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Oral history interview with Larry Aldrich, 1972 April 25-June 10

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Transcript

Interview

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH LARRY ALDRICH
AT HIS OFFICE IN NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK
APRIL 25, 1972
INTERVIEWER: PAUL CUMMINGS

PC: PAUL CUMMINGS
LA: LARRY ALDRICH

PC: Let me say it's the 25th of April, 1972. Paul Cummings talking to Larry Aldrich in his office in New York City. You just told me about the first pictures you acquired and we ascertained that it was the Van Nane and Louisenthal Gallery. You went to that gallery with a friend as you said before. I think you told me that little story.

LA: I started by saying I had no awareness of having any conscious interest in visual art whatsoever. In 1937 I was a bachelor living in an apartment at 38th Street and Park Avenue and a very close friend of mine one day asked me to go to an exhibition of an artist friend of his just sort of to keep him company. So I accompanied him and there were all these watercolors and they were of scenes of Paris and some scenes of Israel and Rhodes and painted in a manner that of course I now know was pseudo-impressionist. I thought that they were very decorative and might be nice to decorate my apartment, but I wasn't exactly mentally or emotionally prepared to pay five, six, or seven hundred dollars for a painting. Besides, they had no meaning or value to me up to that time. And the artist was there and I was introduced to him. There were two or three gold stars on the various paintings which meant they were sold, and I casually said to the artist that if any of these are left (since he was from Canada and I knew it would involve a problem for him to get them back to Canada), I'd be glad to take them off his hands at a hundred dollars apiece. And then we left and about three weeks later he called me and said, "I'm coming up with nine paintings and I'd like to have my money right away if I can get it." And I said, "Sure." And I acquired these nine pictures which I used to decorate the walls of my apartment and I enjoyed them very much as pure decoration and didn't think much about it. Many visitors to my apartment, as a result of them -- since not any of my friends had any interest in the visual arts at that time -- thought I was quite an art collector. We'll have to skip now to -- and incidentally, I might say that since I'm in the fashion business, I had been going to Europe and Paris particularly since the early thirties at least three times a year. Even though I knew that Paris was the art capital of the world, and I'd been to the Louvre and the Jeu de Paume (but just out of curiosity more than anything else), it just never occurred to me to acquire any of those things for myself, even though at that time I had the means to do so. I was married in 1940 and we bought a house in Ridgefield, Connecticut. My wife could draw and sketch and that sort of thing, and when we acquired this house (it was really just meant to be a summer residence), but we found we enjoyed it sufficiently to make it a permanent home, while I more or less didn't do any commuting. I stayed in New York during the week and then came up weekends. And time was hanging heaviest for my wife. She was getting restless even though she got involved in the usual things one does in a small town like the garden club and thrift shop and all the rest of those things. And there was an artist -- a water color artist, quite well known -- by the name of Herb Olsen. I believe his work is carried at Kennedy Gallery. And he moved to Ridgefield, and we met him, and we had a chat, and he said he'd like to have my wife take painting lessons with him. Well, I was rather concerned about her being so restless in the country and to encourage her I started to bring home every weekend the kind of loose leaf -- they weren't really books as much as pamphlets that you could buy in most any stationary store on impressionists and post impressionists painters -- and during the cold winter nights I started to study them and they began to interest me greatly. I then bought much more solid and scholarly art books which I read rather avidly. As a matter of fact, by the time the war was over, and you could start flying to Paris again, I had already decided that I was going to acquire some paintings.

PC: Well, you really didn't pursue it very much between that first acquisition and your marriage. There was a real hiatus.

LA: I'm stressing that to make you aware that I really had had no prior interest in the visual arts whatsoever. In any event, in April of '47 we went to Paris and my wife had decided that she wanted a Utrillo. And so before we even left for Paris, I had written to my commissionaire and told her that I was interested in acquiring a Utrillo, and I asked her to investigate and find out which gallery in Paris carried a Utrillo at that time. And we went to the gallery, with her in fact, called Petrides. I'm not quite sure if he's still in business. And he was expecting us, and he had quite a number of Utrillos hung on the wall. And I looked through them and I selected one that I liked and the one I selected was one that had been painted in 1920 -- most of the others were all 1943, '45, '46 and

what have you -- and the price of the one I selected was $2,800 and the price of the recent ones was only about $900 or $1,000. And my wife just couldn't see why one of the others for $900 or $1,000 wouldn't do just as well. And so while she was studying them, trying to make up her mind, there were two stacks of paintings that were standing against the wall at the end of this private part of this gallery, and I just was rifling through them. And I pulled out a painting of a man with a beard and I asked the gallery owner what this painting was, and it was the portrait of August Basil by Renoir that had been in the Vollard collection and he said he had just acquired it about four or five days ago with that whole group of paintings. In any event, we bought both of those paintings that one trip.

PC: Had you gone to the galleries and museums in New York prior to this trip?

LA: Not at all.

PC: Just reading the books, and . . . .

LA: Just reading the books. However, I did find as a result of the tremendous amount of reading that I had done that the first visit I made to the Metropolitan Museum -- just prior to 1947 in the area where they had their French impressionists -- for the most part I was able to tell whose painting it was without having to go up to it and reading the signature. Which, of course, was very pleasing to me.

PC: You really spent quite a few years in research and development before you ever started buying.

LA: Quite a few years of just patience. Not only that, but I acquired a pretty sizable library over those years. But all of it tended to be from Manet through probably Villon, in other words, from about 1860 to about 1910 or 12. In other words the Fauves and so on.

PC: The post impressionists.

LA: And the post impressionists.

PC: Do you think there's a reason why your interest in those people developed as opposed to American painting or something older?

LA: I think it's principally because those were names that were familiar to me, even though I had taken no active interest in the visual arts. I think it's pretty hard for anyone not to grow up and not have heard of Renoir and Van Gogh and Gauguin. So that's really principally why. Now, as I now know, there was a great ferment taking place in the forties in American art. But I was very, very far removed from any of it. After I got these two paintings home and had a chance to live with them, I gradually realized that there was much more to a work of art than mere decoration. There was something in a painting, done by a real artist that was in itself very exciting, and the more you studied it, the more things of interest you found in the painting. As a result, I began to read even more, and I might say that I definitely realized that I was hooked. I started to go to the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum, and I arranged in all my subsequent trips to Europe that I would allow four or five days to do nothing but look at works of art, prior to my having to go to work. And now, let me see if I can't look through and remember what next painting I acquired.

PC: I assume that after that trip you continued going to Europe frequently.

LA: Oh, yes. I went to Europe three times a year, continued to go. And then also I started to go to galleries in New York, and I discovered Parke-Bernet auctions as well. As a matter of fact, the next acquisitions that I made were at a Parke-Bernet auction (that must have been about 1948 or 1949) where I bought a Manet sketch -- an oil sketch that was really the sketch for the important Manet painting, you know, that had the man with one leg on one side of the street and a carriage on the other side of the street with a flag -- which I think is in the Mellon collection. And at the same time I bought a Dufy at this same auction, and I also bought -- oh, dear, what's the name of that American water colorist? That's not one I subsequently sold. I gave that away.

PC: Was it early or recent?

LA: No, I think he was already dead at that time. Gracious, what's his name? Oh, it's an American that you would know very well.

PC: He was famous as a water colorist?

LA: He did a lot of the water colors in Maine.

PC: Marin?

LA: Marin, John Marin. That's it. I bought those three paintings at one auction at Parke-Bernet, and are you

interested to know about what I paid for them?

PC: That's interesting. Not only what you paid for them, but that Marin was your first American acquisition.

LA: Yes, he was, but it wasn't because he was an American. The Manet I bought for $1,000, and this I suddenly found out later when Dr. Frankfurter, who was then publisher of Art News, saw my collection back in about '59 or so and saw that painting, he said that he was in Paris at the time of this auction, and he was with Paul Rosenberg who said he had sold this picture several years before for $10,000, which I bought at the auction for $1,000. It was painted in 1875 from the window of Manet's atelier in the rue de St. Petersburg. I think the next picture that I bought in Paris -- and my secretary happened to be there and I think she will be able to tell me the gallery -- was a Vuillard. It was called Ceilings in the Louvre or something of that sort.

PC: He became an artist with whom you became very interested, wasn't he?

LA: Well, eventually I wound up with six Vuillards; as a matter of fact, we had an all Vuillard dining room. But that one was painted in 1910, and at the same time I also bought two from the same gallery. Incidentally, this gallery had the estate and all of these I bought were to -- I had the testation they were to appear in the definitive Vuillard book, which I think was being written by his brother-in-law or nephew or something of that sort. So to hold the button up between the two of them was a 1915 landscape of trees and the other was a pastel. It was a 1920 interior of a chair and a table and a vase of flowers in the window and so on. On my next trip to Paris I went there again and . . . .

PC: Would this be 1948?

LA: It would be also about 1948 or '49, and I went to that same -- Reynold and Folliet was the name of the gallery. These things will just sort of come to me.

PC: That's fine. If they do, great.

LA: And I found a little black one from what I now know is his high period. It was painted in 1894.

PC: I'm curious about one thing. What was there about Marin that appealed to you because he was somewhat different from all the others?

LA: Well, it was sort of a sketchy watercolor. Very, very loose, and it was somewhat of a landscape. And I realize now that it was considerably much more abstract than any of the other things that I had been interested in up to that time because I had no particular knowledge of Marin's status in the world, excepting that I of course had heard of him. Well, at the same time that I bought the Dufy, of course I knew Raoul Dufy. And the Dufy was a very lovely painting. It was not one of his race scenes. It was one of the boats and that sort of thing.

PC: It's interesting the Marin because it's so different from the other things. Was it just immediate appeal to the picture?

LA: It was immediate appeal because you must understand that there was never at any time any specific plan that I had originated in my own mind of how I would proceed. It was just that my interest was aroused, and my appetite was aroused. I dare say that almost everything that I acquired in my earlier paintings were things that I just happened to see. In other words, I never went to the gallery and said, "Show me this kind of painting," or "Show me a painting by that artist." It was just walking into a gallery and looking around and seeing something that would strike me. There was only one acquisition I would say that I ever made because I set out to find one that I would like, and that was way, way later on. And that was Modigliani. But almost all the paintings that I acquired were acquired on a basis of walking into a gallery and seeing something that I liked. Suppose I go through this particular publication without speaking of what it is, because I don't believe I can exactly recall when I bought it, but I'll sort of try. Would it matter if this is not in chronological order?

PC: No, it doesn't make any difference.

LA: Well, there's a Wols drawing that I just saw in a window in Paris. Well, perhaps this is not a good idea. I'll try and give it to you more in chronological order. The reason for that is -- as a matter of fact, here's the Dufy, you see -- my memory was good enough to recall it.

PC: This was about 1949 or '50. Were there things in New York that you were interested in, or was most of the buying really done in Paris during your trips?

LA: Well, up till the early '50s, most of the things I acquired, and the only things I acquired in New York, were at Parke-Bernet auctions, and it was after that, that I also acquired things from galleries in New York. But prior to that the majority of the things that I bought were bought on my trips to Paris. And I'll sort of go through this. And it was at this point I must confess that unless I refer to my bills it would be rather difficult for me to tell you the

dates when I acquired anything. But there's a Degas sculpture of a dancer of bronze. Well, it was acquired in New York too. I'm just trying to confine myself now to those things that I bought in Paris.

PC: Were there any particular dealers in Paris that you saw frequently or did you kind of go around and around?

LA: Well, I went around and around to start with, and then after a while when I got involved in the contemporary area, there were specific dealers that I mostly dealt with. This is going to be a lot more difficult that I thought it would be. There's so many things that have been in my life since the 1940's that it's rather difficult.

PC: Well, did you get to know any of the people in the New York art scene by, say, 1950?

LA: I really didn't get to know anyone in the art scene who were collectors or anything of that sort. But I did meet Bill Lieberman of the Museum of Modern Art at a party. It must have been in the '50s because at the time I had a considerable number of things; more than we've outlined up to now. And he was interested to know what they were. I don't know whether you've ever heard this before, but they always spoke of Bill Lieberman as the curator of the collectors. And he was always very much on the alert in getting to know people who had any kind of collection, with of course the hope of interesting them in doing something for the Museum of Modern Art. And I am one of the collectors with whom eventually he was very, very successful in getting things done for the Museum of Modern Art. And he was really about the only person that I had any real relationship with in the art world. And quite frankly in all of my activities in the art world, I had never particularly been involved with other people who had similar interests. In other words, while I had met a great many of them, there are very few people with whom I have become close friends as a result of my art activities. I think we've sort of missed the point of our story. Let's see if we can't go on. It's just wanting to know the next acquisition and all that sort of thing.

PC: Well, it's just the important ones -- not each particular item -- so we can get a general feeling of where you were going. Even though there wasn't a plan, there's still some . . . .

LA: No, there never was a plan.

PC: Well, the early things you bought were not that costly were they?

LA: No, they were not.

PC: But some of them eventually became very expensive.

LA: Well, they became very expensive, yes. I think that the most that I ever paid for anything was $35,000, and we'll get to that later on. That was a Picasso. But to tell you, some of the more important things that I acquired, and before I even go into that, I might I tell you that between the time I made my first purchase and January of 1951, I had spent a lot of time looking at exhibitions in New York as well as Paris and in the various museums. And abstract expressionism was of course coming very strongly into play at that time, and I must confess that while I had an open mind, I was not responding to it. But I continued to look and as I had said earlier, by this time I had become a contributing member of the Museum of Modern Art, which was the museum that I went to most often. I don't remember just when the Whitney moved uptown. Moved to 54th Street.

PC: It was about in the early fifties.

LA: Well, in any event when they moved up to 54th Street (I had never been to the Whitney when they were on Eighth Street), I used to go to them both at the same time --you know, you could go through the back door of the Modern to the Whitney. And once every two or three weeks when I would go to the Modern, I would go into the Whitney as well. But it wasn't until January of 1951 -- it was on a Saturday afternoon that I was in Paris -- that I passed a gallery, the Gallery Pierre Loeb on the Rue de Seine, and through the window I saw a red painting that interested me that was leaning against the wall. And I walked in, and it was still kind of wet, and I asked about it. I was told that it was something that had just been bought the day before, and it was by an artist that Mr. Loeb was considering carrying. He wasn't in at the time, and I asked how much it was and they said a hundred dollars. Then I looked around, and I saw another painting that was also abstract, with a lot of wavy lines, and I asked them how much it was, and they said a hundred and fifty dollars, and that was by an artist by the name of Vieira da Silva. In any event, the owner of the gallery, Mr. Loeb, came in, and I arranged to buy both of them. I remember at that time they had to have traveler's checks or something of that sort, because that was when the franc was in an odd figure and you had to declare your money as you came in and so on, and everyone that could sell anything would try and get money that they could send out of France - into Sicily mostly. In any event, those were the first two contemporary paintings that I ever bought. But now I can go back and hand you some of the things I had acquired before January of 1951. Gauguin's Washer Woman, which was painted in 1894, was one that I acquired in Europe before that time from a woman who had a gallery on the Left Bank. I can't exactly remember her name anymore but she had this painting, and I liked it, and she wanted $25,000 for it. She said that it was not hers; that it belonged to somebody else, and I said I was interested in it and could we do

anything better about the price and so on. And she said "As a matter of fact, I'm going to America in about three weeks, and I'll have this painting with me and I'm going to be at the studio of someone by the name of Serger, who is a . . . ."

PC: A painter, yes.

LA: I think his wife has a gallery. I know she has a gallery now on Madison Avenue. He has since died. And she said, "I'll call you when I get there," and so she called me, and I went up to see. She had a whole bunch of things and apparently this was in somebody's estate in Paris, and I offered her the ridiculous price of ten thousand dollars, and she said "Oh, no. That's out of the question." I said, "Well, why don't you cable it at my expense and see if the owner will take it." And she cabled and sure enough the owner did take it, but insisted that she get a certified American check which I'm sure never got back to Paris. But as a result of this, the Sergers found out about me, and I acquired other things from them afterwards.

PC: Well, it's interesting that all these things were going on, and yet there were no real plans.

LA: There were never at any time any real plans. As a matter of fact, I found that I bought eventually more of my classic early paintings from American galleries than I did in France.

PC: Oh, really?

LA: Yes, but it's principally the contemporaries through the '50's that I acquired in Paris.

PC: Was that because you were in Europe frequently, and you saw a great number of things there?

LA: Yes, but I found that there was always a certain fear connected in my own mind with buying the work of artists that were no longer living from European galleries because to begin with, you had to give them a certain amount in francs and a check for the balance which went to Switzerland. And I never did, since I had never had anyone with me when I bought anything, and I had no certainty in my own mind that I couldn't be fooled very easily by something that was a fake. I was always a little hesitant about acquiring any work by an artist who was no longer living from European galleries.

PC: Because you'd have a different kind of recourse in that country?

LA: Exactly, and as I look back over it now, after having read that book, Fake, and having read many other articles about people who were taken in by fakes, I think it's rather interesting that the only painting I ever bought that was a fake was bought in a Paris gallery and it was a 1948 Léger water color. And it must have been a pretty good fake, because I gave it to the Museum of Modern Art, whom you would think were experts, and it passed their acquisition committee. And when I attempted to send it to the Art Dealer's Association for an appraisal, they sent it back and said they refused to appraise it because they didn't think it was a genuine Léger. So it had to be very good for having gone through the Museum of Modern Art. I returned it to the gallery that I bought it from in France, and they totally disputed that it was a fake, but they eventually returned the $2,000 that I had paid for it.

PC: That's interesting. When was that?

LA: The '50's.

PC: That's interesting to have faked a Léger at that point in history.

LA: Well, I found out subsequently that there are lots of Léger water colors that are faked, and it's very possible that that one was not a fake. But there were so many that were, that there just wasn't anybody that would do something about it and say this is right or this is wrong. And so they just universally said they're all no good.

PC: 1951 seems to be a great transitional year.

LA: Very much so, because when I got those two contemporary paintings home, I found them gradually becoming far more fascinating than all the others I had collected up to that time that were representational. And over a period of years while I continued to add to my collection of classical paintings, I became more and more deeply involved in the contemporary ones. As a matter of fact, I wound up acquiring 24 Zao Wou-Ki pieces eventually, and seven of Vieira da Silva. The Zao pieces were all created from 1951 through 1953. That's the last one I acquired. The last time he was in America was while the Kootz Gallery was still in business, and I saw him there, and he came up to my apartment in New York and saw the various Zao pieces I had. At that time he said he would swap any one of them because he didn't have of his own earlier work. He would swap them for any one that was being exhibited at the Kootz Gallery, which were all in the six to eight foot range. But I had a fondness for them, plus the fact that this was still in the late fifties and I neither was mentally adjusted nor had the facilities to handle anything that size.

PC: What was it about the abstract paintings that appealed to you in the early fifties?

LA: Well, to begin with, I think I mentioned that I had looked at a great many abstract paintings in America and in Europe prior to this time, and I had not liked any well enough to want to own them; I have never acquired anything unless when I saw it it reached out to me. And none of them ever had reached out to me, but they must have been insidiously doing their work all of the time. So that now whenever any one expresses an interest in art and asks me how to go about it, I always tell them the same thing: there is no substitute for exposure. That if you're sufficiently interested, you should take the time and trouble to look and look and look some more, and eventually things will begin to gel, and that everyone inherently has an ability to make comparisons. And if you only start -- assuming you're in a room where there are ten paintings and you hate them all -- looking at each one of those individually and say to yourself, which ones do I hate the least, or rather, which one do I like the best. You'll find that everyone does have some comparative sense and that's the way one begins. And I suppose that by having an open mind and exposing myself during those years, even though I had no desire to acquire one, by January of '51 I was just sort of right for it. And it seems to me that a red color always kind of gets me, and this first Zao was a very brilliant beautiful red and black and yellow, but predominately red, and that was what had drawn me from the street into the gallery. And while I was in there I looked around and I also acquired this Vieira da Silva which happened not to have any red in it, but . . . .

PC: That's fascinating. Well, Zao Wou-ki's then were quite lyrical, weren't they as I remember?

LA: Yes, quite. Actually they had a kind of oriental play quality; they were not pure abstracts at the time. His work now of course is pure abstract. But while they weren't representational either, there were things that you could discern in them.

PC: Well, how did things progress then during 1951? You had these two abstract paintings along with a classic predecessor.

LA: As a matter of fact, by this time almost all of my friends were very, very much interested in the collecting activities that I was involved in, and whenever I came back from Europe they were always keen to see what I had brought back with me. And I remember when they saw these abstracts -- because you must realize that even at this late date of 1972, that the greatest preponderous of painting that had sold, not in New York but in America, are representational. I don't know whether you're aware of that or not, but you have an entirely distorted picture of what people like in art from living in New York. When you get out of New York in the major centers like Chicago and so on, even there it's only a very small percentage of the people who are actively interested in art that are able to have any feelings for abstract work. Even on Madison Avenue where there are some of the top galleries, you also find an awful lot of galleries that show all sorts of scenes and interiors.

PC: Right, that's true. When did you start to bring paintings into your office here, was that very early on or later?

LA: About 1952 or 1953, I had run out of wall space in my house in the country, and I had also by that time run out of wall space in my hotel apartment in New York. Well, I have to digress a moment, but I have been in the fashion business for myself since March 13, 1927. The fashion industry is a rather odd one in that the buyers only like to buy from someone very successful, and at the same time they resent the fact that their sources are people who are successful. I have always operated in a slightly different manner than most manufacturers in that my attitude was that we have a product, and it has certain merits, and you either buy it on the basis of merit or don't buy it at all. I'm not interested in socializing with my customers, and we don't entertain them and so, without it being the factual truth, they had the idea that I was very, to use a southern word, uppity. But they were successful with my clothes and for that reason they bought them. But that doesn't mean that they were particularly fond of me because of the fact that I wasn't "kissy, kissy" as they say. You must have a fairly good idea of what I mean. I wasn't entertaining them or doing them favors, or anything of that sort. And before I hung anything in my showroom, I contacted someone who was very close to me then, who was the editor of Vogue magazine, Ms. Jessica Davis, and I asked her opinion about the idea -- and she knew the kind of paintings that I owned at the time -- of hanging these in my showroom and she advised me against doing it because she said, "You know how the buyers and customers feel about you. They think that you're so rich and so on, and this would only just be rubbing salt in their wounds." But I sort of decided that I didn't give a damn, after all I was at that time spending most of my time on my own premises, and I saw no reason why I shouldn't be in surroundings that pleased me. And so I started by just hanging them in my office to begin with, and then as I acquired more things and there wasn't any room in the office, they spilled over into the showroom so that at one time, about 1957, I had a large Monet water color in the showroom, a Bonnard, a Vuillard self portrait. A Gauguin, The Washer Woman, was in the showroom. There were about seven important paintings in the showroom. And it was vaguely amusing to me the number of times my selling staff would come in and say that such and such buyer from an important store would say, "Mr. Aldrich painted all these himself."

PC: Oh, my!

LA: Suppose I tell you some of the important things I acquired at this point, even though I can't give you exact dates, because from 1951 on, I was buying both contemporary and so-called master paintings at the same time. In other words, if I saw something of a master nature that appealed to me, I bought it, and if I saw something of a contemporary nature, I also bought that. Well, I won't bother telling you about things that aren't terribly important. But there's a Picasso, Pipes of Pan, that I bought at a Parke-Bernet auction sometime in the late fifties, for which I paid $18,000.

PC: What sculptures are there?

LA: This is a Degas sculpture called The Schoolgirl, which I bought in the fifties from the Fine Arts Associates, but it's . . . .

PC: Gerston.

LA: Gerston. He is someone that I bought quite a lot of things from. I was particularly fond of him and, I would go there on the average of once every two or three weeks, and whenever something came in that he thought would interest me, he'd call me and I'd go over.

PC: When did you start with sculpture?

LA: I think the first sculpture I bought was a Degas in the early sixties and that one I also bought from Mr. Gerston at Fine Arts. This Schoolgirl, I bought subsequently, possibly a year later.

PC: Well I'm always curious because a lot of people who collect paintings do not collect sculptures because it's a different sensibility.

LA: No, I think that Mr. Gerston of Fine Arts handled more sculpture than he did painting, and I found that while my original interest was in painting, it wasn't long before it extended to sculpture as well.

PC: You never collected prints at any point?

LA: Never, no.

PC: So it's paintings, drawings, and sculpture.

LA: I do happen to have a whole series of Dubuffet's done, I think in '58. I can't recall his title for it now, although they were in a book that represented the Earth.

PC: Oh, the texturology.

LA: Texturology. Yes, although that's not exactly the title. It's a 165 black and white and 75 in color which I got over a period of years through a gallery there. They would come to me as they got them from Dubuffet, and Dubuffet himself at that time set out to acquire these for me as they were done. As a matter of fact, at least 70% of them are artist's proofs that I have. While I had never met Mr. Dubuffet personally, I had I guess sometime in the late '50's started to acquire quite a number of them. Or I should say in the middle '50's. And he heard about me, mostly because of the fact that -- it's very amusing, but I had kept a Rolls Royce in Paris from 1956 until I stopped going to Paris, when I got kind of annoyed with Mr. de Gaulle in 1964 or 5. And I guess his dealer at the time must have mentioned it, and so he heard about me and became interested in the fact that there was an American that liked his work and was buying his work and was riding around Paris in a Rolls Royce. And so through his dealer, he arranged to send them always for Mr. Aldrich and I acquired all of these. And you might be interested to know how and why I had gotten to know Mr. Bergrom, the dealer, quite well. I bought quite a number of things from him in Paris, and he came here to America and we had dinner with Bill Lieberman. Bill Lieberman said to me that this whole series of prints -- apparently Dubuffet had not done any prints for a long time, and he set up his own plant in which to do them -- they were eager to know just how many prints there would be in this particular series. He said that if I were to acquire them, he'd like to show them in the Museum of Modern Art (at that time he was the curator of the print department). So I said that I would, and arrangements were made for some supposed special price for the black and white and for the color as they would come. I think it was over a period of nearly two years that I was getting a bundle of these every so often. Then finally word came from Mr. Bergrom that this was the last shipment, and then I would have all of them. So I contacted Bill Lieberman and said I had all of these prints now, and he took them up to the museum, and we had boxes made for them, because they just came to me rolled. I asked when they wanted to borrow them to show them and he said he'd like to borrow about fifty of them to send out on tour. And I said, "Well, I'm sorry. I'm not going to lend any of them to send out on tour. You ought to be showing the whole series in the Museum, that was why I acquired them and so let's forget about it." So I still have all of them. [BEGIN TAPE 1 SIDE 2]

PC: This is Side Two. What happened with the Dubuffet prints? Do you still have them?

LA: I still have them.

PC: Are they in your collection or your museum's collection?

LA: Well, my museum doesn't have a collection. The only thing that museum owns is the property and the building. And it owns my allegiance to pay for the operating budget. Would you like me to list the more or less classical things that, are you more interested in those?

PC: I think if we could just go through that, yes.

LA: Well, you have both of the Degas?

PC: Right, we talked about those.

LA: Then there was a Henry Moore, Mother and Child, that was executed about 1953, that I bought from the New Gallery, Eugene Thaw. Then I had another Moore, Girl Seated Against a Square Wall, that was executed in 1957, that I bought also from Gene Thaw.

PC: It's interesting that you would keep up on figurative things and abstraction, and new and old. A great, broad range of interest.

LA: Well, I guess I have to confess that like most people who become hooked, it gets to be a disease. Then there was a Matisse, Venus in the Shell, that I bought in Paris, and there was another much more important Matisse, that woman with her hand on the ground so to speak, executed about 1910. The Venus in the Shell was executed in 1931. That I bought from Gerston. Germain Rousseau, the Trio. I bought that I guess it must have been about '59 or '60 in Paris. And at that same time I bought the two other Moore ones which I still have. I'm coming to paintings. Now this is rather an interesting one that Henri Matisse executed in 1924. It was a Corsican landscape and I subsequently found out that he had denied in 1894 -- let me see and make certain of my dates -- 1898 rather, and it was painted in a Jacia in Corsica. He had spent considerable time there on his honeymoon, and that is when he painted it. By this time, about 1954 or '5 possibly, I had become quite friendly with Pierre Loeb of Gallery Pierre Loeb, and we stopped in there one winter day, and he hadn't anything new to sell me because by that time I had bought representations of all the artists that he had carried. And so I went upstairs into this little cave to have tea, and on the wall I saw this small Matisse and I said, "What is it doing here? You sell contemporary paintings." He said he had just bought it at an auction a week before in Paris for himself and his own pleasure. Anyhow, by the time I had finished the tea, I had talked him out of it. We were such close friends that he showed me what he had paid for it, $4,000, and he wouldn't even let me pay ten percent more. He insisted that I have it for what he had paid for it, and of course there was a photostatic copy of an endorsement of this painting by his daughter, dated I guess it was '56 that I bought it, must have been dated January, '56 and it was to a painting that would be produced in a forthcoming catalogue raisonne of the artist's work, which was then in preparation.

PC: Did you collect those big reference works like that too, so if you got interested in an artist would you buy his catalogue raisonne?

LA: If a big one came out, yes I did. Have I mentioned about this 1896 Vuillard, his high period, the small black one?

PC: Right, that you've mentioned.

LA: Which was painted on a board. And incidentally, I paid $1,000 for it and I no longer have it. That was one of the last things I parted with regretfully, but it brought $24,000. Then I had a Paul Klee which I bough from the New Gallery. And a small 1919 Léger which I acquired from Bergrom.

PC: You seem to have done a lot of business with him.

LA: Well, it was a gallery that I got to know and had confidence in. I would visit it in Paris every time I was there. As a matter of fact, the time I bought this Léger, I also bought a Miro. I bought both of them at the same time. To go on, I bought a small Miro which was painted about 1930, and this is one that I loaned to the Tate Gallery for the big Miro exhibition that they did about 1964.

PC: Which artist did you have the most pictures of, besides Vuillard?

LA: Of the classical ones?

PC: Yes.

LA: I think the only I had a group of was Vuillard. All the others were just one, with the exception of two Picasso

paintings. Then there's a Bonnard, painted in 1922, that I bought at Parke-Bernet auction. That's something else I continued to do right along was to attend the collections. And this was acquired from the Oliver B. James collection, and I subsequently found out that my opposing bidder was the Paul Rosenberg Gallery, which had sold it originally to Oliver B. James.

PC: Did you like buying at auctions, the activity of it?

LA: Oh, yes. But I would never buy anything at an auction unless I went to the preview first and examined the things that I bought very carefully. As a matter of fact, I still continue to buy at auctions. The last thing I bought was a year ago at Parke-Bernet, a Noland.

PC: Have you used the London auction houses ever? Or Paris?

LA: For buying or for selling?

PC: Well, for buying.

LA: Not for buying, but I have sold things there. We'll go into that again. To continue, or perhaps I should stick something in here and come back to it later. In 1953, there was a gallery in New York called the Canby Burch Gallery [phon. sp.], which no longer exists, and they were doing an exhibition of Zao Wou-ki. It probably was 1952, or '53. My name had been given to her, and she called me and told me she was doing this exhibition and could she borrow my Zao Wou-ki's for the exhibition. So first I loaned her four or five, I don't remember. In any event, it was through that means that I got to know her. And when I went to the gallery to see this exhibition, in the back room I saw a Vuillard Self Portrait, and I found out that she had acquired it from the same dealer in Paris that I had acquired my Vuillards from. In other words, as things were released to him (or as he sold), other things were released -- he had the whole Vuillard estate, apparently -- and so I had not seen it before, because it hadn't been released yet when I was there. Anyhow, it was just a knockout, and I bought it from her, so that was about 1952 or '53. Well, by that time I had six Vuillards, and in my house in the country all of them were in one room, in the dining room. We spoke of our dining room as the Vuillard Room. Then I had a Redon which was painted in I think it was something like about 1908 or '09, or something of that sort, which I bought from that Mrs. Serger, who had found out about me from my having visited that French lady whom I bought the . . . .

PC: Oh, yes. Yes, right.

LA: Yes, and so she brought this picture down for me to see one day and with it a small Manessier, and I bought both of them, the small Manessier I still have. And then I bought this Chagall, Homage to Paris, Notre Dame from the New Gallery. I haven't mentioned any of these. This I'm going through now, which will subsequently come out in the things I have auctioned and I haven't mentioned what I paid for them and what they brought. Is that of any . . . .

PC: Well, you can comment I think on what you feel are the more important things; it's interesting to see how these change.

LA: Well, I do happen to remember I paid $17,000 for the Chagall and it went for $52,500. Incidentally, if you'll make a note of when we get to the auction part to ask me who it was that helped me in connection with the auctions, so far as giving me an appraisal of what the things ought to go for. Then I had a Kandinsky, 1908, which I also bought from Thaw at the New Gallery and a Signac painted in 1909, which I bought from Mr. Gerston. All the way up to about 1960, I was still buying masters along with contemporaries. Here's a Braque that I bought from the Gallery Maeght in 1957. Painted in 1956.

PC: I find it very interesting, the two parallels -- one wasn't dropped for the sake of the other one. They both count.

LA: After I had the auction in 1963, people on the outside who didn't know me personally always said, "How fascinating that you disposed of all your earlier collection because you wanted to go into contemporary". Well, at the time that I had the auction of my earlier collecting, I owned about three hundred contemporary works.

PC: Do you still have many works of that period in your collection?

LA: No, there are a few things that I never put into the auction, and it was principally because my wife agreed with my decision to dispose of them since by this time I was so deeply involved with contemporary things that I didn't want to live with the so-called masters. In fact, they were gone for about three years during which time everything was replaced with contemporary things. And when they came back, I left them in storage. I didn't rehang any of them, and that's how I made the decision that it doesn't make much sense to have these things in storage while paying the very, very high insurance costs. Plus the fact that since I don't have unlimited resources and means, and I knew I was going to continue to acquire contemporary things. I decided that I would

dispose of my earlier work and thereby have the funds available to buy anything else of a contemporary nature that came along. Well, there were a half a dozen things that did not go into the sale and as I will tell you later on, it was a rather fortunate stroke for me that they didn't. One of the last important things that I bought was in 1956, and that was a Monet water lily from Knoedler. I guess you were too young to remember the story in the New York Times about when the Germans evacuated Paris, they had to pass the path through Geverny and they just idly machine gunned Monet's studio, and it wasn't until much later that his aunts went to the studio and found all of these paintings, and all of them had machine gun bullets through them, and they all were repaired. Apparently, Alfred Barr saw them in Paris, and I think he may have contacted the Knoedler Gallery. In any event, they had a large exhibition in New York. And Mr. Barr in Paris, before they came to New York, had bought some for the museum through certain funds. I know he bought one for each of the Rockefellers and some other people that were very close to the museum. In any event, when I went to see this exhibition, which was the day before it opened, I arranged to go and see them. The only one that I liked were ones that Mr. Barr had bought -- other than some that were so colossal, you know, there were many that were eight feet high and twenty feet long and that were totally impossible for me to handle in any way at all. And I saw Mr. Koker and told him that I was sorry I was all primed to buy one, but the ones available in the size I could handle, I didn't like because they were all too light. And he told me about one that had not been finished. The repair on it hadn't been finished, and he'd have it in about a week, and he would reserve it for me. And so I came in about a week later, and I saw it and immediately bought it. There was a gallery that opened on Madison Avenue. A Mr. Mayor, I think, started it. Very fancy, with the two architects, and Armand Bartos and -- what was the name of the sculptor who was his partner as an architect at the time?

PC: Kiesler?

LA: Kiesler. Anyhow, they did this gallery and the opening exhibition was to be a loan exhibition, and Mr. Bartos asked if he could borrow this Monet and a little small black Vuillard and three or four other things for the exhibition, and I did lend it to him. And this has come back to me from several people who saw the exhibition: they said that I had the best of the late Monets. The fact that Mr. Barr had first crack at them in Paris and I got what so many people said was the best Monet, apparently it got back to him, and so he went to see the exhibition with someone, Monroe Wheeler or one of the other people at the museum, and when he saw it he said that he had not see this picture in Paris. And it was true. He hadn't. In other words, that one had not as yet been repaired. And it was darker than most of them, and harder to photograph. Bill Seitz did a Monet book about 1959, I think it was. And apparently none of these water lilies were dated. And this one is hanging in my showroom, and Bill Seitz spent about two days sitting in front of it and finally came to the conclusion that this was painted in 1918, because apparently in 1920 Monet's cataracts developed to a point where he couldn't perceive colors very clearly. And he did have a cataract operation and the paintings that were done after this particular date were different in appearance because of his difference in color values. Incidentally, I paid $26,000 for this painting in 1956 and when it was auctioned in '63 it brought $187,500.

PC: That was for the Foundation, wasn't it?

LA: I had given it to the Foundation prior to the auction. To tell you why will get ahead of the story, so we'll remember to come back to that. And there was a 1905 Kirchner, which I bought from Mr. Gerston, again of the Fine Arts.

PC: That's one of the rare expressionist paintings you have, isn't it?

LA: Yes, very rare.

PC: You don't buy very many of them?

LA: No.

PC: Was there a reason?

LA: No, it was just that when I saw this one I liked it. That's how I acquired everything. There was never any logical sequence, and there was never any hunting out to attempt to fill in a collection or anything of that sort.

PC: It was just the individual object.

LA: It was just the individual object that appealed to me and if I had the money to buy one, I'd say yes, and if I didn't have the money to pay for it, I'd say yes and borrow the money. But the lack of funds was never allowed to interfere with my acquiring it once I saw something that I liked. The only times when I would not buy something that I liked was when it was much larger than I could handle. As a matter of fact, in 1952, I guess it was, I went on a holiday with my wife in Rome and we went to the Gallery Odelisk. It was very amusing -- it was about eleven o'clock in the morning and I walked in and looked around and I saw that there were quite a number of things I'd be interested in and I asked for the proprietor. And the man that was showing me things

said, "I'm the proprietor." He told me his name and I said, "How would you like to lock the door and pull down the blinds as if you were closed." And he looked at me rather odd and asked, "Why?" I said, "Well, I see a lot of things here I'm going to be interested in and I would rather not be disturbed." And so -- it was not a large gallery -- he said alright and he locked the door and pulled down pulled down the blind as if it were closed and I looked at everything that he had. Then we went out to lunch and came back, and by the end of the day I bought twelve or thirteen Italian paintings. This was, I think, in 1952, and there was one -- again I'm going to have to test your memory -- an Italian who did sort of industrial scenes. A contemporary. Still alive and still painting.

PC: Was it Catuso?

LA: No, earlier than that. He's an older man now. He had a brother that came here to teach.

PC: Oh, right. I know his brother was at Harvard.

LA: His brother was at Harvard, right.

PC: I can't think what his name was.

LA: Well, I can supply that at a later date. In any event, we got to be close friends during the course of the day and I selected a painting by this artist to acquire that was about two and a half by four feet. And there was another one that was about five foot high and almost seven feet long that I liked very much, but because of the size I couldn't take it because I was only putting things in my apartment in New York and in my house in Ridgefield, Connecticut. And he said "I'm so insistent that you have this painting that I'll give it to you for the same price." Which was maybe $300 or $400 for the small painting. And I said, "I like it very much, but I just don't feel I have a wall for it where I live." He still insisted, and he said, "How long are you going to be in Rome?" I said about another four or five days. He said,"Well, let me send it up to your hotel and you can at least leave it hanging on the wall while you're in Rome and then you decide." Well, he did, and we liked it very much, but again, it was a matter of size. Well, naturally we didn't take it. About four or five years later there was a Pulitzer exhibition for charity at the Knoedler Gallery in New York, and low and behold there was that painting. Here's Henri Hayden, who is one of the cubists that I bought in London, which was sometime in the middle fifties. And I found out later that Hayden had done a cubist Three Musicians, and that when Picasso painted his famous Three Musicians, he gave Hayden credit for the concept.

PC: Oh, really? I didn't know that.

LA: There was a small exhibition that traveled around the country. There was some from the Modern Art Museum in Paris. There were 25 choice things from their collection, and one of them was the Hayden Three Musicians in this country. But to give you an idea of how odd my collecting was, here's a Marsden Hartley that I bought in the early fifties from the New Gallery, one that was painted in 1913, that was from the group that he did when he was in Germany during that time. Then this is the Picasso, which, as I said before, was the most I ever paid for a painting. And I bought this from the Saidenberg Gallery for $35,000 and for a while I believe, it was the only 1908 Picasso in the Western hemisphere. What's fascinating about it is that you can see all of the indications of cubism. What's amusing is that in the auction it went for $100,000, and it was bought by the Marlborough Gallery and was sent to Switzerland. Then I found out later that it was Norton Simon who had acquired it. And then I was in California in 1966 and I had dinner with a Mr. Wiseman, who is a brother-in-law of Norton Simon. And as a matter of fact, there were two paintings that were bought by Marlborough in that gallery, both of which went to Norton Simon. And he told me that it was still in Mr. Simon's rack, that he had never hung it, that he hadn't got accustomed to anything quite that contemporary. It was rather amusing. But of course this is a painting that I loaned a great deal prior to the auction.

PC: Well, some of the paintings that were in the auction traveled a great deal. I mean you lent them to many exhibitions.

LA: Yes, we'll come to all of that when we get to about 1958 or '59. In the auction, on the advice of Gene Thaw -- who I had become close friends with at the time and felt he was very knowledgeable -- and as you know at an auction, you have to sort of protect your . . . . See, in 1963 at Parke-Bernet there was no . . . what is the right word?

PC: Reserve?

LA: Reserve. And so you had to do your own protecting, and so Mr. Thaw worked with me to give me an idea of what something in his opinion ought to go at what figure. And if during the auction it didn't reach that figure, I had to make the decision either to let it go or buy it back myself and pay the full commission. In other words, the auctioneer wasn't aware of the fact that I was doing any bidding.

PC: How accurate was Parke-Bernet appraisals at that point, as compared to what pictures brought?

LA: I don't really remember, because frankly I never even bothered to find out what the appraisals were. I'm not right about that, they did have appraisals on them. Let me see some of them to get an idea. Well, now here's the first one. The Bonnard. They had $45,055, and it was sold for $55,000. I'll only try to find some of the more important ones. Then there was a 1953 Miro. A large one that they appraised at $35,000 to $40,000, and it went for $35,000. That's pretty close. And there was another Kirchner, a couple under a Japanese umbrella that was dated 1912, that they appraised at $15,000 to $20,000 and it went for $15,500. Then this Picasso they had at $90,000 to $110,000 and it went for $100,000. So I think they were fairly close.

PC: They're pretty good estimates, yes.

LA: The Monet they had $100,000 to $125,000 and it went for $137,500.

PC: So it's interesting. It averages out very closely, doesn't it?

LA: Yes, the Gauguin they had $90,000 to $100,000 and it went for $110,000. We're kind of getting ahead of ourselves, but you might find it interesting that at the time the auction was held, Henry Ford had separated several months previously from his wife, and he had quite a collection, and apparently she took all of them. So he was in the market for a new collection. And I think that he was the largest individual buyer at the auction.

PC: That's interesting to see where they went.

LA: Well, I have a list of where everything went. We sort of have gotten off the track from a chronological standpoint. In any event, I was continuing to acquire classical things as I also was buying contemporary things, and the majority of the contemporary things were bought from the Gallery Pierre Loeb in Paris, and from the Gallery de France. As a matter of fact, I think that from about 1952 to my last time in Pairs in 1964, I might have bought more than fifty some odd items there.

PC: Well, do you continue buying things like that or have you stopped buying? LA; The old, the classical, or . . . .

PC: The classical.

