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Oral history interview with Jack Kufeld, 1981 Oct. 5

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Contact Information
Reference Department
Archives of American Art
Smithsonian Institution
Washington. D.C. 20560
www.aaa.si.edu/askus

Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Jack Kufeld on October 5, 1981. The interview took place in his apartment at WEST 11TH STREET, NEW YORK, and was conducted by Avis Berman for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Archives of American Art's Mark Rothko and His Times oral history project, with funding provided by the Mark Rothko Foundation.

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

Interview

AVIS BERMAN: With Jack Kufeld on October 6, 1981, in his apartment at West 11th Street. And I guess the best thing to do is just start with your full name and when you were born and where and about your parents.

JACK KUFELD: Well, I was born in Manhattan. My name was Jack Kufeld, of course. I was born on East Third Street, to be quite specific. So we're not very far removed from there. The year of my birth is 1907, February 1. I'm a little older than Ilya Bolotowsky who was born in July of the same year.

MS. BERMAN: You say Jack is your full name?

MR. KUFELD: Well, actually we had an impresario by the name of Robert Homer Godsoe who had the Gallery Secession on West 12th Street, and he insisted that my name should be Jankel instead of Jack. And out of sheer...well, I didn't care one way or the other. So he said, "Jankel," and I said, "Okay, very good." It didn't matter to me.

MS. BERMAN: So your name must have really been John Jacob. That's where it's Jankel for Jake.

MR. KUFELD: No, it wasn't.

MS. BERMAN: No?

MR. KUFELD: It was always Jack, or Jacob, never John. It was Jacob or Jack. But he felt it was very arty. So we let it go at that. That is how it was born, more or less. Actually, it's kind of a diminutive name because, really, if you were going to make a Hebrew name of it, it should have been Janquet. But I guess he didn't know that and neither did I.

MS. BERMAN: I didn't know that either .My grandfather's name was Jacob and everyone called him Jankel too. And what were your parents' occupations?

MR. KUFELD: My father was a...when he arrived in America which was...I don't know. I guess it would have been at the end of the century or the beginning of the new century. He was an iron worker in Poland and I think he did the same thing here for a while. He sort of in later years became a manufacturer of knitwear. He went into the knitting goods business and he seemed to have a little flair for designing sweaters and stuff like that. He did very well. As a matter of fact, he ran two companies-I remember the Rainbow Knitting Company and later the Lakewood knitting company. And my mother, of course, was my mother. She did nothing. She was a very sweet and very kind lady. He was born, as I said, in Poland and came from the city of Lodz and she came from, I believe, Odessa.

MS. BERMAN: So they met...they were married when they came...?

MR. KUFELD: They met there and were married there and came to America.

MS. BERMAN: What was your father's first name?

MR. KUFELD: Samuel.

MS. BERMAN: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

MR.KUFELD: I have two sisters. They're both living.

MS. BERMAN: Are they artistic?

MR. KUFELD: Neither of them is artistic.

MS. BERMAN: And you grew up on the Lower East Side?

MR. KUFELD: Well, not really. We lived on the Lower East Side for several years. Now I can't tell you just how many. But I know that from there we moved to Brooklyn and from there I think we moved to Greenpoint for some strange reason. And from there, well, I guess I took off. As a matter of fact, that's where I started to paint. And I then became a member of the Brooklyn Society of Painters and Sculptors which held forth at the St. George Hotel. I don't know if it's still in existence or not.

MS. BERMAN: It is but it was I think boarded up for a while. Now they're making it into a co-op, I believe. But it was once a great hotel in Brooklyn Heights.

MR. KUFELD: Well, in any case, the Brooklyn Society of Painters and Sculptors was there. They held their meetings there. They had their shows there.

MS. BERMAN: Could anyone join or did you have to be of a specific aesthetic…?

MR. KUFELD: You had to be a Brooklyn resident. I think that was the only requirement.

MS. BERMAN: And did they have shows or was it classes?

MR. KUFELD: Yes, yes, they had shows at the St. George. And that's how…well, the next step I think was that I met a fellow by the name of Gershon Benjamin who was working, I believe, for a Jewish newspaper as a newsprinter. And he saw my paintings and he said that he would like me to meet a pretty nice painter or a pretty good painter (I don't know what expression he used.). I asked him who it was and he said, "Oh, a fellow by the name of Milton Avery." So I said, "Oh, sure." He said, "Take some of your paintings along and let him look at them." So I said fine. And that's how things started.

MS. BERMAN: What did your painting look like then? What were you working on?

MR. KUFELD: Well, I was doing Greenpoint scenes. You see, living in Greenpoint, I was not too far from Newtown Creek and the waterfront. And I did many of the old factories and the old coal silos and the elevators which I found fascinating As a matter of fact, one of the coal elevators-you know, they're sort of like columns if you recall-as a matter of fact, Godsoe got the bright idea of naming one the Parthenon because of the white columns.

MS. BERMAN: Were they sort of a precisionist style or were they more…?

MR. KUFELD: Well, they were sort of, kind of, expressionist, I would say.

MS. BERMAN: One thing you skipped is did you study art at all?

MR. KUFELD: Yes. I studied for a while at Cooper Union.

MS. BERMAN: With any…?

MR. KUFELD: I don't know. But, in any case, working from casts basically. It took me a long time to break the rigidity.

MS. BERMAN: As a teenager did you know you wanted to be an artist?

MR. KUFELD: I guess so.

MS. BERMAN: Were you drawing?

MR. KUFELD: I even won a medal in public school, some kind of a medal, a John Wannamaker medal of some kind.

MS. BERMAN: Were your parents happy about you being an artist?

MR. KUFELD: My father was... My grandfather was very proud.

MS. BERMAN: They were afraid that you weren't going to be able to make a living? Is that what your father…?

MR. KUFELD: I guess so. My father was interested in America and its prospects. He'd show me automobiles and I wasn't interested and he was always astounded.

MS. BERMAN: Was the Greenpoint section a middle class section there?

MR. KUFELD: Well, it was from poor to middle class. The business people were middle class. There were a lot of

Poles who lived in that area: Poles and Russians, some Italians. It was generally clean but poor.

MS. BERMAN: Did you go to the museums when you were younger too?

MR. KUFELD: Oh, yeah, sure.

MS. BERMAN: Now in your papers it said that how you met Avery was that you were making frames for Avery. Is that correct?

MR. KUFELD: I don't remember. Maybe I did.

MS. BERMAN: Well, it was in the newspaper account but I was wondering if Godsoe, since you said he was such an impresario, if he had...?

MR. KUFELD: It's a curious thing that what I cannot clearly see is, for example, where I met Mark. Mark is Rothkowitz, incidentally.

MS.BERMAN: Right.

MR. KUFELD: I remember that he lived at Third Avenue and 10th Street with Edith. She just died, by the way, his first wife. She died...when was it? September 8.

MS. BERMAN: Really?

