I don't know what's going to be, whether the gallery will have an opportunity to carry his work, or sell it. I don't know yet.

MS. STAVITSKY: Wasn't one of his big supporters Lincoln Kirstein?

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, yes, Lincoln Kirstein was. And Lincoln Kirstein married, you know, Cadmus's sister.

MS. STAVITSKY: So, was -

MS. GRUSKIN: She was a beautiful painter, by the way, too. Never showed any of her work. Yes, he married Cadmus's sister, a beautiful girl, a beautiful woman today. She is now very sick, I understand, and in a nursing home.

MS. STAVITSKY: And what's her name?

MS. GRUSKIN: Fidelma, Fidelma Cadmus.

MS. STAVITSKY: Was -

MS. GRUSKIN: His father and mother were both artists, you know, Cadmus's mother and father.

MS. STAVITSKY: No, I didn't know that.

MS. GRUSKIN: I think the father or mother was an illustrator. And Paul started as an illustrator, too. A lot of these artists started as illustrators, you know, to make some money.

MS. STAVITSKY: I'm curious if Lincoln Kirstein would have come into Midtown a lot, since he liked Cadmus's work?

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, a great deal, yes. And he did a book. One of the books on Cadmus is with Kirstein's text in it. But Kirstein bought quite a few things from us, not only of Paul Cadmus's. I think he bought Kerner's work. I forget who else he got from us. I can't remember all the -

MS. STAVITSKY: So much.

MS. GRUSKIN: So many. We had a lot of people that came in and out of the gallery.

MS. STAVITSKY: Well, I think we have covered -- I -

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MS. GRUSKIN: I must tell you about that space. This was green. And I forgot to tell you that the first house we had was burned down to the ground. And this was the only thing sitting in the middle of that burnt -- that structure that was absolutely burnt, no roof, nothing. This sat there, on an old pedestal, black as it could be. It was green, originally.

So, we had it cleaned, and it turned gray. And I don't know what's happening to it. I feel like they are, like, streaks in here, somehow. Do you see it?

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, there are. I thought might -- I don't know if that's part of the stone or not.

MS. GRUSKIN: It's called steotype [phonetic] is the stone, it's a soft stone. And it probably is -- may be that's why it's crackling, or whatever. I don't know. I'm giving this to the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute. I'm giving -

MS. STAVITSKY: And this is Maldarelli?

MS. GRUSKIN: The Maldarelli, Oronzio Maldarelli, yes.

MS. KLEIN: The museum has a Maldarelli -

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, and the Park, too.

MS. KLEIN: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: What do you call the Park, there?

MS. STAVITSKY: [Inaudible.]

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, yes, they have a couple. And here, in New York, the Metropolitan has a painting. And a beautiful Madonna at St. Patrick's Cathedral. And then there are other pieces. I don't think [inaudible] ever bought anything.

This is a Fred Meyer [phonetic] here, and that's a Waldo Peirce over there, did you see? When he went to Denmark and he stopped those people in the background -- you tell me what you want to know, and -- I will start here. This is a Moore. Bridget Moore's father is an artist. She -- and this is an Edward Betz [phonetic], you've seen the abstracts of Edward Betz. This is a collage, by the way.

MS. STAVITSKY: And he was showing his work in the 1950s?

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, yes, we carried his work. He didn't get -

MS. STAVITSKY: It's very -

MS. GRUSKIN: He wasn't in any of the avant garde group, at all.

MS. STAVITSKY: And yet it's very abstract expressionist.

MS. GRUSKIN: He was one of the early 1930s -- that was our gallery at the time. But he had a sister, a twin, at the WPA period. There is the youngest of that group. They did a lot of murals for the WPA, and this is the [inaudible].

MS. STAVITSKY: That's one of his theatrical ballet pieces.

MS. GRUSKIN: While you're here, why don't you sign this, and then I will -- if you'd like -

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MS. GRUSKIN: These are all the olive groves, yes. He's a wonderful man. He's having the same trouble I am having. It's called the macular degeneration. I will never go blind, or will he, but you have a black spot that interferes with your vision, and you can only see peripherally. And what I do see, it's like having a piece of wax paper over my eyes. I don't see your eyes, I can't tell what your face is like. I'm so sorry, I love looking at people, and I love looking into their eyes. But it's all right. I've done that all my life, and I'm happy.