LA: The modern masters so to speak, oh heaven's yes. The only thing I still have left are: in 1945 and '46 Picasso did a series of 21 women -- small sculptures in series of ten -- and I bought the first two from Kahnweiler in Paris, for about $600 or $700 a piece, and I found a couple of others from the Fine Arts Gallery that were around $700 or $800. In any event, all under $1,000. I had acquired nine of them and the next time I found one that was unlike what I already owned, I was asked about $1,300. And I thought well, that's ridiculous. The next time I saw another one that was unlike the nine that I owned, it was $1,600 and so while I had that, the only time I deliberately set out hoping to acquire a whole series, the prices had gotten away from me and I just didn't feel that keen about it to warrant my paying any more than that. Besides that, I have a 1958, well, I wouldn't . . . . Well, Picasso is a master, but that was a contemporary work. He did a series of five bulls, all unique. I acquired one of those. One of the five from Kahnweiler in Paris, and prior to that, a publisher friend of mine came to see me in the middle fifties or something of that sort with a lot of photographs had been taken by David Duncan of Picasso and he asked my opinion -- only because he knew I was involved as a collector -- whether the fact that it was known that Picasso was a communist would interfere with the sale of a book that he was contemplating which subsequently came out and was called The Private Live of Pablo Picasso. It was a soft cover book. And so looking through the photographs there was one photograph of the steps of his house at Vallouris. And there was a bronze pot with a spout and a handle, and it was positioned so that you could see that it had a face etched on either side of it, and I put that one aside. And then in the entry hall there was a large thin bronze in the figure of a woman, but it was an urn with two handles that was in a niche in his entrance hallway. I'd been told that Mr. Duncan was going to go back to the Vallouris to complete this job and I said when he sees Picasso, would he ask if I could have both of those items and I would be in Paris again in January. And so when I came to Paris, I went to Kahnweiler, and the pot was there with a tag on it with my name, and Mr. Kahnweiler said that Mr. Picasso was sorry , but he was going to keep that urn in the shape of a woman. The next time I saw it was during the Picasso exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art.

PC: It's fascinating how the objects move around through the world and collections and things.

LA: So, the majority of what I still own has been created from 1950 on. [BEGIN SIDE ONE TAPE TWO]

PC: It's the third of May, 1972, and this is Side Three. I think we might just continue discussing the modern masters.

LA: I believe where we left off, we were discussing the fact from 1951 on, after my first acquisition of the Vieura da Silva and the Zao Wou-ki, that I gradually became more and more involved with contemporary art, while at the same time I continued to buy paintings of the master classification. If it's of any interest to you to know where I bought them, and since we've already mentioned the auction, there was a Walf, which I bought from the

Gallery Craven in Paris. I can't exactly remember the dates, but all of these were purchases somewhere between that first purchase of 1948 and my last purchase of a master painting, which was probably late '58.

PC: So it's a decade really.

LA: Yes, then there was a small Picasso, Pipes of Pan, which I bought at a Parke-Bernet auction -- which incidentally, I paid $7,000 for. It was sometime in the later fifties and in the auction, it sold for $18,000. I think I may have mentioned the Dufy that I bought in about 1949 for $300 at a Parke-Bernet auction, and in my auction it went for $4,000.

PC: Did auctions hold any special appeal for you, or was it just things that came up that interested you, and it was just another place to acquire things?

LA: No, I would read about the auctions that were taking place, and as a matter of fact, I think the principle reason that I bought so many things at Parke-Bernet is because I was actively running a fashion business, and I was spending, as part of it, so much of my time in Europe, since I made at least three trips a year, and it was very, very difficult for me to ever leave here during the day. Whereas Parke-Bernet auctions were only held in the evenings, and I could go to the preview which was also from three or four evenings before and see if there was anything that interested me, and then with the auctions being held in the evening, my time was free and available.

PC: There are so many people I know who rarely buy things at auctions, and you seem to have bought so many, that I was curious about why.

LA: Well, that's how it happened. There was a Degas sculpture that was bought from Fine Arts for which I think I paid about $1100 for it, and it was sold in the auction for seven thousand dollars. I might mention at this point that this Degas was one of the things that I bought for one of my daughters. I bought several things for one daughter and one painting that I will tell you about a little later for another daughter, which they both elected to have included in the auction. Then I bought another Degas called La Reverance from Fine Arts Association. And that I think I paid about $1500 for it. And that's another one that I had given to my daughter and that was sold for $8000. Incidentally, that's one that Mr. Hirshhorn bought and still has. So it will wind up in his museum. And then there was a Henry Moore, Girl Seated Against a Square Wall, that I also bought from Fine Arts for about $2000, and that went for $8,750. Then I don't know whether I mentioned the Venus in the Shell, which I bought in Paris for about $1,800, which went for $6,500. And then there was another much more important Matisse, the woman with her hand on the ground, and much larger that I had bought from the New Gallery for about $2,500 or $2,800 and that went for $13,000.

PC: It's interesting to see, in the short space of time, how the prices have increased.

LA: Well, I dare say, this auction was held in 1963 and if it were held today it would bring three times that, which was something that I was well aware would very likely be the case at the time that I held the auction, or decided, rather, to dispose of them. But I deal with that a little later. Then there was a Germaine Rouseau that I bought in Paris for about $700 or so, called The Trio, and that went for $3,000. And then there was a Henri Laurens sculpture that I bought in Paris for about a $1,000. It went for $4,500. I think I've mentioned the small Matisse that I had gotten from the Gallery Pierre Loeb, which I had for $4,000, which was exactly what he had paid for it, and that went for $9,500. And then there was a Paul Klee that I had gotten from the New Gallery. And I think I had paid about $7,000 for that, and it went for $15,000. If this is of any interest to you, I have the record of who bought what.

PC: You said Mr. Ford bought quite a number of them?

LA: Henry Ford bought quite a few of them. I think I mentioned that before, because it was just at the time when his marriage had broken up and his wife had taken all of their art work. And then there was a 1919 Léger and I bought at the same time a Léger and a Miro in one package for $15,00, and the Léger itself sold for $15,500. The Miro was not in the auction. I disposed of that later on, and we'll get to that. And then there was a Bonnard that I had gotten at a Parke-Bernet auction from the collection of Oliver B. James that I had bought for $17,000 and that went for $55,000.

PC: You know, I'm curious. As you go through all of this, and you'd been collecting ten years by the time of the sale . . . .

LA: No, 1948 to 1963. That's fifteen years.

PC: Well, did you have an investment idea in mind at any point?

LA: Never had any investment idea in mind at all. As a matter of fact, I never had in mind to become known as a

collector. My original acquisitions were purely for pleasing me and decorating my home. And it wasn't only till later that I acquired that disease that makes a casual buyer of a work of art to decorate their home, become an avid collector.

PC: When do you think that happened? Can you ascertain a particular time?

LA: I think that happened within a very, very few months after I got my first two purchases, which were an early Utrillo and a Renoir. And I still had those original ten paintings that I told you about that I had bought from this artist, and they were still decorating our house in Ridgefield, and I think that the comparison of these two paintings with this group that I had bought in 1937, made me very, very much aware that there was a great deal more than surface decoration in a work of art. Plus the fact that I think I mentioned before that before I had made these two acquisitions in Paris, I had been reading almost everything that was written by top authors about the period from Manet right on through. And so probably looking back now, I would think that I was slightly hooked before I made my first acquisition, but after living with those first acquisitions I guess I really was hooked. If I had not been possessed of the means to acquire more, I just don't know what I would have done about it. I probably just would have bought reproductions or something of that sort. But fortunately besides the great interest, I did have the means and that's how and why I continued. Then I bought a Soutine and a Braque flower painting, both at the same time in 1957. I know because when I went into the Catcher Granoff Gallery in Paris, this was after the 1956 exhibition in New York of Monets at the Knoedler Gallery, which had created so much interest because of the story connected with how these Monets came into existence. And Catcher Granoff was quite a character, and she insisted on letting me know that these Monets that were sold so presumably inexpensively at that time by Knoedler, that she wasn't quite as much of a fool as the world thought her to be, because she had deliberately given them these eighteen or twenty paintings to sell, while she had a stock of about a hundred just for them to establish the market for her. And she showed me some that she had in the gallery that she was selling for $50,000 that were of the same late Monets in about the same sizes that the ones that had been sold at Knoedler. Anyhow, I bought this Soutine, a 1926 Soutine for about $4,000 in 1957, and I bought the Braque painting of about 1930 -- a flower painting as a matter of fact -- which also was disposed of in this auction for more than the Soutine, about $6,000. I believe I've mentioned the Manet sketch for the famous picture which I paid only $1,000 for, and it went at the auction for $11,000. This may be of interest; this was a sketch for the famous picture that Mr. Mellon bought and auctioned from that German ex-patriot that was sold and I think it was Sotheby's in London, somewhere around 1959 or '58, and I think he paid more than $300,000 for it which established a record at that time. Someone, when they saw this picture, someone from Richmond, Virginia, which is where Mr. Mellon lives, said, "Why don't you contact Mr. Mellon and I'm sure he would very, very, much like to have this sketch, since it is the only sketch of the major painting that Mr. Mellon has bought." And I knew that was true too, because in early '58 or '57, around there, I'd met Douglas Cooper in Paris and his friend, I'll try to think of his name, Richardson I believe it was, who is now representing not Sotheby's, but the other.

PC: Christie's?

LA: Yeah, Christie's in London.

PC: Jacques Richardson.

LA: Yes, and he had told me that he had just completed a book on Manet, and he was hunting high and low for this particular sketch to include in this particular book. And this Richardson said that he'd been very keen to find the picture, but he hadn't had any success because he thought that was a key sketch in the Manet picture. Anyhow, I met someone, as I mentioned earlier, from Richmond, Virginia, who suggested that if I ever wanted to sell it, to contact Mr. Mellon, which I never did because at the time that this was mentioned to me, I had no intention of selling anything. In any event, it went at the auction for $11,000, and it was bought by Mr. Russack personally who was with Wildenstein. And I found out later that two weeks after he'd bought it at the auction he did sell it to Mr. Mellon for more than $20,000. I thought that was rather amusing. And I think I mentioned the self portrait by Vuillard. I had paid $6,000 for it, and it went for $57,000. And that's one of the paintings that Mr. Thaw bought. It was rather interesting at the auction; it was one of those sort of things that just as the auctioneer slammed his little hammer down and said "sold", someone bid sixty and he said, "I'm sorry, it's too late," and the whole audience protested. But in any event, that was it. Then this Redon, Mystic Sailing, which I had bought from Mrs. Serger for about $7,000, that went for $19,000. The Utrillo, which was one of the first two paintings that I had bought in 1948 for $2,800 was the one that had increased in value the least. That went for $13,500, although the estimate had been 20 to 25,000. And then there was this Chagall, that I bought from the New Gallery for $17,000 and that went for $52,500. The Miro which was in the auction, which was the one that I bought at the same time as I had bought the Léger -- the small Miro, which was painted about 1930 -- was one that I was particularly fond of, and I bought it back at the auction. As a matter of fact, there were several things that I put in the auction that I had not intention of ever selling, but on the advice of Gene Thaw, who I sort of became very close to -- at that time he was very involved with all of the kind of paintings that I owned, as he no longer is, he just deals in old masters. Because of my own lack of background knowledge of values of everything,

and since I never made it my business to find out what things were valued at the time I decided to have the sale, I contacted Gene and asked him whether he would work with me and give me an opinion as to about what -- this had nothing to do with Parke-Bernet's appraisals incidentally -- but a limit within what I should let something go and how to protect it. Would it be of any interest to know how this worked at the auction?

PC: Yes, that'd be great.

LA: Well, I sat with Gene Thaw in the first row in the balcony and with arrangements with the auctioneer -- there was a railing on that first row, and whenever Mr. Thaw put his hand on the railing, it would mean the next highest bid. In other words, usually bids up to a certain point, or two fifty additions at another point they're five hundred and another price range they're a thousand and so on.

PC: That was his bidding sign?

LA: That was his bidding sign. As he put his hand on the rail, then the bid was one higher and of course, sitting next to each other, we were constantly consulting and I had the catalog in front of me with his notations of the area in which it should go. We did not have the Parke-Bernet appraisals at all because that didn't mean anything whatsoever. And so the Miro I bought back for $6,500. Incidentally, I had to pay full commission because the Parke-Bernet was not at that time on a basis of having a reserve, and they had no idea whether there was anything I would be buying back or not. I did buy back quite a number of things that were in the auction, some because they did not come up to the price area that Gene Thaw had outlined as what they ought to bring. This is rather amusing. I naturally had to pay capital gain, and I contended that the commission I had paid on the paintings that I had bought back should become part of my cost, because I had put things into the auction in order to sort of screen the whole idea and draw a larger audience with no intention of having to sell them to begin with, and for that reason I felt as though it should be part of my cost. But the IRS did not agree with that at all. They said it could become part of my cost on the things I bought back if and when I were to dispose of them. At any event, this Miro is one that I did buy back, and then there was a 1909 Kandinsky that I bought from the New Gallery for $9,000 and that went for $20,000. There was a Signac. Is this getting to be dull?

PC: No. It's very interesting to see when you think of the years when some of the pictures are painted and then what you bought them for and what they were sold for. The percentage increase in a shorter space of time.

LA: Well, of course, what would be even more fascinating, here we are in '72, if we had an idea of what they would do now. Then there was a Garden at St. Tropez by Paul Signac that was painted in 1909. I had bought that for $6,000 from the New Gallery probably around 1951 or '52, that went for $43,000. That's another one that went to Henry Ford. And the Braque flower painting that I had bought at the same time as I bought the Soutine, that went for $24,500 and to the best of my recollection, I think that may have cost about $4,000 or $5,000. Incidentally, that was painted in 1956, so I bought it the year it was painted. No, I bought it in '57. The Vuillard Self Portrait, I paid $3,000 for that (it was quite sizeable, 29" by 27 1/2"), and that went for $22,000. I think I mentioned the Gauguin which I bought from Paris. I can't even remember her name now, but from a friend of Mrs. Serger's. She brought it here, and I bought it for $9,000. That went for a $110,000, and that was also bought by Henry Ford. Then the Renoir which was the same painting I originally bought in '48, I bought that back in the auction for $17,000. That was the only painting that I discussed with Parke-Bernet, and that was the only one I told them that I was not going to dispose of and please see what you can do about knocking it down as low as possible. Incidentally, I only paid about $1,500 or $1,600 for it in 1948, and I bought it back for $17,000. And then a Louis Valtat water color that was a fauve painting of 1905, I bought from Gerston for about $300, I think I must have bought that about 1950 or '49, or '51. That went for $4,250. The Monet which I had gotten from Knoedler (we may be kind of jumping ahead of my story), I gave to my private foundation, and I will go into that later. I had made an arrangement with the Museum of Modern Art to make available to them $10,000 a year for the express purpose of buying the works of American painters, and I limited the acquisition to no more than a $1,000 per item. They could be either painting or sculpture. And my reason for limiting it to that was to make certain it was only new artists who would get into the collection. The Museum of Modern Art -- and I'll go into that later, how I became rather close to them through Bill Lieberman, who was known at time as the curator for the collectors, among his other duties and he was damn good at it. They had no problems getting donors for paintings that were 10, 20, 30, 50, $100,000 even. There was no limit as I recall, but they found it impossible to find a donor for a new artist that had a low figure because apparently there was not much glory connected with having your name as a donor on something that no one particularly had ever heard of up to that point. In any event, to continue, my arrangement with them was on a five year basis and 1963 was just about the end of that five years. I wanted to extend it for another five years, and by that time I had become interested and active in the Whitney Museum as well. I thought that according to Mr. Thaw's calculations that the Monet should bring about $75,000, and so I arranged to give this painting to my foundation prior to the sale. And again prior to the sale I made the arrangement with the Modern to extend their program for five years and I originated a program with the Whitney Museum for five years, but only giving them $5,000 a year to be used in the same manner. Much to my surprise and pleasure, the paintings brought $137,500, which had cost me $26,000 in 1956. I won't bother with some of the lesser important paintings. There was a 1905 Kirchner that was a fauve

painting of the Negro dancer, that I had bought from the Fine Arts Gallery for something like $4,000 or $5,000, and that went for $26,000, which was much less than the Parke-Bernet figure. They had $35,000 to $40,000 on it, because it was a very large painting. It was 67" by 37". But Gene Thaw's figure on it was $23,000, and so when it got to $26,000, I let it go. Then there was a Henri Hayden cubist painting, which I bought in London about 1951 or '2 for about $1,000 and that went for $5,500. Then there was a Marsden Hartley that I bought from the New Gallery. This was a 1912 or '13 painting which was the period that he'd been in Berlin, from 1912 to about 1914, and I bought this from the New Gallery for about $5,000, and it's interesting that Mr. Thaw's figure on that was between $2,000 and $3,000, and it went for $5,000. Then the Picasso -- and incidentally, earlier I had said I'd pay $35,000 to the Saidenberg Gallery but I later recollected that I paid $35,000 but for the Picasso and for a 1917 or '18 Juan Gris, so I think that it was on a basis of $7,500 for Juan Gris and $27,500 for the Picasso. And this is one that went for $100,000, and it was bought by the Marlborough Gallery for Norton Simon. And then there was another Kirchner which I bought from the New Gallery I think for about $2,500, and that went for $15,500. And then there was Miro that I bought from the New Gallery for -- this was a large one 76 1/2" by 38". It was painted in 1953, and I really had no desire to part with it, excepting that it was just so . . . . It was in my storeroom. I had no place to hang anything quite that large, and so I put it into the auction and it went for $35,000. That was another one that Henry Ford bought. And then there was a Max Ernst, which I bought in Paris in the Gallery Edward Loeb, who is the brother of Pierre Loeb. And I bought it the year it was painted, 1958, and I think I paid $1,200 or $1,300 for it, and it went for $6,250. Then there was a Dubuffet which I had loaned to quite a number of various exhibitions including one at the Museum of Modern Art. And everyone acknowledged it is the outstanding painting in the group that he had painted in 1950. But it is probably the ugliest painting that ever existed, and my wife absolutely refused to let me hang it after I had bought it from Pierre Matisse Gallery, and I had it in my office for a while, but everyone that came into my office absolutely shuddered and was carried away. I knew of course of Dubuffet's importance by the time of the auction because at that time I had eight Dubuffets, and I still have five, and incidentally, it went for exactly what Gene Thaw thought it would go for, but less than the Parke-Bernet appraisal. It went for only $17,000 and the Pace Gallery tells me that they would pay $60,000 for it today if the woman who bought it was willing to sell it. I think I paid $9,000 for it from the Matisse Gallery.

PC: It's interesting about Dubuffet. He really creates that difficult reaction in a lot of people.

LA: Then there was another Dubuffet that was one of his earliest; it was 1945. It was a profile of a man, very, very heavily thickly painted and also about as ugly as a painting as you could imagine to look at, and I actually paid $9,000 for it in 1958 or '59, and Gene Thaw thought it ought to go for about twelve and it went for $9,500, and I said, oh the hell with it. I can't hang that anyhow, and so we let it go. I think all of these early forty paintings are now really priceless. Then there was a Nicolas de Stael. A large one that I had bought from the Gallerie Pierre Loeb about 1956 or something of that sort. It was very, very dark, it was 51 1/4" by 35 1/4", and I paid about $12,000 for it, and I let it go for less than Mr. Thaw's estimate. It went for $25,000. And then there was a Ben Nicholson, and I can't even remember now where the devil I got it from, but I know it didn't cost me more than about $600, and that was '55. And that went for $6,500 and I really don't know why I sold it. Then there's a Riopelle, -- and this is rather interesting -- this Riopelle was painted in 1952. By 1952 after my January of '51 acquisition of the Zao and Vieira de Silva, I had become very friendly with Pierre Loeb in Paris, and in 1952 he had an exhibition of Riopelle, and I thought they were just terrific, and they were about $800 or $900. But these paintings were all too large. About 1955 or '6, I was visiting Pierre Loeb at the Gallery, and by this time I think I had bought every one of his stable, so to speak, and I said, "You know, time has passed, and I no longer buy just to hang in my house. I have the disease to such an extent that I buy things and stick them right in a storeroom. I have never forgotten that Riopelle show that you ever had in 1952. I thought those paintings were so beautiful, and I've regretted that I never got one." So he said, "Come with me." And we went through several back alleys where he had his storeroom, and he had from that same 1952 show (because he'd only sold one) about six or seven of them, and they were so thickly painted that one particular one had a cerulean blue in it that I don't think had ever dried completely. Anyhow, he said, "If you want one you can have it for not much more than what you could have bought it for in 1952. You can have it for $1,000." And I said, "No, I'll give you $1,500." Anyhow, that went into the auction and the principal reason was because it's one that I had never been able to hang because of its size. Plus, it had been on tour anyhow and that went for $12,000. And then there was another Dubuffet that I had also bought from the Pierre Matisse Gallery for about $6,000 and that went for $13,000. That was in 1949. Now we'll come to the de Kooning, which I think is a rather interesting story. I wandered into the Saidenberg Gallery when she was still on 77th Street, and this was after I had bought the Picasso and the Juan Gris from her, and hanging in her back room was a 1949 de Kooning which was two standing women, and I said, "What the devil are you doing with this? This isn't your kind of picture at all." And she said as a matter of fact a friend of hers in Chicago had bought it about 1950, '51, and it's such an ugly picture that she never has liked it, and she just sent it to her a couple of weeks ago, and asked her to dispose of it. And I asked at what price. She said it was bought for $1,800 from the Sidney Janis Gallery, and she wanted $1,800 and ten percent. That's $2,000 and I said, "Fine, I'll buy it." I bought it for my older daughter, Susan, and it was only in her name. Well, in August of 1963, my daughter got married and she was not quite eighteen years old, and she married someone that was still going to the University of Pennsylvania. And when I decided to have

this auction. I said, "Susan, I'm having this auction, and would you like me to include your de Kooning in the auction? I don't know exactly what it would bring, but surely about $20,000, but it will only be worth more if you don't sell it." And she said, "No, Daddy, we need the money now." So I put it in the auction, and it sold for $27,000, and it was bought by Marlborough for Norton Simon, who loaned it to the de Kooning show that was held at the Museum of Modern Art about two years ago. Apparently this was another one of the so-called -- for him -- contemporary paintings that he couldn't live with because he sold it at an auction last year for $45,000 at Parke-Bernet. Wasn't that something? And then there was a Giacometti that I bought from a gallery in Paris for $1,800 that was a portrait of his brother or something of that sort and apparently not a very good one. It was dated '47, and I put that into the auction because I had at that time another Giacometti that was very beautiful, so I felt as though this was surplus, and it went for $4,500. What is interesting is about two years ago a friend of mine from Miami Beach called me on the telephone, and he said, "I'm offered a Giacometti that the dealer tells me you had sold at the Parke-Bernet auction, and I want to know whether it's a legitimate painting or not." He described the picture and I said yes, and he said, "Fine, then I'll buy it." I said, "Incidentally, what are you paying for it?" He said, "The dealer wanted $20,000, but I think I'll be able to get it for $17,500." Subsequently I found out he did buy it, so that gives you a slight idea of what could have happened to some of these. Well, I think that fairly well covers it excepting a Tomias that I bought from Gallery de France. I think it was '56, I bought it in the year it was printed for about $500 or $600, and that went for $3,100. And there was a Lanskoy that -- as a matter of fact, I had about four or five Lanskoys which I had all bought from the Gallery Pierre Loeb, and this one probably cost me $200 or $300, and it was just too pretty. It was very like a candy box that went for $2,200. That's the end of the auction story. Now we can go on to other things. You might be interested to know that including the Monet the total at the auction was about a $1,200,000. In any event, from 1951 on, every trip that I made to Paris -- and that was usually about three times a year -- I would allow four or five days to do nothing but look at paintings, whereas in New York, and I'd come to work in the morning, and there would always be far too many things to make it possible for me to get out. And since I lived in Connecticut, I wasn't in the position of other people who were interested in art to spend Saturdays going around the market. As you note, most of my acquisitions were either from the New Gallery or Gerston of the Fine Arts Gallery. They'd call me on the telephone and say they had such and such a thing they thought I might be interested, and would I like to see it. And I'd make a date, even though their galleries would always close at five o'clock, to come and see it at six or six thirty or something of that sort. I was just too busy during the day to ever get off. In Paris, all of the contemporary paintings that I acquired from 1951 on were either bought from the Gallery Pierre Loeb, the Gallery de France, Maeght Gallery, and Kahnweiler in Paris.

PC: I'm curious about what times of the year did you go to Paris?

LA: I went three times a year -- in January, in April, and in July.

PC: So it was all the first half of the year?

LA: All the first half of the year.

PC: All pretty much during the art season except July.

LA: It's rather different in Paris. Whereas the American Galleries, most of them, shut up pretty tight in July and August, it's a very active period in France because there are so many visitors from America and other countries. They have exhibitions all through the summer.

PC: Did you find that dealing with the French galleries was very different from dealing with the American galleries?

LA: Well, I sort of built up a relationship with almost all of the French galleries that I dealt with. The only difference was that in American galleries, you got a bill and you sent an American check. Whereas in Paris, it was a rather different situation until the early sixties when it was stabilized, and they would take an American check for the full amount. But even through the fifties, you had to pay them a certain amount in francs or traveler's checks and the balance to someone you never heard of, a check made out to someone you'd never heard of, which of course then would come back from a Swiss bank. After the auction, I had a devil of time with some of the things I sold that I had bought in France because I had no way of showing exactly what my costs were because if I bought something from Gallery A, the IRS was not interested in a check that was made out to Mr. so and so, who had nothing to do with the bill I got. As a matter of fact, I would have two bills as well. I would be given one bill for the amount of francs that I paid, which I had to show to customs when I left France. Then I would be mailed another bill for what my actual cost was, which would be mailed to me here in New York, and not on one of their bill heads even. Written out in pencil, you know, that sort of thing. Well, you can well imagine the trouble that went on with the Internal Revenue because they just didn't understand any of that sort of thing and in many cases, because I was unable to prove exactly what I paid for something, I would have to give them, at their insistence, a figure that was lower than my actual cost and pay this capital gains.

PC: That's incredible.

LA: Well, I think that a lot of people have had that experience, plus the fact, you must realize, that when I was acquiring these things there was no thought in my mind of their being an investment or of ever selling them. So I probably was fairly careless about records. You throw things away; otherwise, you have to have a warehouse just for your files. That's the fate of a great many of the things that I had bought in from France from 1948 on. And I certainly found that in writing to the galleries -- since I couldn't even remember the exact dates that I had bought certain things -- I couldn't get any cooperation from them. They said terribly sorry, but we don't have any of those records any more. Of course, they never had the records because otherwise their records would be examined by the Internal Revenue Service of France, and well, that was just one of those things. In the meantime in America, we had met just by chance in someone's house about 1950, I guess, Bill Lieberman who was then curator of prints and drawings at the Museum of Modern Art and unofficially also curator of collectors. We saw each other fairly often, socially again, only in the evening. And whenever I would come back from Paris, he would want to know what I had acquired, and he also would be informed of anything that I acquired here. In fact, I believe he introduced me originally to Gene Thaw of the New Gallery. And one of the paintings that I bought from Pierre Loeb about 1953 or '4 was a Torres Garcia pictograph, which I had hanging in my apartment. At that time, our children were growing up in Ridgefield, Connecticut, and this is another reason why I couldn't take time from my business. I was commuting, but I wasn't very happy about commuting, and my wife wasn't very happy about my being in New York all week so . . . . [BEGIN TAPE TWO SIDE TWO]

PC: Side four.

LA: . . . . so, we arrived at a compromise. I would come into New York on Monday morning and stay in town Monday night and go back to the country Tuesday evening and stay in the country on Wednesday and not come to New York at all, then come in Thursday morning and stay in town Thursday night and go home for the weekend on Friday. So I had two nights a week free and I saw Bill Lieberman fairly often and got quite friendly with Gene Thaw and a few other people.

PC: How did you meet Guson? Was that around the same time?

LA: I just wandered into the gallery, or it may be that Bill Lieberman recommended that I get to know him. In other words, he felt that those were two galleries that had from time to time extremely good things and that they were two people that he felt were strictly on the level. I believe that's, to the best of my recollection, how I got to know him as well. In any event, I was having dinner in my apartment in New York, which was a town house at 108 East 38th, and the Torres Garcia was hanging in the living room and Bill said, "Are you particularly fond of that painting?" And I said, "Well, I don't think it wears too well." And he said, "Well, would you like to give it to the Museum of Modern Art?" And I said, "Fine." I think I had paid $800 or nine $900 for it, and this must have been about 1956, this evening I'm referring to, and so I gave it to the Museum of Modern Art and I believe I got an appraisal of about $18,000. I think that particular picture is probably worth about $20,000 today.

PC: Well, was Lieberman very obvious in his activity of keeping track of your acquisitions, with an eye for the museum?

LA: I think he was, with everyone that he had heard about that was a collector. That's why I stated before that he was known as the curator of the collectors. And I believe that he was responsible for the Museum getting a great many acquisitions. And I understand that as curator for prints and drawings he did an outstanding job. I think earlier I had mentioned about the Renoir that I gave to the Museum of Modern Art.

PC: Right. But you told me about that off the tape.

LA: Well, at a Parke-Bernet auction about, I guess, 1949, I bought a Renoir still life which, when I first became involved in contemporary art after '51, I found extremely dull. It was a very dull painting of apples and lemons and that sort of thing. And I decided to dispose of it and I asked Bill Liebermann about desposing of it and he said, "Well, give it to me and I'll see how much I can get for it." And then after that he called me and said, "You know, if you can afford to take a tax deduction . . ." (because I think I had paid about $2,000 or $2,500 for it) ". . . I think it ought to be worth about $15,000." Well, I'll not go into details, but in any event, he sold it for $5,000, and I gave it to the Museum of Modern Art and got a deduction of $5,000 with the understanding that the funds were to be used to establish a Larry Aldrich fund in the print department. And I continued to add a modest amount of $250 a year to the print fund to keep it alive and that continued until about two years ago. In 1964, he gave me a list of the prints that had been acquired up to that point from my fund, and I don't know how many hundred prints were on it. Did I mention about the Redon drawings?

PC: Not on the tape.

LA: Well, one day Mr. Lieberman called me and said that he was in trouble, that there was a famous Redon drawing, that he had purchased on his own without authorization for the Museum of Modern Art, and the

Museum had been very irritated about it and they didn't have the money to pay for it. This was several months after he had bought it -- you know, it takes a long time before things go through an acquisition committee, which may not meet in the summer and so on -- and he asked me if I would do him a favor and buy this drawing which was from Gene Thaw of the New Gallery, and the cost was $4,000, and let the Museum of Modern Art have it as a promised gift without actually making the gift. Well, I later found out that this particular drawing had become the cause of a rift between Bill Lieberman and Gene Thaw, a rift which incidentally I straightened out some time later personally, because he naturally hadn't told Gene Thaw when he had bought it for the museum that there was any question about it, and several months had gone by without Gene getting paid for it. And finally he had gotten irritated and written a letter to Alfred Barr, and Mr. Barr had been very upset with Mr. Lieberman and that's how in desperation Bill called me and I bought the painting and I gave it to the museum. Quite a number of years later it went through the Art Dealer's Association at a $10,000 figure. We haven't spoken of the kind of paintings that I bought in Paris in the contemporary field. Would that be of interest?

PC: Yes, because the only ones you've really mentioned so far were those first few in January of '51.

LA: I sort of have to do a little investigating to recall.

PC: I'm curious about one thing. Was your wife involved with the collecting? Did she have an interest in it?

LA: No, but my wife continued to paint, but not on a steady basis. And as a matter of fact, she has a great deal of talent and could really be quite good if she were to stick with it, but, you know, raising the children and taking care of me, there's a slight interference. She did have an exhibition in 1962, I believe. Actually after our children were grown, we were in New York a good bit of the time, and she started to work at the Art Students League. In fact, she was on their Board of Control, I believe it's called, for several years, and she was doing excellent work. Really working hard two days a week, and she had an exhibition at the East Hampton Gallery, which received quite favorable notices. In fact, there were twenty some odd paintings in the exhibition, and they sold eight or nine of them. But she never really proceeded very much and has painted sporadically. She was, of course, very interested in what I was buying and I think to a certain extent she was nervous about the fact that not having had any real background in art history or anything else, I was casually using our funds in this manner. But there were other things on her mind; it wasn't vital. She never was with me in New York because as I mentioned, all of my acquisitions were made after five thirty when on the Monday night or Thursday night I was in New York. But she was with me the first acquisition in 1948 in Paris, and she was with me on several Paris trips where we acquired contemporary things. Would you like now to know of some of the European or would you like to have lunch?

PC: Well, whatever you like.

LA: Well, I think I can go through that fairly quickly. Ruvich was one that I acquired four of. I think I mentioned earlier my experience in the gallery in Rome.

PC: Oh yes, closing the door.

LA: Well, I think I either got one or two from them, and then I got two more from Gallery de France, although I've given away one of them, I still have three. Pierre Alechinsky, which was from the Gallery de France. I'm just going to tell you now about the Europeans I bought at the time. Francis Dufour, which I got from the Gallery Pierre Loeb.

PC: These were all acquisitions in the early fifties?

LA: These were all acquisitions in France in the fifties that I'm going to tell you about now. A Robert Lapoujade, which also came from Gallery Pierre Loeb.

PC: How did you find Gallery de France because you seem to have bought a number of things from them over the years?

LA: Well, they were not very far from the Ritz Hotel where I stayed, and I knew of them as one of the outstanding galleries for contemporary art. As a matter of fact, I bought a great many things from them. The Dubuffet that I've mentioned from Cordier. I bought -- oh this may be of interest to you -- I bought a 1959 prior to the Beard series called Tract Gidot from Cordelier. This was in January of '59 and two guoache drawings of the Beard series that were about thirty inches high and about nine or ten inches wide. I paid $300 each for those two and $3,000 for the Dubuffet Tract Gidot, which is a fairly large picture. I was not able to take the two Beard series home because there was a Beard series exhibition that was going to take place in, I believe in May, and he wanted those kept for the exhibition. That year, I didn't go back to Paris again until July, and after the exhibition they were to go to my commissionaire, who would hold them until I came to Paris again in July. As a result of buying these three, he made a definite promise to me that I would have one of the Beard series paintings -- I just saw some slides, but nothing else. Well, when I got back to Paris in 1959, the Beard series was

already known about here. I'd been sent a catalog because the two collage drawings I bought were in the catalog, and when I got to Paris, I immediately went to the Cordier Gallery and I was told that Mr. Cordier was in Switzerland and I said, "Well, I'm Larry Aldrich, and there was a Beard painting that was supposedly set aside for me." The girl said, "Yes, as a matter of fact Mr. Cordier has two of them set aside for you. He let me know that you were expected in July." One was about six by six and the other was about five by five. And she said the price was $15,000 for the five by five and $20,000 for the six by six. Well, I knew that all the Beard series paintings in the exhibition were between $5000 and $6,000, so I was rather indignant and said, "When is Mr. Cordier coming back?" and she said, "Oh, I don't think he's going to be back until some time in August." So I said, "Well you just tell him for me that I think he's a stinker, and I'm never coming in this gallery again."

PC: Why do you think he did that?

LA: Because everybody and his brother, including Matisse, was dealing here in America. The Museum of Modern Art had gotten somebody to buy one for the Museum and those pictures were really very fantastic, and I don't think he's done anything as good since. As a matter of fact, I think they were really the beginning of his world-wide fame and so naturally the dealer was going to . . . And then Estève. I bought two Estèves from this gallery in Paris. I own five Hartungs all bought from the Gallery de France, and I'll tell you a rather amusing story about that if we get into it later. Frochez, I bought several of his from Pierre Loeb. In fact I bought three or four of them. I bought three or four Lankoys from Pierre Loeb. I bought La Picque from the same gallery that I bought Estève from. I have two of those and that's it. Lapoujade I have a few of. Macris, I have two or four of that I bought from the Gallery Pierre. Marfaing, I have four of those that I bought from Gallery Claude Bernard.

PC: You generally bought a number of pictures at a time, didn't you?

LA: Not necessarily at the same time, but I might on the next trip if I saw another one that I liked. Sometimes I'd buy more than one to begin with.

PC: I mean you might buy three or four paintings by three or four different artists at one time.

LA: Yes, oh, I was a quantity buyer. Marotta, an Italian I got in Rome. Andre Masson, I had five of his. I still have three that I got from the Kahnweiler. Matta, I got from the Gallery de France, Natajais from Pierre Loeb, a Francoise Boulen, who is Chilean, from Pierre Loeb's brother. Marion Kratinos from Gallery de France. Sergio Romiti from the Gallery in Rome, Obelisk. Soulages, I have three of his that I got from the Gallery de France. Tapies, I bought that in a gallery, Raoul Ubac from Maeght.

PC: It's interesting that you knew these people from all over. I mean they're not just French painters, they're Mediterranean or South American.

LA: Oh, yes. Paris of course was the mecca then as the art center, whereas New York was giving it a big fight. We'll go into that later. And I think I mentioned to you earlier that I had acquired finally twenty-four Zao Wau-kis, which I still have. Out of twenty-two I still have sixteen. Gelais, I have three of his that are from the Gallery de France. I was one of their best customers. Well, did I speak of Lanskoy?

PC: Yes.

LA: Well, that came from Gallery Pierre. And Lapoujade, I have several of his that came from Gallery Pierre.

PC: You know, I was just remembering. Wasn't the family that owns Gallery de France in the fabric business too?

LA: No.

PC: Or is that a relative of theirs or something?

LA: No, not that I know of. There are two partners, and there is one who doesn't speak English, and he's sort of in the background. Miriam Prevo really runs the Gallery de France. and she's extremely talented to put it mildly. And then Soulages, I have three Soulages, which I got from the Gallery de France too.

PC: Do they range all through the fifties?

LA: Those ranged all through the fifties, yes and no. All the way up to '62, '63. We go to lunch now. Maybe we'll come back and we'll discuss the American scene. [INTERRUPTION]

LA: To continue with the contemporary artists that I bought in Europe, Talplot was another artist that I got from the Gallery Maeght, and in 1955, I attended what was supposed to be the premier exhibition of César at the Gallery Crusivalt. I saw was what was called a "chicken" of found materials with a long neck, and it was on a raised sort of tin or metal or steel thing, and I was interested in it, and it was valued at $300 or $400, and I said I liked it and I would buy it, but I didn't see any signature anywhere on it of the artist. So they said, come back in

an hour, and before I left they telephoned César, and when I came back an hour later, he marched in and with a pen knife he scratched out his name and the title and the year, 1955. After that, in 1960, I bought a much larger one called the Guardsmen, it's also of found materials. An American by the name of Sam Francis, oddly enough, I bought in '57. I guess it was from the Gallery Pierre in Paris. I don't exactly know how he happened to have it. I have a catalog from the show that I loaned it to, and I probably can give you the date of it.

PC: I think Francis was living in Paris at the that time.

LA: He was living in Paris at that time.

PC: That was, you said, a gouache, right?

LA: It is a gouache, it's . . . damn it, it doesn't even have the date on it. There's a reproduction in this catalog, but it doesn't have the date. Now possibly, if we see the listing of the artist, because this is an exhibition called contemporary paintings collected since 1951 by Larry Aldrich. It was just a small sample, and it was at the Cranach Art Museum a the University of Illinois in Champagne. That was February 16th to March 22nd of 1964. A, B, C, D, E, F, 1958, so I guess that's the year I bought it.

PC: It's interesting, with your younger artists, you seem to have almost acquired them the year they were made or the following year.

LA: I just happened to be there, that's all. I have a whole bunch of catalogs in front of me that I'll have to refer to for information on when and how.

PC: Yeah, right. Well, we've been talking mainly about acquisitions of European artists in the early fifties and through the fifties. Did the Americans start at the same time, or did that start somewhat later?

LA: Well, we'll get into that next. I wanted to see if I could complete the European part of the story first. Other European sculptors that I bought and still have are Reg Butler and Paolozzi. Two of his that were found material. One is Monkey and the Nut and the other is Black Magic or something of that sort. These catalogs are very helpful in assisting me to arrive at the date. Well, there was a Kolbe sculpture by Georg Kolbe of 1926, that I also bought fromFine Arts Gallery. Then among the Italians I never mentioned that I bought originally in 1952 from the Gallery Obelisk, were Bruno Caruso, Christiano, Fabiani, Marcello Muzzini, Mario Rousseau. Those were all fairly small pictures.

LA: Which catalog is that?

LA: This is one that we'll come to. An exhibition that took place in 1959. Lynn Chadwick was another sculptor that I bought in England. I can't even remember the gallery at the moment. Then there was a woman figure by Moore, Dietrich, a German, and I bought that in a -- I was just walking along the street in a gallery in Paris in 1958, and a 1957 date on it.

PC: Did you have trouble shipping these works of art back to this country in the fifties, or was it easy?

LA: No, there was a shipper always that the gallery arranged for and of course it had to come through customs, and things that were small I would very often carry with me on the plane, but there was never any problems. The only problem was when my customs agent here would get them. They would have to be examined in a storehouse or warehouse by the art division of the customs. And they always had to have a representative present, because quite frequently they were so careless -- the men working on the piers or in the warehouses -- in the process of opening these crates. And you know, French crates were made out of a kind of wood that seems to split very easily with nails that are needed for crates that we do here -- they're rarely ever screwed in -- that they get sort of impatient. Unless you watch very carefully, it's very easy for them to damage something that was shipped from Europe.

PC: When did you acquire the little Giacometti that you had just mentioned?

LA: The little Giacometti I acquired at the same time from the Pierre Matisse Gallery as when I bought the Dubuffet, Olympia, Corps de Dame, and also a 1948 Dubuffet gouache, and in the middle of a glass fronted case, he had this small Giacometti on a marble plinth. Naturally, you don't exactly accept the price that the dealer says he wants to sell something to you for. There's a bargaining period that goes back and forth. In the process of the bargaining period, I said, "I'll take these two, provided that you throw in that little Giacometti throw-away that you have in the case." And he said, "Throw-away, nothing. There are only three of these, and I have two, and Giacometti has the third one." And I guess this must have been somewhere about 1959 or '60, and so I said, "Well, I'll tell you what I'll do, we'll make the deal and I'll give you $250 for that Giacometti sculpture." And we did. I understand recently that Cluade Bernard approached Matisse and offered him $5,000 for the one that Mrs. Matisse has, and Matisse told him he couldn't sell it to him for fifty because it belongs to

Mrs. Matisse.

PC: Well, in buying things in France, was there more bargaining than here, or did it vary depending on what you were buying and what galleries?

LA: Well, I really honestly don't know how to handle that. Because each case was a separate matter. And it was not a matter only of bargaining, but it was a matter of what my ability was to pay, plus the fact of how much it was worth to me. And there were a great many instances of my making an offer for something and it being rejected and my not buying it. As a matter of fact, I think both in New York galleries at the time, and in Paris galleries, I had established a reputation that you don't ask a high fee with an intention of coming down or anything of that sort, because my procedure or methods were slightly different. I would make an offer, and it would either be yes or no. If they said no, there were no hard feelings. In other words, if I made an offer, and they came back with a counteroffer, the answer was strictly no, no matter how much I wanted it. So they stopped trying to fool around with me at that time. Well, I think we've covered the European scene sufficiently. Would you like me to move on now to America?

PC: Right.

LA: Well, I mentioned that because of the fact that I went to Paris as often as I did -- and in the course of the needs of my fashion business -- and allowed time to look at things. And it was not that I was not conscious and aware of the ferment that was going on in America. I certainly was thoroughly familiar with the achievements and status of people like Jackson Pollock and Kline and Clyfford Still, and quite a few others. But when I was in New York, between my children growing up and my spending Wednesdays in the country and not being in New York weekends, I just simply never got around to New York. About 1957, my children were sufficiently grown up that my wife could spend more time with me in New York, and I decided that the only way that I could get around to see the New York galleries was if I just didn't come into my office on one specific day. And so every two weeks I just didn't come in on Wednesday, and I would use that day to go to the galleries. I also at that point decided that if I were going to start buying the works of American artists, since I was not building in my own mind any kind of a historical collection and because my funds were not so unlimited that it didn't make any difference what price I paid for something, I decided that there wasn't any fun in it for me to follow a path that had already been well trod by someone else, because when an artist first comes on the scene, the dealer has to have some confidence in the work and then he has to find someone, a collector, to buy one and a second one and so on. And the people that I mentioned that achieved prominence through abstract expressionism in 1957 were already 10, 15, 20, $30,000 names. And since I never collected on the basis of "see my fabulous collection," that didn't cut any ice with me. And anyhow, at that point I was far beyond having space in which to hang anything. I had my apartment in New York, a hotel apartment, and it did have a dining room and I had taken up half of the dining room to build a cabinet that could hold sculpture on top and could take about a hundred paintings that were up to forty-eight by forty-eight in dimension. Besides my offices and showroom here at 530 Seventh Avenue, we have a large cutting room on West 39th Street, and I took an area there and built -- of course there are high ceilings -- a bin that could take paintings up to eight feet by eight feet and that can hold about a hundred and fifty paintings. And so to me, it would be far more interesting to find new Americans. At that time, I was not going to any galleries. I would not go to any studios because of something I hadn't mentioned. Earlier in 1949, my commissionaire in Paris said would I come with her to the studio of an artist who did a lot of ballet dancers and things of that sort. Well, I did go with her to one of the poorest parts of Paris, and there he was with his wife and two children, in a cold water flat with no toilet and so on, and while his paintings didn't interest me, I just couldn't leave without buying something, and so I bought a picture for $300 and had it shipped home and immediately gave it away as a gift. So I realized that it was not a wise thing for me to attempt to go to artists' studios because I was too soft-hearted, and I knew that I just couldn't possibly walk into a studio and go out without buying anything. So I closed off that avenue and instead sought to go to the galleries who were interested in finding new young artists to show. I particularly was interested in following up first one-man exhibitions, and those would usually be listed in the Sunday section of the Times. My first acquisition in 1957 on that basis was a Grace Hartigan from the Tibor de Nagy Gallery (Johnny Myers), who was then in the East 60's. I had, before that, bought the work of an American artist. I had gone to see an exhibition one evening to see a painting that I bought at Mr. Gerston's, and he had a David Smith, Parrot Circle. It was iron that had been painted, but it had been allowed to rust and whiten, and I think this was about '57 because I believe it was created in '55, and I don't know that he was handling David Smith as a dealer at the time or not.