MR. KUFELD: Yes.

MS. BERMAN: That's too bad.

MR. KUFELD: She had cancer.

MS. BERMAN: Were you still friendly with her?

MR. KUFELD: Oh, yes, sure. As a matter of fact, her husband called me Saturday, which must have been what? Tuesday was the 8th when she died and he called me Saturday, the following Saturday. We just got a note from him. And George is a very nice guy. He was an engineer.

MS. BERMAN: Very different from her first husband.

MR. KUFELD: Very much. Edith was not very happy with Mark because Mark was kind of an artistic slob, a very sloppy guy; and she couldn't take that.

MS BERMAN: Did she want more security, do you think?

MR. KUFELD: I really don't know whether she wanted so much security as she wanted him to be ambitious in other directions I suspect. She was always ambitious. She set up a jewelry factory. You know, in those days people used to make rings out of copper and silver, and that's what she went into. And Mark just had a job, sort of a part-time job, as Adolf Gottlieb did and Lou Harris did, but they call it part-time. But he used to come to help her and I don't think she was very pleased with the kind of help that he gave her. In any case, that's the way she was oriented. Her family is pretty well off, as a matter of fact. They have apartment houses in Brooklyn and quite a bit of money. So she didn't have to worry about it, but nevertheless she wanted him to be ambitious. It was very amusing that she always referred to him as--after the divorce--Rothko, as if he was a complete stranger.

MS. BERMAN: Well, maybe they had gotten to the point of that. Well, she must have been independent. They didn't take any...evidently they didn't take her parents' money then.

MR. KUFELD: When she married George?

MS. BERMAN: I mean Edith and Mark Rothko because they lived poorly too then. In other words, they didn't take money from her parents.

MR. KUFELD: They seemed to be doing all right because I remember the many summers that we spent adjacent to each other up in Croton Falls. I was in Maopak and they were in Croton Falls which was quite adjacent.

MS. BERMAN: Was this in the '30's and '40's they would go up there?

MR. KUFELD: Yes. And they were there all the time. They had a little house.

MS.BERMAN: Is there any reason that you all went up there as opposed to any place else?

MR. KUFELD: I don't know. It's a place we found. And Mark had a little Ford; it was a…one of these weird little… you don't see them much. I haven't seen one for years. One of these Fords with a closed…what they called the coupe, I guess. It was a closed, small car, you know. Actually a coupe, three passenger, with a rumble seat. But he used to put people in the rumble seat as well…behind him there was sort of a shelf behind the seat. We'd have people sitting there too. As a matter of fact, Avellino was here last week. I gave him a photograph of Milton Avery which I had an also one of Lou Shanker. And I mentioned…he asked me about photographs of Rothko and I said, I just came across the name of Yavno [phonetic], Max Yavno. And they had just published a book of photographs. And he was the guy that used to hang out with us in Croton Falls. As a matter of fact, I remembered because there was an ad in the New York *Review of Books*. So I found it and I cut it out and I gave it to him. Of course, for whatever it's worth, he probably remembers a lot of things too.

MS. BERMAN: Oh, yes. I'm very interested in finding out about that.

MR. KUFELD: Do you know who he is?

MS. BERMAN: I don't know him but I remember the name.

MR. KUFELD: He had taken some pictures of the painter groups many, many years ago.

MS. BERMAN: When you were up in Croton, did Rothko used to paint landscapes? Or did he paint there?

MR. KUFELD: He didn't paint when he was up there, for some reason. You know, they just had a vacation. I just remember one very funny summer. He and Edith cleaned up the front of the place and it was full of poison ivy. And they lifted all this stuff and they carried it off by hand. They were both covered with poison ivy in a few days. It was hysterical. In any case, they did that for a number of years. You see, what I cannot remember or at least put it in a proper time frame was when we went to Croton Falls or to Maopak. I went with another couple to Maopak who later became friends of Mark. As a matter of fact, they're not painters at all. The guy was in the dry cleaning business. His name was Jesse Wiseman. And….

MS. BERMAN: What was the name again?

MR. KUFELD: Jesse Wiseman.

MS. BERMAN: Is that W-I-S-E?

MR. KUFELD: W-I-S-E-M-A-N. Now they live here on 15th Street. I think that I met them at Avery's, and later on there was a kind of…. Then I'm trying to place…what did Gallery Secession have to do with all this? Because Gallery Secession…. You see, Bob Godsoe was a kind of…as I said, he was an impresario and he had myself and he started the group-Gottlieb and Mark and Lou Harris. Who did you talk to?

MS. BERMAN: Joe Solman.

MR. KUFELD: Joe Solman, Bolotowsky, and Ben Zion. How many names is that?

MS. BERMAN: Well, we're getting close to ten. I don't know how to pronounce the name, Tschacbasov.

MR. KUFELD: His real name was Nathan Richter.

MRS. BERMAN: Really. Now who changed the…did he change the name?

MR. KUFELD: He changed it, of course. He was kind of an interesting Gauguin type because he was an accountant in Chicago who had a yacht on the lake and he was living very well. But he got an urge to paint and he did. So he sold his business and everything else and he married his secretary and off he went to Europe. And he studied there and lived in Majorca for a while and came back to America, or New York, to be specific. He was completely broke but happy.

MS. BERMAN: That's fascinating.

MR. KUFELD: A lot of people didn't know that about him. Most of the painters did not like him because he was a very violent guy but we were quite friendly because I liked him. He was a…I don't know. I found him a very interesting guy and we liked each other most of the time I guess. We didn't quarrel.

MS. BERMAN: Did he and Rothko get along?

MR. KUFELD: I don't think he got along with anybody except me.

MS. BERMAN: It's so interesting what you say about the name changes because Godsoe changed yours, Tschacbasov changed his own, and Rothko's was changed by J. B. Neumann.

MR. KUFELD: J. B. Neumann changed it?

MS. BERMAN: Yes. He said, "You need a much more interesting name," and he suggested, "Why don't you make it Rothko?" which to me actually sounds very mystical. It sounds like Garbo. It's got that same kind of appeal.

MR. KUFELD: I didn't have any feelings about it one way or the other.

MS.BERMAN: Did Edith, I guess now, Carson, did she have a collection of Rothkos at any time?

MR. KUFELD: She had some. I don't know what's happened to them because I remember she showed me a few of them but they were of an earlier period, that is, sort of a transitional period. They were I would say before these things.

MS. BERMAN: You mean these colors?