And this is -- oh, this is -- I must tell you, this is where we were married, in Stockton, New Jersey. And this was done by an early 1930 artist by the name of Reese [phonetic]. He is in that catalog. We gave him a show. And Emily Genauer, too, was married by the man who owned that house, by the way, or his brother. So there we have -

MS. STAVITSKY: A lot of history.

MS. GRUSKIN: These are very good watercolors, by the way. Oh, I must tell you that's a [inaudible] over there in the center over there. He was the nephew of Zorak [phonetic], yes. He teaches out of -- on the West Coast, now, and I don't know whether the gallery is doing anything with him at all.

This is the William Palmer I was telling you about. This was done, actually, the war years, when he went to Europe. Right. This is called [inaudible] *Perpendicular*.

MS. STAVITSKY: Okay, and the sculpture next to it, is it -

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, this is a Fred Meyers sculpture, yes. And there are two pieces downstairs that you will see -- I don't know whether you noticed them coming upstairs.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, yes, I did.

MS. GRUSKIN: When you go to the right.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: That's the latest piece he did. These are earlier. They're not as good. These are not as good as that particular one.

This is another one of Betz's [phonetic] pieces right here, also a collage.

MS. STAVITSKY: Another collage. Wow.

MS. GRUSKIN: You see? And that's his work. And he is still doing abstract work.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: Then we have -- the light has gone out. Here is another Peirce watercolor. No, no. I'm sorry. This is Coider, Charles Coider [phonetic]. He was -- you ought to know about NWA [phonetic] in Philadelphia.

MS. STAVITSKY: Mm-hmm.

MS. GRUSKIN: Are they still there?

MS. STAVITSKY: Uh-uh.

MS. GRUSKIN: They're not? All right. Well, he was the art director at NWA for many, many years, and also a painter, a very good painter. And I was [inaudible] and ask him if he could use some of these artists for his advertising campaign. And I remember Charlie going through every one of those pictures, and studying them so carefully. And when I met him years later, as a guest [inaudible] in Jersey and Pennsylvania, he said he didn't remember me at all, coming down there with all this work under my arms, you know.

But there it is. And then this was a Hans Moler up top. He's from -- he lives in Pennsylvania, too, in Allentown. And the lower one is by Robert Sevard [phonetic]. John Payson bought that from me. It was given to me with my name in it. And this is another Bahn [phonetic]. Bahn traveled to Spain, he went to Ireland. I think this is one of the Irish ones.

And I had a whole wall here, filled with Bishops which I -- finally, the gallery has taken. So I don't have any Bishops around at all, except a few watercolor drawings.

This is another Carter [phonetic], a lithograph, and here is a Paul Cadmus. This is quite recent, by the way. He did this as a -- he did three of these.

MS. STAVITSKY: It's called Middo [phonetic]?

MS. GRUSKIN: And here is the famous print of *The Fleet's In*.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, and it's inscribed, "For Grus and Mary." That's wonderful.

MS. GRUSKIN: This is the one he said -- where he said, "I'm doing a [inaudible] of that painting," he said, "but they can't take it away, nor can they bite it."

Oh, here, this is a Waldo Peirce drawing of my husband, when we were up there, in Maine. And this is a Hans Moler, over here. And on this wall, I have -- these are the Bishops, do you see them here?

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, yes, wonderful.

MS. GRUSKIN: I had these [inaudible] her work.

MS. KLEIN: That's beautiful.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: What is that, dear?

MS. STAVITSKY: A woman eating her lunch, or -

MS. GRUSKIN: Oh, yes. And this is the -- a little Dutch girl, I think, here. And it's called -- I forget the name of it. There is a beautiful little head here, somewhere. Is this the head?

MS. STAVITSKY: Mm-hmm.

MS. GRUSKIN: But, you know, she had a wonderful feeling of people. She just drew all the time. And it's really -- it was very exciting to see her. And, you know, another thing. When she got married, her husband allowed her to keep on with her work, and not to interfere with it at all. She had a son, he was taken care of by a nurse and so forth, but he was very free with her. And that was very exciting for an artist, I think.

MS. STAVITSKY: Did you -- I'm curious. Did you ever watch her work?

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes, I have, yes. Very -- not too long, though, because she didn't -- I don't think she cared to have anybody around to work. But I always saw her [inaudible] her painting at all. And I think the only time I did was when she had to demonstrate for this film that came out on her. Because we used to go down to see her paintings when she was ready. And it took forever to get her to bring a painting in.