PC: I can't remember off-hand.

LA: I don't remember either, but there was this one piece that did appeal to me, and I bought it at that time for, I don't know, $1,100 or $1,200. This was probably '56 -- it was shortly after the piece was created. In any event, the first painting I bought was a Grace Hartigan from the Tibor de Nagy Gallery, and at some opening at the Museum of Modern Art (I'd by this time become both a contributor and a member and went to most of their exhibitions), I was introduced to Grace Hartigan, who's very tall and very, very attractive, but didn't look anywhere near as attractive as she could have looked. I don't know how we happened to get in conversation, but

she knew that I had bought this painting, and I think Johnny Myers must have told her that I was in the fashion business. She pulled me to one side said, "You know, I've been working for a long time and living in poverty really." She said, "I have a couple of dollars now and do you think I could get some clothes wholesale?" And I said, "Why of course." And we made a date for her to come up and when she came up she was so eager and there were so many things that she wanted that she said, "Gosh, I'm just unable to pay for these." And so I proposed that we swap. She had told me that she had a lot of things in her studio that had been out to various other shows. As I said, she really had not had very much success because this was a sizable picture that I had bought for about a $1,000. Incidentally, I had decided that I was going to try and keep all of my American purchases under $1,000, or if there was something that really -- you know -- I might go as high as $1,200, but the idea was to try and keep them under $1000. Anyhow, I let her take anything that she wanted, and then I went down to her studio one night and selected several things in exchange for clothes, and we did that for quite some time. I think that I must own about twenty Grace Hartigans at this point. Some of them as far back as 1946. I think that's the earliest one. That's a collage that in lieu of what happened in the pop art scene in 1960 is quite interesting because there are cut-outs from magazines of Campbell's soup ad and several other things. In any event, we became fairly close friends. In fact, one of the few artists in America that I ever did become friendly with. It's very difficult for me to remember exactly what contemporary people I bought in rotation or anything of that sort. But I do remember that in 1958 I bought a Robert Goodnough, The Frontiersman, and apparently that was one that the Whitney wanted in the Annual of 1958. I loaned it to the Whitney for that purpose and for the first time set foot in the Whitney when I attended that opening in 1958. Anyhow, it was still in 1957, Grace Hartigan told me about an artist that she knew that she felt was good by the name of David Budd, and I told her that I would not go to the studio of any artist, while the artist was there, and she said, "Well, I'll arrange to get the keys." So we had dinner together one night and went down to his studio, and I selected two paintings which I bought and still have that were created in '56, '57. I'm going to try to deal all over the lot, I think that you're interested in knowing about my current Artist of the Year program, and I'm going to sort of tell you how it came about.

PC: Well, that started just about that time didn't it?

LA: In 1958. Betty Parsons who was in a different location then on 57th Street, opened another gallery next door for the purpose of carrying new artists.

PC: Oh, that was her Section #11 or something.

LA: Something like that, yes. And I got an announcement of the David Budd show, and I attended it, and David Budd was there and he came up and introduced himself to me. These were all under glass, and they were about sixteen or eighteen by twenty, something of that sort -- inches, I refer to now. And they were very, very pretty, and he came up to me and said, "You know, my wife has a great figure, and Grace Hartigan looks like a different person since she's been getting clothes from you, and it's going to be my wife's birthday, and I would like to buy some clothes for her, but frankly, I haven't got the money." And so I said, "All right, you come and see me." So he came up to see me and got two or three dresses in exchange for which I took about eighteen or twenty of these things that I gave away to important customers for Christmas. Of course, my customers by this time certainly all knew about my interest in art. They had seen plenty of it in my offices and showrooms, and the reaction, the letters that I got from them were very favorable to put it mildly. Still, it was not the beginning of any program.

PC: Was this the first time you'd given away so many pictures to people like that?

LA: Yes, excepting the first ten. I had by this time given those away, and they were scattered everywhere. There were only three of them that went to one person who still has them that I see occasionally in their living room. As I said, I hadn't even thought of any program. Sometime in 1959, I was at the Tibor de Nagy Gallery and Bob Goodnough walked in, whom I'd never met before, and I guess it was the middle of '59 or something of that sort. And he had six or eight small paintings with him that were the series of 1959, and I also bought a large 1959, which you see is currently hanging in my showroom. And apparently Art News was giving him the cover for their January 1960 issue, and he had done about forty paintings from which Art News was to select one for the cover. And they were all about sixteen by sixteen or eighteen by eighteen, and I said, "What are you going to do with the rest of them?" Johnny Myers was present at the time, and he said, "I guess I'll have to try and sell them." Not that his work was so avidly being bought or anything of that nature at that time. I think the first one I bought of his in '58 is about seven foot by eight foot, and I think I paid $900 for it. And the one that's in the showroom of '59 is about seven foot by eight foot, and I think I paid about $1,000 or $1,100 for it. Anyhow, I thought that it would be an opportunity for me to follow up on those Christmas gifts I had given away in '58 and so I said, "Well, when they have made their selection, and you don't know what to do with the others, I'll take twenty-four or thirty off your hands at a very modest price because I will pay for them through my business and give them away to customers as Christmas gifts." And so sometime in late November, he called me up and said he was going to start bringing them in. And I don't recall exactly, but I think I agreed on a $35 price, and I gave those away in 1959. Would you like me to carry this straight through or go back to other incidents at that time?

PC: Well, that's very interesting, but how did you start the plan to buy one artist a year?

LA: Well, really, this is what I wanted to know, whether you want me to continue on through with this story.

PC: Well, let's keep going then.

LA: This was written up in a 1964 issue of Art in America, and so it would serve my memory to be able to complete it. In 1959, I bought two James Suzukis from Graham gallery, a young Japanese. And shortly after that, he called me up one time and said he'd like to come and see me. I hadn't met him, and he came down with a picture in his hand that was, about, oh, thirty by forty, and he said, "I came to see you because I understand that you're very sympathetic to artists." And he said, "I just had a baby, and I need money." I was accustomed to and had the knowledge that in France, when a gallery took on an artist, they made a contract with him to give him so much a month. But I wasn't familiar with the fact that was not the situation here; that the majority of cases are just on memorandum with an exhibition being held, and very frequently the artist even has to pay for announcement and adds and so on. Anyhow, I had bought this large one for $900 from the Graham Gallery and another one that was about thirty or forty inches for $450, and he brought this picture in with him and he said "I desperately need $100. Would you give me $100 for the painting?" And I did. Well, by golly, it wasn't but a week later that he was calling on the telephone and he was down with another one, needed another $100. Well after this went on for quite some time, and I found myself the owner of about twenty Sazukis, I thought enough is enough. And I told him about what had happened in '58 and '59, and this was towards the end of '59. And I asked him if he would like to become my artist for 1960? I would commission him to do about thirty paintings, and I figured out the size that I felt anybody could use, a twenty by twenty size, a,d I would give them away at Christmas. In the meantime, I paid him for twelve, I guess it was. I said, "When you deliver these twelve, I'll give you the check for more, and when people come to my office, I'll do my best to try and sell them with a check made out to your name for a $100. And any I sell, you will replace." So that's how that came about, and I think I managed to sell about twelve or so that first year, and at the end of the year I think Mr. Sazuki got an appointment to teach in either Berleley or someplace. Anyhow he left New York. Well, by this time, the response that I'd gotten from my customers that received these as gifts was of such nature that I felt as though I wanted to attempt to continue this. However, I was not going to artist's studios at the time, and so my problem was to find somebody who would be willing. I had a very difficult time in 1961, and finally out of desperation I called Johnny Myer and asked if he had any ideas. So he said, "Well, there's an artist that does realistic things, they're really nudes, and they are on paper, and you can have them framed. His name is Sherman Dressler and I'll have him contact you." And so Sherman Dressler came, and I think I paid him about $25 apiece, and then I arranged to have them framed and put under glass for about $5 a piece, but I made no effort whatsoever to sell any of those, and those were just more paintings I gave away in 1961. In 1962, an artist by the name of Peter Forakis called me on the telephone, and he said, "I hear that you are interested in the work of new young artists. Can I come up and see you?" So he came with a large painting, which I bought from him, and I told him about my artist of the year program that I needed for Christmas and would he be interested in painting any of them. And so he did a series of about thirty-six, and they were all, oh, I would say about fourteen by eighteen and I gave those away at Christmas time. Made no attempt to sell those either. [BEGIN SIDE ONE TAPE THREE]

LA: So, I sort of had established something, and I had to find an artist each year.

PC: Did different people get these every year, or the same people sometimes two or three?

LA: There are many people who have been good customers of ours who have the whole series from 1958 on.

PC: Oh, really. That's terrific.

LA: In 1963, as I had difficulty finding anybody, and I bought a painting by Richard Tum Suden from Johnny Myers, and that was subsequently used in 1963 new talent issue of Art in America called King's Crown. And I don't think that the exhibition was terribly successful, and I don't know how well you know Johnny Myers, but he's one of the finest characters in the world. And Johnny Myers called me on the telephone, oh, several months after I bought this painting. But it was still in 1963, and said, "Do you have anybody for your Christmas artist?" I said, "No." He said, "You know, Richard Tum Suden is broke, and he needs some money. Can he come down and see you?" And so he came down, and I commissioned him to do thirty paintings, and it was fairly late in 1963, but I still was able to sell about ten or twelve to visitors to my office. In other words, I was slowly building up a list. In 1964, I was not successful in finding anybody and yet I felt as though I didn't want to drop this, and so, in October when I hadn't found anybody, I asked my wife, who was working daily or twice a week anyhow at the Art Students League, to perform a crash program and deliver thirty paintings by the first of December. Well, as a matter of fact, she got one of the Japanese boys that was working at the Art Students League to strip them and because I didn't want the people to receive them to know it was my wife, I had them signed by a new name which is Payne. They were signed by William Payne, and that was in 1964. For 1965, I was in Dorothy Miller's office, and she showed me a painting that had just been brought up for her to see by a young painter by the name of MacWells, whose wife incidentally happened to be working at the museum as a secretary, and I said,

"Oh, I like that painting. I'll buy it." It was about thirty-six by thirty-six, and I said, "If he doesn't have a gallery, have him come to see me." And so, I commissioned him to do about thirty paintings and told him what the program was, and I think I sold about twenty of his while I was building up a list.

PC: So that means he did something like fifty pictures?

LA: That's right.

PC: Oh, that's terrific.

LA: For $100 a piece. Then I think he took the money and went off teaching somewhere or something, I don't remember. 1966: in 1963, as I told you, my wife was on the Control Board of the Art Students League and was also working there, and she asked me if I would stop by one evening and see a show, because you know all of their teachers have once a month or once a season a show of their students' work. And so I went with her one night after dinner, and I looked over the work of everybody in the class, and I said, "It's all garbage (she was not in the show, she was not participating) with the exception of one picture in that corner, and she said, "I know that boy. He's a Japanese boy, and he hardly speaks any English, and he's going to ruin his eyesight, because this is all very little wavy lines done painstakingly in oils." And she said he works about four inches away from the canvas, and also he's here on a student visa, and he has a scholarship. So I said, "Well, you have him come and see me." So I bought that picture, and, as a matter of fact, this is the picture in the catalog. And he told me that he was here on a student visa, and as best as we could understand each other that his family gave him $50 a month on which to live, and he was sharing an apartment with another Japanese where he tried to work. And that he had fantastic training in Japan before he came here, and he had to go to the Art Students League because if he didn't go to school he would lose his visa and have to return to Japan. So I said, "I would like to help you because I think that you have a lot of natural talent, and you're a good artist." But he was very, very proud, and I said, "How much more would you need to be more comfortable?" And he said, "If I had $100 a month, plus my $50, I would think I was a millionaire." So I said alright. For one year, I'll give you a hundred dollars a month, but he said no, I couldn't do that. But, he said, "If you'll take a picture for each $100, why then I'll be most grateful." And so that's how it was; from the middle of 1963 through 1964 and through 1965, he got $100 a month from me, and I, in turn, got pictures. He did some that were larger, and I would give him an addition to the $100 a month. And then there was a young man by the name of Herbert who I think is currently with Graham. But I'm not sure.

PC: David Herbert.

LA: David Herbert opened a gallery in East Sixty something or other, and his opening show was a group show, and among this group were about six of Fukui's paintings. And -- I think this was sometime about 1965 -- by this time, his style had changed completely from the oils that he had been doing originally so painstakingly, and they'd gone into all sorts of different styles. I remember I had dinner with Richard Brown Baker, and I said but I first I want to go to this show because a young man I've been interested in is part of the show, and Richard Brown Baker bought one for, I don't remember, $500, $600. And I think that unfortunately it was the only Fukui painting that was sold. Anyway, in '66, he came in to see me with a painting that represented a style that I thought would be easy for anyone to like and absorb, and so I chose him for my '66 artist and had them all done twenty by twenty. By this time he was using acrylics. I extended my gift list and so he did thirty-six, and I think I sold about twenty or twenty-one for him. And at the end of '66, '67, he disappeared, he went back to Japan. He's since returned, and he did a poster based on those '66 paintings that I had given away for Bloomingdales that I think they sold quite a number of them, and he's since had two exhibitions at the Max Hutchinson Gallery which has been quite successful, and he's been doing prints that are sold elsewhere quite successfully. And he's very well set up. To give you a slight idea of how well set up, in January of this year, '72, he called me -- his second exhibition had just opened at the Max Hutchinson Gallery -- and said, "You know the paintings that I did in 1963 and 1964, when I was working in oil? You own all them all. I don't have any." And he said, "Now that I'm doing well and I'm established, I wonder if you would be willing to swap one with me for one of the paintings that are in my current show." The six by six were selling for $1,600, and so I said, "Well, you come." And he said, "I have the kodachromes of all those early paintings." And he came to my apartment early one morning, and I picked out the one that I showed you a photograph of and gave it to him, and then the following Wednesday, I went down and selected one of the large ones. And he said, "I'm hoping that I'll continue to do well, and I'd like to get quite a few of those. On what basis can I get them?" And so I said, "Well, you just get some money, and we'll work it out." But what I had in mind was to have him make a contribution to the museum in return for each one of them that he gets. Fortunately, I'd only given away one of the '63, '64s. I'd given away several of the '65s, and so I had most of them that would be available to him some day. Anyhow, I was by this time building up a list of people from almost all over the country, and in 1967, I got a telephone call from someone by the name of Albert Notabartolo who'd had some work in a gallery on Madison Avenue that did mostly optical things. I had been in the gallery and seen one of his things, and I had commented that I had thought it was quite attractive, and the woman that owned the gallery had gotten my name. Anyhow, he called me and came to see me, and he said that he needed some money and that the gallery was closing, and so I engaged him to be my artist for 1967,

and I sold about 25 of his. Always at $100, there'd been no inflation. I tried to get a gallery for him, but I wasn't very successful. Well, by this time, word of this had gotten around, and for 1968, Bob Indiana called me and said, "Have you got your Christmas artist for this year?" And I said no. And he said, "I'd like to recommend someone." And a young man by the name of Jack Brustca came up and, his paintings were all sort of industrial kind of things done with airbrush. It was very, very effective, and I engaged him to do -- by this time I increased my distribution to forty, and I sold thirty-nine of his. That was 1968. In 1969, I went to see Ivan Karp, then at Castelli, I said that I was looking for an artist for 1969. In October, November of the previous year, I started looking for my next year's artist. And so he said he had a whole file here of young artists' works, and I could look through these kodachromes. So he put me in a corner with a viewer, and I went through them, and I saw shaped canvases, and I said these look pretty good to me. He said that's a Canadian, his name is Reg Holmes and he lives down on East Broadway. And they're all big shaped canvases. And I said, "Well that's all right. Will you try and get in touch with him and have him come down and see me?" So when he came in, I told him what my program was, and they had to be twenty by twenty and to put his shapes on a flat surface, and he said he'd never done anything like that before. He'd always worked in shaped canvases, and he'd come from Vancouver and been a teacher in Vancouver. And as a matter of fact, the way he had happened to come to New York was that the previous year a picture had been sent down here to some kind of show, and Dorothy Roger's daughter had bought it for $1,100 or $1,200. It was maybe ten feet long shaped canvas. And so that encouraged him, and he came down with his kodachromes, and he went to see Ivan Karp, and Ivan Karp, in his greasy manner, said, "What the hell are you doing up there in Vancouver? You belong in New York." And so he had moved to New York with his wife, who fortunately had gotten a job doing research on Time magazine, and he had a daughter that was about ten or eleven, and he was starving. His wife was supporting him. And so I said, "Well, you try four of these images in shapes on a flat canvas, and we'll see how they come out." Well, they looked good to me, and so I engaged him for my artist for 1969, and by this time I'd increased my gift giving to forty-eight pieces, and this will absolutely astound you. But I sold eighty-nine of his at $100 a piece. Plus the fact that . . . one of the things that I worked out is that after the check is made out to the artist, the artist gets the name and address of the person who's bought the painting. And then when I send them out at Christmas, they also get a list of the names and addresses of people all over the country they were given to as gifts, and one of the things the artist must do is send a letter to everyone and advise them that he gets their check, saying he's so happy they have one of his paintings and if they're interested in coming to his studio, giving them his phone number, interested in larger work. Anyhow, he sold about ten or eleven large shaped canvases from anywhere from $800 to $1200 to people who had bought from me the small ones. He had absolutely nothing. And of course I talked to these boys, and I made them put everything in the bank with the result that by the end of the year he had $15,000 in the bank. That was the most successful operation I ever had, plus the fact that a woman from one of my customers, one of the people that bought a painting -- who incidentally has a shop on Miami Beach -- showed it to a gallery in Miami Beach who got in touch with him and had him send down a dozen of those twenty by twenty's, which they put a price of about $150, and they sold a dozen within ten days, and they even ordered more. And then that woman that had the gallery had a friend that had a gallery in Pittsburgh, and she contacted him, and he sent her eight or ten. And then the Pittsburgh woman had somebody else with a gallery in Philadelphia, and in the meantime he has a gallery in Toronto. I continued of course to hear from all of my artists, and I think recently got something, a write-up in a Canadian magazine of a show that he had done in Toronto. To get back to Jack Brusca, various galleries by this time had heard about my artist of the year, and the Bonino Gallery asked who my artist of the year was and I told them Jack Brusca. She came up to see Jack Brusca, and Abe Sachs also came in to see Jack Brusca and bought one for himself for $100, the same way, with a check made out to Jack Brusca. And he was thinking about taking him on, but Bonino beat him to it, and the first show that was held, I think in late 1969, was very, very successful. And then there was another show in early '71, and in January of '72, he had a big show in the Bonino Gallery in Argentina, which he reported to me was a complete sell-out. And he has a gallery now in Germany, and he's off doing big things. Anyhow, let me take you through '70. I was still looking for my artist for 1970, or I should say late '69. I was in the Abe Sachs Gallery, and in his office was a little striped painting that was about eight inches by eight inches, and I said, "What is this?" And he said, "Oh, it's a young man that just brought it in yesterday." I said, "What's his name?" So he looked it upcalled him and had him come down to see me and told him about my program, and had him do four paintings, twenty by twenty, as a trial. Then I took him on for my artist for 1970. And it's astonishing, by this time the standard is forty-eight that I give away because . . . .

PC: What was his name?

LA: Jay Rosenblum. I'm sorry, I thought I'd mentioned Jay Rosenblum. It's astonishing. I may tell you that by this time my list had grown to such a size all over the country. I usually found the artist in October or November and given him money for eighteen to twenty-four in advance and arranged to have them delivered as soon after the first of January as possible. And no matter when he painted them, have them dated that January year, and I sent out a letter to everyone that's ever painted one, and I say I'm pleased to advise you that my new artist for 1970, let's say, has delivered the first group of paintings, and they can be seen in my office at your convience. I'm reading now from the letter I sent out for 1972, the artist's name in this case would be Jay Rosenblum, and his paintings are uniquely striped, etc., etc., etc. And as in the past, the size is twenty by twenty, and they're sold

with a check to the artist for $100. If you wish to send me a check, I would be most happy to select one and send one to you, with kindest personal regards, cordially. I find that people who are from out of New York, they may send me a check so that invariably the first fifteen or sixteen that I sell are as a response to this letter. I started to say that in 1970 as an indication of what hard times meant, despite the fact that I sold 89 in 1969, for Jay Rosenblum in 1970, I only sold about forty some odd. In other words, people just didn't come in to see them, plus the fact that I acquired a place in Scottsdale in 1970, and I took one of Jay Rosenblum's paintings with me, and I did manage to sell to people who came to see us, to visit us in Scottsdale. In other words, I'd get a check for $100, send it to New York and had one friend pick out a painting and send it to him. Also, I had commissioned him to do a large one that I had over the couch, and one visitor said he wanted something just like that. And so when I got back to New York, I had Jay Rosenblum do one. I had said it would be $1,000, and he got $1,000. In any event, one of the things that I do with my artists is that they are not allowed to take a gallery during the year in which they're painting for me. They can have the gallery, but they're not allowed to show if they're lucky enough to get a gallery. Well, naturally Jay Rosenblum wasted no time in letting Mr. Abe Sachs know how successfully I was selling his paintings, and so one day Sachs called me, this was about November, and he said Larry, I'm taking on Jay Rosenblum, and I'd like to give him his first show in December. And I said, "Well, that's not exactly according to the rules," but I said, "When in December?" He said the fourth. Well, I said, "I usually send my Christmas presents out by the tenth, but I'll send them out on the first this year." I certainly didn't want to stand in the way of his having the show, and apparently it was quite successful. And he has now sent me a note of the advertisement for some prints he was doing; they're about eighteen by eighteen, 250 signed prints that are being sold somewhere for $100 apiece. And Abe Sachs has sold quite a few paintings, so he's doing fine, too.

PC: Did any of the people who have received paintings from you become collectors, or is this their collection that they get from you?

LA: I think it's their collection. You're speaking of the ones I give away?

PC: On you gift list.

LA: I doubt very much if many of them have done much on their own. There are exceptions of people who have become much more aware and much more interested in not only them, but in the case of Jack Busca in 1968, and also in Jerry Rosenblum in 1970, I suggested to the Bonina Gallery that they have Jack Brusca do some of these twenty by twenty's. I said you know that's a size that anybody can find a place for, and so he did ten of them, which they sold for $350 apiece in no time at all. But the gallery decided that there wasn't enough profit to make the effort; they'd rather stick to the bigger ones. And I made the same suggestion to Abe Sachs, and he sold quite a few of these twenty by twenty's. In fact, they were smaller. They were sixteen by sixteens for about $350. Well some of these people who have gotten them as gifts have had visitors who'd recognize the artist from such and such gallery, so they are beginning to realize that they have something pretty good. In late '69 when I was looking for my artist for 1971, I got a letter from Grace Hartigan, who now lives in Baltimore, telling me about a young man who had been going to school in Baltimore and had just moved up to New York, and would I kindly contact him and see his work. She thought he was pretty good, and his name was Ed Kerns. And they were really very lovely paintings (I have a large one in the show which you'll see). And he came up with slides, and I told him about my program, and he naturally jumped at the chance. I had him do four of them, the twenty by twenty's, and they looked pretty good. I told him to go ahead, and he had the contract, and I paid him twenty four in advance. I contacted Abe Sachs after I sold about thirty, and I said, "Look, I've got somebody good for you." So he came up to see him, and he went to see young Ed Kerns. Anyhow, he had his first show this March. Quite successful. He's very happy. Of course, we are kind of getting ahead of the whole basic story, but for an exhibition I was planning in the Museum for the spring of '72 . . . . I might add that by 1969 pretty nearly all my activities had been with artists in their studios that do not have a gallery or never had one-man shows. And I've become a lot more a case hardened, I have learned to say thank you very much, it is very interesting, but not the kind of think I'm looking for now. And then I turn away and go off real fast, before I have a chance to see the crestfallen expression on their faces. Anyhow, there was a young lady by the name of Joan Thorne in a studio down on John Street, and I bought one of her paintings. It was eight feet high and about seven feet wide for the exhibition that is currently on at the Museum. On my way out, she said, "Can I show you some of my drawings?" And I looked at them, and I thought she could be my artist of '72, and so I told her about the program and said, "Would you like to do four of these?" They were in crayon or chalk or something. "And come down and see me with them." And so she did four of them, and you see them all hanging around this office now. And I gave her the contract for 1972. Forty-eight for myself, and today I've sold fifty-one so far. If you're interested, I'll give you some of the places to which they went.

PC: Yeah, I'm curious about that, and also are there people who will buy a picture every year from you?

LA: Yes.

PC: Oh, that's fantastic. You've built a lot of collections.

LA: If you're interested, I think I may have saved the letter which comes with the checks from people from out of town, who in response to my letter . . . . Incidentally, in referring to Joan Thorne, after I bought the large painting and selected her, the Whitney selected her for this Whitney Annual, and so she called me up of course about that and was excited. And so, when I sent out my letter on January 4th in connection with Joan Thorne, I was able to say that one of her paintings has been selected for the Whitney Museum Painting Annual which opens on the 25th of January. And I described her paintings -- soft subdued, subdued pastel colors on a white background -- and I find them very beautiful and different.

PC: That's fantastic. That's a great program. You know, it supports the artist, and it gets his work around to lots of people.

LA: What's interesting in this, in, I've lost my place. In 1964, Art in America did a short article on this program calling it "Christmas Artists" and I received a letter from someone in California asking, in San Bernadino, how he would get to be one of those that acquired one of the paintings, so I said it's very simple. You send me (this was already 1965, because he wrote at the end of '64) a check made out to my '65 artist, and I'll select one and send it to you. And so I received a check and sent him a painting, and when I wrote my letter for '66, he sent me a check and bought one for '67,'68, and in '69 he appeared at my office. He hadn't responded to my '69 letter, but he came in and bought one for himself, and he also bought one for a friend. And he said he was very excited about the program and wondered how he could go about doing something of the same sort in California. And so I gave him the name of Tuckman. What is his first name?

PC: Maurice.

LA: Maurice Tuckman, I said to get in touch with Mr. Maurice Tuckman and tell him that you are a friend of mine and what you're interested in doing. And ask him to give you a list of new young artists that do not have a gallery, and you visit them and pick one out. I really am rather remiss; I've been meaning for a long time to write to him because 1971 was when his program started. He selected someone by the name of McCallum that I've since heard from other sources is pretty good, and I really should write to him and find out how his program has gone.

PC: Who is he? It's interesting to, you know, to cross reference, to find out who he is.

LA: His name is Mr. Toby Walker, and he lives in Beverly Hills, California. And in fact, you can do me a favor, since we just spoke of this, you can write and find out how his program has gone. I'd be most grateful.

PC: That's great.

LA: Would you like for me to give you a slight idea of some of the ones I've sold so far this year and where they went?

PC: Yeah, I'm curious.

LA: You want the names of people as well?

PC: Yeah, a name and a city I think would be easiest.

LA: The name of the person who bought it and the city. Mr. Sheldon Landow of Harrington Park, New Jersey; Mrs. Gilbert W. Chapman of New York City; Mrs. Fred Linden of New York City; Mr. Seymour Smith of Hackensack, New Jersey; Mr. Albert Ligee of Dallas, Texas, he buys two every year. Mr. Arthur Kracauer of Scarsdale; Mrs. John Murchinson, you've heard of the Murchinson family, she's quite a collector. She bought two. Mr. Aaron Moss in New York City; Mr. Leonard Ream in Miami, Florida; Mr. Donald Magnun in San Francisco; Mr. Jack Lawman in Indianapolis; Dr. Maurice Schoenfield in Paterson, New Jersey; Mrs. Barbara Shaw in Denver, Colorado; Mr. George M. Jackson in New York City; Mrs. Julie Pissanack in San Marino, California; Mr. Michael Rich of Rich's Department Store, of Atlanta, Georgia, who always buys one; Mr. Bryon L. Harvey of Aeroflex Corp. in Alhambra, California (this the chap that Mr. Toby Walker bought on for in 1969. He bought one his own ever since); Mrs. Dale Webb, you've heard of Dell Webb in Los Angeles; Mrs. Walter Newman in San Francisco; Mrs. Ralph Ablon in New York City (her husband is head of the Ogden Corp); and Mrs. Charles Redfield in Coral Gables, Florida; a Mrs. Alex Backsie of Rancho Sante Fe in California; Mrs. Pat Morideno of New York; Mr. Cyril Magnin of San Francisco, California (remind me to tell you something about Cyril Magnim after that); Mrs. Norman G. Levitt of Scottsdale, Arizona; Mr. Ira Agress of New York; these are just this year's. Mr. Erwin L. Levy of Dallas, Texas; Mr. Charles M. Pelhasten of St. Louis, Missouri; Mr. John Windale Anderson of Grosse Pointe, Michigan; Mr. Arthur Greenwall of Scottsdale, Arizona; Mrs. Lee Johnson of Palm Beach, Florida; Mrs. Marsha Raw of Paradise Valley in Arizona. Mrs. John Micuda of Scottsdale, Arizona; Mary H. Bains of Scottsdale, Arizona (I'll have to explain these Scottsdales to you); Mrs. Dorothy McCar of Paradise Valley, Arizona; Mrs. Harold Dyer of Scottsdale, Arizona; Mr. Francis Strepholt of New York; Mr. Arnold Kimmel of Sands Point, New York; Mrs. Margaret Putterman of New York City; Mr. Robert O. Donald of New York City; Mr. Sidney Goodman of Minneapolis, Minnesota; Mrs. Dale

Simpson of New York City (she is also in the fashion business); Mrs. Richard Braniss of New York City; Mr. Henry Feydor of Westchester, Pennsylvania; Silvia Manson of Nutley, New Jersey, she bought two; Mr. Henry Feydor also bought two and sent me a check for the paintings and I haven't given him his drawing yet. And Mr. Gene Burton of Pasadena California. And there is one that is being picked up tomorrow from someone in Bronxville, New York. The reason there were so many from Scottsdale is because when I was there in February and March, I arranged to give a talk to the Museum League and the Pheonix Art Museum. And as part of that talk, I told them about my Artist of the Year program and said that I had one at my house, and anyone that was interested could come and see it. And I think I sold nine of them to people who were out there. So that's how it goes.

PC: Well, how do all these people get in touch with you, or is it through business or . . . ?

LA: Originally, to begin with, there were people who would come to see me in my office, who were customers. I give them to buyers, and in many cases it would be the owners of the stores. Also, people would see them in their homes and ask about them, and they'd just say write to Mr. Aldrich, and so that's how it's built up. So that at the present time, I probably send out about two hundred letters on the first of the year. In other words, I add to the list any new ones that I will have acquired this year, and of course, always a lot that are from the previous year or the previous years who don't respond.

PC: That's fantastic. Well, what did you want to say about Mr. Magnin?

LA: Oh, I received a letter from him in which he said that he was going to be giving some of the paintings away to the San Francisco Museum, and how could he get an appraisal on them. Mr. Cyril Magnin is Chairman of the Board now and in the process of retiring from Cyril Magnin Stores all over the West coast. And actually I wrote to him and said that I don't have accurate records (there again, I've never kept records in the past until recently) of just which paintings you own. You send me a list, and I'll try to tell you of those that have galleries, and you contact them. By the way, just for the record, I had told you about the Dubuffet series of prints as you recall, and I didn't have the title. The title is Phenomena, and I think there were 58 or 59, so I can dispose of that note.

PC: So over the years hundreds of paintings have gone out and around.

LA: This present lady, Joan Thorne, who is about 29 I would think, and her husband is in Sweden on a grant or scholarship or something. His field is mathematics, higher mathematics, and while she personally lives somewhere in Brooklyn, I don't know where, her studio is on John Street, and it doesn't have any heat, and the poor thing had been painting with her overcoat on. And she is saving all this money so that when her husband comes back at the end of June, she's hopeful that she'll have sufficient money that they can find a loft in New York and have the money to fix it up, one that has heat and all the rest of it. Also, what is interesting is that the artist say to me that as a result of the discipline involved in sticking to twenty by twenty size, they find that they are constantly learning more, and of course, people who buy paintings never know, but the difference in the quality of the first twenty-four that are delivered when I give them a contract and the ones that are delivered after three or four months are absolutely fantastic. They learn so much as a result of doing it.

PC: Right, right.

LA: Well, now that you've gotten our Artist in Residence Program out of the way, where do we want to go back to? Do you want to go back to my involvment with American painting?

PC: Right, I would think that . . . . Well, it was almost the same time that you got involved with your fund at the Museum of Modern Art.

LA: Well, in any event, beginning in '57, while I continued to buy my contemporary European on my trip to Europe, my acquisition from New York galleries started to accumulate too, but there are always some new first one-man exhibitions, like I bought Jack Youngerman in '58, I bought Ellsworth Kelly in '58. I stretched a little of my $1000 limit there and went up to $1500. It was a pretty large picture, and I think I got that from Betty Parsons at that time, and Newman and Ray Parker. Kootz Gallery I bought quite a number of things from. I got involved in most all the galleries, and in themeantime, I was also getting to know Dorothy Miller -- not Alfred Barr. I hadn't met him because of my interest in art and in artists generally, even though possibly this shouldn't be said for publication -- I have avoided having any social activities with artists, and possibly I think one of the reasons for that is because I became so fond personally of Johnny Myers of the Tibor de Nagy Gallery and know so much about tremendous efforts he made for so many artists of note, and after struggling with one for three or four years, attempting to establish him. And I don't know who was supporting him because he never had any money -- somebody like Emmerich or Janis or anyone of the other established galleries would come along (and now we have the Lawrence Rubin Gallery, as another example), and gives his artists such a proposition on an annual basis that Johnny would lose them all. And so I just felt from a standpoint of character I guess artists don't really give a goddamn about anybody but themselves, and so I sort of avoided that. As a matter of fact, a very amusing incident -- I don't know whether this is a moment to go into it -- but in 1965, I came out to Aspen, Colorado to participate in a seminar on Far Eastern thought and religion, which I decided to do because in 1964 I

had gotten kind of mad at De Gaulle and stopped going to Paris, and John Powers, who I had gotten to know and who is a collector, lived in Aspen and was moderating this first seminar. And he asked me if I would like to come to it. I fell in love with Aspen and ended up buying a house on the grounds of the Aspen meadows. And the following year, John started a program of bringing artists to Aspen for the summer session, and he has had some of the top people and among them in '68, I recall was Bob Indiana. And Bob Indiana once said to me, "Anybody that buys one of my paintings and doesn't think enough of the painting to be interested in meeting the artist is something I cannot understand." I said to him, "Well." I said, "Bob, you're an individual, you're different from the majority of artists. I don't know whether when you made that comment you're applying it necessarily to me, but I sort of made it a practice to avoid being on a social basis with artists because I don't want it to affect my attitudes toward their work to begin with." And also I said, "Quite frankly, purely from observation . . . ," and I said just what I told you about Johnny Myers, but I still, as you know, am constantly doing everything I can to further the work of new artists, but it's for the work itself that I admire and doesn't mean that I have to, in any way, socialize, go to bed with them or anything of that sort. Oddly enough, I mentioned this conversation at the end of this summer in idle conversation to Jean and Howard Lipmann, and they make it a point to invite into their home Louise Nevelson, and since then they've become very good friends. And Bob Indiana is a very organized person, and wherever he goes, he sends all of his chums a post card. And I've been on his list for a hell of a long time for reasons I'll tell you as we go on. Incidentally, I said I saved most of the postal cards.

PC: Well, you've mentioned Johnny Myers frequently. Are there other dealers that you saw as much of?

LA: No, I went to almost all of the galleries that I knew would carry avant-garde, so to speak, or the work of young artists. And there's hardly a gallery of that nature in New York that I haven't purchased from. Well, we'll get on with this. In about 1958, a friend of mine, Hector Escaboza who was then president of _____ magazine and company of California and a sort of a painter himself, and he was naturally interested. He had been in Seattle and had been very active in the museum in Seattle and he immediately became active in the museum in San Francisco. And I had dinner with him one night in my apartment and showed him a lot of my things. And I got a letter some time after that from Grace Morley, who was then the director of the museum in San Francisco and she was going to do some kind of exhibition for the University of California at Berkeley. She requested a loan of certain paintings that I guess Mr. Escobaza had told her about, and I agreed to lend them. And among them was a Picasso, all pretty important paintings, and there was a catalog in which they were reproduced, and I wish I had it so that I could give it to the Archives. Perhaps, when I make a final search of all my papers, I'll find that too. Anyhow, she wrote a very nice letter and then after that wrote another letter, and she said she was going to be in New York and she'd love to come and see me. So she came to visit me, and I took her to dinner. And it was still at the point when my wife was not coming into New York that frequently, and I was very often free in the evenings. I took her to see the things I had here and took her to my apartment, and she asked me if she could have one of the Zao Wou-kis for San Francisco, and I said yes, and that was the first Zao that I gave away. At the end of '58 or early '59, I was in Richmond doing a charity fashion show, and my host were the Thalhimer brothers, which were my account in Richmond, Virginia, and knowing my interests in art, they arranged for me to go through the Virginia Museum in Richmond. And a Muriel Christiansen, who was the curator of paintings and drawings and what have you took me through and . . . . (END OF TAPE - SIDE FIVE) [BEGIN SIDE TWO TAPE THREE]

LA: After going through the whole museum and the area that had modern paintings (and I don't mean contemporary, but modern, which I think of as from Manet on up), which consisted of a room that may have been twenty by twenty, and there may have been about twenty or twenty-five small paintings, she asked what I thought of the museum. I said well, I think that's it's quite fantastic. You have a great many things that look as though they might belong in the Metropolitan. Her answer to that was that they belonged to the Metropolitan and were on loan, all the Egyptian things, so I said I certainly am disappointed that for a city this size and the only museum in Richmond, that your modern paintings are such a small representation and your contemporary paintings just ain't at all. And she said, "Well, that's their reason why I was so anxious to meet you. I would like to know whether you would be willing to lend your exhibition to the Richmond Museum." And I was rather surprised because how did she know I had a collection since all of my activities had always been very, very quiet. And there were not very many people, other than personal friends, that knew anything about it. And she said, "Well, I was told about your collection by Grace Morley, who'd been to a convention or something." She said, "I'm very anxious for you to lend it to us, and when it's here, I'd like you to appear at the opening." I said that the only time I can do that is in the month of December because at that time we were living in Nassau in the Bahamas in the winter time, and we were there from right after Christmas until Easter. And I would commute during the winter, spending two weeks in Nassau and one week back in New York. And she said -- this was late in '58 -- "I think that sometime in December before Christmas would just be the perfect time." She said she'd like to make an appointment to come up and go over the things. And so she came up and spent two days with me, and I, well, it was over a weekend actually, because not only did she see everything in my office and showroom and in my apartment in New York and my store room on 39th Street, but she also came to Connecticut and saw the things we had in our home. And as a matter of fact, now that I think of it, she was the one that mentioned Jimmy Suzuki, thought I was going to see him at the Graham Gallery. And what sticks in my mind as a result of

that weekend was that she turned to me the following Monday after the weekend, and she'd come back in the office to make further final arrangements. And the Chagall, Homage to Paris, was hanging in this office at that time. And she said, "You know, Mr. Aldrich, I hope you won't misunderstand, but after seeing all of your collection, my feeling is that all of your pictures are sexy." And I still don't quite understand what she means or meant about that, but I would assume that she meant they're all warm and soft or something of that sort. But I don't know. But in any event, we made a decision that the exhibition would consist of seventy paintings of which half would be contemporaries, which were principally European ones and half would be the so-called modern masters, and twenty pieces of sculpture which would also be divided in the same way. And it was set for December of 1959. Of course, that forced me to get very busy, and I had practically no photographs of any of the things I owned. I had to get them photographed, and I had to look up various bills and for sizes and the year that they were created and all the rest of it. Actually, I think that it was only from that point that I have any accurate records whatsoever. At the present time when I buy anything, if it's from a gallery, I get six photos with everything that I buy, and if it's from a studio, I photograph them. We're all set up for it in the Museum, and so that I have at this point a record of everything that's in the collection. In any event, two weeks before the exhibition was to open, when everything had already gone down to Richmond, and incidentally I have to check to see his name because he's since now retired. Who was the director of the museum, who was really far more interested in design and interior decoration, than art? It was Leslie Cheek, Jr., and he did a fantastic job. He had come to our house in Ridgefield for a weekend as well and our living room at that time was painted a rather dark grey as a background for all the paintings, and he took this very, very large area and he had it all painted in the dark grey with four fabulous crystal chandeliers. And I have a group of small paintings that I call my suitcase paintings. I used to travel a great deal of the time and when I went to Paris and traveled in this country as well on business, I always took along two or three paintings. And when I got to a hotel, well, I just set them out, and it just wouldn't feel the same to me as the average hotel room. So he set up a small room with an entrance and an exit that was in complete darkness with a spotlight on each one of these. I had about thirty suitcase pictures, and he selected about twelve of them for this show.

PC: What kind of things were they? What would you travel with?

LA: I'll give you a slight idea from the catalog. One of the nude Picasso women things. It's only about four inches tall, and I always stuck that in my pocket when I traveled. And there was a Bruno Caruso, a Christiano, a small Alex Yolensky, a Ivan Mosca, I don't think I've mentioned his name before. I have two or three of his. He's italian, and as a matter of fact, remind me about one of them, it's a painting of a beetle. You may know about that. We'll discuss it later. And I have a small Joseph Stella that was done about 1914; it's a study for the bridge. And I have a small Zao Wau-ki of Westminster Abbey that he did in 1951 on a trip to London. That gives you a slight idea. Anyhow, they had twelve, what they call suitcase pictures in the show. So in any event, about two weeks before I was scheduled to attend the opening, which was going to take place at ten o'clock at night or something of that sort, I received a call from Muriel, and she told me that I would be expected to make a forty-five minute talk at the opening. And I said, "Good God, you know I'm not an art critic or an art historian or anything of that sort." And she said, "That's the kind of talk we want. We'd just like you to talk about your own specific experiences to date." So I wrote this talk, and I wrote it in the direction of attempting to encourage people to become involved with -- I didn't speak of it as contemporary art because the collection was half contemporary and half modern masters -- what I call 20th century art. And I tried to tell them about the joys and the pleasures that it has given me, and when I spoke of the contemporary area, I stressed the fact that the classical painting of today was the contemporary painting of it's time, and in almost all cases received the same negative reception from both critics and the public that abstract art receives today. And as a matter of fact, I wound up the talk by saying that I don't doubt that a great many of the things of a contemporary nature that I have collected, history may some day claim it as the pure junk, but how wonderful it would be for my children, if some of these young contemporary people I'm collecting today should become the modern masters of tomorrow, and that my life has certainly been enriched by my art activities and that if as a result of telling my story, if I've succeeded in inspiring any of you to buy that first picture over the fireplace, which I'm sure would lead to many more, I will feel as though it was worth the effort to come and speak to you. Anyhow, apparently it struck the right note, and it was extremely well received and a Mr. Poland was then the director of the Museum in Atlanta, and I didn't know it, but he was apparently in the audience that night. He was a guest of President Cheek. Would you someday like a copy of this talk?

PC: Oh, yes. We'd love a copy of it.

LA: Well, unfortunately, the one I have now is a kind of different. Changes were made as time went by. In any event, he asked if he couldn't have the exhibition for Atlanta when it ended in Richmond. Let me see if there's a date on this because they did a very beautiful catalog; the cover was the Monet in color. And incidentally, the introduction to the catalog was written by Grace McCann Morley. It was very nice. I don't know that you want to get on the record what this says because eventually you'll get the catalog and so on.