MR. KUFELD: Before that kind of thing and after the early things that he used to do. You know, the reason I say the early things was because every Saturday we used to meet Milton Avery's. There was myself, Mark, Adolf Gottlieb once in a while, and sometimes Lou Harris. We'd hire a model and we'd do some sketching and after it was all over we were supposed to contribute something. We'd have some kind of a little party. I invariably baked a cake. I had a recipe and I made a cake. Everybody had something. I remember the kind of things that Mark used to do-little drawings. They were very nice. And Avery did and Harris did. I didn't relate what she owned to that period but to a later period because somehow they were a little different. After…you know, it's hard for me to jump from one thing to another. But I know that at the end of one summer, and I don't know which one it was, Edith and Mark decided to call it quits. I had taken an apartment in a little hotel on 74th Street next to the Berkeley. It's now converted into some kind of a mission society. It was a small hotel, very pleasant. Mark moved in with me. He was very unhappy and very disturbed. In a previous time we used to spend the night talking about art and what his aims were, and we sort of continued in that vein. And, as far as he was concerned, it was always the same thing-that he was looking for the essence of the essential. That was his whole aim.

MS. BERMAN: When you say essence or essential, can you elaborate what he meant by that?

MR. KUFELD: It was extremely simple. That's the point. As he put it then, and as I put it to you now, he was again saying that what he was looking for was the core for his motive, the core for what art meant to him. And this is what he arrived at. I guess this kind of thing is a result of that kind of striving or that kind of thinking.

MS. BERMAN: You're saying the paintings, say, that he did after 1950-51 when he hit full stride?

MR. KUFELD: Yes.

MS. BERMAN: Did he talk about any other…you say art, any other aims in terms of painting-anything specific?

MR. KUFELD: No. You see, that's the point. He seemed to be aiming at that particular thing. He was looking for it because he didn't have it then, as you know. So he kept talking about this thing that he was looking for. This was his whole attitude.

MS. BERMAN: It seems very spiritual.

MR. KUFELD: Well, not really. It seemed to me at the time, as I recall, I wouldn't say that his was a practical approach and yet it was a kind of…oh, what can I say…not even one-sided but self…oh, what's the word?

MS. BERMAN: You mean self-centered or self-actualizing?

MR. KUFELD: No. It was self-centered and kind of idealized, not spiritual necessarily, but an idealized approach or point of view, or a hunting for the thing that he wanted.

MS. BERMAN: Well, I think at the time in the late '30's and '40's, he was very interested in Greek and Roman myths and archaic art, too.

MR. KUFELD: Yes. And you could see it in the things that he did, which had nothing to do with what eventually happened.

MS. BERMAN: That's true. I think though that if you look at his art even in the figurative stages, it seems to me quite inevitable because he is working with planes and certain color schemes although he hasn't….

MR. KUFELD: The color was always very simple in those things. If I recall, and I haven't seen one in years, one of those things, sort of a greenish-brownish-greenish motif.

MS. BERMAN: You're talking about those early subway series, you mean? Some of these figurative paintings? Maybe from the middle '30's here, looking at the catalogue. He did some of this sort of coloring.

MR. KUFELD: Yes. See, browns. What I was thinking of is later, in this period.

MS. BERMAN: Oh, when he was getting a little more surreal, I guess.

MR. KUFELD: And more of this kind of thing.

MS. BERMAN: What number of the catalogue is that? You're sort of looking at Number 30.

MR. KUFELD: About when?

MS. BERMAN: This is 1938, Number 23, Antigone. To go back to those Saturdays at Avery's, did Rothko sketch form the model for a long time or was that a passing phase or did he enjoy that/

MR. KUFELD: Well, he used to do it every Saturday.

MS. BERMAN: What was the relationship between Rothko and Avery? I was wondering what they learned from each other.

MR. KUFELD: Well, they didn't learn from each other. I suspect that Mark learned a good deal from Avery in terms of...Avery was pretty...how should I put it...pretty sure of what he wanted and he usually got what he wanted. And he does everything by his own aesthetic point of view. Like when he looked at my things the first time I came to him, he said to me, "You've got it." And I said, "I've got what?" I didn't know what in the heck he was talking about. And what he was talking about was the fact that there was a kind of...how should I describe it...kind of tonality which Avery made a fetish of, you'll recall in his work. And I think Mark accepted that too and many other painters did too. As a matter of fact, these things also fall into that category. Nothing ever jumps out. He was very, very, very vociferous about that. It was very important.

MS. BERMAN: When you're saying "he" now, you're saying Avery?

MR. KUFELD: I'm talking about Avery. And I think that all the painters accepted that as truth.

MS.BERMAN: Capital T!

MR. KUFELD: Yes, with a capital T.

MS. BERMAN: Besides art, Rothko was supposed to be quite a conversationalist. He seemed to have a lot of....?

MR. KUFELD: Well, I don't know. A conversationalist? At least in the days that I knew him, not especially. No, I don't think so.

MS. BERMAN: He seemed to be, I guess, kind of a persuasive character.

MR. KUFELD: At the time you must remember that we were very friendly so there was no need to impress me. I didn't impress him; he didn't impress me. We were friendly, and whatever he had to say he said very sincerely, very simply, and very honestly. And there was nothing-no special quality about it that I would have to take with me, so to speak. I recall that whatever he had to say was not of any profound quality.

MS. BERMAN: I guess I should figure out the scope of your acquaintance. I guess you must have met him in, say, 1933 or 1934. When was the last time that you saw him, or you remained close up to a certain point?

MR. KUFELD: I don't know the dates but I can tell you what happened at the time we had just had a show, a group show in Paris at the Gallery Bonaparte. When the show came back, Mark took some of the photographs and some of the smaller drawings around to the...you know, we used to do that. I never did it myself but some of the fellows used to do that to get a show. And he went to one of the galleries, or he went to a number of galleries. But he went to one gallery and he came back and reported that this particular gallery (I've forgotten the name of it-it was a big gallery in New York at the time but it doesn't exist anymore) was not interested in the group but they were willing to give me a one-man show. That's the last...I didn't pursue it, and that was the end of it. I didn't see anybody after that. Why I did it, why I stopped at the time, I don't know. I still don't understand it. But that was kind of the time when I broke my relationship with the group, with everybody that I knew. Why? I don't really know. I can't say honestly. If I met Avery on the street I'd cross over because I didn't want to have any conversations. Didn't want meeting with painters.

[END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1]

MS. BERMAN: That must have been a terrible time for you.

MR. KUFELD: It was. So I don't remember the name of the gallery. It was a big gallery. I don't know how you can figure out…the only way you can figure it out is that was immediately after the paintings came back from the Paris show.

MS. BERMAN: Let's see. Brummer sent it to France and then the group went to the Passedoit Gallery in '37, Georgette Passedoit.

MR. KUFELD: I don't know because, as I said, I was supposed to have a show and I didn't want it.

MS. BERMAN: Well, you and Louis Schanker and Joe Solman got a lot of very good notices from some of the people and Rothko was either never mentioned or…?

MR. KUFELD: He was mentioned.

MS. BERMAN: But not as often. By the way, when did you return to painting?

MR. KUFELD: Oh, a number of years ago. I don't know whether you've looked at what I've done.

MS. BERMAN: Well, I was looking in your papers and there are only a couple of reproductions.