So, I would go down to her studio, and see her. She would have to -- she would know this, I suppose -- she would have three of the same subject going in different colors, or whatever, because -- and then, what she would do, she would photograph it and have the photograph on the side, so she could study the forms and the colors that she wanted to use for the painting. And so then, she had these three paintings all being worked.

And we even took one that was never filled in with color at all -- that was never finished, rather -- that had the drawing. The drawing was the beginning of it. And I think the gallery still has that. Oh, I don't know -- oh, those are the watercolors. And here, now here is a little Doris Rosenthal head. I have plenty of stuff in my closet. This is a Thon, and this is a Coiner [phonetic], this is a Moler, this is a Peirce. And I think you will enjoy looking at these.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, these envelopes are wonderful.

MS. GRUSKIN: He used to write us and do these little sketches on the corner.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, these are great.

MS. GRUSKIN: Isn't that fun?

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: He was a great man. This is a Hans Moler. This is a -

MS. STAVITSKY: 1948.

MS. GRUSKIN: We took them out to the country. I'll turn on the light in here.

MS. STAVITSKY: [Inaudible] watercolors.

MS. GRUSKIN: This is a messy room, because I have a lot of stuff I've been working on. I think these are all -- I don't know. That's a Moler, I think, and this is a Bahn. This is a Vickery, by the way. He was a marvelous, draftsman, I think.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes, really.

MS. GRUSKIN: Here is the Nagler drawing, see? And this is the print of -- *Barabas* [phonetic], I think, is the title of that. Oh, yes. This is another thing we did. I didn't tell you. We commissioned -- or he was commissioned, we worked with a motion picture house, to use fine artists for this particular movie, called *Barabas*. And they all had to give their interpretation of *Barabas*. And there were very few artists that ever did anything of *Barabas*, except in the old -- in some of the books. And I did a little research on that, and found nothing at all, except a German who did, possibly, a drawing. And so this was the first time that *Barabas* paintings were really done.

And I guess this is a Coiner, and these are little Bahn watercolors. Let me turn on some more light. I can't see anything in here.

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MS. GRUSKIN: This would be more Peirces. And this is something we found in Bologna -

[End of tape 2, side A.]

MS. GRUSKIN: -- a building like -- I can't think of the name of it.

MS. STAVITSKY: Foyer, or -

MS. GRUSKIN: You know what I mean, don't you? You go inside of a building, and they had their own courtyard inside?

MS. STAVITSKY: Mm-hmm.

MS. GRUSKIN: And so we did. And we saw all these marble plaques, and [inaudible]. And we were curious [inaudible], and we came across it. I began reading, knowing Italian as I speak it and understand it, and then I said, "My God," I said, "there is my name. What is it doing here?"

And so, we found out later from one of the people in Bologna, that there was a museum with that name, and these plaques were found -- they were constructing something underground, and they came across these, and they kept them. And the name -- I don't attach it to my family in any way, of course -- but the name is so old, it goes back to Caesar Augustus.

MS. STAVITSKY: Wow.

MS. GRUSKIN: And we had such fun. Let me turn on the light, here.

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MS. GRUSKIN: And that's going to go to the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, the school there. And these two are both Hans Moler. This is another Hans Moler. Monty Egan [phonetic], he spent a lot of time there. And this is another Waldo Peirce here, which he sent us on our wedding day.

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, wonderful.

MS. GRUSKIN: And he went into this pond and gathered the flowers and painted them. And he was just -- I just loved Waldo, I really did. He was such a wonderful man.

This is Ethel Magnifan. She spent her time going to Colorado, where she lived, and doing the Grand Canyon, and those mountains, and capturing the color. And she has repeated this many, many, many times in different shades of color. But, unfortunately, poor Ethel is now -- has had a stroke, and is mentally demented, too. So they are very unhappy about it.

And I don't know what I've got up there, but I think -- oh, I think it's a Waldo Peirce -

MS. STAVITSKY: Another -- yes, it looks like another Peirce, yes. Dancers, mm-hmm.

MS. GRUSKIN: And that is -

MS. STAVITSKY: Another Ethel -

MS. GRUSKIN: Yes.

MS. STAVITSKY: Yes.

MS. GRUSKIN: This is a little sketch of a mural that she was doing that she won not too long ago, of a competition that was held across the country. She came first, and they gave her this -- we gave the exhibition. We had her cartoons for it. And the mural was for the Fredericksburg Museum, I guess, right there. I'm getting lost, I think. Is there anything else -

MS. STAVITSKY: Oh, yes.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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