PC: How much didyou have to say about what went into the exhibition or did you let them choose whatever they wanted?

LA: Oh, no. I let them choose whatever they wanted. And I came to Atlanta and gave pretty much the same talk. And unbeknown to me, a you lady --Virginia Field -- who was with the American Federation of the Arts, and she's now with the Asian Society. And as a matter of fact, it's through her that I met, you know, we spoke of him, the first private collector that I showed at the museum.

PC: Oh, Richard Baker.

LA: Richard Brown Baker. They were friends. And she was in Atlanta, and she approached me while I was still there and asked if I would lend the collection to the American Federation of Arts to circulate. And they made the same basic idea of half modern masters and half contemporary, but they made completely their own selections, so that they delegated some things that were in the Richmond-Atlanta show, and they added some things that were not in the Richmond-Atlanta show. And that traveled from October of 1960 through April of 1962. I attended the majority of openings and gave this same basic talk, but it was constantly changing as time went by and changing too, because of the change that took place in the items that were in the show. But you would be interested to know where they went?

PC: Well, that again is in the catalog, but what I'm interested in . . . .

LA: Well, you're not going to get this catalog for a long time, I know because unfortunately, I'm afraid I was too generous in disposing of them, and I only have one catalog left of the Richmond one. In fact, it isn't even the Richmond one because, I think it's the Atlanta one. It's the same catalog that Atlanta reproduced, and I only have one of this.

PC: That's an A.F.A. catalog, isn't it?

LA: Yes.

PC: Well, I think all their catalogs came one day so there would be one of those in the library. What I'm interested in is what kind of public reaction did you receive from these exhibitions? From the A.F.A. and the previous two. Was there an apparent reaction that you got, letters or comments from people?

LA: Well, of course there were reports -- write-ups and reviews in all the newspapers all over the country. I'm afraid I must confess that I don't have those either. And as part of my talk, this is something that I didn't exactly invent but came about as a result of my being in the Gallery de France one time. I saw two people looking at some paintings while Miriam Crebo was showing them, and I was waiting for her and when they left I said, "Gee, those people (they were French) don't look like very likely collectors. She said, "Well, they're part of a club that started about a year ago. A group of five people get together, and they buy five paintings and two people are always on the committee, and they all pay for them, and then, when they've bought the five paintings, they have an auction and the lowest bid price was what was paid for the painting. Then if they bid more than anyone else, they get it and anything that's in excess over what he's paid goes into the pot, and then they all contribute money for the next year." And so I told this story in all of these places, but not on the basis of having discovered it in France, but more or less as something that I had evolved as a suggestion since many people are a little hesitant about going out on their own. And there are a great many people who find this group activity far more interesting than any other. The people in the museum itself, some of them had told me that it resulted in many new people becoming actively interested in 20th Century art. Again, I never stressed contemporary at that point, and they all felt as though it would give the museum a much needed push in the direction of the 20th Century art, etc.

PC: Well, this was also the first time that works from your collection had been exhibited as a group.

LA: Right, I had been lending things from almost 1950. Wherever it was requested, I would always lend it, but as a collection, it was the first time and, in fact, the only time, actually. But shall we start now and go back to my collecting activities in New York from '57 on?

PC: That's good because we just really touched upon that.

LA: Before we get back to 1957, I should mention in connection with this exhibition that took place in Virginia and so on, in the January '59 issue of Arts Magazine, which was then maybe not owned but certainly edited by Hilton Kramer, there was a five page write-up on the Larry Aldrich collection stating that it would be shown in Richmond, etc., etc. And he went through the collection and made his choices of what he wanted to show in the magazine, and what he selected to show was the Ferdinand Léger of 1920, the Gaugin Washer Woman, an Andre Masson of 1954, a John Marin, Autumn Landscape of 1913 that I mentioned earlier, a Marsden Hartley, the de Kooning of 1949, the Kandinsky of 1908, the Kirchner Negro Dancer of 1905 and the Emil Nolde, Russian 2, of 1913.

PC: Were most of these in the exhibition or was his selection separate?

LA: No, no. They were just from what was going to be in this. And of course in the story, he tells more about the things that were in the exhibition. Lists a great many of them as a matter of fact. He says, "The collection opens with the impressionists, post-impressionists, the earliest works on display is the late Monet followed by Renoir's posthumous portrait of August Basil. Notable works by Monet, Signac, Gaugin are included as well as by Louis Valtat, Bonnard and Vuillard. The character of the collection however is not determined by the turn of the century works, nor yet by the 20th Century masters including Braque, Gris, Hartley, Kandinsky, Kirchner, Klee, Marin, Matisse, Miro, Nolde, Picasso, Soutine. Rather, the Aldrich assemblage takes it's distinctive tone from it's broad international representation of young and often little known talent. From Italy comes works by Caruso, Fabianis, Gentilini, Masca, Muchini, Musish, Rometias, and Rousseau. French artists include La Boulenlais, Lapoujade, and Roumatuchais. Among the Americans are de Kooning, Hartigan, Levi, and Larry Rivers. In addition, there are the English Alan Davey, the German Karloff, the Greek Macree, the Portuguese Vieira da Silva, the Japanese Sazuki and the Chinese Zao Wou-ki. In the sculpture, the collection reveals the same formative impulses. Young artists represented by the British Chadwick and Paolozzi, the German Kolbe and Moore, the French Cesar and the American Diao. The background against which you have here is supported by Degas, Matisse, Laurens, and Picasso, with the Spanish master contributing no less than nine examples. In effect, the Aldrich sculpture numbering twenty pieces presented every tone of the spirit of the entire collection. An alert and wide-ranging interest in the new, coupled with the readiness to plunge for the sake of fervent enthusiasm." That was most of the article. Another thing that comes to mind is that after this article appeared in Arts I got a telephone call from Dr. Franklel who was then editor, publisher, owner of Art News, who apparently hadn't up to that point heard of me or my collection. I invited him to come and visit with me. He came about three o'clock in the afternoon, first to my office, and then we went to my store room and then to my apartment in New York where he went through everything. And then he had to leave about seven thirty or so. He said if he had more time, he could tell me a great deal about myself as a result of seeing my collection. And I said, "Well, why don't you come and psychoanalyze me as a result of seeing my collection. He said, "I'll write you at some time. Of course he never did.

PC: Oh dear, that would have been interesting.

LA: Yes, I don't know whether it was just chatter on his part or whether he had some ideas. I can't tell.

PC: Oh, you had mentioned the Moska beetle painting.

LA: Oh, yes. That's one that I bought from the gallery in Rome in 1952. And when Bill Lieberman saw that, some years later, he said that -- I think it's Lawrence Rockefeller, I'm not sure, who collects beetles and any painting of an insect. He asked if I would be a nice guy and let him . . . , it wouldn't do me any harm if he could bring this to him and let him buy it. I said, "No, but I'll keep it in mind if I ever dispose of it." I still of course have it. As a matter of fact, I've recently read a reference to it -- again my memory -- I don't know whether it's Lawrence's or David's interest in paintings of beetles and insects.

PC: That's interesting. I didn't know that. You had mentioned Dorothy Miller just in passing, you know. When did you come to meet her? Was it through Bill Lieberman?

LA: I met her through Bill Lieberman at the Museum of Modern Art opening, I dare say about 1957 or '58. I thought she was very attractive, but naturally at these openings you just chat for a minute or two. I had no knowledge of her personal background which of course I've learned a lot about since then, but in 1959, the end of '58 I guess it was, I mentioned that I found that the only way I could acquire Americans was to take off every other Wednesday and get out and around. Well, I didn't feel as though that enabled me to cover enough territory to begin with. In the second place, by this time I had learned of Dorothy Miller's reputation as a finder so to speak of American art, and I was very much interested in helping artists. I had started a foundation in 1950 that made non-interest bearing loans to medical students. Because of the size of the foundation, which is not very large. It was limited to New York University because my closest personal friend was a professor of surgery at New York University and the way this came about was that he once told me about students that fall asleep in class. Somehow or other, they gather sufficient funds to get into the first year of medical school, but a great many of them have to drive taxis at night and do other kinds of work, and they just physically fall apart. And so as a result of this, I started this foundation which made non-interest bearing loans to medical students that were confirmed by the school; they were usually second year students, and when I made whatever was needed for them to complete their year, I would set aside enough for their third and fourth year. Well, in 1958, the government started a program whereby students, particularly medical students, could borrow from a bank, not paying any interest, the interest being deferred until such a time as they are out practicing, etc., etc. So I felt there was no longer any need for me to pursue that activity. And since my interests since 1950 had so much deepened in the field of the visual art field, I decided to devote these funds of the foundation to the arts, and I cast about for various ideas of just how to proceed. I thought of annual prizes or something of that sort, but then I found there was an Emily Lowe, who did something of that nature. And I was familiar with the Museum of Modern Art's because of conversations that I was having very frequently with Bill Lieberman about their problem in getting donors for contemporary work. And so I called Bill when I came to the decision and asked him to have

lunch with me. And I told him that I had decided that I would make available to the Museum of Modern Art for a five year period ten thousand dollars a year which could only be used for the purpose of painting or sculpture, limiting it to not more than one thousand dollars per item. But if there were unusual circumstances, it could go up to eleven or twelve or thirteen hundred. I set that limit to be sure that it would be new people and also someone not already in the collection. I made it very clear that I would at no time make any judgements and decide they couldn't buy this or they couldn't buy that, that it was purely their game to play. The only thing I insisted on was that I see the items that they want me to buy before I give them a check for it and then in each case I get a letter requesting a check for such and such an artist and all of those records, happily, I do have. Of course they were very, very enthusiastic about it and I had me Mr. Barr again at museum functions and he called me and told me how wonderful he thought it was, it was just something that the museum needed desperately, because they did not have funds for new, young people, etcetera, etcetera. And that's how it all started. I had hoped to accomplish two things. One to help young American artists, and quite frankly, the second one was a personal selfish one in thinking that in essence they could help my efforts and sort of do my shopping for me, because, as I said, I could only get out once every two weeks and sometimes I wasn't even able to successfully do that. And I wa under an impression, which I since learned was a mistaken impression, that they had people combing New York galleries all the time. Which I discovered was not the case. And another reason why it did not, the second thought I had did not materialize was because Dorothy Miller or Mr. Alfred Barr, whoever it might be, might select something that would come within the confines of my fund. Well, it first would have to go be approved by the acquisitions committee. That might be three, four, five or sometimes if they got something in the month of May, it wouldn't be presented until the acquisitions committee, until September, and it was only after that was passed and usually there would be a group of two, three, or four that Dorothy Miller would call me and I would come to the museum to see them. And of course, you know, as I said, I never, my agreement was that I had no say in whether they should or shouldn't buy something. Well, what would happen would be that I'd find out where it came from, naturally which gallery, and if there was anything that interested me, I would call the gallery and make an appointment to go and see the work. Well, I found several things happened. In some cases, for example, Larry Poons, which the museum bought a nice sizeable painting for about six hundred dollars which came from the Green Gallery. And it was probably three months after it had been sent to the museum it was sent to me. In the meantime, the museum doesn't worry about where the gallery gets the money, and they don't also realize that the artist doesn't get paid until the gallery gets paid. So apparently, this was from a first show when I was in Europe and missed and, it was so successful that he said I'll put you on the list and they begin at $2500. So I fooled them. Well, that happened time and time again. So that from the selfish standpoint that I mentioned in hoping to have them do my shopping for me, it didn't work out that way. As a matter of fact, later on when I started spending more time away from my business, I was doing more of the shopping for them.

PC: Well, are you satisfied over the years with what they've acquired? Do you think they have done a good job with your funds? Bought a lot of interesting things?

LA: Very definitely. As a matter of fact here's a fine idea of what they bought and when they bought them: The fund started in 1959, and in '59 they bought a Robert Mallory, George McNeil, Milton Sledwick, and a Jack Youngerman. In 1959 in the Sixteen American Show, they bought a Richard Anuskiewicz which was the first painting that he sold (I incidentally bought the second painting that the sold). From that first 1959 year, the only artist that I acquired for myself was Jack Youngerman, and I bought three of them. In 1960, [the fund paid for work by] Richard Anuskiewicz, who I mentioned; one of those Mallory Patchobatten [phon. sp] (I have no recollection of who that was); Joan Brown, who was a California artist (I bought two of those from the Stampfli Gallery); Robert Hangman (I didn't acquire one of those); Wally Hedrick, who is also a California artist (I acquired one of his); Henry Higgins, who is a sculptor (I acquired one of his); James Garbais, who is also a Californian (I acquired one of his). I think there were four Stellas in the show, and I think they were all in black silver or something of that sort. And the only reason I didn't acquire one at the time was because it was 8' by 8', and I was still buying paintings for my own use, so to speak. Incidentally, I think that was seven or nine hundred dollars, and I was told that two years ago by Leo Castelli that he could sell that painting for the Museum of Modern Art over the telephone for $50,000. So that gives you a slight idea. Very often, they would buy things from exhibitions that were held at the museum, and one of the exhibitions that they held in '61 was that "Assemblage and Form." They bought a Pamela Bianco; a George Brecht; Thomas Chimes (I bought two of those); a George Cohen; a Bruce Connor which was a horrible black fox with what-not; and Sally Hazelett Drummond who does portraits and who incidentally now lives in Ridgefield, Connecticut; Jean Fallutt; a Robert Indiana, which is a well known painting (it's probably about $20,000 today); Elaine de Kooning; a Jim Love; a Robert Moscovitz (I have several of his). In 1962, it was Al Copley. You want me to continue this?

PC: I'm curious about things they acquired and who also acquired them.

LA: John S. Anderson; a Robert Beauchamp (I acquired one of his); Robert Hansen; Jacob Landau; Wayne Thiebaud (I acquired one of his and we had an argument about it, if you call him a pop artist); and Tom Wesselmann. Wesselmann was another incidence of I can't remember now what gallery it was, but the Museum had it for several months before I saw it. I called up, and none available, but I wasn't that keen about it anyway.

That painting is now about $15,000, I'm told. In 1963, it was a Vern Blosum; James Gill; Lester Johnson (I acquired two of his); David Park; a Larry Poons (I told you why I wasn't able to acquire one of his); David Simpson; and a Will Insley. In 1964 it; was a Kirsten Kraa (I acquired one of hers); Alice Neal: Elizabeth Sparhawk Jones; Nina Trevergadoctor; Esther Biandostampfi; and Agatha Wejchiechowsky (I acquired two of hers). In 1965, it was Getulio Alviani; Billy Al Bengston (I had bought the Billy Al Bengston in 1963 from Martha Jackson); Toni Costa; Benjamin Cunningham; Paul Feeley; Charles Hinman (before we get through with '65 I'll go back to Charles Hinman); Ray Johnson; Craig Kaufman (I'll go back to him too); Sheldon MacKline; Enzo Mari; Agnes Martin; Gladys Miesson; William Ryman; Ole Sihovonen; Miroslav Sutej; Tadaski; Ernest Trova; Walter Zehringer; and Ernest Trova. I had bought it in 1963 from Pace Gallery; it was one of my first ones that they had. They were considering taking him on, and I bought this painting, and I've since owned quite a number of Trova's sculpture and painting. In fact, one he gave me as a gift. [There are] two things about 1965[you should know]. That was the year that they had the Observant Eye show. There were Europeans as well as Americans, and Alfred Barr called me and said, "Larry, I want you to do me a favor. I wouldn't have called about this unless I was rather desperate," he said. "When I picked them out in Europe, I agreed to buy certain paintings for the Observant Eye show." And he said, "The museum doesn't have any funds at all, and I can't find a donor because they are all under a $1,000, and would you let me use part of your funds even though I know they are limited to American artists for this purpose because otherwise I don't know what I'm going to do." I said, "Well, I'll think about it." Well normally, my first reaction was to say that's your headache, but by that time I had gotten to be so fond of Mr. Barr as a person, and I just felt it was a terrible embarrassment to him to have to call me. When you think of the kind of people on the Board of the Museum of Modern Art and how close he was and should have been to them, but he had to call me, who certainly was a Johnny-come-lately in his life. He wouldn't approach any of those people who certainly could have done any number of favors. And certainly God knows he's done enough for them in buying things for them, like the Monets he bought in Paris for nothing for David Rockefeller, Paley and Bertram Smith and several others. But anyhow, being a soft-hearted guy I said all right. Now to get back to telling you about my original hopes that they could do my shopping for me and that it wasn't working out that way. We come to Charles Hinman. Charles Hinman had his first show in 1965 at the Richard Feigan Gallery, and where by this time I had bought quite a number of things. Feigan called me and said this show is coming up. I know that you're never in New York on Saturday, but it is opening on Saturday, and I think it is something that you'd be very interested in. And so I said that I'm going to be gone for about ten days, so if you have them there, I can come down tonight at six o'clock. He said, "Fine, I'll wait for you." I was just crazy about them, and I selected a very large one that was sort of tear-dropped shape, and I bought it for I think it was $900 or $700, I'm not sure which. And that night at home, I called Dorothy Miller, and I also called Jack Baur at the Whitney. I told them about this new artist, and I thought that all prices were under a thousand dollars and I thought it was great. In any event, someone came up from the Whitney, and they didn't like it, who it was I don't know at this point. But Dorothy Miller did go up and see the Hinman and when I came back, which was ten days later, and the show was still on, she called me and said, "Larry, those Hinmans are great, but the one we want is the one you picked out." I said, "All right, you can have that one. I'll get another one." So I called Dick Feigan, and I told him that the Museum of Modern Art could have the one that I had picked out and of course my fund would be paying for it, and I would come up and select another one. And he said, "Larry, you can't because the show is all sold out. However, Chuck is still working and making new ones and I'll promise you that when he creates something new and brings it, you'll have the first look at it." So he called me once, and I went, and I didn't like it. And he called me a second time, and I didn't like it, But the third time was one I did like. It was about half the size of my original one for $700, and I said, "Fine, I'll take this one, and it shouldn't be more than about $400 since it's half the size of the one that was $700. He said, "I'm sorry, Larry, but it's $1400." I said, "What?" He said, "You know, they were very cheap, and Chuck Hinman is a very good friend of Rosenquist. And Rosenquist told him you're crazy to price them that low and since they were such a big sell-out, you ought to double your prices right away." I said, "This is a hell of a note. You double your prices because of the fact that the Museum of Modern Art bought one, and I'm sure that you told everybody, and it was on that date that you sold out the whole show. I said, "I'm responsible because you know very well that I called Dorothy Miller and told her about these. And now I'm forced to pay the penalty." He said, "It's not in my control. I'll tell Chuck Hinman about it, and we'll see what can be done." Well, he called me two days later, and he said, "Larry, I've talked to Chuck and told him all about it, and Chuck talked to Rosenquist and the best he can do is $1100." So I paid $1100 for it. Craig Kaufman was at the Pace Gallery, and again I called Dorothy Miller and the Whitney, and Dorothy Miller came up. And she bought one, but this time not the one I had selected. So that was my participation in 1965. Should I at this point tell you, possibly I shouldn't even tell because it's on me in a sense. It has to do with the fact that 1965 was the year of the Observant Eye Show. Do you want me to tell you about it now, or shall we go all the way back and I go . . . .

PC: No, this is a good start right here.

LA: Well, Bill Seitz, as you know, did this show, and in the early 1960's, Pop Art suddenly blossomed. By that time, I was pretty active in going to galleries everywhere, and Pop Art just didn't appeal to me. However, besides Pop Art, there were what to me were seemed like new geometric paintings. I'll have to check to give you the names, but in any event, I must have bought about seven or eight paintings. In fact, when Bill Seitz was

working on the Responsive Eye show, I brought him to my storeroom and showed him all of them, and he added two or three people to his list who were subsequently shown in the Observant Eye show. But as part of his coming to see me in August 1964, and the Museum re-opening in October of '64, we were doing a massive alteration job which included a sizable landscaping job, and the entrance to the building was recreated. There were just simply masses of dirt all over the place, and my wife was just going mad. She thought that the whole concept of the landscaping was stupid and what-not. She was frankly driving me batty. And so I knew that in about two weeks it would look like an entirely different story instead of all these mounds and mounds of dirt, because he hadn't changed earth levels and everything else. So I suggested that she make a round trip with me on the Queen Mary, getting off at Southhampton and going to London for three nights, and then going back to Southhampton and returning. And I had loaned my small Miro, which I didn't sell in the auction, to Penrose who was doing a Miro show in the Tate Gallery. So while we where in London, we went there, and they were just hanging the show at the time. It wasn't open to the public, but I went in to see Penrose and looked at all of the Miros and then went through the rest of the museum. I saw a painting that had small and large black and grey dots on it that was quite sizeable. And there was no label on it or anything else, and so I went over to the young lady at the desk and asked whose painting it was, and she said it was an English girl by the name of Bridget Riley. And I said, "Well, can you tell me what gallery carries her?" I was given the name of -- I think they are out business -- a gallery in London, and I immediately went to the gallery and he said that he didn't have any, that he had sent three of them to Richard Feigan in New York. That the Feigan Gallery was going to have a first show of Bridget Riley that following October or November. So as soon as I got to the New York, and unpacked my bags, the first stop I made was at the Richard Feigan Gallery, and sure enough, he did have three, and one I didn't like, but two I was crazy about. And I said, "I'll buy both of these." And he said, "Well, I can only sell you one because someone from the Museum of Modern Art is coming over to see these, and they may want one of them. But you know, we're good friends. I promise you that you'll have one positively." He said they are coming over in a day or so. Well, they did come over in a couple of days later, and they sent both of them over to the museum for their committee to look at, and they selected the larger one and I got the smaller one. Now we come back to, this is in 1964, about September, and the '65 show is coming up. Bill came to see all the various things that I had, and the Bridget Riley at that time was hanging here in my office. He said, "You know Larry, it would be a great idea if you converted that into a fabric. I think it would be terrific." So I said nothing about it, and we went to our store room where he saw the other . . . .

PC: Well, we only have a minute and a half left on the tape.

LA: Well, I can't tell you the rest of the story in a minute and a half, so shall we make a notation where we are and take it up at another time. [BEGIN TAPE FOUR SIDE ONE]

PC: Okay, this is side seven.

LA: I showed Bill all of those paintings that I thought were a new form of geometries, and I believe that he picked out two of them for the Observant Eye show that he did not know about. One was an Avedisian and the other one whose name we can't remember at the moment -- It was at the Martha Jackson Gallery. But when we were in our cutting room, he said, "You know, Larry, really I think it would be a terrific idea if you were to convert some of these to fabric." I had a less expense firm as well as the Larry Aldrich clothes called Young Elegants, and I got Julien Thomshin [phon. sp.] who was a fabric designer. I had the Vasareley and the Bridget Riley and Anuskiewitz and this other young man who I can't remember, and I said I would like to convert these into prints. I said I don't want them to be copies of these paintings, but I want the prints to be inspired by these paintings. Of course this is something that you're going to have to do exclusively for me. And so he presented quite a number of sketches for this line. And then he made up the fabric. I stress again that he was to make these exclusively for me, but he was a very clever little boy, for while he made those exclusively for me he made variations on those and put them on an inexpensive fabric that was shown and sold to inexpensive blouse people and what not.

PC: So they were everywhere?

LA: They were everywhere all of a sudden. Anyhow, the Bridget Riley one was not necessarily the most successful, but because it was interpreted in black and white and in grey and white, it was quite effective. And Bill said, "I think it would be wonderful if you gave Irma [his wife] a cut of the fabric, and she could have a dress made out it to wear to the opening of the Observant Eye show." And a turban. I sent her a big swatch of it. In the meantime, we had designed some dresses, and I showed them to Life magazine. And Life went for them and had a feature that came out shortly after the Museum of Modern Art show opening. Anyhow, Anuskiewitcz, whom I had gotten to know quite well by then, was just thrilled with the idea of what I had done. This other chap at Martha Jackson's Gallery was very, very happy about it. The one that lived in Paris I didn't hear from.

PC: You mean Vasarely?

LA: Vasarely, yes. Bridget Riley was coming for the show, and I met her at the opening dinner. In fact, this was

such a big event that NBC or CBS were filming, and they asked that I be filmed with her in front of the Bridget Riley, which I had loaned for the show and [they had me] tell how I happened to buy it, you know, the whole story of seeing it in the Tate and so forth. And she was very attractive, and so I said, "Would you come down to my showroom? I have something that I'd like to give you as a gift." And so she arranged to come down with, oh dear, what is his name? The Englishman. Smith that got the last Venice Biennale a couple years ago.

PC: A painter?

LA: A painter. His canvases were shaped.

PC: Oh, Richard Smith.

LA: Richard Smith, yeah. She came down with him and Eugenia Sheppard of the Herald Tribune. At the opening, Eugenia Sheppard asked about a dozen times to meet Bridget Riley to take her picture. When I found her, I couldn't find Eugenia Sheppard in that sort of a crowd. So I called Eugenia that afternoon, and I said that Bridget Riley was coming at five o'clock. She said that's marvelous. So she appeared with her photographer and waited. And Bridget Riley came in. And I had prepared a rack of all of the prints that were made from all of the paintings including the Bridget Riley, assuming, want one for herself. Well much to my amazement and my shock and my horror, Riley literally hit the ceiling. "How dare you take one of my paintings and convert it into a fabric." And so on and so forth. And she was absolutely livid and, of course there was the photographer taking a shot of her emoting in a big way, plus Eugenia Sheppard writing just as fast as she could. Well, I don't have to tell you that it was a very embarrassing experience. The fact that the other artists were thrilled about it didn't mean a goddamn thing. Well, the result was that she actually got a lawyer who wanted to sue me for the profits. It was a real scandal that went on and on. In fact, she was a guest at Scull's several nights later and sat next to Eugenia Sheppard, and she went on and on about Larry Aldrich. So, that was one of my less happy experiences.

PC: Whatever happened with the whole thing?

LA: It went away after a while. As a matter of fact, it was a lost operation for me to begin with because this young designer fellow had plastered it over the whole wide world to very inexpensive firms. And if you recall that period, they were everywhere from $1.98 up, so that I not only got stuck with fabric but had to sell out the dresses to Lohman's. In every way you can imagine, it was a disaster -- financially, emotionally, and every other way. And I felt for a while that I wanted to go into hiding. Anyhow, that was 1965. ***** In 1966, George Baker, Francis Celentano, Marvin Israel, Joseph Levi, they [Museum of Modern Art?] got through me. Someone told me about him, and I went to see him in his gallery. I made the first purchase of a work of his, and I think the Whitney bought one too. Ronald Mallory is another; I bought the first one and told them about it, and the Museum of Modern Art bout one. Ronald Markman; Richard Merkin; Rudolfo Mishaam; Walter Tandy Murch; and Fairfield Porter. In 1967, Gene Davis, and that's another case -- I was crazy about the painting. It was then at the Poindexter Gallery, but it was three months after the Modern had selected it, and she had no more, and she lost Davis. He'd gone with another gallery, and when his first show came up in the following year (this was a big painting, about 8' by 8' or larger that I bought for the Museum of Modern Art for $1000), they started at $4000 for small ones. So I never got one of those. Peter Dechar -- I bought two of his, but at this point, it's not very clear whether I saw him first or Dorothy Miller told me about him. Oh, dear, what is that gallery?

PC: Ekstrom.

LA: Ekstrom, yes. Anyhow, I bought one for myself, and I told Whitney about it (if Dorothy told me I don't remember), and they got one. Tony DeLap -- I had bought one of Tony DeLap's things in 1955. Nicholas Krushenick -- there's another story about that. He had a show at the Pace Gallery, which I think was more or less his first real exhibition, and again it was opening on a Saturday. And Arnold Glimcher called me, and I went up there on a Friday afternoon and picked out a painting for myself. And I said, "You know, I'm $1000." Everyone knew about my limit, and I believe it was $1800 or something like that. And I said that I'd call Dorothy Miller, which I did right from their gallery. Well, she came up on the following day with Alfred Barr and the only one they wanted was the one I had picked out. So they got it, and of course they let me know about that first thing on Monday. And I went back up on Tuesday and selected another one that was half the size. As a matter of fact, the one I have is a $8000 size, and the one they have is a $12000 size. Stanley Landsman I saw at Castelli and told Dorothy Miller about, and for my fund they were only able to get a small one. I had him in my highlights show that year, and I got a big one, which I still have. Norman Zammitt is an artist from California that I had bought in 1966 and told Dorothy about, and then he had a show here with Felix Landau, who went with another gallery and then combined with . . . .

PC: Charles Allan.

LA: Allan. That's it. And she went up and saw Zammitt, and they bought one of his. So you see that gradually I got to be doing more of the shopping for them than they for me. In 1968, they bought a Peter Agostini, a Paul Mogensen and a Gladys Niesson, none of which interested me. In 1969 a Rollin Crampton, a Don Kaufman which

I had put them onto, another Alfred Lesley, his style had so changed that I agreed to it. Robert Mangold, which I also had told them about, and an Earl Miller. In 1970, Steven Antonakos -- perhaps this requires a different story. By 1970, Dorothy Miller was out of the Museum, and Bill Lieberman had been made director of paintings and sculpture. Steven Antonakos, David Diao, Robert Grosvenor, and Peter Hutchinson were all people that I had told the museum about, but they did nothing about them. I had bought them in '68,'67',69. My understanding was that it was to be purely painting and sculpture. So Bill Lieberman called me to come and see new acquisitions for my fund to pay for, and there was a Steven Antonakos drawing for $400 or $500 when I had bought a light sculpture for not much more than that. A David Daio drawing for a few hundred dollars, and I had a eight by nine painting that I told them about for $900. A Robert Grosvernor drawing -- I had told them about the sculpture -- and a Peter Hutchinson, whose painting I had bought in 1965, who was now doing conceptual things. And this was purely a photograph of an underwater thing or something of that sort. And a Brice Marden, which was a drawing, and a Dennis Oppenheim, which was also a conceptual thing, just a photograph for $1000. And a Richard Van Buren, I don't know if you're familiar with his work -- all little pieces in plastic. I had shown him in the highlight show of 1968 at the Museum. And when I pointed out to Bill that this was not part of our arrangement, that I was not going to buy photographs and certainly everything else was drawings. Oh, by the way, to get back to 1969. That Alfred Leslie was a water color of O'Hara, and they wanted me to buy that because of the fact that it was O'Hara even though Leslie was already in the collection from my fund, which I agreed to do. Of all the rest of these were drawings, the only legitimate one was Richard Van Buren, and when I pointed that out to Bill, he said, "Oh, yes, but things have changed now. I'm director of paintings, sculpture, prints, and drawing. It all comes under one head, and so, what the hell." So I agreed and paid for all of those things and that closed out the fund. Incidentally, when the fund closed, out of the ten years of $100,000, there was still about $10,000 that they had not spent. I have not heard from them since July, 1, of 1970, in connection with it. But in the event I do, I plan to tell them that I'm sorry, but there's just not any more funds.

PC: They really got extraordinary amount of work.

LA: Well, this gives you a slight idea of what can be done with a comparatively small amount of money if you'll concentrate on seeking new young people. I dare say that you could pick out three of these items, and they would be worth today more than the whole. More than the $100,000 even though they only spent about $90,000.

PC: That's fantastic. So that fund is over with then?

LA: That fund is over with, yes. And of course, I mentioned to you earlier that the Whitney fund, which started as a result of my giving the Monet to the auction, that was for five years, but I carried it through for six years. And when we get to that phase of my story I'll be able to tell you why. [END OF TAPE SIDE SEVEN]

PC: Side eight, 18th of May, 1972. Paul Cummings talking to Larry Aldrich.

LA: I believe I mentioned earlier that I had no contact with other people who were interested in art other that dealers. Collectors were people that I didn't know and made no effort to know. It was just by chance around 1951 or '2 that I met Bill Lieberman of the Museum of Modern Art, and we became rather close friends. Bill kept telling me that I should get to know other people who were actively interested in collecting art, although I couldn't pin him down as to any virtue or benefit in that for me in any way whatsoever. But in any event, in probably the mid-fifties, I did join the Collector's Club connected with the American Federation of Arts, which held an annual meeting, and it was a form of fundraising. But I did attend quite a number of their annual meetings, and I met a great many people who were members that were actively interested in the arts like Mr. Hirshhorn and Vera list and quite a number of other people. But however, other than seeing them at these annual meetings, I made no effort whatsoever to, in any way, mix or mingle with them socially.

PC: What actually is that club? I never had anybody define it very well.

LA: Well, it's really nothing but a means of fundraising for the American Federation of Arts. It was $100 a year. It has since been raised to $125 a year. And they have an annual dinner at which they have various speakers, and they attempt to have different kinds of functions each time. Sometimes, it's a matter of going in a bus to see somebody's collection. As a matter of fact, one time they went to the Joseph Hirshhorn house and saw the sculpture and had lunch there. This is getting ahead of my story, but after I opened the Museum, the Collector's Club came to Ridgefield on their annual do of that year. I guess it was '65. Besides seeing the exhibition that was up at that time, I took them through my store rooms and arranged to have dinner, a steak fry as a matter of fact, at a local building that's used as a community center. Other times, it's been held at different clubs, and frankly, I haven't attended one of the annual affairs for about the past three or four years.

PC: Well, somebody had told me they also would give works of art to various museums and things. Do they do that or is that just bad information?

LA: Well, that's unknown to me, their giving works of art to museums. The Federation, as you know, circulates

exhibitions, but that's about it. And then in about 1958 or '9, I can't remember which, again at Bill Lieberman's urging I was invited to joint the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art and that too is a disguised form of fundraising. Members pay $1000, but they have it so organized that it's on a basis of high honor to be invited to join. And presumably, it's only top people, either as collectors or in the social sphere or what have you. In fact, the first meeting I attended, and that's also just an annual sort of affair, was at Philip Johnson's in New Canaan. I had met Philip Johnson prior to that through the Modern at various occasions, but this was a do at his house, at which there was the annual meeting and luncheon was served and all that sort of rot. The second meeting I attended was held in Washington, and as part of it, we were taken through the National Gallery and then had our meeting at the Solegrave Club or something of that sort. And I believe the third meetings was held at Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III's house in New York City, her apartment rather. And the fourth meeting was in Detroit, at which they went through the Detroit Museum, and I think Mrs. Ellie Ford, I believe was her name, gave the dinner for the group. I did not attend that one. I had Mrs. Aldrich attend it instead. And after the Museum opened, after I opened my own Museum, rather with the costs involved, I dropped out of the International Council because I needed all the possible funds that I could spare for the Museum.

PC: Well, did you find that a rewarding activity or just kind of a nice social event, being involved with the International Council?

LA: Well, I didn't find it in any way particularly rewarding. For one thing, it didn't take me very long to find out that, while they went through what was supposedly a meeting and an election and all of that sort of thing, it was really all cut and dry that the members really had nothing whatsoever to say about it, that there was just a small clique that had started it, I guess, I don't know how much earlier than when I joined. Everything was controlled, and all you did was confirm what had been done. As a matter of fact, at the Washington meeting, I did speak up about the fact that they ought to attempt to do something that would be more interesting to the members of the International Council instead of these social occasions, annual social occasions and cut and dry pseudo meetings. And I hadn't any plans of exactly what, but if you're going to keep the interest of people -- and the way that came about is that at the meetings they mentioned the fact that there'd been so many that had dropped out and that they needed efforts to be made by the members to secure other new members, again on a basis of, you know, they would be invited to give their $1000 a year. Not that anybody could just apply and join. And as a result of my comment, when we came back to New York, I got a call from August Heckscher and a date was set up to meet at, I'm trying to think of her name, the name of the woman who's very close to the Museum of Modern Art. I think her aunt was one of the original founders.

PC: Mrs. Parkinson.

LA: Mrs. Parkinson. We met at Mrs. Bliss Parkinson's house to discuss the potential of what could be done about making membership more interesting. But nothing really came of it, and as I said before, when I opened the Museum, I just dropped out. This is a rather amusing side-line, but I had become by this time very close and friendly with particularly Dorothy Miller, whom I liked and admired very much. I'd also gotten to know Mr. Alfred Barr, and we had lunch together several times, and this was at about the time that I had started the Museum of Modern Art fund. And when the Sixteen Americans show was put on in '59 by Dorothy Miller, I was invited to see it about three days before it opened, not only to the public, but to the contributing members. It wasn't completely hung even at the time, and one of the things that I saw that I liked very much for the first time was a Jasper Johns. There were four of them in the exhibition, and three of them had apparently been bought by Mr. Barr and the fourth one, which was the one I liked the best was a flag, oh, I would say 48" by 48". I said to Dorothy Miller that I would like to acquire that particular one. And she said, "That's the only one that there's a possibility of anyone acquiring (and I think the price was two thousand dollars), but it's reserved for Mr. Nelson Rockefeller, and until he gets around to seeing it we can't let you have it. But if he doesn't want it, you can have it." Well, after the exhibition opened, I think that Jasper Johns almost immediately became one of the stars of the exhibition, and I would contact Dorothy Miller about every two weeks and say, "Well, what about that Jasper Johns?" And she'd say, "Larry, Mr. Rockefeller hasn't gotten around to seeing it yet." Well, the exhibition closed, and Mr. Rockefeller still hadn't gotten around to see in it, but about two or three weeks after that he did see it and bought it. Well, since I had anticipated the possibility, good possibility of acquiring that picture, I didn't do anything about contacting Castelli. And after I was told finally that Mr. Rockefeller was taking it, I did contact Mr. Castelli, and he said, whom I really didn't know very well, and he said, "Mr. Aldrich, all I can do is put you on the list, and I want to tell you that you'd be about number 36 or 37." So that ended that, and it wasn't very long after that, Mr. John's prices went up, up, up, and up. Much to my regret, I do not have the Jasper Johns in the collection. It's rather ironical though that in the fire you may recall in the Governor's Mansion, Albany, that was one of the pictures that was completely burned up.

PC: Really? I don't remember that.

LA: And several others. But that was one of them. In any event, you may recall that in early 1960, I guess it was, there was a fire at the Museum of Modern Art that was quite tragic. There are some things that they lost entirely. And quite a number of others, particularly a Monet, that I believe it took several years to bring that one

back. And this is just sort of an amusing kind of thing to give you an idea of how keen and close I felt to the Museum of Modern Art at the time. They had a lot of great costs as a result of the fire and certainly did not have available funds. And at the spur of the moment I just picked up the telephone and called about thirty-five or forty people that I knew. Of course this has all been front page news so that anyone living in New York knew about the fire. And I just said that, you know, they're in difficulties, and they need some money and said I don't want much, but please send me a check for a hundred dollars. And within two days, I had raised about four thousand dollars that way, and sent it on to the Museum. After the fire, the Museum decided that they had to do quite a number of things to make certain that an accident of this kind would not create as much problems and damage because apparently there were certain open stairwells that were contrary, really, to the fire laws as they existed at the time, but were not contrary to them when the museum had been built. And they decided to make a campaign for about $20,000,000 or $25,000,000. I worked on that campaign. I succeeded in getting a $15,000 donation from Lord and Taylor. I worked very closely with Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III in connection with that. And also got a $10,000 donation from a Mr. Lawrence Wein, and in fact I had Mrs. Rockefeller go and see Mr. Wein. I set up an appointment for him in which he gave her $10,000 for the Museum. And what is rather interesting about it is that Mr. Wein happens to be my cousin, and as a result of that meeting, Mr. John D. Rockefeller III got Mr. Wein involved in the Lincoln Center, and he raised several million dollars for the Lincoln Center. And he did it in a rather amusing way. Mr. John D. Rockefeller III is naturally a name that is not only prominent, but there are a great many people who would be very impressed at the opportunity of meeting him. And so the way Mr. Wein handled it was that I think there was a hundred thousand dollar donation that would put your name up on the board or something of that sort. And so he would make luncheon dates for himself and a prospective donor who was capable of giving that much money but normally, would have absolutely no interest in Lincoln Center or what it represented, and Mr. John D. Rockefeller, III. And of course in every particular case, just to be able to return from a luncheon and say, "my friend John D. Rockefeller III," why, I think, he managed to raise about $2,000,000. He became a trustee of Lincoln Center. I think he's the vice-president or something. But all of this came about as a result of my sending Mrs. Rockefeller to Mr. Wein's office. And as a matter of fact, you may have read about two years ago that the final financing was completed for Lincoln Center with Mr. John D. Rockefeller III giving $1.25 million, and Mr. Lawrence Wein giving $1.25 million. So that's a little by-line connected with it.

PC: I'm always amazed that, you know, a small little gesture like that could just grow into something enormous.

LA: Yes, you never know. To continue about the Museum of Modern Art, they decided that they would, as part of their fund raising, have an auction, which I think took place in 1960. Refer to some notes I made on some information that I was able to get because I can't exactly remember all those dates. The auction was held sometime in 1960, and several close friends of the museum were called to a meeting and told about this auction. And they had a list of names of collectors, of people who had collections and the list was parceled out to each person to contact. Among the names that I was given were, was Lee Ault, and I didn't know him personally. I contacted him, and he gave me a Soulage that was oh, a modest size, about 3' or 4' by about 3'. Someone else that I didn't know either, he's since died. In fact, I asked to be given the names only of people that I didn't know because I find that it's much easier to contact someone you don't know for something of this sort. It is for me, anyhow, than to attempt to ask someone that you do know. In any event, I can't recall that person's name, and they gave a Utrillo. And I personally gave a Juan Gris. I'll tell you later what all those things sold for. Another person I was asked to contact was Roy Neuberger, the stockbroker, and part of the whole set-up was that, before anything was accepted, we had to personally contact Mr. Alfred Barr to get his approval, because he felt that there shouldn't be anything in the auction that might not sell for at least $3500. So I contacted Mr. Roy Neuberger, and he said, "Yes, I'll give you a very large and very important Eilshemius." I called Mr. Barr about that and said, "No thank you, we don't want it." I told Mr. Neuberger that I was sorry but they didn't feel as though that would be right for the auction. Would there be anything else and Mr. Neuberger said, "No, I'm sorry there won't be anything else." So I found out later that Mr. Neuberger had bought about two hundred Eilshemius's at one time for about ten or fifteen dollars or twenty dollars a piece and he had them in a warehouse and any time anyone asked for something for some charity, he'd donate an Eilshemius, which no one was particularly interested in and didn't bring any money. Another person I was asked to contact was a Mr. Henry Pearlman, whom I met subsequently, and he said, "Oh, yes. You know I love the Museum of Modern Art." And he said, "Call me back tomorrow, and I'll think of what I can give you." So I called him the next day and he said, "I have something very, very good for you. It should bring a lot of money. I have a ceramic head by Gaugin and dated about 1901."

PC: Oh yes, you had mentioned that. It was an edition or something.