MR. KUFELD: I'm talking about those that you see now.

MS. BERMAN: Well, they seem to be more surrealist than some of your…just the few portraits and all that I saw in your papers.

MR. KUFELD: Those are all of that thing that was shown in the Gallery Secession, a portrait of Godsoe and….

MS. BERMAN: That's what I saw that was reproduced.

MR. KUFELD: There were some surrealist things at the time. But actually surrealism as such, as far as I'm concerned, doesn't exist and it never did.

MS. BERMAN: Rothko became very interested in surrealism. Now was that during your acquaintance with him?

MR. KUFELD: No.

MS. BERMAN: After you stopped painting, by the way, what did you do?

MR. KUFELD: I got involved in photography. That was all.

MS BERMAN: What did you specialize in?

MR. KUFELD: Well, I did portraits and theatrical photography. I worked for the…what do you call it…William Morris Agency, and did some of the Oscar Hammerstein…you know, Rodgers and Hammerstein shows. But, God….

MS. BERMAN: You didn't like it?

MR. KUFELD: It was not for me. I mean it was very interesting but it's a lot of work and you've got to live with the theater crowd and they're just not for me. So I go out of it as fast as I could. It was interesting for the time being. Then I got into electronics.

MS. BERMAN: How can you make these transitions? You were able to do it? I mean to go from painting to electronics. Usually in the stereotyped idea of aptitudes, usually someone who is quite creative and is interested in the arts usually cannot buckle down to something like electronics.

MR. KUFELD: Well, I didn't buckle down exactly. I didn't sit and make things. I was in selling; I was in sales management and I was very unhappy with it. Then I decided after all that it wasn't for me anyway. Nothing except…I don't even know if I should paint but that's the only thing that makes me feel like I'm alive.

MS. BERMAN: Excuse me for being rude and going back to a time that was obviously traumatic for you, but do you regret giving the painting up now when you did, which was probably about…?

MR. KUFELD: No, I don't really know. It's one of those things you can't measure or fathom or even analyze. It's

just one of those things that happen.

MS. BERMAN: So then at that time you didn't see Rothko any more. But he had moved in…that time that he shared the place on West 74th with you. That was before that too?

MR. KUFELD: Oh, yes. Sure, sure. Then I got married and he disappeared and that was it.

MS. BERMAN: When were you married, by the way? I should ask that.

MR. KUFELD: I don't know. I don't remember the date. Anyway, I got married.

MS. BERMAN: And were you married for a long time?

MR. KUFELD: Six years.

MS. BERMAN: And do you live alone now?

MR. KUFELD: No, I remarried. I was married for 18-20 years before my wife died. And I just remarried again.

MS. BERMAN: Congratulations.

MR. KUFELD: I say again. It's been 11-12 years. My wife died in 1968, July 12. Mark knew her very well. They were good friends. It was an important marriage.

MS. BERMAN: So you say that Mark knew her. That must have been after…I'm just trying to figure out the time element.

MR. KUFELD: Well, from the '30's into the late'60's.

MS. BERMAN: So you did see him eventually?

MR. KUFELD: No, no, I did not. But she said she met him and they talked and he was a little surprised that he didn't see me like usual. As I said, I didn't want to see anybody.

MS. BERMAN: Edith Carson, was she ever surprised that her husband had become this famous artist?

MR. KUFELD: She never talked about it. As I said, she talked about him very objectively-"this fellow, Rothko." [Laughter] You know, they never had anything to do with each other later.

MS. BERMAN: I guess eventually she moved out to California then, right?

MR. KUFELD: Yes. You know, it's a strange thing. When I was in the electronics business, I was living not very far from them. They were living in a place called Bent Oaks and I was in Annapolis. It was about 17 miles from where they lived. As a matter of fact, when they bought their home there-a lovely home-on a hill overlooking the Severn River... You know, the Severn River empties at Annapolis and they were at the source of the Severn River.

MS. BERMAN: Oh, wait a minute. Now you're talking about Maryland, not California?

MR. KUFELD: Yes. Maryland. And they sold that home in Maryland and bought a place in California.

MS. BERMAN: Did Rothko ever talk, by the way, about Max Weber or Bridgeman or the Art student League or any of that sort of thing?

MR. KUFELD: Edith did. As a matter of fact, when she was here in New York a couple of years ago, she dragged me to the Art Students League to go to her old classes and to go through the whole building practically to see everything that she had done in the past.

MS. BERMAN: Oh, so she was a student there too?

MR KUFELD: Yes.

MS. BERMAN: Is that how she met Mark?

MR. KUFELD: I have no idea but I assume so.

MS. BERMAN: I didn't realize that. Her interest in having her husband be ambitious seems almost odd because she was a student there. She had some aptitude for it. She made jewelry.

MR. KUFELD: I have a painting of hers and a little piece of sculpture that she did.

MS. BERMAN: Usually someone who's more of the business world has to prod someone, not usually one artist prodding another to be that way.

MR. KUFELD: Very strange, Edith.

MS. BERMAN: Yes.

MR. KUFELD: She was getting deaf, almost completely deaf. By the time she died, she couldn't hear very much. As a matter of fact, in Annapolis I rigged up a system where, if the phone rang, it caused some lights to show so she could see it.

MS. BERMAN: Oh, what a good idea.

MR. KUFELD: She couldn't hear it.

MS. BERMAN: Now you must have visited one or more of Rothko's studios. Did you ever visit his studio?

MR. KUFELD: The only one that I knew or visited was the one on 10th Street.

MS. BERMAN: There was sort of a contemporary and municipal art exhibition of federal art. You were in it. He was in it. And they listed him as being on Nostrand Street in Brooklyn

MR. KUFELD: What?

MS. BERMAN: They had given his address as being in Brooklyn. As a matter of fact, 724 Nostrand Avenue.

MR. KUFELD: Nostrand Avenue?

MS. BERMAN: Yes. They gave Rothko's address as that.

MR. KUFELD: It could have been Edith's mother's address because that sounds more likely. Nostrand Avenue, yes.

MS. BERMAN: Now were you friendly with Gorky at all? Did you know him?

MR. KUFELD: No, never.

MR. BERMAN: You know, Gorky had a strong effect on a lot of artists and I was wondering…?

MR. KUFELD: I don't think he had any…I don't think Mark was involved as far as I remember. Gorky committed suicide. What year was that?

MS. BERMAN: 1948, I think.

MR. KUFELD: See, there was a period when I was being involved with the Design Laboratory which was an offshoot of the Bauhaus…you remember what that was. And I was connected with it for about six years or so.

MS. BERMAN: In what capacity?

MR. KUFELD: I was teaching design, you know, design synthesis. That's a strange word for it. And with I. Rice Periera. Do you remember her?

MS. BERMAN: Certainly.