LA: And I was very excited about it and thanked him profusely. And I explained that I would have to report this to Mr. Barr and call him the next day and so I called Mr. Barr, all excited. I called him Mr. Barr although he insisted every time I said Mr. Barr, he said, "Please call me Alfred". But somehow or another I had so much respect for him that it was years before I could address him as Alfred, and I said, "I'm very excited about something I'm getting from Mr. Henry Pearlman, and that's a ceramic Gauguin head and that should really bring a lot of money." And there was a hesitation and silence at the other end of the wire, and then he said, "I can't

explain why, Larry, but I don't think we want, we can't, we don't want that in the auction." And so I was very deflated about it, and I called Mr. Pearlman and said, "I'm sorry, but Mr. Barr doesn't think it would fit in with the other things in the auction, and would there be anything else." He said, "No, I'm sorry, but there isn't anything else that I could give you." Well, several months later, I was at Mr. Gerston's Gallery, Gerston Fine Arts and he said, "Come here, I want to show you something." And he takes me in the back room and he says this is what people in the art world are like and showed me a Gauguin head. And he said this is Mr. Henry Pearlman's, and he said he was a big customer, and he couldn't offend him, but he brought it in to me for me to try to sell for him. And he said he had bought the original several years ago and he had twelve or fifteen copies made and I guess that was something that Mr. Barr new about, and I didn't. I happened to be leaving for Europe at that time and Dorothy Miller said, "Would you please go to the Kanweiler and the Gallery Maeght," and that Elenor Saidenberg had approached both of them on a trip to Europe for something for the Museum of Modern Art. And they had both turned her down because they said, "What do we care about the Museum of Modern Art. They never bought anything from us." So I said all right, I would try and in Paris. I bought a lot of things from the Gallery Maeght, and I bought a great many things from Kahnweiler. And I approached both of them and while I didn't get a great big gracious smile or anything like that, they gave me the same story, why you know the Museum of Modern Art had never bought anything from them, but I pointed out to them the importance of the Museum of Modern Art and the effect it had on a great many people. That they had inspired to collect and made America a great deal more art conscious. And they needed help, and it would be beneficial to them. There would be a catalog and their name would be in it and all the rest of it. Anyhow, grudgingly, I got a big Talcott from Gallery Maeght, and Kahnweiler gave me a very large Andre Masson, before the auction. Obviously, I didn't even have to bother to call Alfred from Paris, since it was obvious to me that both of those would go for a great deal more money that the $3500 limit. And then I went to Gallery de France -- that was on my own -- from whom I had bought a tremendous number of paintings and they were pretty, well primitive, audacious, and offered me a Soulages and a Hartung, both of them at least 6' by 6'. I was familiar with prices of their things then, and they would have sold in galleries for $5000 at the time. Somewhere between five and six. And I just felt as though I would be too much of a good thing for me to accept two things from her, and since we already had a small Soulages from Lee Ault, I just said, "No, you're too generous. I'll only take the Hartung." Then I approached the Gallery Pierre Loeb, and he gave me two Torres Garcia that were done in 1913. He had been a friend of Torres Garcia. These were both representational of different family groups, and I accepted them not knowing just what their evaluation would be. Anyhow, when they all got back to America, before the auction, Mr. Barr decided that the Torres Garcia would not bring that much money, and so I wrote to Pierre Loeb and told him that, and said I'll arrange to send them back to you and he wrote back and said, well they can have it anyhow, without putting them up at the auction. So I think that at the present time I understand that, if you can find one of those in South America, it would bring about $40,000 or $50,000 in South America. Not here. I then made an effort to find out what the Museum of Modern Art did with both of them. If they were of any interest, I could find out from Betsy Jones at the Museum. At the auction, the Soulages which Alfred put in as a borderline painting because he thought it might not bring that $3000 brought about $5500. The Utrillo that I bought brought about $20,000, the Hartung brought about $12,000 or $13,000. And the Juan Gris that I had originally bought for $7500 brought $22,000. A side-line of the story about that painting: at the auction, you might not be aware of it, for the first time, there was a hook-up at Parke-Bernet to Texas and California, and the Juan Gris was bought by Dehaney, the bid came from California. Several years ago, you may recall, there was a big fire in Beverly Hills, and it wiped out a great many houses, and one of the houses that was wiped out was this Dehaney. He had a big collection, and all the art work was wiped out including that Juan Gris. When I had been in Paris and had gotten these various things, I owned a Soulages which I had bought two years before. It was the first one that indicated a change in his work, and it was rather sculptural. I was interested in a large one, and there was to be another exhibition of his work in May, all based on that sculptural first one that I had acquired. And since I was not due back in Paris until July, they sent color slides before the exhibition opened, and I chose one and wrote and said that I'd buy that one when I get to Paris, assuming of course (this was before the auction was held) that it would cost me about $5000 or $6000. Well, as a result of the auction with that small one going for $6500 and the large Hartung going for $12,000 or $13,000, when I got back to Paris, I found that the exhibition had been held in May very successfully and the pictures that I wanted was the same size that had been offered to me in January before the auction for $5000 was now $12,000. As a result of my activities, I was rather indignant about it. I didn't see why I should have to be penalized when I was rather inadvertently responsible. I didn't get too far, but in any event, they compromised, and I paid $1000 more. I had bought a large Hartung, and that, of course, is still in my collection. That's the saga of the auction. At the end of 1960, I received a telephone call from Mrs. Gene Lipman, who was the editor of Art in America, who I had never met, and she told me that they were doing a feature in one edition on what should a museum be, and the people that were going to write something in connection with it were Thomas Messer and George Wildenstein and John Canaday, Herbert Ferber, Robert Motherwell, Edward D. L. Stone, Charlie Cunningham, Edward G. Robinson, and R. Sturges Ingersoll (President of the Philadelphia Museum) and little me. I agreed, and it was to be under three hundred words.

PC: So that was the first time you did anything with Art in America?

LA: Yes, and I didn't actually meet Mrs. Lipman until quite some time later. And after the article was sent in, she

called, and she said she liked it very much. Much to my astonishment, I received a check for $100. And when I told Alfred Barr about it, he said, "That's a fine thing. I don't get thirty cents a word when I write." I think I photostated the check, and it is somewhere. I have no idea where.

PC: I'm curious about the first formal statement about your ideas about a museum.

LA: Yes, which I never thought about before until Mrs. Lipman called me and asked me to write this.

PC: Do you know why she asked you?

LA: Well, I assume she must look have heard about my collecting activities from someone else.

PC: But you had no idea about your own museum at that time?

LA: Oh, no. Not at all. Nothing. It couldn't be further from my mind. As a matter of fact, I will tell you later, the whole museum came about as an accident. Do you want to make a notation of this is, Art In America Number two of 1961. I don't know whether you'll get a copy or not.

PC: What kind of reaction did you get from that article?

LA: Well, I think what is very amusing is, I believe it was about in 1959, that the Collector's Club had a dinner at the Metropolitan. Mr. Rorimer, who was then director of the Museum, gave us a talk and then also took us on a tour down through the bowels of the Metropolitan to see all the millions of things they had down there that never saw the light of day. And at dinner, my wife and I sat with Mr. Rorimer. My wife was very attractive, not only physically, but in her personality, and they got to speaking about cooking, and it turned out that Mr. Rorimer was quite an adept amateur cook (and as a matter of fact, he gave her a recipe of something he called Sunday Night Rice, which we used very often). But after this issue came out -- I can't really talk about this without mentioning something I said in my article. I said I wonder if many more people might not find it easier to respond and relate to art if they could see it in a more lenient atmosphere that in the high ceiling, large display areas which exist in most museums. Would it be so very difficult for a museum to create a series of living rooms, libraries, dining rooms, and etcetera in which to display an exhibition of contemporary works of art? I think museum directors might be astonished by the favorable response to such an exhibition. I am personally very much interested in 18th century American furniture, and I have often thought on visits to the Metropolitan Museum of Arts how fascinating it might be to see in the superb rooms of it's American wing an exhibition of 20th century art. Museums have become more than just a storehouse for art treasures; they have become the cultural centers in most big cities of the world. That was part of the article. A couple of weeks after this appeared, I got a telephone call from Mr. Rorimer, and he said, "I read your contribution and liked it very much, and I just wanted to tell you that the idea of contemporary or 20th century art in the American Wing would be wonderful. There is only one problem. We don't have the electricity in the American Wing, and if you might like to pay for it, we might do something to start that kind of exhibition." He was only kidding. He knew I was incapable of anything of that nature.

PC: That's marvelous. They subsequently did do an exhibition?

LA: Yes, they did subsequently spend the money to electrify it, but if you recall, originally, they just had candlelight, and there were lots of open windows. And there was no track lighting or anything of that sort that would make it possible for an exhibition. I think I mentioned earlier that in 1961 and 1962 I had agreed to allow a collection of 70 paintings and 20 pieces of sculpture to travel to museums around the country, and most of the exhibition consisted of half of my classical works, earlier collecting, and half of my contemporary works. And I attended the opening at a majority of the museums and gave what I hoped was an inspirational talk to try to inspire more people to become interested in collecting 20th century art. Well, during the time these pictures were on tour, I replaced in my house in Connecticut and in my apartment in New York and in my offices and showrooms the paintings that were gone with much more contemporary work. When the exhibition returned early in 1963, I let it remain at the Santini Brothers Warehouse, and I just hung the new contemporary works in those three places. Frankly, another reason why I left them there was because I found it so much more stimulating to be surrounded by contemporary works. For my own personal pleasure and enjoyment in living with art, the majority of those other things seem dull to me in comparison with the much more stimulating contemporary works. And so I tossed around in my mind for quite a long time what to do about it. I also found that during the two years they had been on tour, I had done very little personal acquiring of new things. For one, it had to be a rather difficult time; running out every four weeks to a different part of the country usually meant two or three days. I would arrive the day before because I found that in most museums I would make suggestions of changes in how the collection was hung. I discovered that most museums out of town were rather inept in their method of hanging things, and also, they really used me to promote the museum. And they would have interviews arranged and television spots or interviews and radio and that sort of thing. Also, there always was quite a sizeable audience for the talk I gave. You asked me once before what affect it had, and there was hardly any way of knowing.

PC: You know, I'm quite curious about another thing. How did you like seeing the collection in those different rooms and different surroundings? They looked different? Or did they just look like old friends in a different situation?

LA: Well, they looked better in some museums that they did in others. Let me put it that way. I discovered that the majority of the museums had very, very poor lighting systems, and they weren't exactly spic and span, as I feel a museum should be. A great deal of that has to do with, I suppose, cost involved, and also (and this is just my own personal reaction), the kind of people that they have as guards of museums are so depressing to look at. After all, it's a job that is kind of boring, and they show their boredom, and of course they know nothing whatsoever about what is being shown in the museum. And all of that takes away from the possibility of people getting inspiration out of going to most museums. I know that there is a great deal of criticism in recent years of directors of museums on the part of many critics who feel as though museums should be a storehouse of treasures. And where attempts are being made to get museums more lively, it's praised in some quarters as you are aware and mainly criticized by some of the older critics. But in any event, I was tossing around in my own mind as to what to do about the collection. I was certainly aware that works of that caliber were becoming more and more rare and from a standpoint of economics, if I no longer wanted to live with them, that it would make sense to wrap them up and keep them in storage until I died. Because of the fact that they will be worth a great deal more, plus the tax laws are such that there is only an inheritance tax as against a capital gain tax if you sell them. But also, I was sort of running out of funds with which to buy new works, and so one day I made the decision to sell them. At that time, Sotheby's of London were coming along quite strong, and a big tall chap was the representative in America. Can you recall his name? He's been president of it until rather recently.

PC: Holland.

LA: Holland, that's right. I contacted him and took him to Santini to see all the things that I decided I might dispose of. And this was probably around April or May and I asked him to give me some kind of idea or estimate of what I wanted to sell. We spent a couple of days at it. And then I went to Europe again in July and, at the Ritz, got a telephone call from Peter Wilson from the south of France, asking me to come down at his expense and discuss it with him. He had the whole list and so on and said that we would have set it up on a basis of -- what is the term?

PC: Attrition basis?

LA: Well, attrition basis, but a -- which is what Parke-Bernet does now too.

PC: Oh, you mean with a reserve.

LA: With a reserve, yes. I refused the invitation because I hadn't quite made up my mind. Anyhow, when I got back, I contacted Parke-Bernet, and they came to spend a couple of days at the warehouse, too, and I finally decided that even there were no reserves at that time with Parke-Bernet. I did make an arrangement with them whereby the Monet which I had already given to my foundation, they would only charge one percent for the Monet but regular commission on the balance of the things. Well actually, I was not sufficiently familiar with what these various things should bring. I had become very friendly with Eugene Thaw, and so I made an arrangement with Eugene to give him one percent of the net for him to act as my advisor on the basis of not what their estimates were but what he thought something should bring. Of course, we attended the auction together, and I believe the auction brought $1,200,000 or something of that nature.

PC: Do you remember if there was a great deal of difference in what Sotheby's at that time thought they would realize over what Parke-Bernet estimated? Or didn't you get that far?

LA: I didn't get that far with Sotheby's, and the reason was that I didn't want to take the time to go to England where I knew no one, and also, I had been told that there is a certain danger connected with auctioning things at Sotheby's. I don't know whether this is true or not, and that danger that there was no way of keeping a reserve secret.

PC: Oh, really?

LA: That was what I was told.

PC: I've never heard that, it's interesting.

LA: And when there is a large auction group of dealers, will all get together knowing the reserves, were and they just buy in a group, so to speak, as close to the reserve as they could get. And none of those things may be accurate, I don't know. But I just felt that I was too much of a babe in arms to take that on.

PC: Well, this was really the first time you really sold anything, wasn't it?

LA: The only time. And I also felt as though the name of Larry Aldrich, which was well known because of my being in the fashion business, would attract more people in America than in London where my name was not known. I think I did mention earlier, perhaps I should tell you that in about 1959, Friends of the Whitney Museum was organized as a separate corporation with a $250 donation, and I became a Friend of the Whitney, and I made a contribution of $250. And I was beginning to like the people at the Whitney. I had met Jack Baur and various other people, and of course they were aware of the fund that I had at the Museum of Modern Art. I was pleased to a certain extent with the fund, and I decided to do the same for the Whitney. Prior to the auction, I called Jack Baur, and I told him that I was having this auction. And as of January 1, 1964, I would make $5000 a year available to the Whitney for the same purpose as for the Modern. And I also called Alfred Barr and told him I would extend my $10,000 a year for five more years, beginning January 1, 1964. I had given away quite a lot of things, but I had never sold anything before the auction. Of the many Zao Wau-ki's that I owned, I'd given one to San Francisco Museum (I think earlier I told you how that came about), and then I gave one to the Richmond Museum, and I gave one to the Atlanta Museum. And then a friend of mine was interested in Colby College, and so I gave one to Colby College. And my cousin Larry Wein became very interested in Brandeis University, and in fact, he paid for a sort of a faculty center that needed some paintings, and I gave them a Zao Wau-ki, and I also gave them a Music. Later on when the Rose Museum opened, over a period of time, I gave them a 1900 Vuillard, a small portrait of his mother. I gave them a Grace Hartigan, one that was, oh, about 8'by 9' that was done in 1958. I gave them a Valtat, Garden in Saint Tropez. I had bought a Cindy Goodman, which is a very beautiful, mysterious painting, but I had never been able to hang it. It was representational and of these women going through a revolving door and someone standing in front of a building. And it just didn't look right with anything, so I gave that to the Rose Art Museum [BEGIN TAPE FIVE SIDE ONE]

PC: This is Larry Aldrich, side nine.

LA: In 1958, my wife and I made a tour of all the private collections in Switzerland. It had been arranged for us by a friend of mine, Gustave Zustag, who is president of Ivom Faber Fabrics in Zurich and also a major collector of 20th century art. And among the collections that we saw were the Burley Collection in Zurich. And what impressed me is that he had a large house on the lake and had acquired another house right next door in which there wasn't a single stick of furniture, but in which there was a fantastic collection of paintings that went from the 15th century through to about 1920 with 6 or 8 Cezannes and God knows how many Braques and Van Goghs and what not. And he had a curator on the premises and brackets to hold the paintings and the only piece of furniture in the whole house was a rocker and . . . .

PC: Why I wonder?

LA: There were possibly twenty rooms in the house and in each room there would only be one painting hung, and apparently, after dinner, he would go across to his house and sit and rock before a particular favorite picture and change them as the mood struck him. And of course, that impressed me tremendously. Well, after the auction I had about three hundred contemporary paintings, and anything else that I would buy would immediately be sent to my storeroom. In fact, it got to the point where I was even too embarrassed to tell my wife that I had bought something else. Having made this visit to the Burley collection and seeing his method of enjoying his art -- he made such a deep impression on me -- after the auction when I had available funds, free funds for the first time in quite a long while, I decided that instead of having my collection in storage I wanted to build on our property in Ridgefield, Connecticut, a place that would be big enough for me to hang possibly forty or fifty paintings at one time and sculpture and also an area for storage that would be big enough to hold everything that I owned and large enough to leave room for future acquisitions. Well, I thought I wanted it on one particular part of our property, and my wife's ideas were different. We were in the process of discussing it and maybe arguing about it and not really coming to any definite decision excepting that we both agreed that this was something that we would do. On a Saturday afternoon in December (the auction had been held in October of 1963), I ran out of cigarettes, and I drove into the village to get some. I passed a building that I knew as the Christian Science Church; it was a large four story building that had been built in 1783. Much to my surprise I saw a "For Sale" sign on the lawn, and so after I got the cigarettes I drove back to the church and parked my car in the late afternoon, and I was able to look through the windows, and much to my astonishment, I noticed what looked to me like ten or twelve foot high ceilings, which was certainly rather rare in a building that was constructed in the 18th century. Actually this building had a plaque on the front of it. It was called "Old Hundred." It had been built in 1783 by a Lieutenant Joshua King, and when Major Andre during the Revolutionary War had been captured, which was in the area of North Salem, New York, not far from Ridgefield, he had been put in Lieutenant Joshua King's care and stayed with him until Major Andre was finally found guilty and hung in New Haven, Connecticut. And he had built this building which he operated as a store and a residence. The store sold malt and hardware and all of that sort of thing, and since it was one of the largest buildings in town, it also later on became part of it, became the area for the first savings bank in Ridgefield, Connecticut. And it was a gathering place for local opinions and politics, sort of the cracker barrel idea. And when the Lieutenant died, the business as a business continued in that same building for a hundred years. And when it then moved to a more commercial area of the town, plaque on the front of the building told this story, and the building was known as Old Hundred. Well, somehow or other, looking at this building gave me the idea that since it was only a mile

away from where we lived, that it might make more sense and might even be less expensive for me to acquire this building and keep my collection there. I could open it to the public on a Saturday or a Sunday and avoid any further argument with my wife about where we should put this sort of thing on our own property. Had it been on our own property, it would not have been at any time open to the public. And so, the following day I arrived there just about noon as the services were over, and I asked to see who would be in charge of selling the building. And Mrs. Rose Curtney took me through the building and told me that it had been for sale for about three months through one of the members of their congregation who was the real estate agent, but they'd had no success because the building was too large and too close to the street for any one to want to use it as a residence. It's in a historic district on Main Street, and so for that reason it was restricted for business purposes. So they really had no bids on it whatsoever. And only the previous day in desperation, they'd put this "For Sale" sign out in front, which I had happened to see. And after going through the building, which is a four story building, she gave me the key, and I went home for lunch and came back and stayed there until about 5:30 studying possibilities. I realized it would require quite an alteration from my purposes. There were stairways that were sort of in the middle of rooms that would lend themselves to the hanging of paintings, and there was not a stairway from the first floor down to the basement. The basement had been used as a Sunday School and had a separate entrance. In any event, I decided to make an offer for the building. Their reason for selling it was because they wanted to build a new church, and there were four and a half acres in the property, and the house was for sale with the three acres, and one and a half acres would be reserved for the church and parking lot. So I called her on a Sunday about 6:00, and I made her an offer for the house and the three acres, and at that time, I offered to create a parking lot that would just come up to the boundary line of my property; in other words, my property was along side of what would be the church property and also went around what would be the parking lot of the church property.

PC: Sort of L shaped.

LA: So that it's L shaped, yes. And I also proposed that the entrance road would serve both the museum and the church, would be something that we would share. And that I would use the parking lot for museum purposes with the exception of Sunday mornings and Wednesday night which was their meeting night. The price I offered was considerably less than what they were asking for it, so she said she'd have to get in touch with the other three members of the committee that were in charge of selling it and would call me back. Well, she called about two hours later and accepted my offer, and I said, "Fine, we'll meet next Sunday morning at my attorney's office in Ridgefield." And this is just very cute, but she said, "Mind you, we're accepting your offer, but there is something I want to tell you, and that is that according to the Christian Science Church laws, we cannot start a new building unless and until we have fifty percent of the cost of the building in cash in the bank. And in accepting your offer, we're just $2,500 short of that fifty percent." So I laughed and said, "Well, I'll make a personal contribution to the church of $2,500," and that's how we made the deal. Well, I got busy and contacted an architect that we had been using and studied the whole area. Naturally, I mentioned what I had done to Bill Lieberman who was a close friend of Stuart Preston who was then with the New York Times, and I've only found out about this recently, but he mentioned something to Grace Glueck who did art notes on the New York Times that there's a fellow by the name of Larry Aldrich that's going to open a contemporary museum in Ridgefield, Connecticut. She called me, and I told here something about my plans and it was written up in the New York Times. Well, in the process of creating the alteration, a combination of factors made my original concept change. My original concept was purely to use it for the showing of and housing of my own collection. But Bill Lieberman came up to see it, Jack Baur came to see it, and René d'Harmoncourt came up to see it. And in a way, d'Harmoncourt had the most influence. He said to me, "You know Larry, this is a wonderful building and a wonderful opportunity with the interest that you have in young artists and new art. The museums in New York are not really in a position to consistently show the work of new young artists, and you're somebody that really could do it." Anyhow, I guess I sold myself a bill as well, and instead of spending after the purchase about $40,000 or $50,000 to fix it up, I ambitiously built an extension, raised roofs, did all sort of things of that age. When you start ripping things apart, there's no way of knowing in advance what you're likely to find. And we found in some of the most important weight-bearing areas sags in the floor; when we ripped things apart, we would discover why they sagged -- they had nothing supporting them from underneath. Also the basement area, well, it's not really a basement, which had been originally a dirt floor and big hug chestnut beams supporting them, when they converted it to the Sunday School in 1929, they had made a concrete floor and just poured it on top of the dirt without in any way protecting either the beams or the foundation. The result was that the beams were all rotted, the whole foundation in that lower area was all rotted. I had originally planned to open the museum in June, and because of this added work, I wasn't able to get it finished until October. And instead of the amount I had anticipated spending, by the time the museum opened, it cost $300,000, a hell of a lot more that I had expected to spend, which was due to the various unfortunate things we found in the building and also due to my ambitiously deciding to make it an active on-going museum and enlarging it as I did, as a matter of fact, to a point where my wife spoke of it as "Larry's Folly." In any event, all over the Museum in gold letters were the words "God is Love," that is all over the area that they used to worship. And I really came to the conclusion that the only reason that building hadn't collapsed was because the Christian Scientists must have some kind of an in with God, because certainly on a basis of what was in the building that supported it, it should

have collapsed long ago. I was at some sort of Whitney opening when I ran into Bob Indiana -- by this time it had already appeared in the New York Times that I was opening this museum and that it was a Christian Science Church that I was altering and so on -- and Bob said, "Oh, I read about that. You know, I was born a Christian Scientist." Something clicked immediately in my mind, and I told him about the problems that I found in the building itself and the words in gold letters, "God is Love." And knowing that Bob Indiana's art always involved lettering, I said, "Since you're a Christian Scientist, Bob, how would you like to paint a picture for me? Instead of "God is Love", have "Love is God" as the theme. And if you paint such a picture, I'll have it in the Museum, and I'll never lend to anybody. I'll never allow it to leave the Museum, and maybe I'll get the same good fortune transferred to me that the Christian Scientists had." And he was very enthusiastic about the idea, and he painted a beautiful diamond shaped picture with "Love is God" in a circle in the center of it, and it's really a knock-out. This is just a side incident connected with the Museum.

PC: Well, is that now he got interested in the love word?

LA: And about six months after that, after the Museum opened, I got a long handwritten letter from Bob in which he said that after he had done this picture for me, night after night after night, he had dreamt of the word "love." And one morning, he woke up and he started on the love series. He was writing to me to tell me that the first exhibition of it was going to be held at the Stable Gallery ,and since I was inadvertently responsible for the whole love series, he would be happy if I would attend the opening, which of course I did. So that inadvertently, the existence of the Museum was responsible for his thinking of the whole Love series, which I think has made Bob a millionaire.

PC: That's fantastic.

LA: The various suggestions that I got from Jack Baur and from René and from Bill Lieberman were all very, very helpful, and I remember when we were about two weeks away from the finish. Philip Johnson, by appointment, came to see what I was doing, and after he'd gone through the whole thing, he said, "Larry, I'll bet that if you had torn this whole building down and hired me to build a new museum it would have cost less that what you've spent here." I said, "That my be true Philip, but since this is a historic district, I'm afraid that I would have not been permitted to have a contemporary building here, and it certainly would not have been in keeping with the main street of Ridgefield." There are a few other things that I recall in doing the building. I felt I wanted it to be a place where viewing art would be made easier. The floors were 3/8ths inch oak, the original floors, and I had them all stained teak color; the walls, part of them painted white and part of them were painted a warm grey; the ceilings were painted black, and I had track lighting, and I worked with lighting engineers and worked out a lamp that was much shorter than most of the lamps that are used in track lighting in museums because of the fact that I only had 10 ' high ceilings. And they developed a light with a flick of an extended switch, and I could make the light either shine up or down or from left or right or right to left. There were four fireplaces which I covered over. There were many windows, and I filled in and covered all of those windows, but I did so that it looked as though the shades were down about 2/3rds, so that from the outside it looked the same. I found in the attic what seemed to be a leak, and I had been told they put a new asbestos roof on two years before I had bought the building. It was guaranteed for twenty years, and so we got out on this great big huge roof to investigate. And we found out that underneath the asbestos shingles were two layers of tin, and underneath that was the original hand-used wood shingles. In other words, instead of taking down what existed they just covered over, and naturally when it was hot or cold, there was contraction so that was why there were leaks. So I had to start the whole roof from scratch. Well, it was alright anyhow because, in one area that was only a 7' ceiling, I raised the walls, and I extended and created 10'ceilings there, too. Captain Steichen, the famous photographer, was an old friend of mine. He lived in Redding, and of course he was terribly interested in what I was doing in connection with the Museum. He had just retired at about that point. In fact, in the '50's when I was commuting two day a week, I would commute with the Captain, and that was at the time that he was doing the Family of Man for the Modern, and so I heard all about his problems connected with it for a couple of years until it opened. Anyhow, he came to see the Museum about ten days before it was ready, and he said, "I think everything you've done is wonderful. The only thing I question is the black ceilings." Well, I'd already put one coat of black paint on the ceilings, and my own thought was that a black ceiling would make you less conscious of the fact that it was only a 10' ceiling. Well, my heart sank a little bit because I had a great deal of respect for his opinion about everything, but there was nothing I could do about it because it was all that sound proofing material and you couldn't very well do much about it and so I put the second coat on. Well, he naturally attended the opening of the museum. And he sought me out and said, "I just want to tell you, Larry, that you were right, and I was wrong. The black ceiling is great." That made me feel a great deal better. I arranged for the entrance to the Museum to be at the lower level, what had been the Sunday School. And there was an area that I had made into a private office and set up one portion with a small kitchen for receptions, and what had been the furnace part I made into a workroom, and another area I made into a library. I had a very large library from impressionism on which was transferred to the Museum. And also I filled in from the time that I started the alteration to when I opened the museum with several hundred other art books from Abrams and all the other art publishers. And I decided I would operate the library on the basis of anyone coming in and asking for something that I might not have just give me ten days, and I would get it for them. Nothing is taken out of the library, incidentally. It's just for use

there, and it's open to the public Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from ten to four. And of course when the Museum is open to the public Saturday and Sundays from two to five, people who have seen the various exhibition can go through the library. There's a comfortable big long table and chairs where they can sit and read. And there are other areas where we have publications. In fact, I just this year took half of what had been my work room and paneled it and carpeted it and moved all of the publications into that one area so that the library part now just consists of art books because it has been spilling over insufficient room.

PC: How large is the library now?

LA: How large is it? Well, I don't quite know how to answer that, but it's . . . .

PC: Well, roughly, say in the number of volumes.

LA: Oh, I don't know. I guess a couple of thousand. Anyhow, about four years ago I guess, it was reported to me that there were four students of the Art School of Yale that had been coming to the library every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday for two weeks and working on their theses. It was about the month of May, so I called Gibson Danes who was then head or director or whatever of the art department at Yale and told him about it. I said, "I don't quite understand why those students should be driving down to Ridgefield three times a week to write their theses when you have such a vast library." He said, "It's very easy for me to explain. It takes eighteen months from the time we get any new book or publication till the time it becomes available to the students." Isn't that something? In any event, one of the things I decided was to permit smoking, and I had some big cylinders that I had gotten from California that are filled with sand, and there are three or four of them in the corner of each room. I had put in a complete music system at the same time with extensions to outside of the building and also a system with a speaker for lecture purposes. In the alteration, I had to put in an outside stairway to the third floor because of fire laws. In other words, there are three exhibition floors, and in the process of doing it, I had a metal stairway from the ground area to a sizeable balcony and then from the balcony metal stairway up to this third exhibition floor that looks out on a big lawn area. With the thought in mind that some time we could have music there, I made connections for speaker and microphone and all the rest of it on the balcony floor and underneath, which is a larger area where I have tables and chairs, some in the sun and some out of the sun. And a greatmany people in the nice weather (the Museum opens at two o'clock) will get there at quarter of two and find four or five groups sitting on blankets on the lawn that have brought their lunch and picnic until the Museum opens. When it opened in 1964, there were lots of rather amusing incidents. For example, I became aware because I spend a great deal of time doing alterations away from my business, which was rather fascinating to me, I was aware that there was a man that came every day, an elderly man. And he said, "Are you Mr. Aldrich?" I said yes, and he said, "I'm a retired contractor, and I've been watching this job almost every day." And he said, "They're doing a very good job. I just want to tell you that with the amount of money you're spending here, you're never going to make it a profitable enterprise." That was very funny. Anyhow, the Museum opened with a ten dollar black tie benefit for the Ridgefield Library, and there were about five hundred people, all the top old-timers in Ridgefield. And you may be interested to know that I dare say that ninety percent of them have never been back since.

PC: Really?

LA: Oh yes, because it's a very conservative town. It's less so now because it's been growing by leaps and bounds, but most of them have absolutely no interest in art of any kind, particularly of contemporary nature. But then it opened a week after that to the public, and before it opened I arranged for all of the various magazines and newspapers. We met them at two central points in New York in limousines and brought them up to Ridgefield. And I remember that John Gruen said (because I came right to the door with the key and opened it, put the lights on), "It's the first time I've ever had anybody open a museum for me." That was very cute. Then they came to our house for lunch and so on. And there were quite a number of stories then about the Museum. At the start, there was no charge whatsoever, and the Museum opened with various things from my own collection in October of 1964. And I printed a catalog in which there were not any reproductions because I had plans to just give them away. The opening exhibition had 75 paintings in it and twenty pieces of sculpture. And I found much to my chagrin that at the end of the day when I would leave the Museum, I'd find eight, ten, twelve catalogs just laying around on the grass or on the walk. I had printed many, many thousands of these; I expected that there would be very, very large attendance (from curiosity standpoint if nothing else), and planning, as I say, to give them away. But when I saw that so many of these were just thrown away, I started to charge a quarter for them, and while not everybody bought one, I certainly didn't find any more lying around. Well, the exhibition opened in October, and I had planned to keep it on all through the winter until the next exhibition in the spring, in April of 1965. By the time the next exhibition opened, I came to the conclusion that far too many of the people who came to the Museum were just not interested. They were purely curiosity seekers, and so I made a fifty cent admission. Children under twelve were free. And that's how it's been until a few years ago when I found that a couple of parents would come in with eight or ten children. The way that came about was that groups of parents would say, "We'll go play tennis or golf, and you take our kids to the Museum." And it was impossible to watch that many children at one time. So in making a fifty cent fee for every

child unless it was carried in the parent's arm, we helped take care of that. From the inception, keeping in mind what I told you about the depressing effect most guards in museums make, I used local high school boys and girls for my guards, those who have an interest in art. We would tell them before each exhibition what the shows consisted of, encourage them to talk to people in the Museum and give them the ability to answer some of the simpler questions.

PC: One thing that I'm curious about -- up to the opening of the museum, you had lived in Ridgefield for quite a number of years.

LA: Yes.

PC: What did the local people say to you as this was developing, and what kind of reaction did you get?

LA: Well, I think that when I told you that the opening was a black tie benefit for the library, and at least ninety percent of the five hundred there never came back, that should give you the answer. The majority of them have no interest whatsoever in art. Of course, the changes that I made in the building and the wonderful landscape job I did which includes a fountain have helped to make the beautiful main street even more beautiful, and of course they're very proud and pleased about that. But they're not terribly interested in it. I occasionally hear about the amazement at the number of cars that they will see in the parking lot, which you are able to see as you go by on Saturdays and Sundays. They just wonder why anyone would waste their time going to a museum when you could be out in the country playing tennis or swimming, or golf, or what have you. But of course, the younger people int he community are interested and do come. The humanities and art classes at the high school come, and we get high school groups from within a fifty mile radius, who come by appointment during the week on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday. There are all kinds of art groups that come by appointment from as far away as New Jersey and Long Island and Philadelphia. And museums in the most recent years have contemporary art societies, and they come to New York 20, 30, 40 strong, and they will see the museums and galleries. And generally, they will work out a one day trip of going to the Hirshhorn Sculpture Gardens and then going to Philip Johnson's, and then coming to the Aldrich Museum. Or they either start out at the Aldrich Museum and work their way down, or most of them take the morning for the Hirshhorn and the Johnson and have lunch in Ridgefield and then come to the Museum in the afternoon. We even had the Tate Gallery in London group. There's a rather unique story about that. When they wrote to make the appointment, they asked if it would be possible (because they were doing the Hirshhorn, Philip Johnson, Aldrich bit) to have lunch in Ridgefield, and since they didn't have a great deal of money, could they get a luncheon at $3.50 that would include a glass of wine. Well, since the advent of the Museum, the restaurant business in Ridgefield has boomed because I dare say that sixty percent of the people that come to the Museum come from quite a distance, a great many from New York, and they either come up early and have lunch in Ridgefield or they'll come up at four o'clock or so and spend an hour or so in the Museum and then have dinner at any one of the three of the inns in Ridgefield. So I called the one that has sort of pseudo French foods and told him the problem. There was going to be about thirty-eight people in the group and would he, as a favor to me, do a lunch for them with a glass of wine for $3.50? Of course, if I'd asked him to do it for nothing he would have done that too. When we got a letter of thanks after they left they had stressed the fact that (because besides New York they had apparently gone on to the middle west and California) the lunch they had in Ridgefield was the most memorable lunch of all.

PC: It's fascinating that you get people from such a distance. Has the attendance changed a great deal? Has it increased or does it maintain a level?

LA: Since there's been an admission charge, it has sort of maintained a level. I was open in the winter time until several years ago, but I'm not open any more except from April through the first of the year. And including the groups, we get from 12,000 to 15,000 people a year. That doesn't mean a fifty cent admission is paid by everybody. But the groups, plus the previews that we have for each opening and the general admission, it comes to somewhere between 12,000 and 15,000 people.

PC: And that is really in about eight months out of the year?

LA: It's eight months out of the year now. I can tell you more about certain things as we go along that give you a better idea.

PC: I'm surprised at the number of people.

LA: Yes, particularly since at least sixty percent of them come from New York. We have a mailing list now of at least ten thousand, if not more, that receive notice of each new exhibition. Would it be of interest to you to know what was in the first show?

PC: Well, I think what would be of interest is how you selected the show and why you decided to select those particular things. Is that stated in the introduction though?

LA: Well, I did state this: a selected exhibition of 75 paintings and 20 works of sculpture international in character, collected since 1951, will open the new museum. This wouldn't be of interest particularly, except it does say that this wasn't really written or signed by me, that's the last paragraph, "Mr Aldrich has been an active prostelizer for contemporary art and a portion of his collection is toured throughout the county, personally attended each opening to tell the story of how he became a collector. Opening the new Museum represents the expression of his desire to share with others his pleasure of living with 20th century art." Then also the catalog told the story of Old Hundred and as you see from the catalog, when I opened the museum, it was called Old Hundred, and the change came about because Old Hundred somehow or other to someone who wouldn't know doesn't signify contemporary art. I formed a Connecticut foundation called the Larry Aldrich Museum Foundation, and there was no problem about operating the Museum as a private foundation. It was made tax exempt up to twenty percent of one's stated income. Do you want to know what was in the first show?

PC: I think a kind of a synopsis of it and some idea of why maybe you picked these people, because your collection is so large.

LA: Oh, heavens yes.

PC: And why did you pick these people particularly?

LA: Well, I tried to make a selection that went from 1951 up through the moment at which the Museum was opened. And it represented different types of art that had been created since that time as well. I really don't know how else to answer it; the catalog will have to speak for itself.

PC: A thought came up in the midst of something a little while ago. I guess it was when you mentioned that after the auction sale you had had some more money that could go into the collection. Do you have to have a budget plan or anything like that for the collecting?

LA: No, no. It was just a matter of when I saw something I liked I would acquire it, and if I didn't have the money handy at the moment, I could always borrow it. It was only later that I found out that I was very rare among collectors in that when something was delivered to me, within two or three days, a check went out to pay for it. And I now am informed that dealers sometime have to wait as long as two or three years. As a matter of fact, I was just told about Nick Wilder in California who has almost had to close his gallery because he had so much money owed to him he had nothing left with which to operate. And after I got to know the dealers better, they told me that they were willing to accept the price I offered, which they never would do from someone else, because they knew that two days later they got the check.

PC: Which is very rare.

LA: Apparently, it is very rare. But as I say, I didn't know that. But it wouldn't have mattered anyhow because I just don't like to owe money, if I can help it.

PC: I'm always curious about that point. There are many collectors who do have an annual budget or a very specific kind of program. It's interesting that you've never followed any of those factors. Well, after the opening of your own Museum, you had mentioned that you had dropped your affiliation with the International Council and various other activities after that. Were there other changes in you art activities because of the Museum?

LA: There certainly were. And those changes had to do with the fact that the size of the picture was no longer a factor as long as it was under ten feet tall. Also, I was more inclined to acquire things that would be important in size because of hanging it on the Museum wall than when I knew I could never find a spot in my own apartment in New York or in my house in Ridgefield. Prior to that, even though I had bought some larger pictures that I couldn't hang very easily, I would shy away from larger pictures very often that I liked because of their size. But I no longer had that qualification or restriction.

PC: Did you have a curator or someone at the museum during the week or some kind of staff there when you started, when it opened?

LA: Yes, there was one person in charge that would open and close the Museum. There was someone else that took care of cleaning and so on, and the person in charge of opening and closing the Museum was there during the time it was open to the public and also took care of the office, stenography and records and so on had to be kept. And then there was a Mr. Carlus Dyer, who had gotten his training at the Museum of Modern Art long ago, who was then teaching graphics at Silvermine College, and he worked on a per diem basis. He did all of the catalogs, including the first one, and he also supervised with me the hanging and the lighting. When I say "with me," I mean that he would do the original hanging, and then I would come home on a Friday morning and go over the hanging and make any changes that I thought would be more to my liking. Well, I'm sort of getting ahead of my story. After the first exhibition, which was from October until April, of areas of my own collection, I naturally had to cast about for future exhibitions, and since I knew quite a number of other collectors, I felt a

kind of exhibition that would be of interest to people would be a selection from the collections of other people. Another thought that I came up with was one that I was going to call Critics's Choice in which I would contact the critics of the Times and the Tribune and the various art magazines and ask them to select from the exhibitions that had taken place during the previous art season the artist that impressed them the most. And I would get three, four, or five examples, and I would call that Critic's Choice which I planned to make an annual. I contacted Stuart Preston and asked him what he thought of the idea, and he thought it was an excellent one and was very happy to go along with it. Then I contacted John Gruen of the Herald Tribune and told him about it, and he was very interested and liked the idea, but he said he wouldn't be permitted to do it without Emily Genauer's permission. So I contacted Emily Genauer and much to my astonishment she said, "I don't like the idea at all. What right do you have to pick the brains of people in the art world? If you want to run a museum, you run a museum yourself," and so on and so forth. That ended that. But then that got me to thinking, and I felt that basically she was right; if I was going to operate a museum, I should do it on my own. So I came up with another thought, and that was that of all the exhibitions that took place in the New York galleries, and because my own well-known interest in new art, I would place special emphasis whenever possible on first one-man exhibitions. I would arrange to have three, four, five examples of each artist's work, and I called that the Highlights of the Season, and the first Highlights of the 1964, '65 art season was born just that way. I might say, to go back before that, that I had met Richard Brown Baker as a member of the Collector's Club, and I had visited his apartment on West 79th Street and seen a great many of his art works, and I decided that he would be the first private collector whose collection I would show. And so after the opening exhibition of my own things came down, I arranged with Richard Brown Baker to show an area of his collection which I called, Art of the Fifties and Sixties, Selections from the Richard Brown Baker Collection. And I had a catalog in which many of the works were reproduced. That was on from April 25th through the 5th of July in 1965. And that was followed by my first Highlight show. [BEGIN TAPE FIVE SIDE TWO]

PC: This is side ten.

LA: The Richard Brown Baker catalog I printed about twelve hundred, which cost me I guess about two or three dollars a piece to print, including the make-up and design of the catalog, which was done by Carlus Dyer, and I sold them for a dollar a piece. During the course of the exhibition, we sold possibly three to four hundred, and then I circulated the catalog to every important museum in the country, and I have done that with all of my catalogs since. And I'm sorry to have to tell you that my catalogs now cost closer to five dollars a piece, which I still sell for a dollar.

PC: Really?

LA: Yes, they've become better and more beautiful all the time, and I also still always sell three or four hundred of them and circulate the rest to the museums all over the country. And in many cases, directors of museums have written and asked me to send them directly to their home because they go right into the museum library; very often, they don't see them at all, like Tom Messer and quite a number of others. Incidentally, Charlie Cunningham, about two years ago, told me that they have a Contemporary Art Society with the Chicago Art Institute, and they use my Highlights Catalogs as the basis from which to make their acquisitions. I thought this very flattering. There's literally been hundreds of works of art that have been sold in galleries to people who have first seen examples of the work in the Museum itself, and whenever any of my own things were on view -- incidentally, I decided that there would be four exhibitions a year, one of which would always be an area from my own collection. And so the first year beginning in '65 after the Richard Brown Baker collection and then the first Highlights Show of '64, '65, the fall exhibition was called Selections from the Museum Collection, November of '64, was from rather new acquisitions, plus I had a copy of Chagall's Story of the Bible, and there are 105 prints which I had loaned to the American Federation of Arts that had circulated for about four years, and they had framed them. And the exhibition from September 26th to the 24th of December was new acquisitions that I had made since the museum opened. So you see that one of the things the museum did was to speed up my acquisitions. So two floors were new acquisitions and the third floor were the Chagall Bible prints.

PC: The paintings, the works of art remain in your collection rather than the Museum's collection, don't they?

LA: The Museum owns nothing. All the Museum, the Foundation, owns is the building and the property. I supplied the funds for the operating budget exclusively on my own. Later on, we'll come to further details in connection with that. Then the fifth exhibition called Selections from the Museum Collection was on from the 8th of January to the 3rd of April. Incidentally, whenever the exhibition was of areas of my own collection there was never a catalog. There was just a checklist that was available, mimeographed, that people could have to use to go through the museum and then return on their way out.

PC: I was just re-thinking what you said a moment ago about the way a number of things sold because of the influence of the Museum. What about when you had your own collection? Where there many inquiries about where could they find the paintings to buy?

LA: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, not only that, but many people would inquire whether they could buy anything from my own collection very often.

PC: So there was really quite a direct influence going on. That's great.

LA: I might say that by this time I had (and neither of us can remember where or how) met Jean Lipman and when she saw the first Highlights show, she told me that they had a new talent issue which they did every other year and up till then it had been based on recommendations from various museum directors and so on. And she said she would like me to do a new talent issue completely on my own in the fall of 1965. I agreed to do this new talent issue for them, and I was conscious of the fact that there was a great deal of good new talent in California as well. So as part of doing this issue, I decided to spend a few days out there. I knew Maurice Tuckman, and I wrote to him that I was planning to come to California and would like him to give me a list of young new people that he knew there in California, give me a list of their names and the addresses and the phone numbers and the rest of it, and that I would make appointments from New York before I left. So I took in both the local scene and the California scene in that new talent issue. And because of the fact that I felt that people who would read the magazine might not know who I was or my relationship to either new art or art at all, plus the fact that I was asked to write an article besides selecting the artists, I tried to write on the basis of informing people of just what my connection was with art. It's two pages, and I think I should read it only because here will be something else that I'm going to tell you later that bears entirely on this.

PC: Okay. Sure, sure.