MR. KUFELD: Chaim Gross and William Rodis. I was with I. Rice Pereira. And the sculpture department was Chaim Gross and Vladimir Jaffe. That's the way the thing was set up. And of course, there were all the other departments. And that was a very interesting period.

MS. BERMAN: Why don't you tell me about what you taught and what it was like to work there.

MR. KUFELD: Well, I was involved in…what was it called…design synthesis I and design synthesis II. In other words, we took people who were architects, engineers, poster design people, photographers, who were accustomed or who worked in the old tradition. We taught them something about the modern image basically, the way the Bauhaus worked, as you know. As Gropius would have it taught. The results were remarkable. I looked at a history of the Bauhaus and I find a mention of Design Laboratory as some collages and montages of some of the students, which I recognized-no names. It was very strange. It was the sort of things I taught them

to do.

MS. BERMAN: Who were some of the famous figures that you came in contact with through working there?

MR. KUFELD: Famous figures? Well, as you know, Gropius came to visit us every once in a while. He came down from Harvard and he said we were doing a much better job than anything they did in Germany because we had better equipment. And the rest of the people, like Bill Goldberg and a few others you wouldn't have known anyway. Some of them eventually ended up at Cooper Union (names I don't remember) at the new art department.

MS. BERMAN: Did you talk much with Gropius about his philosophy?

MR. KUFELD: No, we didn't have much...he talked at us.

MS. BERMAN: What did he used to say besides complimenting you?

MR. KUFELD: He was very pleased that we were carrying on the work, that we understood what he wanted and that we were in agreement basically with the same ideals. And of course, you understand that.

MS. BERMAN: Were any of The Ten interested in what you were doing over there? I'm thinking particularly of someone like Bolotowsky because that would be very integrated.

MR. KUFELD: No. I was the only one of the group that was involved.

MS. BERMAN: Did you ever watch Rothko paint?

MR. KUFELD: No.

MS. BERMAN: Right now I have a series of questions from the Rothko Foundation and I'm asking these because they're trying to conserve the paintings and this is really asking about technique. But I was wondering if you ever saw or noticed anything or where he talked about priming canvases or grinding his own pigment.

MR. KUFELD: Well, I used to teach that as a matter of fact. Where did I give that course-technique? I gave that someplace. You know, how to grind pigments and prepare canvas. What seems to be the problem?

MS. BERMAN: Well, I guess they don't know what some of the materials were that he used because Rothko was rather secretive in what he did.

MR. KUFELD: There shouldn't be any secrets. It's very easy to tell. From what I gathered, he used a raw canvas and painted directly on the canvas, from what I was told.

MS. BERMAN: This is in the early works or the later works?

MR. KUFELD: The later works. He used raw canvas and he painted with oil paints right on the raw canvas so that the pigment impregnated the canvas. That's how he gets very much this effect, you know, without having to work too hard at it, you know, for the unity because the canvas does the unifying.

MS. BERMAN: When you say you were told, do you mean someone who knew Rothko told you?

MR. KUFELD: Yeah.

MS. BERMAN: Would you know who that was?

MR. KUFELD: No, I don't remember. Is that the basic problem?

MS. BERMAN: I guess it's one of the....

MR. KUFELD: Well, you see, there's only one danger as I see it. Oil has a tendency to rot the canvas eventually. That's the bad feature. The reason for priming the canvas is to prevent the oil from seeping into the canvas. At one time, for example, when the art project was going on, I was in charge of the technical dimension. And I used to put all these big murals up and I found all kinds of methods. And I studied the methods of the old masters so that I would do it properly. And one of the things you learn is not to use raw canvas because it could be murder. And he did it and it could be very damaging. What can be done, I don't know. You know, you have to think about it. The only thing you could do is probably try to preserve the back of the canvas.

MS. BERMAN: I thought maybe he used a wash or something like that.

MR. KUFELD: Oh yes, a wash of oil and that is what is not so good, because a certain amount of the oil remains

in the fiber.

MS. BERMAN: When you knew him, did he make his own pigments or did he use a certain kind?

MR. KUFELD: He used regular pigments, Rembrandt, you know, the standard brands of pigments. But those were all good because at the time we had set up standards. The ASA, American Standards Association, at the time was setting up standards. And they were pretty decent.

MS. BERMAN: Well, when you say the standard brands, do you mean Windsor Newton?

MR. KUFELD: The Windsor Newton, the Rembrandt, all of them. All of them eventually found that it was easier to have good pigments, not to put too much filler in; and they didn't.

MS. BERMAN: As you probably know, later Rothko became very, very particular about how he wanted his paintings exhibited. When you knew him was he like that at all?

MR. KUFELD: No, not at all. I don't know whether they're going to have a problem technically but I imagine they should have somebody examine them very carefully to see if there is any damage due to oil seepage. But they can tell, you know, by examining the back of the canvas and the fiber to see if there is any. And, if there is any, to try to isolate it. That should do something to save them. That's all I can suggest. Do you paint?

MS. BERMAN: No.

MR. KUFELD: Did you ever?

MS. BERMAN: No. My sister's a painter.

MR. KUFELD: I see.

MS. BERMAN: She primes her canvas. She also uses acrylics and that makes a difference. And she does gouaches also. I don't think she's worrying about immortality. I think she's worrying about trying to sell one once in a while.

MR. KUFELD: Nevertheless you sort of worry about it because…some people do. They like things to last.

MS. BERMAN: When you were friendly with Rothko, who were some of his favorite artists or the artists he talked about or the people he admired?

MR. KUFELD: Oh, gosh. That's a difficult question to answer. I'm trying to think back now. Offhand, I can't say. I guess he liked people like Picasso at that time .And he liked…who else? I can't say. It's very difficult. I'd have to think about it a good deal for it to come back, if it does at all.

MS. BERMAN: That's okay. Did you ever notice what sorts of books he was reading or anything like that?

MR. KUFELD: Books? I don't think he was much of a reader. Most of the painters were not readers. I was the only one, not that that's anything to be proud of but that's the way it was.

MS. BERMAN: Well, was he interested in psychology or psychoanalysis or Freud or Jung?

MR. KUFELD: Not particularly. He seemed to be more interested in music.

MS. BERMAN: Oh, really?

MR KUFELD: Yes.

MS. BERMAN: That's interesting. Did he talk about composers?

MR. KUFELD: He liked Cesar Franc particularly. I remember that. For some strange reason, he liked the Franc symphony, expressed a liking for it one day.

MS. BERMAN: Did you ever talk about color theories or anything like that?

MR. KUFELD: Color theories?

MS. BERMAN: Right.

MR. KUFELD: Yes. Well, you know, as I mentioned our discussions with Avery, and I think there was a kid of relationship with that to our own feelings about color, sort of an agreement generally that Avery was on the right

track in terms of color relationships. And his simplicity.

MS. BERMAN: Well, I'd like to know I guess why you liked Rothko and why you were a friend.

MR. KUFELD: Why I liked him?

MS. BERMAN: Yes. What was so important…?

MR. KUFELD: He was a nice guy. He was a nice, simple, sweet guy and he was intelligent. And that's about it. That's all you need. Between intelligence, decency and a sweetness of character, that's fine. There are not too many people in the world like that, you know. Or don't you know? Edith was also a very nice human being .So they were a nice couple, very pleasant and we had a good relationship as a result of that.

MS. BERMAN: Did you know the second Mrs. Rothko?

MR. KUFELD: No.

MS. BERMAN: Did you ever meet her?

MR. KUFELD: It's strange that I continued knowing Edith for all these years.

MS BERMAN: Now I wanted to go back to Robert Godsoe who had the Uptown gallery.

MR. KUFELD: Not the Uptown. He occasionally used the Uptown gallery. He owned the Gallery Secession in 12th Street. The number I don't remember but it was on West 12th, as a matter of fact, between Fifth and Sixth. A stone's throw, as it were. He was a guiding light. He was a very bright man.

MS. BERMAN: He seemed to hop back and forth between giving show or having a gallery and being a critic.

MR. KUFELD: Yeah, he did all those things. When you're limited in funds, I guess that's what happens. The gallery was his. He lived with a fellow by the name of Chester Knox. Knox, Knox…Chester Euwis was his real name. He called himself Knox. He used to sing. And they both shared that place. And it had this huge floor below and it was sort of a duplex. Upstairs where were bedrooms and a kitchen and bath. It made an ideal gallery because of the big space below. I don't know why he used the Uptown Gallery. It was run by a woman. It was a club, uptown. It was the Uptown Club, run by Rosa Kursin-"S-I-N," I think. As a matter of fact, I had a one man show there. Why it was there I don't remember. Why there and why not downtown I don't remember, unless he used Uptown Gallery before Gallery Secession.

MS. BERMAN: Yes. That's what happened with him.

MR. KUFELD: Well, now it's beginning to make sense. So he probably didn't have this place on 12th Street because they lived originally in Brooklyn Heights on Columbia.

MS. BERMAN: Oh, where all the artists lived?

MR. KUFELD: Yeah. He had a beautiful apartment, I remember, overlooking the river and the upper bay. I had a one man show at the Uptown Gallery Later on…now that you mentioned it, and I'll take your word for it because I really don't know…the Gallery Secession right on 12th Street. Later we had shows down there. This is where everybody came together and we had the group. That's where the group formed. When Joe was there, we were talking about the guests. As a matter of fact, I wrote down because I said wasn't Marsden Hartley a guest exhibitor. He gave me some more names which I wrote down. Are you interested? Do you want those or is it not important.

MS. BERMAN: No, that would be important eventually. Thank you. Now we were talking about Godsoe. What kind of tastes did he have?

MR. KUFELD: Godsoe was a strange guy. He was a writer and a good writer. As a matter of fact, as I recall, I think the *Partisan Review*-it wasn't published here. It was published in England I believe. At the time they published a segment of a book he had written .They were going to do the rest of it, and then is when they went out of business. A pretty interesting writer, but he was a surrealist.

MS. BERMAN: He liked surrealism.

MR. KUFELD: Very much so.

MS. BERMAN: How old was he then, in the mid '30's?

MR. KUFELD: In the '30's I would say he was in his middle 30's. Maybe a little later, I don't know, just about that .But he was a bright man and he's the one who gave the name to the Gallery Secession and the one that got the artists who he felt that these were the people who would best represent Gallery Secession.

MS. BERMAN: Surely he must have known a few of them and some of the artists brought their friends in.

MR. KUFELD: Well, he was rather particular in the artists that he picked for the group. You know, everybody claimed that they formed The Ten but he's the one that really did. I saw a piece in which Mark and Gottlieb mentioned the fact that they formed The Ten but they didn't. They had nothing to do with the forming; Godsoe was the one who formed it. You know, everybody likes to take credit for something but I'm quite certain that he's the one that was quite responsible for this organization.

MS. BERMAN: I'll ask another question about that in a minute. What was very funny is that, from your papers, what Godsoe would do is that, when he would turn critic, he would write rave reviews of the men who were in his gallery.

MR. KUFELD: Yeah, because be believed in them, not because it was dishonest because he wasn't. Because he believed very much in the people that were in his gallery. It was an entirely different aspect of the thing, you know. He was an enthusiast.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2]

MS. BERMAN: Helen Westheller West?

MR. KUFELD: Ellen Wesella. I don't know if you've ever heard of her.

MS. BERMAN: Yes, I have.

MR. KUFELD: She used to lovely woodcuts and very interesting paintings. We got her in as a guest. I remember at the time a curious thing had happened. I had been reading about Francois Villon, about the period, and I did a painting. She came in and she looked at it and she said, "That reminds me of a poem by Francois Villon." That was absolutely fantastic. She was quite a gal. What I mean to point out is that he had enthusiasms and she happened to be one of the many to show her work. She was a very tiny little old lady, a little old lady, but she was very good. Another fellow that he showed once in a while, I don't think anybody remembers him. Pietro Lazarri, a north Italian who lived next door to me on Bleecker Street at the time who married the daughter of Lester Cohen who wrote "Sweepings," and suddenly disappeared. They ended up in Washington. They had a child who was born deaf and there was a very famous school in Washington. That's why they moved there.

MS. BERMAN: The Lazarris moved there?

MR. KUFELD: Yes. And things worked out very well. Of course, the daughter is now teaching.

MS. BERMAN: You certainly keep a lot of ties, I mean people that you met a long time ago and you continually….

MR. KUFELD: Well, you know, they're nice people, decent people. And I have a lot of warm feelings about people like that. As a matter of fact, Edith called me one day. I was in the area. And she said, "Let's go up and see Lazarri's show in this gallery in Washington and then we'll go over to his house because we've been invited." So we saw the show and then we went over to his home. As a matter of fact, then we went over to the school to see the piece of sculpture that he did of the president of the school. You know, here's a guy that nobody even remembers.

MS. BERMAN: It takes a lot of effort to keep up all these friendships. I admire you for being able to do it.

MR KUFELD: I've mentioned all The Ten now, haven't I?

MS. BERMAN: Well, we haven't gone all through them yet but I wanted to ask you, after the Secession Gallery, what happened to Godsoe?

MR. KUFELD: Well, I don't know what happened to Godsoe. I saw him a couple of times and then he disappeared. I have no idea. His father founded the Hartford Courrier.

MS. BERMAN: *Current*? You mean the Hartford…?

MR. KUFELD: The Hartford newspaper.

MS. BERMAN: Wait a minute now. The Hartford *Current* was….

MR. KUFELD: Courrier.

MS. BERMAN: Okay, because the Hartford *Current* had been in existence in the 19th Century. But the Hartford *Currier*...? So he was probably from Harford?

MR. KUFELD: Yes. His mother was still alive when I knew him. I've never heard from him or seen him since.