LA: Incidentally, there were thirty-seven artists that I selected. Actually I selected about forty-two, but from a space standpoint, five of them were thrown out. But the article at the top of the page said, "The 37 artists on the following pages were selected for Art in America biennial new talent feature by Larry Aldrich, a collector whose interest in contemporary art led him to open his own Museum." I sort of tired to give a background of a little story: "In the 1940's to decorate the walls of our house in Ridgefield, Connecticut, we bought a Utrillo and a Renoir. Through exposure to these paintings, I gradually became aware that in a work of art there exists a force and an excitement that goes far beyond mere decoration. With my interest aroused, I attempted to acquire a do-it-yourself education in modern art. I read a great many books on impressionism, impressionist and post-impressionist art, moving on to books about the movement that followed. On semi-annual trips to Paris in connection with my activity in the fashion business, I would take time to visit art galleries, always finding paintings to bring home. My collection grew, and by 1950, it consisted of a Manet oil sketch of 1875 and examples of most of the well known artists from the impressionist period up to the expressionists of the twenties. As a collection it was not very adventuresome, but finding and acquiring each object was a great adventure for me. I became a victim of a delightful disease to which there is no cure, art collecting. Almost from the beginning of my interest in art, I attended gallery exhibitions of the works of contemporary artists. Abstract expressionism was then well on it's way. But I seemed to lack the comprehension to appreciate what the painters of that style were trying to say. They were so very different from what my own selections represented. I realize now that the tendency to reject the unfamiliar when it is first exposed to view is a commonplace reaction for most people; however, I continued to look. I did not overcome my inability to respond to new art until 1951. It began with the purchase in Paris of two pictures, a Zao Wau-Ki for $100 and a Vieira Da Silva for $150. Both artists were completely new to me. Somehow this modest first purchase of contemporary work broke the barrier of my inability to accept and appreciate the new art. Although I had seen examples of Klee, Miro and Leger before 1951, it was only after my first acquisition of contemporary art that I bought examples of the work of these modern masters. de Staël, Giacometti, Dubuffet, De Kooning, and Hartung also became part of the collection. The purchase of these modern masters was incidental to my principal art activity, concentrating more and more on contemporary scene. As my involvement and enthusiasm grew, so did my collection. The adventure of collecting now revolved principally around making my collection adventuresome. As an expression of my great interest in the struggle of younger artists, in 1959, I entered into an arrangement with the Museum of Modern Art, whereby I provided an annual sum for the purchase of painting and sculpture by American artists who are not already represented in the Museum's collection. To be certain, the fund would be used to buy the work of young artists. I made the stipulation that no single item could cost more than $1000. In a recent check of purchases over the four year period, July of 1959 to July of 1963, it was fascinating indeed to find how successfully the fund had been used. A few of the artists represented, some of whose works cost only a few hundred dollars, are Frank Stella, Jack Youngerman, Robert Mallory, James McGarrel, Edward Higgins, Richard Anuszkiewicz, George Altman, Bruce Conner, Robert Ryman, Robert Indiana, Lucas Samaras, Tom Wessleman, John Anderson and Larry Poons. These were all young innovators on the art scene when their work was bought by the Museum. They have since achieved solid recognition with selling prices to match their reputation. I fail to see any sign of a middle age spread showing in this performance by the Museum. As Emily Genaur of the New York Herald Tribune suggested in an article of January 22, 1966, I forecast that any future examination of the records of July '63 to July '67 will show equal or better results. In 1963, I disposed of most of my early acquisitions, using some of the funds to start a purchasing program at the Whitney Museum similar to my earlier arrangements with the Museum of Modern Art, with the same stipulation of a limit of $1000 per item. From my contract with the directors of the Whitney, I take issue with the statement made by Hilton Kramer in the New

York Times on January 9, 1966, to wit, "The directors of the Whitney give the impression of being simply adrift in the complexities of 20th century art." Purchases made from the fund in 1964 and '65 prove this indictment unfounded. Creative artists are constantly struggling for new means of expression, seeking new directions and exploring the use of new materials. The viewing of new work of promise is a thrilling experience for someone deeply involved in contemporary art. Standards which might be used in the visual appraisal of the merits of familiar art, however, do not apply to new works. A favorable response to what I term "art which is not yet" results from an inner feeling that this is good, a feeling I have learned to trust in making new acquisitions, even though I have my fair share of mistakes. Anyone who attempts to evaluate new directions in art on an intellectual level is bound to come cropper. Without the support of a growing audience of art nuts willing to acquire the work of artists attempting to blaze new art trails before they completely succeed, many creative artists of promise would find it almost impossible to develop maturity in their work. This audience has become so hooked on collecting new art that they even ignore the published opinion of art critics. Critics are in the unenviable position when faced with new and familiar art images of having to express an opinion which becomes public record. Like ordinary mortals, they too are more than likely to reject the unaccustomed at first viewing. I don't know if Ms. Emily Genauer still finds the painting of Frank Stella unspeakably boring. His work has without a doubt been an influence on many younger painters, and he has been selected for showing in several international exhibitions. It would cost $5000 or more to be bored by one of his paintings now. John Canaday of the New York Times made it clear in his comments on the 1959 Sixteen Americans Exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art that he did not think highly of the work of many of the artists selected. Among them were Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Louise Nevelson, Ellsworth Kelly, Richard Stankiewicz, Frank Stella, and others still being heard from regularly and doing very well indeed. When faced with new and totally unfamiliar art, critics might possibly be wiser to merely describe the object." There was something else that I was dying to use from John Canaday, but because he had written it in a private letter and it hadn't appeared in print, I didn't think it was wise to do so. But in a letter to Elizabeth Shaw who was the publications, or publicity, director of the Museum of Modern Art in connection with the 1959 Sixteen Americans, he quoted them as, "The sixteen Americans most slated for oblivion." That gives you a slight idea. In the article, I did say since the new talents issue of Art in America is now on a biennial basis, I felt free to choose artists who had emerged only in the '64-'65 and '65-'66 art season. Shall I state who those artists are?

PC: Oh, yeah. That will be interesting.

LA: Robert Morris, Donald Judd, Frank Gallo, and they were all reproduced. Stephen Antonakos (if you remind me I'll tell you an interesting story about him because the first sculpture that he ever sold I bought); Howard Jones, who is from St. Louis, and I own several of his; Ben Cunningham who is an Op artist; Julian Stanczak, who is also an Op artist; Joe Raffaele; Ronald Kitaj, who had his first exhibition in the Marlborough Gallery; Charles Hinman; David Von Schlegell. I might at this point mention another story about David Von Schlegell. Quite a few years ago, you may recall that there was in New York City about ten or twelve important sculptures that were shown in front of various buildings along Park Avenue, including Louise Nevelson. And that was the first Barney Newman Pyramid which was in front of the Seagram Building, and David Von Schlegell had a very large piece that extended out into the air. When Hilton Kramer wrote about these various pieces, not many of which he liked, he particularly disliked the David Von Schlegell one, which I arranged to buy. And I happened to run into him on Madison Avenue, and I said, "Mr. Kramer, I just bought a sculpture that you panned terribly, that David Von Schlegell, to put out in the sculpture garden in the Museum in Ridgefield." And he said, "Oh, I didn't mean that one at all." And I said, "Well, I guess I'm afraid you didn't." And that was the end of that. [Others in this Park Avenue group include] Leroy Lamis; Robert Grosvenor; Leo Valledor; and Dean Fleming. Fleming and Grosvenor were the original people in the Park Place Gallery when they opened in West Broadway. Lowell Nesbett; Darby Bannard; Josef Levi, whose work was very optical with lights (I bought the first piece that he ever sold and also had my fund buy one for the Whitney and the Modern); Ronald Mallory, who works with mercury, and I bought one for both the Modern and the Whitney; Robert Bolomey, a sculptor; Richard Randell, another sculptor; Abe Ajay, which is not a painting and it's not a sculpture. It's . . . .

PC: It's kind of a construction?

LA: A construction. Roger Barr, a sculptor; Tony DeLap, a sculptor. Then from California, Craig Kauffman; Larry Bell; Vass; George Baker and the Museum of Modern Art bought one of his from my fund; John Altoon; Robert Graham, who does those small figures; John McCracken; David Diao, a sculptor in California; Fletcher Benton; Max Finkelstein, and that was it.

PC: It's interesting how many of those people are still very busy and active, isn't it?

LA: The majority of them.

PC: Well, should we talk about these three special artists? Antonakos, Lamis, and . . . .

LA: Well, yes. I'll tell you about Antonakos. I went to his studio, and his work is all neon. I think he's the first one

that used neon as though it were a drawing. And I bought a piece that was represented in this article, and by this time, I had become quite friendly with Howard Lipman, who had the Howard and Jean Lipman Sculpture Fund at the Whitney Museum. And when I would find anything in the way of sculpture that I thought was new, because I was going to artists' studios at that time, I would tell him about it. And so I told him about Antonakos, and he came up to see his work. He liked the piece very, very much, and he asked me if I would let him buy it for the Whitney and then have Antonakos create another piece for me. And I said no, not at all. In fact, it was in one of the first exhibitions held at the new Museum when it opened. I don't know whether you remember it or saw it, but you can see the reproduction and recall it. And then he designed another piece for me, and he also designed one for Howard Lipman for his personal collection. And of course he's done extremely well ever since. Now, who is the next one?

PC: Oh, Lamis. Leroy Lamis.

LA: I had been on the Annual acquisitions committee for which they selected various Friends of the Whitney. I guess it was in 1966, and Bob Sarnoff was the head of the committee that year. I was on the governing board or whatever you call it of the Friends of the Whitney. And in my Highlight show of '65-'66, I had bought a Leroy Lamis, and I wanted to include him. And Bob Sarnoff had a very good one, and I asked Bob if I could borrow if for the Highlight show and Bob said, "Larry, I have a policy of not lending because I've had so many damages in the past. However, I don't see how I can turn you down." And I said, "Don't worry." I was fully insured and we have guards at the museum and nothing can happen. Well, the exhibition was held very successfully, everything was packed very carefully, because you know they are plastic and delicate. And Santini Brothers, who had brought the exhibition to the museum, returned it. When they returned the Leroy Lamis to Mr. Sarnoff, the lobby of the building had a marble floor and it was in the morning, and it had just been mopped or something. Aand the man carrying the Lamis slipped in the lobby, and the damn thing crashed and broke to pieces. Well that was rather embarrassing moment for me and --

PC: And Santini.

LA: And in view of the fact that Bob had told me that he never lends, but made an exception in my case. But he was very, very nice about it and understanding, and he naturally got the insurance value. Leroy Lamis replaced it with another piece that he subsequently told me he likes just as well if not better. So we're still friends. Now, what was the other one?

PC: Fletcher Benton was the third.

LA: Oh yes, Fletcher Benton was one of the first of that -- what do you call that?

PC: Kinetics.

PC: Kinetic artists. I bought three of his things while I was in California, and about three years later he came to see me in my New York office here. And he said that he was contemplating leaving California to get a place out on Long Island, and he was seeking a gallery in New York. He'd been to the Wise Gallery and three or four others with no one being interested. The Bonino Gallery had opened not long before, and I had already place young Mallory with the Bonino Gallery. So I called Mrs. Bonino, and Fletcher Benton went up to see her, and she took him on. I'm told now that his sizeable pieces are easily sold for about $5000. Anyhow, he's had several exhibitions there since and all quite successful.

PC: I remember seeing his work in California a couple of years before it was shown here, and nobody was interested in it. It's really curious.

LA: Oh, I have a wonderful piece of his. It's about 5' in length, and there are bands of color, and it's lit up and the colors just go very, very slowly. It's a fascinating piece.

PC: They're hypnotic after a while.

LA: I'm going to tell you who I had in the first Highlight Show and the reason I'm going to tell you about it is that an incident occurred. I had Mary Bauermeister, who had a first one-woman exhibition. I had Julius Bíssier; Roger Balomey from the Royal Marx Gallery, who had his first one-man exhibition and I was on the committee of the Whitney that bought one of his; Pietro Cascella, who is an Italian (you must keep in mind that I never thought of the Museum as a showcase for purely American art, it was always as far as I was concerned, art period, whether it was created in America or anywhere else); Tony De Lap from California: Jean Dubuffet; Hans Hofmann; Alfred Jensen; Horst Egon Kalinowski from Cordier and Ekstrom (that was his first big exhibition and I bought a piece; and the Museum of Modern Art had bought a piece too, which didn't have anything to do with my funds); Romulo Maccio who lives in Paris, but is represented in New York; Louise Nevelson; Fairfield Porter; Bridget Riley; Soto, who had his first exhibition at the Kootz Gallery in New York even though he wasn't a younger man; Tadasky who also had his first one-man exhibition, and I bought one also for the Museum for Modern Art; and Ernest

Trova who had his first exhibition that year at the Pace Gallery. It was a sculpture exhibition that is. I had bought a painting two years before. I might also tell you that for this first Highlights show, which as you know opened in July, sometime around March or early April that I got this reaction form Emily Genauer. I had to get the Highlights show together in a really short space of time without having actively seen all of the exhibitions that had opened from the previous September through to the end of May. So, the first Highlights show was not exactly representative of what future Highlights shows would be because, after I decided to make the highlights an annual affair, I was in the position then that I had to see pretty nearly every exhibition in the galleries that I knew carried new work throughout the year and then make my decision by the end of April because I needed to allow two months to gather the material and create the catalog. The Highlights of '64-'65 was to be the third exhibition at the Museum. The first exhibition had been hung and lit by Carlus Dyer. The second exhibition of Art of the Fifties and Sixties of Richard Brown Baker had been hung and lit by Carlus Dyer, and this exhibition, which was to open on Sunday, July 11. It was previewed a day before, Saturday, July 10. On Tuesday, I came back from lunch and found a call from the Museum to call immediately, and I called and found that Carlus Dyer had fainted in the Museum and had been taken to the hospital, and all of the material was all over the place, and nothing was happening. And so I had to rush immediately to Ridgefield to work. As I've mentioned, one of the people in the show was Louise Nevelson, and we had three of her great big wooden things which come all numbered. And they were strewn out all across the floor, about 80' of it. When I looked at it, I figured that that was probably what caused Carlus to pass out. Anyhow he had not gotten to the point where there was any specific direction. Fortunately, there is one specific area on the lower floor, the first floor has three specific areas, and the third floor has four specific areas. There is an easy flow through all of them, so it's perfect from a standpoint of a Highlights show because you can group things, put each artist's work together in a separate area, so that they can tell their own story without another area interfering with it. In fact, it has been the envy of damn near every museum director that has come there, even though it is on a comparatively small scale. And so one of the things I did was to take all of the black Nevelsons and put them up in one room, and in that same room, I put all of the black and white and grey Bridget Riley's, and it really was very, very effective. I knew nothing about lighting fixtures. Fortunately I was able to get a hold of someone who also was teaching at Silvermine to come and assist me with the lighting. I hung the show, and then he came and lit it. The fourth exhibition was New Acquisitions and the Chagall Bible, as I told you. The fifth exhibition was Selections from the Museum Collection, and that ran from January 8 to April 13. I mentioned earlier that I was quite close to Brandeis University and had given them lots of works of art, besides being a consistent contributor. Edith Steinberg was the head of their New York Office, and she was involved in their Annual Creative Arts Award. In fact, I had been on the committee for one of the awards that picked Ellsworth Kelly for the junior painting award. That was rather amusing too. Let me run through this a minute. On the committee was Dr. Alfred Frankfurter, Mr. Rich who had been the director of the Chicago Art Institute and from there went to Worcester (at this time he was at Worcester) and someone else from M.I.T., Gyorgy Kepes and myself. We were a committee of four. My interest naturally being in the work of younger people, I had three candidates. That was 1963 by the way. And they were Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Ellsworth Kelly. Dr. Frankfurter was a very strong personality and could argue very successfully. He couldn't see Johns or Rauschenberg under any circumstances, and he was insistent on Georgia O'Keeffe for the important medal award. And I recommended Barnie Newman for that. He couldn't see that either. Well, it became a two man contest in a way, and we finally compromised. I agreed to Georgia O'Keeffe if he would agree to Ellsworth Kelly. Anyhow, I was still in a position at the Museum of finding shows to do, and I didn't want to do any time retrospectives. From my own background of experience, I have felt that retrospectives of an artist's work set him back many years. Particularly, I remember a retrospective of Vuillard that was done at the Museum of Modern Art by Ritchie (who then went with Yale). I felt that that set Vuillard back many years, and the Max Ernst retrospective did the same. A Miro retrospective did the same. It's just too much of one artist's work, you know, and familiarity sort of breeds contempt in a way. So the one thing I decided was that I was never going to do a retrospective in the Museum.

PC: A lot of artists agree with that. They don't like them. They don't like the big shows like that.

LA: Because of my closeness to Brandeis and because they never really got much publicity for their Creative Art Award, which they started in 1957 (and this was 1966), I thought of the idea of doing a Tenth Anniversary Exhibition of the Creative Art Awards of Brandeis University, and I proposed it to Edith Steinberg who was delighted and thrilled with the idea. And together we worked with the assistance of the various galleries and the artists to get examples of their work for the exhibition. I think that we had about four to six examples of each artist's work. Well, the exhibition was hung on a Sunday, and it was opening the following Saturday. Edith Steinberg called me and said that she would like to come up to the country with Emily Genauer and her husband. She was very keen to have Emily do a favorable article on the show, not for the benefit of the Museum, but for the benefit of Brandeis, and so I agreed. And they came up in a limousine, and they came to the Museum first. It was her first visit to the Museum. She was tremendously impressed. I took her upstairs to my storeroom and showed her a lot of things. I have a large, one of the first boxes with glass on both sides of Mary Beuermeister, and she said, "Oh, I didn't like her work when it first came out, but I just bought one two weeks ago. A small one," and so on. And then they came to our house for lunch, and we had a very pleasant lunch, and it just happened that her husband was interested in the Aspen Institute, of which I'm a fellow as you know. I

have a house there, and I live there in the summer time. And all the time we were talking, I was internally getting more and more upset, because this was in April of 1966, and I had turned in the new talent issue article in January of 1966, and it was going to appear in July. And if you recall, that's the reason why I read the article. I said I had made several comments about the various art critics including Emily Genauer, and I was very disturbed. I felt as though she might not know that this was written the previous January, and when it came out in July, that she had been stabbed in the back and so on. And so after we finished lunch, and they were ready to go, Edith Steinberg and Ms. Genauer's husband got in the car and I said, "Ms. Genauer, would you mind coming in here to the living room? I want to tell you something. I'm a little bit embarrassed to tell you about this, but I have done the new talent issue for Art in America which is coming out in July. And as part of that issue, I was required to write an introduction, and in a part of the introduction, I mention something about our local critics in connection with viewing new work. One of the things that I mention is that you were bored by Stella, and now it would cost you so much if you wanted to acquire one to be bored by and so forth." And she drew herself up very huffily and said, "Well, I might be able to change my mind about something, but Stella still bores me." And she flounced out. Well, before we had finished lunch, she was telling Ms. Steinberg that she was going to do a very important article the following Sunday, and devote her whole article to the museum and this exhibition, etc., etc. Needless to say, it never appeared.

PC: Oh, that's incredible.

LA: That's how it was. Is there any need for you to know who the artists were by the year? Would that be of any interest to anyone?

PC: Well, I think as long as they're in the catalog, it's generally there. I think we could go back and touch on another point. Your activity in Friends of the Whitney acquisition committee, was that just for one year?

LA: Yes.

PC: That was just that one year you were on?

LA: They choose from among the Friends, a different group each year. At that time, the contributions of Friends were to be used mainly for new acquisitions, and then there were also some museum acquisitions. And the committee generally consisted of about five or six Friends of the Whitney with one having been selected by the Museum staff as the chairman, and also Mr. Goodrich and Mr. Baur are on the committee. And they had the funds from the Whitney estate, I guess, that could only be used for acquisitions as well. The staff would bring things to the acquisition committee; they would have them sent up, and the acquisition committee would either pass on them or reject them. Then also the various members could bring things as well. For example, I brought the Roger Bolomey, had it sent up from the gallery, and the acquisitions committee accepted it. They bought a Robert Indiana. It was at that time in the Whitney Annual. We bought a sizeable Adolph Gottleib. Also bought a sculpture that I voted against. And a few other things of that nature. There was a couple of thousand dollars left when we got down to the end of the line. This represented about four meetings, and I brought in about a dozen photographs of new young people that I had just bought, but it didn't get anywhere. My own feeling is that Lloyd Goodrich (he was of course the director at that time) did not have much feeling for new contemporary work. Either that or he felt that it was very important for the Whitney Museum to be very well represented in the area of Americans of note, and he tried to get the funds spent to fill in wherever there were gaps. At least that was my impression.

PC: Were you involved with any other special committees or activities through the Friends?

LA: Well, you may recall that the Whitney Museum also had an auction and various Friends were given people to contact and I was given two people, Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg. Jasper Johns at that time had an apartment at about 100th Street and Riverside Drive, and Bob Rauschenberg was somewhere down on lower Broadway. I talked to Johns on the telephone, and he wasn't very receptive. I said, "Well, let me come up and see you anyhow." And so we made a date for one morning, and I went all the way up to Riverside Drive. He was working on a painting at that time -- I don't know who bought it. But I've seen it since in the Museum. It had a broomstick on it, and it was a kind of grey background. And he said that in the first place the Whitney didn't own any of his paintings, and secondly he was interested in a dance group. You probably would remember.

PC: Oh, Merce Cunningham.

LA: Merce Cunningham. And all of that charitable contributions that he could afford he gave to Merce Cunningham. I went to see Bob Rauschenberg after making a date with him one morning at ten o'clock. And I must confess I routed him out of bed when I arrived, and he'd just pulled on a pair of pants and made some coffee. I had a long conversation with him about the Whitney and he said, "Well, before I'm willing to give anything I want to see the new building." It was not open as yet, so I said, "Well, I'll arrange to make a date for you with Jack Baur. He'll take you through." He said, "I'm willing to do something provided that I see an area where there can be performances or something of that sort." Anyhow, I made a date for Jack Baur to take him

through the Museum, this was possibly six or seven weeks before the Whitney opened, and he did give a painting of the late 1950's which sold at the auction for $15,000. Apropos of the Whitney, come to think of it, all of the Friends at a meeting at the old Whitney were shown photographs and sketches of what the new Whitney would look like. And from the sketches I don't think there was anybody that was very favorably impressed. About three or four weeks after that, Art Buchwald, who was then writing for the Paris Herald Tribune and was someone that used to go around with me in Paris -- I would try to get him to buy some of the new younger painters and he would occasionally buy prints and drawings -- he didn't have very much money. Anyhow, his first book came out which was a compilation of various articles he had done for the Herald Tribune. And he was living in Washington. He'd moved from Paris, and the Tribune gave a luncheon for him in connection with the publication of his new book. He had selected the guests, and so I was one of the guests in Mr. Whitney's office. I'd never met Mr. Whitney before, but it was very apparent that he knew of my activities in art. Beforee the guest of honor arrived, I was having a drink and standing and talking with Mr. Whitney, and he said, "How do you feel about the sketch of my new Whitney Museum?" I said, "Well, certainly it is something you may have to get use to." He said, "I hate it." And he said, "The worst of it is that my cousin Flora Miller is surely going to hit me up for a big contribution, and I don't feel like giving anything to it, because I hate it." Then we had a very lovely luncheon. During the course of the luncheon, he was four or five places away from me, he said, "Oh, by the way, Mr. Aldrich, I would love to do what you do with young contemporary artists. But I can't because my wife hates contemporary art."

PC: You know that's something that comes up frequently. People say, well, I can keep it in my office or keep it in the summer house or somewhere else, but I can't have it at home. But you never had that sort of problem.

LA: This was something that amused me. Just a day or two before the Whitney new museum was going to be opened, Channel 5, I guess, was doing a ½ program of the Whitney. And as part of the program they were going to show about twenty-five paintings, and as each one flashed on the screen, Bill Agee, who was one of the curators was going to tell what that painting was. If you recall, the opening exhibition was American art from way, way back.

PC: Three hundred years.

LA: Three hundred years or something like that which they borrowed from all over the country. And Jack Baur called me two days before and told me about this program. He was to be on it, and Flora Whitney's son-in-law, Mr. Erving, who was the associate architect, and Bill Agee. He had asked if they would like to have a collector on the show as well who was not connected or employed at the Museum. And I don't know why he thought of me, but he asked if I would come on, and I said sure. Well, Mr. Baur and Mr. Erving apparently had never been on television before, and they were so nervous that they were almost unable to answer any questions. So I dominated the first part of the program because I was the only one that was able to talk. And one of the questions that I was asked was how do you like the Museum? You can imagine on the program, and I said, "Well, when I first saw the sketches of the Museum, I confess that I didn't very much like it. But now that I see it completed, I think that the architect was very right because the beetle-brow that sticks out on the avenue, from a standpoint of the Museum is located in an area of apartment houses, makes it possible for anyone to very easily find the Whitney, and from that standpoint I think that the architecture was excellent. And certainly the interior space is marvelous." [BEGIN TAPE SIX SIDE ONE]

PC: Okay. This is Side eleven. Was there any more on the story about the television program on the Whitney Museum?

LA: Well, no. Except that a great many people saw the program, and lots of people afterwards said to me that the program should have just had you on it, nobody else. But, Bill Agee did a fantastic memory job of these twenty-five paintings that were going to be in the show. As they were flashed on an easel one by one, he gave, with no notes or anything else, a description of what the painting was, and who it was by, and everything else. It was pretty breathtaking. It was astonishing for anyone to have that much total recall. It was very good. But the Brandeis University Creative Arts Award show that opened in April of 1966, practically all of the artists -- that was twenty artists over ten years, a medal winner and a junior winner -- were at the opening. And in order to make it more impressive, I provided champagne for everybody. Usually at a preview, there's a bar with anything that you want to drink, and I remember Mark Rothko said he didn't drink champagne, he just wanted scotch. And so I had to send for this on a Sunday. Nothing was open, and I had to send someone to my house quickly to get a bottle of scotch. And then after the opening, everyone was invited to our house, and we had a big buffet dinner. They had come up in several kind of small airport-sort of buses. Mark Rothko managed to finish several bottles of scotch before he left. But it was a very nice party, and everybody was very happy, and there were write-ups that went all over the country on the exhibition, and it was successful in every way.

PC: That was quite a collection of people to have together in one place, wasn't it?

LA: It certainly was. The next exhibition was the Highlights of '65-'66. I had been preparing for it all year around.

That opened on July the 10th. It was a slightly different exhibition. I mean it was much more with it that my first Highlights show. And I wrote an introduction in which I said, "The Highlights Exhibition, a summer annual, represents my personal choice of the most stimulating, exciting and impressive works from the many New York gallery shows I have viewed last September. This is the second Highlights Exhibition since the founding of the Museum in 1964. I have chosen twenty-one artists, twelve of them from first one-man exhibitions. I wish to express my sincere thanks to the lenders who make the Highlights Exhibition possible." Now I think that I ought to tell you who was in that particular exhibition so you'll know who the twelve were from their first one-man exhibition. Abe Ajay, from his first one-man exhibition; Larry Bell, first one-man exhibition; Marcelo Bonevardi, first one-man exhibition; Pol Bury, his first one-man exhibition in New York, although he's been well known in Europe; Dan Cunningham, which was another one-man exhibition; Dean Fleming (it wasn't his first exhibition); Frank Gallo (it was his first exhibition at the Graham Gallery); Charles Hinman, his first one-man exhibition; Howard Jones, first one-man exhibition; Gerald Laing (I'm not sure whether his was the first or not); Leroy Lamis (it was not his first); Josef Levi (it was his first exhibition at the Stable Gallery and I'd place him at the Stable Gallery); Sven Lukin, his first one-man exhibition at the Pace Gallery; Ronald Mallory, his first one-man exhibition and I had placed him at the Stable Gallery; Mr. Masayuki Nagare, who was an older and Japanese, but had been his first one-man exhibition in the New York, the Stefelli Gallery; Lowell Nesbett, I think it was his first exhibition; Edward Paolozzi, it was not his first exhibition, but he was at the Pace Gallery; Joseph Raffaele, not his first exhibition; Richard Randell, at the Royal Marks, it wasn't his first exhibition; Leo Valledore, it was his first exhibition; Victor Vasarely (of course he had quite a number); and that was the 1965-66 Highlights show. The next exhibition was that of the collection of John G. Powers. He started collecting about 1960. Would it be of interest to you to know how he got started collecting since I happen to know the story?

PC: Can I ask you that and how you got to know him?

LA: Well, the way I got to know him was that in going around through galleries, you know, dealers even though I tell them I don't want to know who bought what, I don't like to be influenced that way. I found very frequently I would hear the name John Powers, and that John Powers had bought this, and John Powers had bought that. And I was always interested in knowing about other collectors because of having in mind the possibility of showing their collections in my museum. And so I asked, I think it was Arnold Glimcher, I said, "Would you reach this John Powers? I'd like to get in touch with him." So he gave me his home phone number, and I called him, and we arranged to meet for lunch, and we became quite good friends. This was June of 1965, and I showed his collection in September of 1966 through December. By that time I'd seen him quite often and found that he had been the president of Prentice Hall, the publishers, and in connection with that, he'd had dealings with Harry Abrams. And Harry Abrams came to their plant in New Jersey one time and, they had an employee's dining room that apparently was quite sizeable. And Harry had lunch there and said, "You know John, you've got perfect walls here for pictures. There ought to be something of an inspirational nature. You've got nothing on the walls," and so on. He said, "Let me send some paintings over, just to hang them on your wall," which he did. Apparently, the employees, you know, thought this was nutty, you know, what the hell are these things and so on. After a while, they got to like them. Anyhow, John Powers was thereby exposed. And he started by buying -- it must have been about 1959 or '60 -- abstract expressionists that I'm afraid to say were not the top people. And also he's a person with such an enthusiastic nature and having a great deal of money, that when he saw something he liked, he'd buy five, six, eight, nine, you know, that sort of thing. And then pop art came into existence; he fell in love with pop art. As a result, the most important part of his collection at that time was pop art of the most important pop artists. Another one of his loves was deKooning, and he owns more late de Koonings I think than anybody has in the whole wide world, despite the fact that people that presume to know de Kooning's work think that his late work is too sweet and pastely, and doesn't have the guts and so on. But of course it'll be another twenty-five years before the story is really told as to whether his late work was better than his early work or vice versa. I asked him to write something for the catalog. In fact I think I had Richard Brown Baker write something for the catalog too, and I think that what they wrote is probably going to be of interest. Like Richard Brown Baker starts out by saying "I buy art because doing so is fun for me."

PC: Right.

LA: In the exhibition were about twenty late de Koonings, and there were a total of eighty-seven items in the show like Andy Warhol and Yves Klein, Jim Dine, Red Grooms, Hinman, D'Arcangelo, sculpture by Indiana, and a painting by Jensen, Gerald Laing, Roy Lichtenstein, several of his, and Marisol and Kenneth Noland, and Morris Louis and Larry Rivers and --

PC: It's interesting that it provides such a contrast from the things that you had shown.

LA: Yes. Well I always tried to find a collector whose work was not, you know, necessarily my own personal taste. In other words, I was attempting to do somewhat an educational job in the Museum, and also what I hoped would be a lively one that would serve to interest people in becoming involved in acquiring and living with 20th century art. Then the next exhibition which was the ninth that the Museum held was from January 8 to June 4 of '67. That was the Museum Collection, which really is my own that represented works that were created in 1964,

1956 and '66. It's pretty hard to get more current than that isn't it? And that was followed up by the Highlights of '66 and '67.

PC: Can I ask you a question before we get into that? In 1965, you got involved in Aspen, or some project to do with Aspen.

LA: Yes, Would you like to know about that?

PC: Yes, because it comes in here.

LA: That's fine. I'll tell you something about that. This is fast becoming more of a autobiography that just really my collecting and activities in art. But I mentioned to you how I came in contact with John Powers, and the first time that I met him was by appointment at my invitation to lunch at Pavillion when Mr. Soulé was still alive. That was June of 1965. After we had talked about art, and I had talked to him about the Museum and what I was doing, and that I would like to show his collection the following year to which we readily agreed, he started telling me something about himself. Apparently, he was married to the daughter of the principle owner of Prentice-hall, and at that point he had gotten a divorce, and he was going with a very charming attractive Japanese girl -- I had heard about the Japanese girl because apparently she was always with him when he was in the galleries -- and he told me he had been going to Japan for quite a long time in connection with his work with Prentice-Hall (incidently, his work with Prentice-Hall ended with his divorce). And he had a large collection of Japanese art which was shown about two years ago in the Boston Museum and he, had a house in Aspen, Colorado, and he was very much interested in the Aspen Institute. He was a trustee, and he was going to moderate the very first Far Eastern Seminar in August of 1965, and he asked me what I was going to do. Well, I had always been going to Paris in January and July, but after opening the Museum I decided that it was much more fun to be in the Museum and talking to people. So, I arranged for other people in my fashion organization to go to Europe, and I decided I was not going to go, and when I told him that he said, "Why don't you come out for two weeks and be a participant in the Far Eastern Seminar?" And so I thought I'm of an age where I ought to get involved in something I have no knowledge of and no background in whatever, and I said yes. And just as a side line -- he got up, and I thought he was going to the john. When ten minutes passed and he didn't appear, I asked Mr. Soulé, "Would you please look in the john and see if there is a big, tall, good-looking guy laid out on the floor or something?" He wasn't there. He was on the telephone. He called Aspen and arranged for me to get accommodations at the Aspen Meadows for the first two weeks in August and arranged to have the reading material sent to me in Ridgefield, all on the phone. When he finally came back, he said, "I've been on the phone, and it's all set." So we went out to Aspen to participate in this seminar, and we so fell in love with Aspen that we wound up getting a house on the grounds of the Meadows, and John had started an artist in residence program of his own. He had two artists out at a time. Gosh, what's his name that just had an exhibition, the one-man exhibition retrospective at the Whitney now? A Pop artist.

PC: Rosenquist.

LA: Rosenquist, and the artist that is at the Larry Rubin Gallery?

PC: On, Poons or somebody like that.

LA: No, no, no. Older man.

PC: Olitski?

LA: No, he does big areas. I've shown him at the Museum, and one other artist. They were also in the Far Eastern Seminar. Naturally, during those two weeks, I saw a great deal of John and acquired this house and was going to spend quite a bit of time in Aspen. John approached me the following year in January or whatever in '66. And at this point I was beginning to feel the financial pressure of running the Museum, and I contacted a few people for some assistance on the basis of asking them to become patrons and giving me a $1000 a year. And I succeeded with Mrs. Albert List, my cousin Lawrence Wein, Henry Leer, another friend of mine, Mr. Wilson Fulmar, another friend, Leo Model and someone from McCalls Magazine Corporation. And I also approached John Powers, and he said, "Well I'll become you patron and give you $1000 provided that you contribute $1000 to my artist in residence program in Aspen which is costing me about $12,000 a year." And so we made a quick phone call arrangement. I really had nothing whatsoever to do with the selection of the artists. The majority of the artists were of a pop orientation that came out over those several years, with the exception of Bob Morris, who was there one year and Donald Judd, who was there one summer, and Oldenburg, who of course is a pop sculptor, D'Arcangelo was there one summer. What's the guy who does the tiles?

PC: Carle Andre?

LA: Carle Andre was there one summer and several others. I can't remember. But there was a building in Aspen that belonged to Bob Anderson that they used as a studio and the use of that studio was withdrawn. And so the

artist in residence program has sort of died out because there was no place for them to work. The last artist in residence program had Carl Andre and Stanley Landsman and Bob Indiana, and I think one other. They had a wonderful summer but they didn't do any work. There was no place for them to work.

PC: Well, there are all sorts of corporations that have meetings and all kinds of projects and things that go in Aspen.

LA: You mean at the Aspen Institute? Oh, yes.

PC: Have you gotten involved in any of those things?

LA: Well, yes. I've been in quite a number of seminars, and I'm a Fellow of the Aspen Institute, and I have been working in increasing their Fellow membership. I'm quite close to everything that happens out there now and the various presidents they've had since 1965. At first I went out all summer, and I'd go out four or five weeks in the winter time, but since 1970 I've acquired part of a tennis ranch in Scottsdale. I spend two months there in the winter time and only to go to Aspen in the summer time. I'm going to be 66 next month, but I'm still playing tennis, but I just feel I shouldn't ski anymore. It's too rugged. And also, if you haven't the physical strength to perform in accordance with the ability you have on the ski slope, it loses its fun. As long as this is becoming more of an autobiography than anything else, you might be interested to know that my first Far Eastern Seminar made a tremendous impression on me personally, besides acquiring a house there. I came back with a determination that I was going to make several other changes in my life. I arranged for two people who I knew in my organization to acquire thirty percent of my business with the understanding that I would be gone four to five months a year, and in New York, I would only be here on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I relieved myself of all mechanical duties and just retained those like setting the policies, and I said that as long as we were able to continue to operate at a profit, I didn't care how small it was, that we'd stay in business, but if it didn't work, then I was going to give it up. It ought to be deflating but it is not; actually, it has been more successful, with the exception of when the goddamn midi came in, and we're just about coming out of that depression now happily. But that gives me the time that I require to do all of the galleries, and I am more and more becoming involved with artists that don't have a gallery which means climbing lots of stairs and so on. So, I really couldn't have accomplished any of that if I had to be the real operating head of my business.

PC: Is that why it's called Larry Aldrich Associates?

LA: Yes, it had been Larry Aldrich Incorporated prior to this change over in the fall of 1965, and now it is Larry Aldrich Associates.

PC: Well, a lot happened in the mid-sixties, didn't it? That was also the year that you opened the sculpture garden.

LA: Well, I started putting sculpture out as I acquired any, and I have been adding to it every year. Would it be of interest to you to know what is out there now?

PC: Oh, yes.

LA: Robert Morris' L's are in fiberglass, that was 1967. There is a large Gerald Laing which he calls Airplanes. It is painted aluminum, one hundred by two hundred and forty by one hundred and forty-four. There's a Mel Edwards chain piece. There's a David Ainsley, who is British, 1967. It is painted aluminum, which incidentally was a gift of Ira Agress, and the Robert Morris L's were a gift from Howard Lipman. There's a Jerry Johnson, The Bridge, 1969. Welded Aluminum. Sheldon Machlin, great big red ring, painted steel. There's a Robert Morris large open square of aluminum. There's a Duane Valentine, who is from California -- incidentally, he was one of the artists in residence and I bought that piece from him in Aspen -- it is fiberglass, three ovals, and as a matter of fact, when Howard Lipman saw it, he recommended Duane Valentine to the Whitney Museum. They acquired one which he paid for. An Alexander Liberman link that is painted steel, 1967. Robert Grosvenor that goes along the ground for sixty feet and then shoots up in the air forty feet. There's a Robert Bart of 1966. A Bill Barrett and that is the last piece I acquired. It was put out in April. There's Robert Murray, Flame Field of 1966, that's when it was put out. An Arnaldo Pomodoro bronze which was installed in November of 1965 that was created in '61. It revolves like a sundial. An Anthony Caro of 1966. A Duane Hatchett, Totem Steel of '65, that's when it went out. Anthony Paravano, '64. Clark Winter, which is cast stone, 1968, that was a gift. A large Edward Paollozzi, 1967, stainless steel. Apropos of this, I think I ought to tell you at this point something that you might find interesting. When President Johnson was in office . . . it was 1968, and about two months before he declared that he was not going to be a candidate for re-election, the Collector's Club arranged to come to the White House to be shown the private quarters. Mrs. Johnson was very gracious; I had met her on several occasions before and did know her and knew her children as well. And then they had cocktails in the large dining room and so on. And at the end of the day, we all met for dinner at one of the clubs in Washington, and I sat opposite of Carter Brown who was then the assistant to Mr. Walker at the National Gallery. A few months before that, it had been announced that the Mellons were giving an additional $20,000,000 with which to start a sculpture garden in connection with

the National Museum, and Carter Brown told me that he had said to the Mellons, "That it doesn't really make much sense to have another sculpture garden that would be in conformity with the policies of the National Gallery (which is not buying any work of art unless the artist has been dead for twenty years) because it would only be a repetition of what is around. But rather, use that money to create a contemporary sculpture court, sculpture garden, and would you please drive to Ridgefield and look at the sculpture garden of the Aldrich Museum?" Well, I was very pleased, and a few months later I read that the National Gallery is going to have a contemporary sculpture gallery. So I guess that either the Mellons finally took his word for it, or they drove up to Ridgefield and saw it. I don't know which. But it really is quite attractive. It sort of developed gradually, and I have been developing the grass area going further and further back behind the Museum. I'm still open-minded and still hoping for and looking for additional pieces because there is space for more sculptures.

PC: Fantastic. Some of the sizes of those pieces are enormous. Do you move things often, or are they installed permanently there?

LA: They can't be moved because they're installed so that they are permanent. The Robert Grosvenor that I was just talking about cost me about $2,000 to install because it is in a V shape, and the bottom of the V has plates that go down about four feet into the ground. And those were set in concrete all along the sixty feet. Are you still on the button? About a year ago I noticed on the Grosvenor where it shoots up forty feet in the air, and it is made of aluminum, that it was beginning to crack and open. And we wrote to Bob Grosvenor about it and got no response, and we knew the piece had been made by Milgo in Brooklyn. We contacted Milgo to come out and look at it which they did and they said they weren't in any way responsible. I had gotten it, that is, I paid Paula Cooper for it, that's his gallery. But I had contacted Bob Grosvenor directly when I decided that I want one of his pieces and he came up to the museum, and I showed him the area in which I wanted the piece to go. He made several sketches and sent me one, and we agreed on a price and that is how we got it. In any event, Milgo recommended someone to repair it, saying he had no responsibility. And so we tried to get the engineering plans at this juncture, and he said he couldn't find them and this person that he recommended does the work for Alex Liberman up in New Milford. But he said he didn't have the equipment to cut into aluminum, and he recommended someone else. And that someone came and opened it up, and we found that there was just a little narrow wire on that support. It was the most dangerous thing with all the children and what have you around the sculpture garden. Anybody could easily get killed. So we propped it up, and he had to wait until good weather, and it wasn't repaired until this April, early April. He put in sufficiently strong stuff to withstand 100 mile per hour winds and everything else and welded the aluminum back again, and then somebody working for three days smoothed it out. And because of the inclement weather, we haven't been able to get it repainted yet. But that's going to be quite a job because you have to have a hoist or a truck with a way to get up to the top of it. In any event, my bill was six hundred and some odd dollars and just for the repair, never mind the four hundred dollars an hour and three days that somebody worked to smooth it off. I don't know what it is going to come to to have it painted. So I called Paula Cooper who knew about it before I repaired it, and I said, "You know, I had no choice. I can't sue Milgo. I can't sue Bob Grosvenor. I bought it from you. I'm going to have to sue you." And oh my God, you know, I like Paula Cooper. I've not only bought a lot of things from her, but I've sent a lot of people to her gallery to buy things. She is a very bright, sweet person and she has very often given me names of artists to look at that she is representing. And so I made her a proposal that she just make a $600 contribution to the Museum, and I would forget the whole thing, never mind that it is going to cost me about $1000. Incidentally, other than the gifts, all of the sculptures belong to me even though I can never move it because it is all set in permanently. But this has been going on for several weeks now, and she just called to plead that she just barely paid her expenses an so on and would I take $400 contribution to the Museum and I said yes. So that's the end of that saga. [BEGIN TAPE SIX SIDE TWO]

PC: It's June 24th, 1972. Side twelve, Paul Cummings talking to Larry Aldrich. I think if we could continue with Channel 13.

LA: We'll have to check the date on this too, because I see that the catalog isn't dated.

PC: We can check that out quite easily. How did they come to you?