MS. BERMAN: Well, you were saying that Godsoe formed The Ten.

MR. KUFELD: Yes.

MS. BERMAN: But according to what has been written-and certainly contradict me if you think it's been wrong-is that the reason that The Ten formed is some of the artists were getting dissatisfied because of some of the other painters that Godsoe began to show.

MR. KUFELD: No. I think that's a Joe Solman theory. I think it's a romantic idea. And I think basically The Ten happened because of Godsoe and maybe the reasons came later. You know, the theory came later. I may be wrong but I think that's the way it worked.

MS. BERMAN: But how do you account for the fact that all them embers dropped out of Godsoe's gallery? The next show they had was at Montross Gallery and not at Godsoe's.

MR. KUFELD: You know, you've got me on that one because I was in the show but I don't remember why. If I could remember it, then I would give you an answer. I don't know that there was a question of dissatisfaction. Maybe that's something Joe dreamed up. It sounds like him.

MS. BERMAN: Why do you say that?

MR. KUFELD: Because he has romantic notions about what happened. I never argue with him. I wouldn't contradict him, but I don't know whether he's right or wrong. I doubt it. I doubt it but I'm not sure that it's a valid thing. I don't know why.

MS. BERMAN: Well, let's....

MR. KUFELD: So I'm not going to say absolutely I'm wrong or I'm right. It's not that important .I wish it were historically correct, but that's about all.

MS. BERMAN: When you showed in Godsoe's gallery, did he pick your pictures or did you get to pick your own?

MR. KUFELD: Well, normally what you do is you have a show. It's a group show so you show one painting, two paintings. It wasn't very much a matter of choosing paintings.

MS. BERMAN: We haven't talked about Lou Schanker. He was one of the members of The Ten.

MR. KUFELD: Lou's strong point was always his woodcutting. He was a very good woodcutter, a beautiful woodcutter. He was as good as the Japanese.

MS. BERMAN: He made beautiful colored woodcuts.

MR. KUFELD: Yes. Of course, the Japanese were superb in that kind of thing. But his painting left a lot to be desired. The woodcuts were superb. Figure that out. He carved beautifully.

MS. BERMAN: Did he ever sculpt?

MR. KUFELD: He did beautiful wood sculpture, very fine wood sculpture.

MS. BERMAN: Did Rothko ever have any interest in sculpture at all?

MR. KUFELD: I never saw any of it.

MS. BERMAN: I don't mean that he did it but was he interested in it at all?

MR. KUFELD: I don't know.

MS. BERMAN: Well, when you became The Ten, whether it happened or was formed or whatever, you met in various studios. I guess I want to know what the atmosphere was and what you talked about and what you felt when you were with The Ten.

MR. KUFELD: We used to meet at the gallery basically. What they talked about? I guess it was mostly business. I'm wondering…we didn't do very much business there. I think we sold…I don't remember selling anything. In those days selling a picture was a rarity.

MS. BERMAN: Did hostile criticism bother Rothko or people in your group?

MR. KUFELD: I don't think anybody paid much attention to it because the critics were not really critics. You know. I don't have to tell you. Who did we have? Edwin Alden Jewel was an ex-sports writer with the New York *Times*.

MS. BERMAN: He was a sports writer?

MR. KUFELD: Yes. McBride wrote for the *Herald Tribune*. The reason he was a critic was his brother painted water colors. And the *World Telegram* I think was this gal. What's her name?

MS.BERMAN: Emily Genaur.

MR. KUFELD: Emily Genaur because she did the column on career inspiration.

MS. BERMAN: Now she's so grand.

MR. KUFELD: So that's why the business of respect for the critics in this country was at a very low ebb. So where did we get any criticism when we had the show in Paris? Did you read the review?

MS. BERMAN: Well, it was in French and I don't know French.

MR. KUFELD: It was rather interesting. I felt they sensed…because my painting…they said that it was a carnival of death, which it was. It was a sort of a last gasp. That's when I stopped painting.

MS. BERMAN: So that was a perceptive thing that the critics said?

MR. KUFELD: Yeah, not only perceptive but it was also true. Because I had painted myself into a corner, as it were.

MS. BERMAN: After that happened, you said, of course, that you were avoiding some of the other painters. But did some of them try to talk to you or seek you out?

MR. KUFELD: Very few. The only one that really cared I think was Tschacbasov. The other ones never. Painters are very peculiar like that, or need I tell you that? They had an ego which they would be better without. I'm not one of them.

MS. BERMAN: Did you find The Ten while you were in it was sort of a cohesive unit?

MR. KUFELD: Not necessarily because don't forget that they were sort of pulled together. Bolotowsky never said anything. He sat there and he twirled his mustache and blinked. That was the whole Bolotowsky. Ben Zion sat and grinned. Well, Lou Harris was a nice guy. He was kind of sweet and gentle, very gentle. Adolf Gottlieb, he was an echo of Mark Rothko. Period.

MS. BERMAN: Why was he so influenced by…?

MR. KUFELD: That's all he was. He was an echo. What else can you be if that's all you are. Lou, well, Lou was Lou. [Schanker] Lou when he was a young man looked like Ernest Hemingway, you know, a big black mustache, very handsome, very lovely guy. He thought he had a voice and he used to practice Mozart arias. He was a gentle, sweet guy, married to a very nice woman, Tillie (Matilda). She's the one that took him to Europe and to Majorca. That's before Libby Holman. He was very lucky, that man.

MS. BERMAN: And what did you used to say during the meetings?

MR. KUFELD: No, we didn't have any meetings to speak of.

MS. BERMAN: Did you just sort of sit around schmoozing in each other's studios?

MR. KUFELD: Yeah. Lou used to live where that little park is over on the East Side. You know, a little park on Second Avenue?

MS. BEMAN: Oh, near what would be now near Stuyvesantown or something?

MR. KUFELD: No, before Stuyvesantown. It's about 16th Street or something like that?

MS. BERMAN: Oh, I know what you're talking about . I'm not placing the name.

MR. KUFELD: It's a little park there and Lou lived right there. It's surrounded by brownstones. Manhattan New York Lying-In Hospital is there now. We used to go over there once in a while. He had a nice simple apartment in a brownstone. Those were quiet years, you know. I didn't know Libby Holman in those years. I knew him before. He used to come here to dinner, and that was it. (Inaudible) From jogging against orders.

MS. BERMAN: Is that how he died?

MR. KUFELD: Probably. See, he had a doctor and everyone said "no" except the one that said, "Do what you want to." He used to run around the track all the time. He was advised not to but he found one doctor who said, "If you want to, yes, go ahead." So he had a stroke after that.

MS. BERMAN: I guess the first show that you had when you were called The Ten, ten who were nine, was at the Montross Gallery.

MR. KUFELD: Yeah, I remember that. But I don't remember who was in it of why we were there instead of anyplace else. I do remember Montross. It was on Fifth Avenue on the corner of 69th-45q.