LA: I'm not certain whether it was 1965 or early 1966, and I was approached by a Mrs. Hedda Hendricks in the Museum. She apparently lived somewhere not too far from Ridgefield, and I knew her visually because I had seen her in the Museum quite a number of times, and she told me that she was very active and interested in Channel 13 and that the new Alexanders was opening shortly and it was going to have an area that was going to be an art gallery (whether that still exists or not I don't know). She wanted to know whether they could borrow a selection of my collection to show in the new Alexanders when it was going to open to the public. And said that it would represent a great deal of effort and considerable cost, what with trucking the things there, and also setting them up and arranging the exhibition, insurance and all the rest. And I said you may wind up instead of making any money, you may wind up losing it. I said, "How much money do you contemplate that you'll be able to make anyhow?" She said, "Well, if we could make $10,000, we'll think it's fabulous," and they planned to have certain patrons that would contribute $25 towards the cost of organizing the whole thing. So I agreed, but only

on a basis of Carlus Dyer from my staff doing a modes catalog and also having Mr. Dyer hang and light the exhibition and that was agreeable to them. So Mr. Dyer went into New York to see the area that had been provided, and it was just a plain wide open area that just had no meaning. It involved construction of temporary walls and areas and things of that nature which I believe Alexanders paid for because they were also interested in getting publicity for the store. Alexanders was also permitted to a full page Sunday ad. This was to open with a private preview of, I think it was on a Saturday night, black tie sort of thing, so they really did it up. And then the store was opening to the public on Monday, and it would be open to the public at I think fifty cents admission for four weeks. We made the selection of the things that they would show on a basis of what space was available, and wherever possible we avoided pictures that were too large. I have the catalog which you can refer to. In any event, what they hadn't realized would happen is that they drew a great many more people who were curious mostly because of the fact that it was the collection of Larry Aldrich, and who were not necessarily people who were interested in art. Well, in any event, they were very much elated Instead of the $10,000 they had hoped to make, they cleared $22,000 and asked to extend it for two more weeks which I agreed to do. Of course, it was a big deal for them, and Alexanders was very pleased because it brought lots of people into their new store. Andwhat is interesting is that there was a newspaper strike at the time and the full page Sunday ad that was supposed to be run in connection with the opening was never run. I think it was settled about two or three weeks later and so they ran the ad then and just changed the wording. In fact, that's why they asked me to extend it. Apropos the effect on attendance of, the fact that the Larry Aldrich name is know to women all over the country. The first exhibition that I have mentioned was in 1959 at the Richmond Museum in Virginia. My wife and I went down a day before the exhibition was to open. We got there on a Sunday night and the exhibition was to open on a Tuesday night. On Tuesday morning, we were taken to Williamsburg and we were taken on a private tour. I don't know if you've ever been to Williamsburg, but in most of the rooms where there are real antiques, you know, as compared wit the many reproduction they had made, there is a rope across the room so you can only look at it, but in our case, the rope was taken down and you could feel the wood and so on. They knew of my interest in 18th century furniture mostly because Lesley Cheek, the curator, had been to see me in New York in my office that has all 18th century American English furniture and in my apartment in New York and in my house in Connecticut, which is principally 18th century American and English antiques. We had lunch at the home of the director of Williamsburg, and it was rather interesting because they were living in an 18th century house and all of the furniture was true. Did I mention that the director was a Mr. Battle?

PC: Yes.

LA: Yes, I can't think of his first name either although he later became our Ambassador to Egypt prior to . . . .

PC: Oh, Lucius Battle.

LA: Very attractive and his wife was very attractive too. She was pregnant at the time. What was amusing was that in this house that was absolutely exactly as it would have been in the 18th century, there was no electricity in the house. It was all lanterns, candles and lamps and that sort of thing. But in the basement was a complete laundry set-up of washing machine and dryer and all the rest of it. Incidentally, Lucius Battle's wife, after they left Williamsburg and were living in Washington -- and I think he was in the cultural area of the State Department -- she was assisting the Woodward Foundation in Washington in acquiring things which I believe they either lend or give to the Museum. I don't remember which.

PC: Art in Embassy program, of the American embassies?

LA: Yes and as a matter of fact, it was through Mr. Battle that Nancy Kefaufer contacted me when she took over this Art in Embassies program. And I loaned her fourteen paintings, and since she has died there's a Mr. Munsing that's in charge of the program. And that's my quota. We have fourteen paintings on loan all the time and when two or three are returned, shortly thereafter Mr. Munsing contacts me, and I replace them with two or three others so that it's a constant exchange. In fact, the last three paintings came back that since I've replaced, they were a large -- I've forgotten the Japanese name -- and two Grace Hartigans, and they were returned to my apartment in New York from Washington in a case that was so huge, and you had to have, you know, real tools to open it and to dispose of the exterior and so on, that I had in mind to ask if there isn't some other method because when the man delivered the huge case I said, "My God, how am I going to open that? Would you open it?" And he said, "Oh no, that's not our job." And I am really going to get around to contacting Mr. Munsing and telling him unless they figure out some other way, I'm going to just end my connection with the program because hell, I can't be a . . . .

PC: How long have you done that then?

LA: Well, since the program started.

PC: That's quite a while now isn't it?

LA: Yes.

PC: How did she get in touch with you? Just call up and say we want to borrow pictures for the program?

LA: Well, it was Mrs. Battle that called me from Washington and said -- actually we had contacted them and we became fairly good friends and said that Mrs. Kefauser was taking over this. I believe she was the first one. I think the idea of the Art in Embassies program started with the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art at the time that I was a member, and of course it was rather limited to what they were able to do. I think that they were influential in getting the State Department interested in starting this program for our embassies all over the world, borrowing paintings from collectors for a minimum of two years, and where an ambassador is still in a particular post, and he requests that the loan be extended for one year or two years, they contact the lenders. And in my case I've never said no, because the one thing I have is plenty of pictures.

PC: Well, over the years you must have lent them many, many paintings then.

LA: Yes, as I say they always have fourteen things of mine floating around the world somewhere.

PC: Do they keep you informed as to where they are?

LA: Oh yes. They keep you informed as to where each painting goes when it goes. I've gotten to be quite friendly with Mr. Munsing, and he unburdens his problems to me from time to time. And while his own inclinations are towards more contemporary works, ambassadors or ambassador's wives or both together generally make a selection before they leave for a specific post and what the ambassadors all ask for is Andrew Wyeth. And that of course creates a problem because Munsing's own interests are far more advanced than Andrew Wyeth, and he feels as though our embassies should represent what is going on in the world of art currently, but with very few exceptions I don't think our ambassadors have exactly been terribly interested in visual arts as for other than decoration. Anyhow, to get back to Williamsburg. This was in December of 1959, and on the way back from Williamsburg to what was to be a private dinner party before the opening, it started to snow and the chairman of the board said to me, "You know, Richmond people are very funny. Snow is rather rare, and when it snows and gets a little icy, everyone stays home because the majority of people of means live in private houses and in the Richmond area they're all stone steps. If they get icy, there's a problem of getting out and so on." But he said, "Don't worry because the auditorium seats about six hundred, and it can be cut off from the center by something which automatically will go across so that it would be reduced to a three hundred seating and don't be disappointed if there isn't much of an audience because of this weather." So I said, "Well, it don't make any difference to me." Anyhow, I was to speak at eight-thirty I guess it was, and the exhibition was then to open at nine-thirty. When we got to the museum after dinner, it was about twenty-five minutes after eight, and there was a scene of bedlam. Despite the snow and ice, the whole auditorium was filled, and there were a couple of hundred people that wanted to get in and couldn't, and the foyer was filled with people, and they were all very indignant. Anyhow my talk had to be delayed until nine o'clock while they rigged up speakers to the lobby area.

PC: So, it was a full house.

LA: A full house. This thing happened in pretty nearly every museum that I went to. It was an overflow house. I remember in St. Louis there was a private dinner party first, and I was to speak at about eight-thirty and the museum is in town, but all of the homes are in Clayton, Missouri, which is about a twenty-five minute ride. So the director of the Museum and his wife and I had to leave before coffee in order to get there by eight-thirty. I can't recall his name now, but his wife was lame. I think that he then went with the National Portrait Gallery in Washington. You may know.

PC: I can't remember now.

LA: Because his wife was lame, he was allowed to drive his car right to sort of the back door of the stage and two or three seats had been held in the front, and those were the only three seats that were free in the whole auditorium. I wasn't flattered. The various museums construed it as an awakening of interest in their community and art, and what they didn't realize was that the sizeable audiences were mainly drawn by the fact that the name Larry Aldrich was known to most of the women in these communities in connection with my fashion business and fashion activities. So I mean this took up a lot of time and a lot of nonsense I think, going into this.

PC: But it's interesting why people who came to these things to see the art, to see you, you know, all the factors add up. It's not just one point.

LA: Well, I suppose so. Just as I have always wondered why women go to fashion shows. And that's the biggest bore of all. But yet they do. I don't know. There's no question that fashion shows do attract large audiences. Well, I think that we've finished with the last exhibition which was number eight from September 25th to December 11th of the John G. Powers collection. I think I gave you that catalog. The ninth exhibition which took place January 8th to the 4th of June was called the Museum Collection, only things that were created in 1964-1965 and 1866. I will get you a checklist for all of these museum collections. The exhibitions that were all of my

own, from my own collection, for which there never was a catalog.

PC: I'm curious. Did your paintings get shown many times in the course of exhibitions, or do they appear, you know once in an exhibition like this and maybe there not for a period of time?

LA: Well, there isn't any set pattern. It all depends on what I happen to think of and what area of my own collection should be shown. And besides these checklists that give as a record of when anything was shown, we have a complete file on every artist whose work I own, which contains fixed photographs and information on when it was shown in the museum or if it was loaned, where it was loaned and for how long and the date and what period and anything that happens to come across the desk, so to speak, of exhibitions of artists whose work are in the collection. They automatically go in a file. So some day that will be quite a big mess for the Archives to acquire.

PC: Oh, but those are great sources of information on each of those artists -- where every painting has traveled.

LA: As a matter of fact, this six photographs for everything that I buy is something that I have been doing since around 1960, and apparently it's something that very few other people ever do or ever did. When I would tell the head of a gallery when I bought something in the past that I'll have six photographs when the object is delivered and when the six photographs are delivered, the next day a check will go out to you. Well, you know, I've met so many other people that are interested in collecting over the years, and in many cases, they get to know about the fact, particularly if they happen to go through my file, that I have six photographs of everything. They've gotten to realize that that's a pretty sound idea, and so whenever they buy anything from a gallery, they ask for six photographs, and the dealer says, oh, you know Larry Aldrich. Well, after the 1964-65 and '66 things that were shown, and of course this gives you a slight idea because this was January 8th to June 4th of 1967 and the fact that there were a considerable number of works that were created in 1966 gives you a slight idea of the extent of the increase in my collecting since the Museum was founded. In addition to the costs of operating, the Museum was making a pretty big drain in what was still left from the funds from my auction. I never invested any of those funds. I kept them separate and drew on them for the Museum purposes. Well, then I'll tell you later, I was getting toward the end of the line. In the course of doing this Highlights show, it involved a great deal of time and effort on my part because I had to see almost every exhibition in the galleries that carried new art. If a gallery had a representational exhibition, no matter how well known the artist might have been, it was never of any interest to me because my interest was more in the abstract area. But as a result of the amount of time I would spend in seeing all of these exhibitions in order to make my selections for the Highlights show, if there were any changes coming about, if new artists were doing something that was completely different, it would be very easy for me to spot it. I'd have to be an awful yuk not to be able to see it. That doesn't mean that I would always like it, but I would certainly be aware of it. I'll turn to this Highlights of '66 and '67, which took place June 18 to September 4th of 1967. Just curious to see for myself if nothing else who I had in that. Mario Ceroli who was Italian, and you'll notice that no time did I feel that this Museum is to be dedicated purely to showing American art. It is to be dedicated to showing contemporary art, no matter where I found it, no matter where it was created, and generally in many cases the artist particularly came from first one-man exhibitions. I would have bought one of the works myself in addition to the ones I would borrow from the gallery. And something else that I forgot to mention that I did from the conception of the Highlights show -- besides having one of the items that represented each artist, there would also be a photograph of the artist as well.

PC: Why did you do that?

LA: Well, I just thought it would make the catalog more interesting. As a matter of fact, the only exception to that was when I had Darby Bannard in a Highlights show, and he refused to be photographed.

PC: Oh, really?

LA: And I understand that, I've never met him, but I understand that he's very attractive looking. I've read a lot of his articles, and he certainly is erudite and well informed and has a wonderful background in art history. But he refused to be photographed. Ceroli was with the Bonino Gallery, and he is from Italy. John Claque, who is from the Wadell Gallery. And what I would generally photograph in the catalog was the one that I had acquired myself. Alan D'Archangelo; Peter Dechar, I bought one for myself and one for the Whitney and one for the Modern; Walter De Maria, and this is from his first one-man exhibition and the one I photographed was the one I bought. And Lucio Fontana, who of course with Marlborough Gerson was an established artist. I didn't acquire one of those. Sue Fuller; Edward Higgens, my fund had bought a Edward Higgens for the Museum of Modern Art in 1959 or '60, and I had acquired one for myself, I think in 1962. But I chose him because these were radically different from anything he had ever done; they were all hinged and opened up and they were quite fascinating. Ralph Humphrey, whose work was minimal in 1966 and these were all borrowed although I had a Ralph Humphrey that I bought in 1963 that I bought direct from the artist. My memory makes this whole tape very difficult. The show on the Marlborough Gallery now, one of the early abstract expressionists who's Greek?

PC: Stamos?

LA: Stamos, yes. I think I mentioned earlier that my wife spent considerable time painting at the Art Students League and had been on the Board of Governors, or the Board of Control, I don't know which, and Stamos had been teaching at the Art Students League for quite a long time, and so we got to know him quite well. And he called me one day and said there is an artist that he thought was very, very good, and he wanted me to come and see his paintings. He was somewhere up on the west side. Stamos went with me, I think this was about 1963, and they were all single color paintings, but so subtle that there were variations in the single color that existed as a result of more weight in one area and less weight in another, but all working from the one color. Quite frankly, it was very minimal and very new, and on that basis it fascinated me, but I didn't particularly feel as though I wanted to acquire one. However, we had climbed four flights or something like that and so really in order to avoid having to own one I said, "Well, it's very interesting. It is really over my head, however, if you'd like to sell one for $100, I'll buy it. I don't know what I'll ever do with it." And Mr. Humphrey said, "Yes." Apparently he was very glad to get $100 at that point. So I think I showed it in the Museum in one of my 1965 shows, and this was two or two and a half years after I had acquired it. It had just been sitting in the storeroom and seen in the Museum properly lit or perhaps the span of time, well, I had gotten more accustomed to minimal work although this was really quite a stark example. I found myself liking it very much and having a slightly guilty feeling about having acquired it for $100. And Stamos came to the Museum when this was exhibited, and I saw him and said, "Oh, I'm so glad to see you. Do you remember I bought this painting for $100 hoping he'd say no?" I said, "I like it very much now." He still didn't have a gallery, and I said, "Will it be all right with you if I give you $100 to give it to Mr. Humphrey with my apologies?" In any event, after that he did have a show at the Green Gallery shortly before the Green Gallery closed and then he had a show at the Bykert Gallery in 1966. At that time, they were still quite minimal, but there would be a stripe of a contrast color that would be sort of gessoed on or something or glued on. And Takeshi Kawashima. Have I mentioned a young man, Fukui? Oh yes, I mentioned him because he became my artist of the year in 1966. Well Fukui called me one day and said there was a Japanese artist that he wanted me to see so he picked me up, and we went to see his work downtown. And I bought one at a very modest sum of $300 or something like that, it was quite a sizeable painting, 68' by 68'. Shortly after that ,this was in '66 and early '67, the Wadell Gallery had his first one-man exhibition, and so I selected him the for the Highlights, and I think he has gone on to really good things ever since. Then Justin Kowles, and I bought one of those which is reproduced in the catalog. I think that it was his first exhibition in America, but I'm not certain. Gyula Kosice, who's Argentinean -- all of his work plays with light and water, and I had three of his, one of which I bought myself, but in fact I showed him again in the Museum in the exhibition of the fall of 1971, which were just sculpture and shaped paintings from my own collection. Nicholas Krushenick -- incidentally, just a few weeks ago I was approached by a museum in Germany that is doing an exhibition of Krushenick, and they asked to borrow mine. I had paid $1000 for it and I agreed. I was willing to lend it because I've since gotten to know Nick, and in fact he paid a visit to the Museum and fell so in love with the whole idea that he wound up buying a house in Ridgefield. So I called Arnold Glimcher to get an idea of what the value of it would be now, and he said that for the size that I had, it would be $8000. In a way, there is almost something indecent about that because after all this was in the spring, the early spring, and I had to select my Highlights people before the end of April because of the time involved in getting a catalog and the photographs and the loans and so on. And the one I bought was Masarati, '67. So this exhibition must have been sometime around February or early March. Stan Landsman was in that exhibition, and that was from his first show at the Leo Castelli Gallery, and I acquired one for the Museum of Modern Art. And for this exhibition, actually, there were three pieces I selected and from the time I selected them to when we were hanging the exhibition, Leo Castelli called me and said Mr. Landsman, who I had not yet met, was creating a new piece that was different from any of the other things, and he would like to have it in the exhibition. He couldn't get me a photograph, but I would just have to take it on faith, which I did. Well, it was the first piece that he had ever done that was quite sizeable, in fact 71 high by 27 by 24, and you look into it from both sides. And that was certainly the most popular item in the exhibition. In fact, we had to clean off the glass at the end of every day that it was exhibited because of people's noses.

PC: Got right up to it.

LA: Anyhow, Mr. Landsman came to the opening, and I met him then, and I immediately arranged to buy that piece for myself so it is currently in my collection. And what was interesting when I met him, he said, "You know the piece that you bought for the Museum of Modern Art? I don't know anybody at the Museum of Modern Art. If you introduce me to Dorothy Miller, I'm willing to exchange it for something I'll create that is much bigger and much more important." So of course I arranged for him to meet Dorothy Miller, and he made a swap. Richard Lindner was another who of course was not a new artist; and George Ortman; Michelangelo Pistolleto from Kornblee, I think that was his second exhibition; Earl Reibak, Howard Wise Gallery, and that was his first exhibition, and I had bought the first one of his possibly a year or so before this. Actually, I got a telephone call from someone, and she said she had a friend that was with the Atomic Energy Commission and was a physicist and he worked out something in the way of light sculpture and would I please do her a favor and let him come down and show it to me. He had not shown it to anyone. And so he came down with three pieces, and they were

very interesting in that, besides the color, they lit up as you walk by them from left to right or either way, the colors all completely change. He's gone on to other things since that are imposing and impressive. Anyhow, I selected the one that had the most abstract image to begin with, and I bought that and then a year later he got with the Howard Wise Gallery and this was his first show. And I believe since then he has had several more, but the Howard Wise Gallery is out of business now, but I keep coming running across some of his pieces in various Museums that I might visit from time to time. Then Lucas Samaras, that was not of course from his first one-man exhibition. I had a piece of that I bought, a box No. 57. It's one of the one that are kind of stitchery. And Tony Smith -- these are all the Fishbach Gallery and these are all large pieces that we put outdoors. And it's the first time that I have ever had any outdoor things as part of the Highlights show. The Tony Smith things were just too marvelous, and I had to have them for the Highlights show. As you know they were huge, and they were all in plywood, and actually it was a rather expensive deal for me because of transporting them. And Tony Smith sent an assistant that just didn't know the score so that we had to have Carlus Dyer and several people that were employed that knew things about hanging an exhibition. And we had to totally repaint them. Peter Tangen, all sort of shaped paintings, they were acrylic on canvas. And apparently he was on the staff of the Museum of Modern Art and I don't know if anything has happened to him. He is one of the few that have ever been in the Highlights show that was picked from the first one-man exhibition that didn't go on to more and greater things. David Weinrib, of course this was not his first exhibition, but it was the first one that was all plastic. And Mario Yrisarry, and this was not his first exhibition because I had bought one of his from the Graham Gallery. Mario had an exhibition I think the year before in 1965, and there was only one painting sold, and I had bought it. This exhibition in '67 was completely different kind of work. As a matter of fact, he left the Gallery, and since has had two or three very successful exhibitions at O.K. Harris. Have I mentioned that I managed to get a few patrons that gave me $1000 a year?

PC: Yes.

LA: Yes, I think I did. That was the first assistance I had which was in 1967. As a member of the, I don't really know what they call it, Governing Board or something of the Friends of the Whitney, I had met a Susan Morse Hilles who lived in New Haven who I knew had very interesting collection. And since I had to really organize my exhibition almost a year in advance, I approached Susan after one of the board meetings at the Whitney, and I asked if I could show her collection in the Museum. And she archly said, "Oh, I don't know if I have the kind of collection you would find interesting." So she invited me to New Haven to look it over and I arranged to show it. Incidentally, whenever I showed the collection of another private collector, I asked him to write a statement to be reproduced in the catalog. This was the third private collector's works I've chosen. It's rather interesting each time. But something that I did not know was that she had areas of her collection exhibited in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and she had a catalog of it that was far more impressive than mine because I made a selection while the Boston Museum just took everything she owned, whether it was good, bad or indifferent. And I also made a selection based on how many objects the Museum could show to the best advantage, but she was so thrilled at this exhibition because she said the things never looked so good anywhere else. It is rather interesting that things do have a way of seeming to look better in the Museum in Ridgefield than they do anywhere else. As a matter of fact, only last evening my wife had not seen the Rosenquist exhibition at the Whitney, and so we dropped in there last evening before going to dinner and there is one of the Rosenquist's belonged to Richard Brown Baker, and one belonged to John Powers that had been shown in the Museum as part of their collections, and truly, and I'm not being biased but they really didn't look anywhere as good as they do there. Now, I don't know, perhaps it's because we don't crowd them or I think I mentioned before that it is divided although with free flow into areas that don't conflict with what you're looking at in the area you happen to be standing in at the time. But in any event, I have started getting people as patrons of the Museum, and Lord knows I needed the help. And Sue had seen the catalog, and she noticed that patrons were listed, and on her own, she said, "I'd very much like to be a patron, but I can't because ninety percent of my annual income is given away to charities and on that basis I never have to pay any income tax at all." That law incidentally has been changed, I think. But she said, "I can only give it to public institutions and yours is a private institution." And so I said, "Well, I'm just as pleased about your expression of good will, and in the event I'm ever able to make this into a public institution I promise you'll be the first to know."

PC: I'm curious about the reaction of the people that come to the Museum. Is there a great deal of difference between when there is a private collection like that when you show it or the Highlights show or things like that or is it just difficult to ascertain?

LA: Well, from the standpoint of attendance, the records show that the biggest attendance is for the Highlights show, and whether that is because Highlights is always in the summertime, and more people in warm weather will drive out from other areas or whether it is because of the excitement of seeing what is new and happening in the New York scene during the previous season, I don't know. But I find something rather interesting and that is that a great many artists who already have it made, so to speak, very rarely ever get out to exhibitions because they are too involved in doing their own work, but almost all of them would come up in the summer to see the Highlights exhibition to give them a chance to catch up with what has happened in the New York area. And so many have told me, which is very complementary, that they trust my eye for having selected what was

the best in that season. In the fall of 1967, my reserve fund from the auction was gradually running out -- and I think I have told you that my wife always spoke of the Museum as Larry's Folly, and she was rather disturbed that I might be going overboard financially, which of course I actually did -- but I did promise her that various investments that I had made over the many years that I count on to take care of us in our old age I would never tap any of those for the purpose of operating the Museum. However, I felt that the fund from the auction, which I had never invested, I would freely use to operate the Museum for as long as I could. In any event, in the fall of 1967, I felt as though I had sufficient background of activity in the Museum and, I hope, accomplishment that I felt no hesitation in attempting to get outside assistance. I dictated a letter and attempted to get the names of people to sent it to. I avoided sending it to personal friends, but when I was going to an exhibition at a museum, it would be a one-man show, and I would see that it was loaned by so and so. I'd take the name down and have the secretary at the Museum trace and see if it was someone that lived in New York and get their address and so on. Also I got the list of the Friends of the Whitney, and I contacted Emily Stone of the Museum of Modern Art and offered to pay for any effort involved in getting a list of their contributing members that lived in Westchester or Fairfield County in Connecticut. I had no problem because I was getting an annual report from the Modern, as everyone does that's involved, so that I could very easily get the names from that of the museum members with a New York Address, but the ones that might have lived in Greenwich Connecticut or White Plains or something like that I have no way of tracking down. [TAPE SEVEN SIDE ONE]

PC: This is Side Thirteen.

LA: In spite of what I had done in the way of my fund for the Museum of Modern Art, what I had done for them in connection with the auction, things I had given them directly, I was listed permanently as a patron of their collections or something, Emily Stone refused. And I don't mind telling you I was quite irritated about it, but I didn't say anything about it. But I made up my mind right then and there that as far as I was concerned I was going to finish out my commitment to the Museum of Modern Art and then goodbye and God bless you.

PC: Had you given them works besides things that your fund acquired there?

LA: Yes, I gave them that Torres Garcia that I mentioned earlier. I gave them the Redon, I gave them the Juan Gris for the auction that netted them $22,000. I had a print fund that they got with that Renoir that I told you about and I kept it alive by modest contributions annually, besides the fund itself. Anyhow, I wrote this letter to probably a list of, I managed to get together of about possibly twelve or fifteen hundred names. Would it be alright for me to read it? "Dear, who ever it might be addressed to: In October 1964, the Aldrich Museum, dedicated to the exhibition of contemporary art, opened in Ridgefield. The Museum is a tax exempt organization open to the public on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from two to five p.m. It was tax exempt as a private foundation. There is a contemporary art reference library of over three thousand volumes, and gallery tours are given on Friday and Saturday. The Museum has the only non-objective sculpture garden in the country. Seven exhibitions tracing the development of 20th century art have been given for the past two years; four exhibitions are presented each year. The Museum is consistently visited by people living in rural areas stretching from Hartford to New York City. A considerable number of visitors from every state of the union, as well as many foreign countries, have visited the Museum. Our exhibition catalogs are distributed to all the important Museums in the United States and abroad. At the present time the mailing list of visitors to the Museum who receive announcements of each new exhibition exceeds ten thousand names. The Museum has helped contemporary artists by exposing their work to a new audience, art galleries by sales to people who saw the artist's work in the Museum. And has increased public awareness to the meaning and excitement of the living artist today. I donated the funds for the land and building of the Museum representing a cost in excess of $300,000. I personally own the collection, including the outdoor sculpture and make new acquisitions from my own funds. The highest of professional standards are strictly adhered to in the operation of the Museum. And the operating budget comes to $60,000 a year." It's a hell of a lot more. "I am attempting to form a Friends of the Aldrich Museum to assist me in meeting the annual budget for this worthwhile and excitingart project. The Museum needs two hundred Friends and all to become eligible for qualification as a thirty percent tax deductible public assisted institution. The names of the Friends will be listed in each exhibition catalog. If you agree there is merit to the aims and objectives of the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, I would sincerely appreciate your becoming a Friend." This letter went out sometime around November or December of 1967, and in response to it, I got a hundred and twenty Friends. At the same time I made a, swallowed my pride so to speak, and contacted a few friends, personal friends that is, and managed to increase my Patron list so that I had, in early 1968, ten Patrons which is $10,000 and a hundred and twenty Friends which was $12,000, making a total of $22,000. This is all through 1986. They didn't all come in at one moment. In 1968, by the end of '68, I did have one third of my operating budget come from outside sources. Incidentally, admissions, sale of catalogs, anything of that nature, is not considered part of public support. In early 1969, I applied to the Internal Revenue Service to be declared a public institution, and I think it was accomplished in the fasted time on record, in fifty-seven days, because I got the, what you would call it, designation as a public institution toward the end of June in 1969.

PC: How'd it happen so quickly?

LA: Well, I had a friend by the name of Ralph Becker, an attorney in Washington. And I contacted him to get his designation as a public institution. Perhaps I should explain to you that the requirements of a public institution is that at least one third of your operating budget comes from public sources, number one, and that you must have that record for a minimum of three years. Under those circumstances the Internal Revenue Service cannot refuse to give you the designation of a public institution. However, they do have, or did have then, the right to give you that designation if on examination they feel that it is an institution that's being really operated for the benefit of the public, etc., etc., in every sense a public institution, and it was on that basis that my attorney in Washington applied to the I.R.S. and since he was right on the scene and it was for a personal friend and very much interested in what I was doing, why he made far greater efforts than anyone else would have, and he had a new partner that had just come from the I.R.S., someone by the name of Howard Feldman, and as he tells me, Howard Feldman was at the I.R.S. pushing this practically twice a week. In any event, you can rest assured that the first person I contacted when I got this designation was Sue Hilles who became a patron. As part of my applying to the I.R. S. for designation as a public institution, my attorney told me that it would be necessary for me to have a board of trustees. And since I was well aware of the problems many museum directors have as a result of a board of trustees actively interested in operating the museum and determining policy and what should or shouldn't be exhibited, etc. It would have absolutely ended any pleasure or fun that I had in operating the Museum if I had a board of trustees that would function in that manner. And so I thought about it for a considerable time and my attorney told me that it would be necessary for me to have a mix of people who are prominent in the art world, and of people who are prominent in other areas other than the art world, and also that there would be a certain proportion of them who are from the immediate area of the location of the Museum itself. And so I thought about it for quite a while and came up with a list, and I secured the approval of becoming a member of the board of trustees on the telephone with all of these people, making it very clear that they were in no way financially to be involved and also that they would just purely be window dressing because of my applying for designation as a public institution. And Alfred Barr at that time was in New York, and I spoke to him on the telephone, and he immediately said yes. Mrs. Susan Hilles who was from New Haven said yes; Mr. Joseph Hirshhorn, who was in Palm Springs at the time and I reached him in California, immediately said yes; Philip Johnson, who lived in New Canan (and Joseph Hirschorn, incidentally lived, lives in Greenwich, Connecticut) -- these are all, mind you, people who had been to the Museum and I knew they admired what the Museum was doing and what it represented -- And Mr. Harvey Koizim who was an attorney in Westport, Connecticut, and was also president of a savings bank and was interested in art --I had been lending him eight or ten things twice a year to hang it in his bank in Westport; Mr. Alvin Lane, who was an attorney in New York and is a collector of American sculpture and drawings of American sculpture and he also happens to be a partner of my cousin, Lawrence Wien, naturally I had no difficulty in making him a trustee. And I selected Alvin Lane because I also wanted him to handle for me all of the legal details that are necessary in having a board of trustees, such as an annual election and all that sort of thing. And Mr. Henry J. Leir, who is a neighbor of mine in Ridgefield and not at all interested in art, or certainly not contemporary art, but a very close friend, and he had become a Patron of the Museum -- we mentioned him before -- Mr. Howard Lipman, who is of course a well-known collector of American sculpture and closely allied with the Museum as the Howard and Jean Lipman fund and with it have bought untold numbers of things and currently he's a trustee of the Whitney Museum and also, incidentally, president of the Archives of American Art, the organization which you work for. Mr. John Powers, a collector and a close friend, Mr. Lawrence Wien, my cousin and attorney, and Mr. Albert List, whom I'd become quite friendly with and who'd also become a Patron of the Museum. And they all immediately said yes, including Mrs. List, but Mrs. List is the only one that said, "Larry, I'm going to say yes, however I want you to know that I expect an annual report every year of the entire activities of the Museum." And of course I said that naturally she would receive them. In fact, I had lunch with Vera yesterday, and I told her I was doing these tapes for you, and I reminded her that she was the only one that when she agreed to come on the board asked for an annual report, including a financial report. And she laughed about it. Anyhow, that is how I got my board. There's never been an actual meeting of the board, such signatures that were necessary for the board to sign and new elections each year were handled through Mr. Lane and through duplicate papers that were sent of course to each one of the trustees. At this point I wish I had a board of trustees which was more active in the operation of the Museum, and certainly it was more active in the financial aspect of it, but we'll discuss that again later on. Back now in sequence again with the activities of the Museum. Incidentally, at that time I was still doing four exhibitions a year and the Museum was open in the winter time as well, which it no longer is at present time; it is not open in the winter because we found that there were far too many times when, since the museum is open only to the public on Saturdays and Sundays, that Friday night late it would start to snow and by twelve o'clock, why, you couldn't move in any direction, and there was no way of informing people that the Museum couldn't possibly open and since we'd draw at least sixty percent of our audience from New York, many times it would snow in Ridgefield, which is a eight hundred feet elevation and it wouldn't be snowing in New York, and people would start out from New York for the Museum, and they'd get as far as Logan and find the heavy snow. If they did manage to make it to Ridgefield, they'd be terribly disappointed of finding a sign on the door, "Closed on Account of the Snow." And we got many letters of complaint from people who started out from New York. So I gave it up. In any event, I have referred to the fact that in connection with the Highlights show, I see so many exhibitions that if any change is taking place I certainly would become aware of it, and in '67, I was becoming more and more aware of minimal art, and so decided that for some time around June or July of 1967 I decided

that the opening show in January be what I hoped to be the first exhibition of minimal art, and I was calling it Cool Art. After I made that decision, unfortunately in late fall of '67 the Jewish Museum beat me to it with, I don't remember what they called their exhibition; but in any event, I had this Cool Art exhibition in January to March of '67 and in my . . . . well, I am getting ahead of myself by telling you about the statement, but I can't think of the name of the artist who died in late '67, his black paintings.

PC: Ad Reinhardt.

LA: Ad Reinhardt, I even had to write this down, otherwise when it comes to it, I won't remember. I own two Ad Reinhardts of the early sixties, one quite large and one, and one medium size and I felt as though historically that Ad Reinhardt and Barney Newman were to a great extent the mother and father of minimal art. And I called Barney Newman, who I had never met personally, except very casually in large groups at a museum show or something of that sort, and I told him about the exhibition I was planning and at first he said, "No, no, no, I don't want to be in it." And I talked to him some more, and I said that I would send someone from the museum to see him, this Dorothy Mayhall, who worked for me, in charge of the Museum and did a lot of shopping, and that sort of thing, followed through on the Highlights show, on the loan forms and nagging the dealers to make sure we got the things I selected and all the multifarious details. Anyhow, I told Barney Newman that Miss Mayhall would be knocking on his door on the following Tuesday. So, she reported to me that she knocked on his door and said, "I'm Dorothy Mayhall and I want to talk to you about the Cool Art Show." And he said, "No, no, no. Don't bother me." And he practically slammed the door in her face, and then he said, "You know, you have such a pleasant face. Come on in." And he even gave her tea, and he said, "I'm working on this picture now," which I guess is six feet by six feet or something like that. And he said, "I'll finish this picture." This was probably in the early fall, the exhibition was to take place in January. "I'll give you this picture for the exhibition." Anyhow, shortly before that, Ad Reinhardt suddenly died, and I thought it would be terribly nice if this exhibition were in the form of a memorial to Ad Reinhardt, and so when I was doing the catalog I stated such. And in the Frontis piece I said, "We dedicate Cool Art 1967 to Ad Reinhardt who was one of the pioneers of this movement. The essence of his work lives on, and his influence is felt in the works of many of the artist in the exhibition. We all mourn his untimely death last September." In the introduction to the catalog I said, "Cool Art 1967 is the Aldrich Museum's first attempt in its three year history to present the flavor of the significant new movement in today's art. No really adequate descriptive title has been found yet for the Cool. Critics and artists alike have discarded 'Minimal' and 'Mini-art,' 'Primary Structures,' 'New Abstraction,' 'ABC art,' 'Abstract images,' 'Simplistic,' 'New Aesthetics,' etc." Incidentally, it is "Primary Structures" that the Jewish Museum used. In any event, "Cool Art might be described as that art which specifically embraces space, science and technology. It is impersonal, sophisticated, intellectual, non-illusory, monumental, classical, reductive, simplified, objective, direct, elegant, calculated, non-arty, nuance-full, and has intense physicality. The cool artist cooperates with modern technology. He may send his drawing or model to a fabricator who will make the piece for him. He readily uses plastics, fiberglass, aluminum, formica, extruded alloys, and new methods of shaping and forming metals. He turns away from emotionalism of the '50's with it's disordered chanciness. He is the child of Malevich, Mondrian, Barnett Newman, David Smith, Tony Smith, and Ad Reinhardt. He studies and explores new concepts of space and mathematics, engineering structures, physics. Whenever we could we selected work created in 1967. The Aldrich Museum is grateful," blah, blah, blah, blah, and special thanks and etc. Well, before the exhibition opened and before this catalog was ready, before I dedicated it to Ad Reinhardt, I found out where Mrs. Reinhardt could be reached, and I called her on the telephone. I asked her if it would be alright, and she said most gratefully yes. Now she must have mentioned it to several people because this was probably in December, and I called her because it takes four or five weeks for the catalog to be done, and in any event, the pictures came out. And we take a two week period in which we hang them. And we get a letter from Barney Newman saying we got his painting under false claims, etc., and under no circumstances is it to be shown in the exhibition, and he wants his painting to be returned immediately. Well, because of my lack of background of knowledge, I was not aware of the bad blood that existed between Barney Newman and Ad Reinhardt. I knew nothing about that. I have since learned about a trial and all that sort of nonsense. I was very upset, and I called Dorothy Miller and told her about it. I said "My own reaction is to say the hell with you, it's already here and you're not going to get it back and it's too late and you have signed a loan form and all the rest of it, but I thought I would call you, Dorothy, for your excellent experience and advice." She said, "Larry , if it would have been anybody else but Barney Newman I would tell you to tell him to go jump in the lake and retain the picture for the exhibition, but Barney Newman is someone that you just don't want to get started up with." And then she told me about the bad blood that had existed between the two of them, etc. And surely he must have found out that this catalog is being dedicated to Ad Reinhardt, and that's the reason he was pulling it out. Well, two issues later in Art News there was a letter from Barney Newman in Letters, which I didn't even save it, which he said that the painting of his for the Cool Art exhibition at the Aldrich Museum was obtained under false pretenses, and he is serving notice that he had nothing whatsoever to do with it, blah, blah, blah. So I came up with this bright idea about some of these characters in the art world. Anyhow, the exhibition consisted of forty-two pieces because they are all quite sizeable. I think you might be interested to know who they were. Carl Andre, it was a stone piece. I think I own the first piece that he ever sold and perhaps that would be interesting for you to know how that came about. John Myers of Tibor De Nagy Gallery then had his own gallery on 72nd Street and

Lexington Avenue, and he called me up one day and said Larry, "I'm having an exhibition of a new artist by the name of Carl Andre and they are big styrofoam pieces and . . . ."

PC: Oh yeah. I remember that show.

LA: And he said they are going to come down from wherever he lives on the East Side by horse and wagon, and it is going to cost $300, and he didn't have the $300, and he would pay me back after the exhibition. And I said sure, and I sent him a check for $300. About two weeks later, he called me on the phone, and he said, "I haven't sold a single piece, and I haven't got any money to pay back the $300, and would you do me a favor and could you by come to the exhibition and maybe there would be something you'd like, and we can work something out." And so I came to the exhibition, and there were three great big styrofoam pieces that were in an oval sort of thing. Huge. Besides that there were two very tiny pieces of metal that were magnetized to make a little column and there was one other piece that consisted of wood blocks that were set into making a square about four feet high and a top block of wood that had a metal chain that went down into this well. I thought that was pretty nice, and I said, "Alright, Johnny, I'll take this piece for three hundred dollars." And that is how I happened to get it, and it's quite a famous piece now. When the Guggenheim Museum had an exhibition of Carl Andre, I loaned them that piece for it. They requested it. Anytime he has had a show, he has always listed for certain important pieces that particular one. Richard Artochwager; Jon Baldwin; Bennett Beane; Bill Bollinger; Roger Bolomey; Walter De Maria; Peter Forakis; Paul Frazier; Daniel Gorski; Douglas Huebler; Will Insley; Patricia Johanson; Donald Judd; Ellsworth Kelly; Lyman Kipp; Joseph Konzal; Gary Kuehn; Todaaki Kuwayama; Sol Lewitt; Robert Mangold; John McCracken; Clement Meadmore; Ursula Meyer; Forrest Myers; Antoni Milkowski; Paul Mogenson; Barnett Newman (of course his painting was in the catalog and he was listed and that's the reason why he wrote that letter. The painting was forty by thirty, and it was reproduced in the catalog); Edward Paolozzi; two of Ad Reinhardt, which belong to me; Salvatore Romano; Charles Ross; Edwin Ruda; Robert Smithson (incidentally, I bought the first piece that Robert Smithson ever sold if you'd be interested in that I'll tell you about that later); Michael Steiner; Frank Stella; Carol Streeter; Richard Van Buren; Christopher Wilmarth; Derrick Woodham. I mean most of those are still pretty active. Do you want me to tell you about Robert Smithson?

PC: Yeah, sure.

LA: I can't remember who it was that told me about him. At that point, I was beginning to go to galleries as you know from the new talent issue I did for Art in America in 1966. And in between buying from galleries, I was interested in going to artists. I had become a little more case hardened so that when I went to see someone's work, and I didn't like it, I had the ability to swallow hard and say, "Thank you very much. It is interesting, but no the kind of thing I'm looking for at the moment." Anyhow, I went to Robert Smithsons's studio, and he had a metal piece in the shape of a vortex. Three sides with mirror all the way down in it. It gave you a fantastic illusion when you looked into it and the top was completely raw. In other words, the glass and metal were not in any way finished. I told him I would like to buy this piece, and how much he wanted for it. And he said to make him an offer, and I said $250, and he said fine, he'd be delighted. And I said the only thing is in showing it in the museum I can just imagine a lot of children, because it was at the height that a smaller child would have to reach up. They'd put their hands on this and could very easily cut their hands. I think it would be a good idea if you had metal something that would cover over the edge all the way around. He said, "Yeah, I guess that's a good idea, but I haven't got the money to pay for it, you know." And I said, "Well, what do you think it would cost to get the metal to make one?" And he said, "Oh, $50." And I took $50 out of my pocket and gave it to him. You know, I don't buy sculpture unless it is unique. I said, "I'm going to have this photographed, and I'd like you to sign a photograph. That means there won't be another one like it." And he said, "Oh, that isn't necessary. I'll sign the bill, and it says this is a new piece, and there won't be any more made." So the first exhibition at the Dwan Gallery he had -- and incidentally I showed this piece in an exhibition that I had prior to this date, and Betty Parsons saw it, and I gave her his name and address, and Betty Parsons had him in a group show, and Dwan apparently saw the group show and contacted him, and that's how they took him on. That's how Dwan became his dealer. So I went to the first exhibition, and Robert Smithson happened to be there. There were three of those vortexes as one unit and the only difference, the exact same size and he had put the rim around it, excepting that one of the white glass, one with burnt glass and one was with pink glass. And it was sold as unit plus the fact that he had made a multiple of the same thing about six inches high. It was being sold as individual items. So I came up to him, and I said, "Robert, you may remember that when I bought this from you a couple of years ago, that you signed a bill saying that this would be a unique piece that would never be repeated." And I said, "Good God, it's the main theme of your show. How do you account for it? Had you forgotten?" "Well," he said, "No, I hadn't forgotten, but, after all, yours was only one unit and these are three units and they're being sold as one unit. That makes them altogether different." I said, "Okay, Mr. Robert Smithson, that ends my relationship with you." And I left. Well, interestingly enough on Tuesday night, Charles Cowles gave a cocktail party in his loft on Wooster Street, and I was there with Mrs. Aldrich and Bob Smithson was there, and I said, "Hello Bob, let's let bygones be bygones." And he said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Don't you know who I am?" He said "No." I said, "I'm Larry Aldrich." He said, "Oh, my God. I would have never have recognized you because of your mustache." "Well," I said, "You do remember I bought the first piece you sold

and the circumstance." "Oh," he said, "Yes, I do indeed. I heard about that show that you have in the spring of all new artists that don't have a gallery and so on." And he said, "I think as long you're willing to let bygones be bygones, my wife, Nancy Holt, is a sculptor, and I understand you're doing this as an annual and I wish you'd see her work." So I said okay, and I promised that in September when I start out for my next spring's contemporary reflections show that I would call on her. Well, I think that's about all there in connection with the Cool Art show excepting to tell you that it was very successful and greatly enhanced the status of the Museum among artists. And as we mentioned at lunch, I've avoided any personal kudos, but for years and years and years, everyone says that I'm the one that has an eye, and I guess many, many people among the artists, I'm not talking about outsiders, continue to use that term in speaking of me. For my spring show of 1967, I started with what I thought would be an educational process. Speaking of educational process, about 1965 I started to do art history seminars in the Museum. The first seminar was divided into eight sessions and went from impressionism, pretty much on up to today, and then later on after Barbara Rose's book on American art from 1900, I cribbed that to create another seminar of six weeks. Six weekly sessions.

PC: How are these seminars done?

LA: They're done in the Museum with slides and lecture. I have a lecturer, Jackie -- oh God, in all these years I can't remember her name. I think she's listed as education something in some of the catalogs.

PC: Oh, so it's the same person that gives the lectures, I see.

LA: Yes, she gives the lecture. She teaches somewhere. Jacqueline Moss is her name. She teaches art history in a high school in Stamford, Connecticut. And it's limited to sixty participants because that's as many as we can get in. We charge all of $15, and I pay all the expenses connected with the mailing and so on and, of course, the time and the lights. I bought the slides and things, and we have slides of everything that's been in our Museum. What's the name of that slide company?

PC: Sandak?