MS. BERMAN: Right. It was quite prestigious. He had Ryder and a lot of the master Americans. Did you get to pick out what you wanted to put there or did they select it?

MR. KUFELD: No.

MS. BERMAN: Do you know why they decided to give you the show?

MR. KUFELD: Do you know why?

MS. BERMAN: No, I don't. That's why I was asking.

MR. KUFELD: No, I don't. That's too long ago.

MS. BERMAN: That's true, but you're terrific at answering all these other questions. Why not try.

MR. KUFELD: Maybe some day it will all come back to me.

MS. BERMAN: Before you went to France, the person who did that was Joseph Brummer. Did you meet him at all?

MR. KUFELD: No, I never met him. The whole thing was taken care of. All I knew was that it was taken care of. The paintings were packed and sent to the show. I saw the reviews. The paintings came back.

MS. BERMAN: Who were the artists, if you can remember, who went to these various dealers?

MR. KUFELD: As I said, I told you, I said I remember that, immediately after the paintings came back, Mark went around to see if he could get a show. And the only thing I remember is that he came back and said that this particular gallery (damned if I can remember the name of it) was not interested in them but interested in me and would give me a one man show. I never said anything. It was a pretty big gallery.

MS. BERMAN: Was he envious of that?

MR. KUFELD: No, no. I don't think anybody after the show had animosity or envy or jealousy or what have you. You know, that's the way…it was straightforward.

MS. BERMAN: It's so sad that, say, ten or twelve years later, of course Rothko was in a different group then, but the people he was friendly with, like Newman and Still, they liked each other and then they became…they were so competitive and so angry at each other they had a great falling out. Did you know Barnet Newman?

MR. KUFELD: No, I didn't know him. I knew his work but I didn't know him.

MS. BERMAN: I'm interested if you could elaborate a little bit more…it's hard to believe, as you said, that Gottlieb was just an echo of Rothko. But I sensed that Gottlieb seemed to be a little more active as an artist.

MR. KUFELD: I don't know. He was a strange guy. Of all the people in the group, I was less interested in him, to put it very mildly. I could never be friends with the guy. I never found him significant one way or the other. He seemed to be right behind Mark in everything that Mark did. Whether that has any value or any meaning, I don't know. But to me each man should find his own path.

MS. BERMAN: Did you find when you were associated with The Ten that sort of being in the group helped

improve your painting at all?

MR. KUFELD: I think that the association would because, being with other artists, they talk about their work. It's always exciting and productive. I found it could be exciting.

MS. BERMAN: Did you criti…?

MR. KUFELD: It was, to a certain extent. I don't think we ever criticized each other, if that's what you mean.

MS. BERMAN: Yes.

MR. KUFELD: (Inaudible)

MS. BERMAN: Well, I didn't really mean in a negative way but in a constructive….

MR. KUFELD: In a positive sense you don't. You know, each man has to find his own way, whatever that is.

MS. BERMAN: Did you know John Graham at all?

MR. KUFELD: No.

MS. BERMAN: Were there any other artists or other people that Mark introduced you to, especially when you were living together? You were very close then.

MR. KUFELD: No.

MS. BERMAN: Did he ever talk about some something he was becoming involved with, automatic writing?

MR. KUFELD: No.

MS. BERMAN: That must have begun to happen just after you didn't see him any more.

MR. KUFELD: (Inaudible)

MS. BERMAN: Well, it was when he began working on it in the late '30's and '40's. That's when he became interested.

MR. KUFELD: I take it's always interesting and it's always there. I never think of it as automatic. (Unintelligible)

MS. BERMAN: To go back to Edith Carson, since you knew her so well, if you could make clear because, as you said, she did have a …did understand art, if you thought that she made any contributions to her husband's growth as an artist?

MR. KUFELD: I don't think so.

MS. BERMAN: There was a point where Rothko-this was between 1936 and 1940, he lived at East Sixth Street. Were you there while he was at East Sixth?

MR. KUFELD: East Sixth?

MS. BERMAN: 313 East Sixth.

MR. KUFELD: What was the date?

MS. BERMAN: 1936.

MR. KUFELD: (Inaudible)

MS. BERMAN: Also about this period Rothko became interested in Aegean art, Egyptian art and African sculpture. Were you aware of that during the time that we were talking about?

MR. KUFELD: (Inaudible)

MS. BERMAN: Gottlieb and some of the others were collecting some of this. Was he interested in collecting art that you remember?

MR. KUFELD: No. (Inaudible)

MS. BERMAN: Was Rothko religious at all? Did he ever talk about his past or his childhood?

MR.KUFELD: (Inaudible) I never questioned him.

MS. BERMAN: Oh, no, not questioning. Sometimes you talk about, oh, when I was a kid or…? Oh, were you on the WPA project, by the way?

MR. KUFELD: Yes.

MS. BERMAN: Were you on the easel project.]

MR. KUFELD: (Inaudible)

[END OF TAPE 2, SIDE 1]

MR. KUFELD: …it's not a matter of being proud of it. It's learning the trade, so to speak. That was part of the job. (Inaudible)

MS. BERMAN: Did you see Rothko on the project? When you think about the WPA project, what would you comment?

MR. KUFELD: We were all grateful to WPA stipend, whatever it was.

MS. BERMAN: What sort of work was he (Unintelligible)

MR. KUFELD: (Inaudible)

MS. BERMAN: Did you ever exchange any paintings?

MR. KUFELD: Never.

MS. BERMAN: Were you interested in doing that then?

MR. KUFELD: (Inaudible)

MS. BERMAN: Do you know if he destroyed any paintings?

MR. KUFELD: I don't know. (Inaudible)

MS. BERMAN: Well, is there anything else in particular that you remember about your friendship with Rothko, probably something we haven't gotten around to?

MR. KUFELD: (Inaudible) I can't think of anything. You know, it's very hard to (inaudible).

MS. BERMAN: Did Rothko keep a journal or a dairy?

MR. KUFELD: I don't think so. At least I'd never seen them.

MS. BERMAN: Do you remember which one of the two initiated the break-up?

MR. KUFELD: I think Edith initiated it. (Inaudible)

MS. BERMAN: He had come to depend on her in a lot of ways.

MR. KUFELD: (Inaudible)

MS. BERMAN: You talked about Rothko's love of music. Was he interested in, say, Mozart, Beethoven, or Bach?

MR. KUFELD: Not that I (inaudible)

MS. BERMAN: (Unintelligible)

MR. KUFELD: (Inaudible)

[Exchange between Ms. Berman and Mr. Kufeld-inaudible.]

MS. BERMAN: Did you find that many of these young artists…that maybe they were so interested in their own work that they were struggling, that maybe they didn't have time or enough energy to look at someone else's work?

MR. KUFELD: (Inaudible)

MS. BERMAN: Thank you very much for being so much help.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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