LA: Sandak. They take slides of almost every one of our exhibitions which they sell in a package or a group. And Jacqueline Moss gets $225 for giving the course. And as I said, I pay all the expenses. In other words, that would be fifteen participants at $15 would be $225, and usually the expenses come to about a $150. If we have enough participants to go beyond that, it's split fifty-fifty with the Museum. Well, most of the time it costs the Museum money, but we have been giving four a year, and it's been as few as twenty and as many as sixty which is the limit. That was one of the important things I believe that influenced the Internal Revenue Service to give us this public institution designation. Besides that, on Saturdays, we have guided tours at two-thirty and at three-thirty, and usually Noel Frackman, who reviews for Arts magazine does these guided tours, and when she's not available we have a Martha Scott, who is the art editor for the Bridgeport Post. And those are very popular. Personally, perhaps I shouldn't say this, I can't stand by and listen, I get sick to my stomach. And I was always faced with the problem as vast as my collection is in size of how to use it. Generally at least one exhibition a year was areas of my own collection, and I had to constantly come up with thoughts and ideas, such as the previous year I had done from the collection 1964, '65, '66, etc. I have a large collection of the '50's that's more European that American, and I thought I would start something that I hoped would be educational in a way and have an exhibition of art of the '50's. The following year, have an exhibition of the important (all from my own collection) new movements in art in the '60's, and then follow that up the third year with having the best things in the '50's and '60's in one exhibition so people could make the comparison and see the changes. Well, so I had the art of the '50's from March 31 to June 9, 1968, and much to my astonishment our attendance was about fifty percent off normal. I discovered that I had in the Museum built up an audience for the newest things that existed all of the time, and art of the '50's was already old hat to them. Can you imagine? Art of the '50's would be so sparkling brand new to the Metropolitan for example, but the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, it was old hat and people just weren't interested. So I quickly dropped that idea. Then the summer exhibition was the Highlights of '68, which took place from June to September of 1968. In this exhibition, only five of the artists represented had their first one-man shows during the previous year. I said that this is the fourth Highlight exhibition since the Museum opened in October of '64. In addition to the artists selected, several artists of worthy inclusion are not represented because work was not available, or the Museum lacked the space. These artists were: Olitski, Noland, Bannard, Goodnough, Chryssa, Morris, DuBuffet, and Streeter, among other. After telling you the ones I didn't have perhaps I should tell you who I did have. Richard Anuszkiewicz, and incidentally, the Museum of Modern Art from my fund bought the second painting he ever sold, and by some kind of fluke, that was one I saw when I was shown another group that had been passed by the acquisition committee at the Modern. Dorothy showed me this painting that was one that she had just picked up for the fund to buy, and had waited to get a group together for the next acquisition committee. And she told me where to go. The Contemporaries it was, and I went there immediately and bought one. That was the third painting that Dick ever sold, and he's aware of it, and he has been very friendly to me ever since. In fact, every year he sends me a small original work of art as a Christmas present. And then Francois and Bernard Baschett, you know, the musical brothers, and I bought one of those. Fletcher Benton, from California, whose work was light

and movement. Chuck Boterf, Tibor de Nagy Gallery had his first one-man exhibition, and I bought a piece of his. Robert Breer, all things that moved, and I had them in the entrance of the museum, and you know, they moved so very, very slowly, and the space is about eighteen feet wide. And I had them the three of them so that they would go from side to side, and when they hit the wall they'd start right back, and people would shake their heads, weren't sure if they were moving or not. Max Finkelstein, he had been one of the new talent people that I selected from California in '66. Paul Frazier. Dwane Hatchett I had bought in '64, an outdoor piece that's at the museum in that list of outdoor sculpture. Incidentally, I did tell you that music is played during the time that the Museum is open? Well, Dwane Hatchett's pieces are all metal, and Carlus Dyer and the three assistants that we have in hanging a show, plus wrapping up the previous show and getting them either put away or sent on to New York, got an inspiration about nine o'clock one night. I'd already gone home and they were there from nine o'clock until four o'clock in the morning. And they made a tape of various things in the Museum which we played during the whole exhibition.

PC: Terrific.

LA: It was marvelous. I still have that tape. Lyman Kipp, who is in that exhibition, and Mon Levinson, and Sol Lewitt, and Alex Liberman, I already had a piece of his outside. And Roy Lichtenstein, and Robert Mangold, I also recommended and the Museum of Modern Art buy one from my fund. Howard Mehring who was one of the Washington color field painters. Ursula Meyer, Louise Nevelson, and hers were all plastic pieces, transparent sculpture. And Nicolas Schoffer, he had three pieces, and they were all situated in one room and we set them up so beautifully. Carlus Dyer who works for me is absolutely terrific on display and exhibition, and making shelves and putting on lights and mirror behind them. It was a fascinating room. And Frank Stella, and I'll come back to that in a moment, and Syliva Stone and this is from her first exhibition, and she is now married to Al Held. I bought a piece which was in the exhibition, and I recommended it to the Whitney, who didn't buy it, but they've since bought one for four times as much money from some other source. Cy Twombly, and that was it. Did I speak of, previously, of an exhibition of Frank Stella's paintings at the Castelli Gallery?

PC: Oh yes, right.

LA: I also had mentioned, I think that the artists speak of me as the 999 fund.

PC: No, no.

LA: I told you I believe that these all these ten foot high, the first circular pieces that were so vividly and brightly painted, and my ceiling was ten feet and nine/six is the biggest I can hang anything. I saw the exhibition before it even opened, two days before, and the biggest one was twenty feet long and ten feet high, and I think there were about six pieces in the whole exhibition and the smaller one was ten feet high and about five feet wide. They ranged from $3500 to $7500, and of course I was heart sick that I couldn't acquire one. Are you sure that this wasn't on the previous tape?

PC: No, it's a different story about it.

LA: I asked Leo Castelli if he'd make a date to meet with Frank Stella at the gallery and tell him my problem. So I met him there about a week later, and that's when Frank said, "You know, the artists speak of you as the 999 fund." Because my fund both at the Modern and the Whitney was limited to $1000 per item, and of course Frank knew that my fund had bought the first one of his at the Museum of Modern Art. I told him my problem. He said he had two stretchers that he hadn't painted on as yet, I think it was about September or October of 1967, and he had a fifteen foot stretcher and a twenty foot stretcher that was five feet high. The fifteen foot one had two circles, and the twenty foot one had three circles. And when he got around to painting those, he'd send them up to Leo with my name on them, and I could make my selection. Well, this was in September or October, and it wasn't until April in '68 that Leo called me and said, "I've got these two paintings." And I picked the one that was fifteen feet long. It had two circles five foot high and then Leo said, "You know, Larry, I have a problem, and Frank and I've discussed it quite a bit. To begin with, you know that last September when I opened the exhibition those paintings were from $3500 to $7500. That one for $7500 could now be sold on the telephone for $25,000 or $30,000. All of those just went zooming, and in fact I know that Vera List bought one in '68 and paid $27,000 for it." Actually there were only six paintings in the exhibition, but Frank had made about thirty some odd stretchers and eventually all of those thirty were made, and so they kept coming into the gallery from time to time and of course we recognize that you didn't buy one of those first ones only because they were too high. Frank feels that you've done so much for art and so on; however, this painting is now worth $20,000. You can have it for $5500." So I didn't call for any argument and took it. I used both of them in the Highlights of that year. [TAPE SEVEN SIDE TWO]

PC: This is side fourteen.

LA: In perhaps early 1966, I was in the Pace Gallery, before they moved to their present new location, and behind their exhibition area, there was a kind of an office that they occupied on the right. On the desk was a

clear, plastic model about eighteen inches high inside a plastic case of Louise Nevelson and was the first one of that type that I had seen. I asked about it, and he said it was a unique model and that Louise was going to do a whole series of these things and also with probably different material. I owned two pieces of Louise Nevelson. One was a wall piece behind glass, and the other was a box. I said I'd like to have this piece, but in sculpture, I only buy things that are unique. I said, "If you get it photographed, will Louise sign the back of the photograph that it's unique?" And he said sure. That was $1500. About four days later, he called me on the phone, and he said, "Larry, before you saw that piece, there was a young man that was in here every single day. He is a young architect, and he's never bought a contemporary work of art of any kind, and he was just in love with that piece. And as a matter of fact, he doesn't even have the money to pay for it, but he came in again, and I told him that the piece was sold and he was just in tears." He said, "I know how you feel about working towards getting people interested in collecting, so would you be willing to let him have this piece? He's aroused my sympathies too, even though he'll only be able to pay for it at the rate of a $100 a month. I'll promise you that Louise will do another piece for you." Now mind you, in '66, Louise Nevelson had plenty of recognition, but she had not yet made those big steel pieces. She still was not way up in price price. She wasn't getting $40,000 for those boxes or anything of that nature. And so I said yes. An amusing sideline was about a week later, Armand Bartos who was an architect, called me on the phone and said, "Larry, a young architect that works for me bought a Louise Nevelson," and so on and so forth. "And he told me about it, and he said that it had been bought by you and that you gave it up to him and now he's suspicious and he thinks that since you gave it up to him, maybe it's not any good." So I said, "Well, you can assure him that it's damn good, and I reluctantly gave it up to him only because of my interest in having young people becoming involved with contemporary art." And I said I was promised that Louise would make another for me. That's rather amusing though, isn't it? In any event, I'll go back to this young man whose name I can't remember, but this was in 1966, and it wasn't until 1970, and twice a year at least, I would say to Arnold, how about that unique piece that Louise Nevelson? It was 1970 that Arnold called me on the phone and said, "Larry, Louise finally came through with a unique piece for you." So I went to see it, and it was about twice as high as, almost anyhow, as the piece that I'd given up for $1,200 or $1,500. It was very, very beautiful, and she had developed technically so that technically it was a great deal superior to the other one. And again it was a case of Larry, I had a long talk with Louise and since that time you know what's happened to her prices. And normally this would be easily $7500 or $8000, and we think that you ought to pay $5000 for it. I said, "You know, I'm not questioning what it's worth, but you know of my recognition of the beauty of those plastic pieces that were there for $1200, and it's not my fault that it's taken all this time for Louise to get around to making another unique piece for me. And I don't think that that's a fair deal, particularly since I've been a very active buyer of other things of yours. I certainly had a hell of a lot to do with promoting, who's that St. Louis sculptor?

PC: Trova.

LA: Trova, and I don't think it's fair. So, he said, "What do you think would be fair?" So I said, "$3500." So they took it, and I'll be showing it in the Museum this fall for the first time. I guess it was in the late fall of 1970 that this took place. Anyhow, this young man that bought the sculpture showed up a the Museum with a Chinese chap by the name of Hanford Yang, and he introduced himself to me and said, "I work for Bartos, and I'm the one that bought that sculpture." And incidentally, he said the thing fell apart, and he had returned it, and it took six months before he got it back, etc., etc. And in talking to Hanford Yang, I find that he has a vast collection. He was collector I didn't know anything about. And after about the second visit, I asked if he would be interested in our showing his collection at the Museum, and he said yes. He lives in a house somewhere in a terrible neighborhood in the Bronx, but he lived there because of the amount of space both for hanging and showing his collection. I said, "I haven't the time to make a visit, but would you send me a list of the things that you own and I'll surely from the list know what . . . ." He replied that he would do more than that; he'd send some photographs as well. And so I kind of booked him for my fall show in September 29 through December 22, 1968. And it was a most interesting collection as you will see from the catalog. And you might like to know as I turn the pages of this catalog that by fall of '68, I had eleven patrons. So that was . . . .

PC: A relief?

LA: Yes. Mr. Hanford Yang also made a statement which I think was one of the more interesting ones of the private collectors that I showed. Can I read it?

PC: Sure.

LA: This is under his picture. "The act of acceptance and rejection in things has inherited double standards. If one's decision is solely subjective, it can be dangerous, obsolete, and unnecessary. Unless things are judged objectively, can there be room for improvement and refinement of taste? Any form of art is valid if it relates to the science, society, economics, and technology of a particular period of time. Things that are truly meaningful, good, and original are invariably difficult to comprehend when one first encounters them. To be suspicious is intelligent, but to be automatically negative toward the unfamiliar is only being simple-minded. With the above statement as my personal guide, I tend to prefer the things that puzzle me the most and tend to buy the things

that I like or understand the least." What is interesting about this statement is that in different words, it's the repetition of the sort of thing that I had been saying for a great many years, that I partially said in 1960 and '61 during the Museum tour in my talk and so on. And I always feel that if this was the credo of art critics when they approached something new, that they might have a better track record than they have had up to now. Incidentally, this had one of the Love paintings of Robert Indiana and interestingly enough, it has since been sold at an auction and went for $19,000. It was bought from his first Love exhibition that I think I told you inadvertently the existence of the Museum was responsible for. The next exhibition was in 1969. I did not open for the winter, that's the first year, and my first show opened on the 16th of March and ran until June the 8th of 1969. That was Art of the '60's, and it was a review of the contemporary scene from 1964 through 1968. In that naturally were some of the things that I acquired that had been in previous Highlight shows. As you know, most of the time when there was a first one-man show that I selected from I would buy a piece for my own collection. And to give you a slight idea of the numbers of my acquisitions, a review of the contemporary art scene, 1964-68 consisted of 79 pieces, and that was not all that I had bought during that period by any means. I'll turn that over to you. In the fall of 1968, John Russell, the English writer and critic, did a story for Art in America on the collector Larry Aldrich that included the Museum and had photographs of part of the sculpture garden and the interiors and so on. Just for the record, this was part of a series that came out in a book a year ago by Viking Press, of Collectors in America in which this article was included. They all had been taken from previous issues of Art in America.

PC: I'm curious about an article like that in Art in America, and even its appearance or reappearance in a book by Viking. Do you get any reaction from that among people, you know, outside the art world? Or don't they even know about it?

LA: Well, you know the circulation of those publications is not exactly very colossal, and every once in a while, I'll run into somebody anywhere across America that would have seen and read the articles and will meet me and say, "Oh, I saw this article or that article or the other one." But as for my immediate associates in business for example, none of them are aware that any of this kind of thing exists at all. I attended a coming out party of the daughter of a friend of mine in Aspen two summers ago and found out that I had been deliberately seated next to a friend of hers from Denver who was actively interested in art, and she had requested Kay Black, the mother of the daughter whose party it was, to be seated next to me because she wanted to talk to me about art. She'd seen that particular John Russell article in Art in America or things of that nature come up every now and then but . . . .

PC: There is some feedback then?

LA: Some feedback, yes. Of course, many people that come in the Museum may mention, they see a particular article, also in the library various publications are around and on occasion they pass by and see somebody reading an article, either one that I wrote or one that was written about the Museum or something of that sort. But that's about the extent of it pretty much. I think I mentioned that by 1966 or 65, we had, the family, become quite friendly with Howard and Jean Lipman and also that Howard had become a patron of the Museum back in 1967, and when the Museum became a public institution, he became another one of the inactive trustees. Well, we would see them infrequently at social, you know, dinner occasions and that sort of thing. And sometime around April I guess it was of 1969 we were having dinner with Howard and Jean, and Jean knew by now that by the end of April I had selected all of my people for the forthcoming Highlight show, and she casually asked me whether I had noticed any new trend in doing the Highlight show. And I told her that I had, that the first example was the Larry Poons show which had opened in September - October of '68 that was a complete change away from his work into much more painterly and warmer and softer, and there's none of the flatness, nor the minimal or anything else, and that the second time I saw anything like this was a Darby Bannard show that also opened in the late fall of '68 that was a complete change away from his minimal things because I own one of his minimal things that I bought in '63 I guess it was in his first show, to a much more romantic painterly kind of painting. And also by this time the artist that I told you about that I had bought for a $100, Ralph Humphry, had achieved quite a reputation, and in fact the Whitney had bought one, and the Modern had bought one for several thousand dollars. I saw an exhibition of his at the Bykert Gallery that again was a complete change away from the minimal format to a much more warm, painterly, lyrical, in fact that's the first time I even used the term lyrical. And then, I said, in going around in the other galleries that I had bought something from a first one-man show that was definitely very lyrical and that was William Pettet, and another one was a Dan Christensen, and a David Diao I had bought from Paula Cooper that was very lyrical. And so she said, "Then you feel as though there's a trend towards the lyrical?" I said, "It seems to me to be so. I believe there will be." And as a matter of fact, I don't remember whether I had completed my introduction to the catalog, I have to check it, but I think I said something about it in my introduction to the catalog. Let me check it myself. "Highlights of the 1968-69 Art Season is our fifth annual summer exhibition. We have collected two or three works by each of the 29 artists who we feel had the most exciting and significant one-man shows in the New York City art galleries since September. Nine of the artists had their first one-man shows this year. Peter Alexander, Leon Berkowitz, Dan Christensen, David Diao, Eva Hesse, Clement Meadmore, Richard Serra, Christopher Wilmarth, and Peter Young. A definite new trend appeared this past season: artists turned away from hard-edged and shaped canvases

toward the more sensuous, painterly, non-form, two-dimensional aspects of painting. Artists represented in our show involved in this departure are David Diao, Don Kaufman, William Pettet, Robert Ryman, and Dan Christiensen." About four or five days later, Jean Lipman called me and said, "Would you like to do an article for Art in America on the painterly young artists?" And I said, "Well, I don't know because I'm not capable of a scholarly type of article. It has to be a reportage, and what kind of reportage can I do about six artists? Let me investigate and find out whether there aren't any new young people who may be working in this lyrical vein, and I'll let you know in a few days." And she said that I didn't have much time and that she wanted to hit while the fire is hot. She said, "I want to be the first, and the first issue I can get it in is the November issue, and you have to have the whole article in, complete, before the 20th of June in order for me to get it in the November issue. I'll give you a certain number of color pages," and so on. So I contacted Ivan Karp, Richard Bellamy and Paula Cooper, and I told them that I wanted to do an article on painterly painters, and since they saw lots of work by new artists, could they give me the names of anyone whose work they saw that they thought would be along this vein, away from the minimal or the hard-edged or the geometric. And they gave me several names, and they also suggested that I contact David Whitney, who was about to open his gallery. We made a few preliminary stops. I felt as though I could find enough people to warrant doing an article, and I called Jean, and I said that I would do the article, but I would refer to them as lyrical abstractions. Her own feeling was that she wanted to call it new young painters or something of that sort, but I was rather stubborn about it. So she did agree to young lyrical painters anyhow. And so really it was not very good timing for me because it's a period when we're in the midst of showing our fall collection, and as you can imagine, it involves a great deal of stair climbing and what have you. Have you ever seen the article by the way? Well, the introduction tells about my seeing the first change in a Larry Poons and a Darby Bannard and a Ralph Humphry, and then went on to the new ones that I found and a few that I'd mentioned in my catalog as having been the first one-man exhibitions. The most difficult part of the whole job for me was not find the paintings, but having to write the description. That's more work of a professional critic, but I managed to get it in. In any event, as I was sending the material in, they kept expanding the size of the article. Originally, it was only to be two pages in color, and that was to consist of the Poons and the Darby Bannard and the Humphry, but I managed to get a black and white photo and a slide of everything I selected and so they kept on adding color pages. Anyhow, Helene Aylon, who had since then her second exhibition at the Max Hutchinson Gallery; Ronnie Landfield was has had two exhibitions at the Whitney Gallery (they have since gone out of business) -- I saw him last Tuesday night and he told me he's going to have his first exhibition at the Emmerich Gallery this fall; Carol Haerer, and she had her first exhibition at Paley and Lowe, I think it was; Gary Bower, who had since two exhibitions at Ivan Karp; Lawrence Stafford, who had just one exhibition that I know of at Whitney; Gary Rich, who's having his second exhibition this fall at the Max Hutchinson Gallery; of course Dan Christiensen, we know about that; David Park; John Torreano; Donald Kaufman, who's with the Feigan Gallery; Philip Wofford is with Emmerich; Kenneth Scholl had an exhibition at the Whitney; John Griefen had an exhibition at Kornblee; David Diao, I understand is now with Paley; Pat Lipsky has had two exhibitions at Emmerich, both of which were sell outs; William Pettet of course is well established since that first show in '68. The last two pages were in color besides the first two and two in between pages were in color.

PC: So, you've done lots of things for those artists.

LA: Yes. We'll get back now to finishing the Highlights of '68-69 season that was held June 8th of '69, and let me tell you who I had in that exhibition. Pierre Alechinsky and I own two of his paintings, one I bought in '58 and one I bought in '60 at the Gallerie de France in Paris, but this was from a Lefebre Gallery exhibition in New York; Peter Alexander from California, those plastic columns that were so beautiful; Hosrt Antes, who is an older, well established painter; Leon Berkowitz, who is one of the Washington color painters; Varujan Boghosian was an established artist; Daniel Christensen, incidentally, the Whitney had bought one of his painting from his gallery. What is the name of the curator that's now in the West Palm Beach that had been with the Whitney for a number of years?

PC: Jack . . . .

LA: Gordon.

PC: Jack Gordon. Right.

LA: Jack Gordon had bought this Christensen (I don't know how he came to it), it was the serial type of painting, and it was very, very beautiful. He had no gallery, and I got his name and phone number at the time I saw the painting, and I called him several times on the telephone and spoke to him. I identified myself and told him I was the one that was paying for the painting the Whitney bought, and I wanted to come down. He said, "Well, I'm really not ready." And I'd keep calling, and finally I just forgot about it. And then the first exhibition came up at the Andre Emmerich Gallery, and that was rather frustrating because I called Bob Miller and said I'd like to see them before they open because I'm never in New York on a Saturday. He said, "Oh, there's plenty of them. You don't have to worry. We don't have them hung till Friday night." So I said, "Okay, well, at least reserve a couple of them if they look good to you. Let me have a choice. He said, "You don't have to worry." I arrived there on

Wednesday afternoon. The show opened on Saturday, and there must have been about 26 or 27 paintings in the show, and every goddamn one was sold. I was furious. "Well," Bob said, "That wasn't my fault. Just talk to Andre. I can't do anything about it"

PC: You know, a lot of painters bought paintings in that show. It's very interesting.

LA: But anyhow, I had him in the Highlights; Nassos Daphnis, and he's rather interesting because, as you know, he's not a young man, and Leo Castelli had been handling him for a long time and never had any success with him. And that one show that he had at the end of '68 was a complete sell out, and there was the painting that I bought. And since then the, what do you call it, the something Knox Museum in Buffalo?

PC: Albright Knox?

LA: Albright Knox gave him a big one-man show. He's had big one-man shows in other museums, and he's selling so well.

PC: It took a long time for him.

LA: A long, long time, yeah. I was astounded when I found out what my painting would be worth today in '72 that I bought in '68 for about $1,200 or $1,500, and it's huge, 97" by 97" in a diamond shape.

PC: So that's a pretty good size.

LA: And David Diao and of course one of my own was in that show; Thomas Downing which were shaped canvases; Mark Feldstein, I don't know what's happened to him since; Dan Flavin, he created a piece in a corner in the museum for which we got local electricians, under Dan, to set it up, and it was quite fantastic. He was at the Dwan Gallery, and they sold it from the Museum for about $9,000. Eva Hesse, unfortunately she's since died, and I bought an aluminum one with rubber extrusions called Accession One 1958. Three weeks ago, the Contemporary Art Society of the St. Louis Museum was in the Museum on a Sunday. They arranged to come at eleven o'clock, and after that had lunch in Ridgefield about one thirty. And after they toured the exhibition that's on now, I took them through two of my storerooms. Then a week ago, I got a letter from the curator saying how much she enjoyed the whole visit and that they don't have a Eva Hesse at the St. Louis Museum. She thinks mine is the most outstanding one she's ever seen, and would I consider either selling it or making a long term loan to the St. Louis Museum. And so I answered and told her that I wouldn't be showing it until August, I wouldn't need it until August or September of '73 at the earliest, if she wanted to borrow it for a year she could, but it wasn't for sale. John Hoyland, and that was his first one-man exhibition even though he's well known in England; Howard Kanovitz, remember those fascinating ones? Craig Kauffman, and I had one from his first show, and also my fund bought one for the Modern. I don't remember just what year that was now, but this was either a second or third show and they were different. It was quite beautiful. Donald Kaufman, whose work has turned lyrical; and Sven Lukin, I had bought another from this exhibition; Robert Mangold; Clement Meadmore; Doug Owlson; William Pettet of course; Salvatore Romano, whose sculptures float; Robert Ryman who represented a problem. He insisted on hanging them himself, and it was a mess. Ludwig Sander --

PC: What was the problem?

LA: Oh, he wanted them a certain place in a certain way, and it didn't conform. Anyhow, those are problems we have all the time. And Richard Serra, Prop, 1968; a Robert Smithson in that show too with one piece that we really created ourselves.

PC: That's the mirror, right?

LA: Yes. And Christopher Wilmarth; and Peter Young. As you can see from this catalog, besides my list of Patrons in '69, I have a very healthy list of Friends.

PC: Did that list grow? Are your Friends still growing?

LA: I have a very sad tale for you. In 1970 and '71, which were the two years of the so-called depression which we're not out of as yet, my list of Friends dropped precipitously. During that period, my cost of doing business rose precipitously because, to begin with, there was a 25% increase in trucking, which you may recall. There was a trucking strike for a while. Insurance costs went up about 50% The insurance companies refused to insure things that came up by truck and were returned that way unless the trucker carried 25% of the value of the shipment, which came to usually a premium of $500 or $600 each trip. And of course, I had to pay the trucker for getting that insurance. Anyhow, we're kind of getting ahead of our story. Charles Cowles, who is the editor of Artforum, had been to the Museum in '68 and then came again in '69 and in '69. We had quite a long chat and just sort of by chance he'd begun to tell me something about himself. He'd only been out of college a short length of time from California, and he'd started this Artforum while he was still at college there and just recently

moved it to New York. And he told me that his collection was mostly young Californians. So I asked him if he would like to show in the Museum as a private collector in the fall of 1969. I said I was particularly interested because so many of his artists were California artists, and it would be something completely new. So that was the exhibition we had from September 28th of '69 to January 4th of 1970 and by this time my catalog shows an Aldrich Museum Board of Trustees because I had gotten that designation in June of '69 after the Highlights catalog had gone to print. And Mr. Cowles made a rather interesting statement, too, in which he told a great deal about himself. He'd started collecting when he was 18, buying works out of his own allowance and his first earnings. And in 1959, he went to Stanford, and it was all very interesting and gave credit a friend of mine, Nicolas Wilder, who was championed the most radical and important artist in California. He said he bought his first contemporary work in 1964, a sculpture by Robert Hudson and a painting by Tom Holland. About that time, he became active in Artforum, and shortly after he became the magazine publisher and moved to New York. I'll now give you that catalog.

PC: Okay, thank you.

LA: Doing the article on the lyrical abstract painting, every one of the paintings reproduced in the article belonged to me, but they were not so identified. In other words, in going around to the studios, when I saw or found something I liked and included in the article, I also bought one of the works. I spent from the end of June to Labor Day in Aspen, and, as I mentioned earlier, I had to get the article in by the 20th of June. Shortly thereafter I left for Aspen, but I still had quite a few people on my list of new young people that were working in that vein, and when I came back from Aspen, I pursued that list. I wound up with thirty-eight paintings, about three of them that had been in the '68 - '69 Highlight, and the balance were all the new artists that I'd found for the article in Art in America, and others that I found after that. I decided that the exhibition in the Museum from April 5th to June 7th would be a lyrical abstraction show with only these three artists that had previous shows, and all the others were brand new. Peter Selz whom I'd known when he was at the Museum of Modern Art, he was then at Berkeley, and he had contacted me six months before and said that their new museum was opening in the fall of 1970 and he would like to go through my collection and select a few things for it. I had told him I'd be glad to cooperate, and the week before the lyrical abstraction exhibition opened, or a few days before it, he called me and said he was in New York, and he'd like to make a date to come to the Museum to go through my art objects and make a selection for the show. I told him that the lyrical abstraction show was opening in a few days, and he had seen the article which he mentioned on the telephone, and he thought it was very good and that he really planned to do a show of that nature after his first opening show. So I asked him to come up on the day of the preview which would be the 21st of June and go through the files of all my paintings and select what he wanted. He said that he happened to know an artist who's going to be in the show and that he would come up with her, and he did. And after he saw the show he asked if I would lend me the whole show for his second exhibition (the first one was to be called outstanding paintings from all over), and I loaned him about four or five things that he selected on his own, and his second exhibition was going to be young painterly painters, he hadn't decided to call it lyrical abstraction or anything of that nature. He asked if he could borrow this exhibition, and I said sure, of course he could. He said it was going to be pretty expensive to crate these and get them to California and so on, and that he would give me a list of museums. I would write to them and tell them I'm writing at his suggestion, that he'd seen this exhibition, and that maybe I could work out a tour and it wouldn't cost anybody an arm and a leg. I thought that would be a good idea, particularly in view of the fact that the majority of these were all new artists, and I felt it would do them a lot of good to get the exposure. So I wrote to the list of museums that he gave me and almost all of them responded asking for it. It would be impossible to work out a schedule because one in New Orleans wanted it in May and one in Boston wanted it in May and, you know, there was a conflict of time and so on. In the meantime, I got in touch with one of the top packers and shippers to get an idea of what the cost would be, and I found that it would cost each museum about $3,500, that would be a permanent packing and so on. While all of this was going on, the Contemporary Society of the Phoenix Museum in Phoenix, Arizona came to the Museum by appointment when the lyrical show was on. The director said he would like to have the show for some time in November of 1970, and I told him that I was planning to circulate it, and I didn't quite know what I was going to do about it; but if there were no circulation, would he want to have the exhibition if it was just packed in plyfilm and put in a truck and sent to Phoenix and returned that way and would he absorb the cost? He said yes. So I said, "Okay, I'm making a definite commitment with you." Shortly thereafter, some other people came in the Museum, and I was approached by a man who said he was the director of the Philadelphia Convention Center, which I'd never heard of, and that they had a museum and did shows. He said he'd like to have it for September of 1970, and I told him that I was attempting to arrange the circulation but that it was kind of getting me down at the moment. However, since it was Philadelphia, would he undertake to pay the fee of trucking it to and from Philadelphia. It could be trucked directly to Phoenix, and so we shook hands on that. And then there were these letters from museums, and it was just driving me crazy. I got Matt Doty, who's had a lot of experience from the Whitney Museum, and asked him to try and figure out this puzzle of how to handle it when four museums in different parts of the country ask for it at the same time and so on. And he gave me some information about it, and it's very difficult, discouraging sort of a job. Anyhow, I was still interested in trying to promote these artists, promote them is the wrong word, but get them exposed as such throughout the country as I could. But, thinking about Matt Doty and his experience, I

thought that it would be much better if a more important museum that had the facilities and the staff and everything else that could circulate this, but I didn't know that anyone would be interested. And so I called Jack Baur, and I asked him to come to see me in the Museum. He lives in Bedford Village, not far away. When he came, I said, "I want you to see this exhibition, and when you've seen it, we'll sit down in the office and chat." And he saw the exhibition and came back about twenty minutes later. I said, "How did you like it?" He said, "Oh, I think it's marvelous. I love it. It's wonderful." I outlined to him the fact that I was rather interested in exposing all of these new people, that I had attempted to set up a basis for circulating it, and I found that it was much more than my limited capacity in staff could handle. And that if he liked the exhibition, and if he were willing to first show it in the Whitney Museum, and then circulate it to whoever might want it throughout the country, I would be willing to give them the whole exhibition as a gift. Well, I don't think he understood me very well. I had to repeat that I meant give him the whole exhibition as a gift. But finally, he did get it, and I don't think he had to consult with any board of trustees or anything before he said yes. And the exhibition was held at the Whitney from May 25 to July 6 in 1971. In other words, I couldn't give to him until after it came back from Phoenix, so it came from Phoenix directly back to the Whitney Museum, which was not until January 1971. And I wrote to all of the artists and told them that this exhibition was going to take place and that I had given the whole group as a gift to the Whitney. that since it was going to take place in the end of May, 1971, if any of them wanted to exchange their paintings for one they would think would be more important or more current or anything of that sort, subject to someone from curator of the Whitney approving of what they were going to amend as an exchange, the exchange would be made.

PC: Did anybody exchange?

LA: Quite a number of them did. By this time, incidentally, the majority of them had already had their first one-man exhibition. In June of '69 when my fund was still active at the Whitney and when I was about finished with the article for Art in America, I called Jack Baur and said I'd like to have lunch with Jack and his curators of contemporary art. And we met at the Museum for lunch, and I met Marcia Tucker for what I thought was the first time, but she apparently had met me several years before, and another young man, it's not Matt Doty, but the other one.

PC: Monte.

LA: That's right. James Monte. And I told him about this lyrical article that I had just completed and that I had seen a great many artists and had bought many artists from their studios. If they were interested, I would give them a list and so on of those artists and of course if they saw anything they wanted, my fund would buy them. Incidentally, the one that I selected for myself from Wofford was the one they wanted, and I gave it to them. And then I didn't get another one until the Whitney had already picked him up to do an exhibition, so I had to buy it at the retail price. And they bought quite a few that my fund paid for and that really ended my fund at the Whitney. As you remember, I told you that I'd only had a five year deal with them of $5,000 a year, and they spent a total of $25,517.50, which ended that. Now would you like to know by year what they acquired?

PC: Well, that would be fine. [BEGIN SIDE EIGHT SIDE ONE]

PC: Reel fifteen.

LA: Perhaps this is the moment that we should review what the Whitney bought with the funds and let posterity be the judge of whether Hilton Kramer was right in saying they don't know what the hell they're doing. I don't know whether they are or not, but anyhow this is the record from my fund. The first year, which was 1964, they bought something by Jean Hodge, a collage for $855, a Millet, Andrechevik, Monument to the Unknown Soldier, 70" by 42", an oil, $765, and he's, I understand, still around.

PC: Oh, yes. He's became very figurative now.

LA: Very figurative now. Robert Beauchamp, you are familiar with his work Aftermather, 80" by 71" for $1200. While the fund is limited to $1000, as I think I may have mentioned, if it goes up a couple of hundred dollars above that I don't mind. Wayne Thiebaud, a Pie Counter, for $1000, and that year the only artist that I recommended was Agnes Martin, and they bought a 72" by 72" for $900. I know that this Agnes Martin is $16,000 today.

PC: Well, the Theibaud would be close to that.

LA: Really? I'll be damned. Does he sell them?

PC: Yeah.

LA: He does okay. He's not my cup of tea. Then in 1965, they bought a Tony de Lap sculpture for $675, a Barrie Mc Dowell for $800, a Mike Todd sculpture for $375, a Toni Costa for $1000, a William Reimann for $1000. And

there was only one thing that I got involved in, and that was Trova, Ernest Trova. You know the one with the small figure?

PC: Oh yes, right, right.

LA: And that was $2500. Of course I called the attention of the Whitney to it, and the Pace Gallery was most cooperative with me. We made an arrangement whereby I got him for the Whitney for $1750 and my fund paid $1000 in 1965 and then they were to pay the balance of $750 in 1966. That's the only time that I did it with my how two hands that the fund went above it. In 1966, they bought Robert Hansen for $540, a Larry Zox for $1000 and a Sven Lukin, which I also recommended from his first show, and I bought one myself and I recommended it as well to the Modern, but the only piece they wanted was very colossal (it was partially on the floor, and they felt it would present a problem when they mop up the floors and so on in the Museum) which the Whitney got for $1000. And then in 1967, a Dominic Denio for $900; a Peter Dechar, that I recommended, for $1000; an Earl Reiback that I had nothing to do with that they got from the Wise Gallery from his first show for $850; a Karl Worthum for $285; and a Cladys Niesson for $292. And then in 1968, they bought a Richard Merkin for $720; Elliot Lloyd for $675; Bennet Beans for $450; the Dan Christiensen that I told you about that was $1000; and a Robert Gorey, for $810. In 1969, they bought from their '69 sculpture show a very charming little Jim Love for $540, and an Allan Shields for $990 and a Gary Bower clock for $1000. And they bought it directly from him. He was the director of their new school they had opened on the lower east side for children, and, in fact, I used him as one of my lyrical people as well. Then in '69, Philip Woffard for a $1000, the one that I had bought for myself; Malcolm Bailey, which I had nothing to do with for $700; Theodore Cinder for $720; David Paul for $720; a Jim North for $540; Donald Kaufman that I recommended for $750; an Alan Siegel, who was in my lyrical show, for $600; a Gary Hudson, which was also in my lyrical show for $500; Gary Rich from the lyrical group for $500; and a Katherine Porter from Boston, which was in some show that they had at the Museum. And that ended the Whitney fund.

PC: It's interesting how different from the things that the Museum of Modern Art acquired.

LA: Well, the Whitney exhibition Lyrical Abstraction took place on the 25th of May, and they did their own catalog. I don't know whether I should read the forward that Jack Baur wrote or not.

PC: Well, it's in the catalog.

LA: It's in the catalog, I don't have to read it.

PC: How may artists would you say, just off hand, exchanged their pictures?

LA: I think if I go through I can tell you. Helene Aylon did. She exchanged for a larger one. Victoria Barr exchanged hers. James Beres changed his. Jake Berthot exchanged his. Dan Christiensen did not. David Cummings did not. Carl Glicko did not. John Griefen did not. Carol Haerer did. Gary Hudson did not. Don Kaufman did not. Jane Kaufman did not. Victor Kord did. Ronnie Landfield did not. Pat Lipsky did. Ralph Mosely did. David Paul did, Herbert Perr did. William Pettet of course didn't, that was a fantastic picture. Murray Reich did not. Gary Rich did not. Herbert Schiffrin did. His had been one of the last paintings I bought, and it was not terribly large. It was to go into a specific space, and so I hadn't selected a large one of his, so he exchanged it for a big one.. Apparently saw him the other night, and he's going great guns. Kenneth Showell did not. Alan Siegel did not. Shirley Smith did. Lawrence Stafford did not. William Staples did not. James Sullivan did. John Torreano did not. Jeff Wya did not. Bob Willis did not. Philip Wofford did not. Robert Zakanych did not. During the time of the lyrical exhibition that I had done at the Museum in Ridgefield, Alfred Barr came to see it on two occasions. He sort of tried to play a little game as to which one of these artists would really come through in a big way. You know, a big way is like Olitsky or something like that. He was particularly fascinated by a second William Pettet that was included that was much larger and was very different from the first one and, if anything, more lyrical. And he was just fascinated by that, and he said, "I'm almost willing to bet that in ten years that will be a $50,000 picture." You know, that sort of conversation. Also, what was amusing is that one of the artists that I chose for the lyrical abstract show of my own was Victoria Barr, the daughter of Alfred and Marta Barr. I ran into the Barr's at the Museum of Modern Art at some kind of occasion prior to the opening of my own lyrical show. Mrs. Barr said, "Oh, Larry, you know you shouldn't have bought one of Vickie's paintings." I said, "Why?" She said, "You know, just because you're so fond of us." I said, "Look Marta, I'm fond of you, but not to that point. I bought it because it fits in with what I'm going to do with the lyrical painting." Alfred stayed very far away. In fact, when he came to the show after the opening at the Museum in Ridgefield, at first, he went right by Vickie Barr's like he wasn't even going to look at it, but then he came back and studied it and said, "Hummm, I haven't seen her work for a long time." And it was a completely new direction for her as well, and he thought it was quite nice. And she exchanged hers for another one in the Whitney show, and as a result of my selecting her and the Whitney, she got a gallery with Johnny Myers and has since had two shows. I'm not exactly sure how successful they were, but I understand pretty much so.

PC: It's been very difficult for her to be a painter, having a father like that.

LA: I'll say. I asked you whether financial details were of any interest. Well, when the Lyrical Abstraction show opened in the Museum in Ridgefield, I think there'd been a story in Grace Glueck's column in The New York Times that I was opening this show. I got a call from Mr. Douglas Davis of Newsweek who said that he wanted to make an appointment to come up to the Museum and see the show before it opened, that he might be wanting to do an article on it because he'd seen the article I'd written for Art in America and then he'd seen evidences of it going around that there was a definite movement in that direction away from minimal and the hard edged and the geometric. And so he came up and spent a whole day at the Museum the week before the show opened, and he did an article in the May 4th issue of Newsweek and the lyrical show had opened on April 5th. It's the only copy I have. I don't know whether I should give it to you or give you the date of the Newsweek.

PC: Just give us the date, fine.

LA: Yes, anyhow the Newsweek was the 4th of May, 1970, and there are two pages of color reproductions. They reproduced one William Pettet, the Dan Christiensen, the Gary Hudson, and the Ralph Humphrey untitled painting that was not in the show but had been in the article. He called it the New Color Painters, and in the fourth paragraph, he explains about the new color painters. "The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art in Ridgefield, Connecticut, is devoting it's entire building to what it calls Lyrical Abstraction. Featuring 32 painters whose works were early in the dawning by Larry Aldrich himself, most are in their 20's and 30's and unknown with a few exceptions. Jake Berthot, one of those 32, is also on display at the Jewish Museum in New York along with Ntvar Bhavsar in an exhibition aggressively labeled Beautiful Paintings." I might tell you that after the article appeared in Art in America, it was picked up by a great many museums. There was a Contemporary Art Society in Columbus that called me and had me give them the names and addresses of all the artists in the articles, and they came to New York to get an exhibition for Columbus and wanted me to come out and give a talk, which I didn't do. What is amusing about this to me is that when the Whitney exhibition came out, over a period of several weeks, three of the different art writers and critics wrote about the show, and I think Hilton Kramer was the only one who said, "They should have looked a gift horse in the mouth," or something of that sort. In any event, there was only one of the three, and I think it's Schedelshof.

PC: Oh, Scheldauhl.

LA: Scheldauhl, he spanned the whole idea terrifically and then three weeks later John Seery's first exhibition (he was one of my lyrical people) at Emmerich Gallery, he reviewed it and just absolutely raved about how lyrical it was, which was funny. And then the third critic, you probably recall their names. Shirie or something like that?

PC: Oh, William Schirie.

LA: Well, I can't recall it exactly, but he wrote not only a review of it, but a review of the whole movement and the other two called it watered down or washed out abstract expressionism or what have you and this one really dug what this represented, that is not the accidental kind of thing that happen in abstract expressionism at all. This was deliberate attempt to create something that had a visual beauty, and they were planned before a spot of paint was put on the canvas, etc. In any event, I think he was the only one who seemed to dig what it was. That doesn't mean that he thought that he liked it or anything else, but if anyone that reads the reviews of exhibitions that come up, I think that the term "lyrical abstractionism" is passed into art history in a way, and that is really very, very amusing. In the March 31 issue of Time magazine in their art section [there is a review] by a Robert Hughes who I do not know and have never met. The title is Three Bold Newcomers, and can I read it because it's just too funny. "The latest effort to launch an art movement from the frail base of one New York patron's taste took place about a year ago when dress manufacturer Larry Aldrich gave the Whitney Museum a mass of paintings by younger American artists on condition that they all be exhibited under the category of "lyrical abstraction." The show was a complete flop. Even New York, where the omnivorous appetite for meaningless art categories would test the digestion of a goat, rejected this offering. The name meant nothing and the members had nothing in common, yet the event did involve a few artists of strong and furious talent, all of whom repudiate groups, and at a time when the death of abstract painting is monotonously proclaimed from various Manhattan pulpits, it is worth considering that these men have provided a large share of the rather sparse pleasures of the art season." And then he proceeds to write a very flattering write-up on David Diao, Philip Wofford, and Robert Zakanych. Now what do you know about that? Well, I was in Phoenix at the time this came out, and it was sent to me, and I just, you know, I just threw it in a drawer. I came across it not long ago, and I called Jack Baur on the telephone, and I said, "Jack, there was an article by Robert Hughes in Time magazine on March 13." I called in about the middle of April. And I said, "After reading it, I think we should both hang our heads." He said, "What are you talking about?" And so I read him this first article, and he said, "Oh, good try." He said, "Larry, it was one of the most successful, popular shows we had, and I don't have to tell you that 'lyrical abstraction' is a common term in the art world." It's used even by Barbara Rose. One of the New York Times reviews started out by, all of them of course pan me unmercifully, and they all said something about an individual collector foisting his taste, and undoubtedly giving this exhibition away for, because of the tax laws

for financial gain, etc., etc. Of course, I had made a policy long, long ago, that I never respond to anything that appears in the newspapers regardless of what, where and when. As a matter of fact, after the awful black eye that John Canaday gave to the Rosenquist show, I was very unhappy to see that Rosenquist responded with a letter. In fact, I saw Rosenquist last Tuesday night, and I said, "I guess you feel better for getting it out of your system, but it's a waste of time. It's not going to alter or influence these critics in any way what-so-ever, and why take the time and trouble and the effort. Just ignore them because that's what they hate worse than anything else. For that reason, I'm going to tell you exactly how that worked. For the 38 paintings in the exhibition, you notice there were 32 artists, but there were several cases where there were two paintings by each artist. My cost came to about $30,000 for those 38 paintings, and the way I arranged for the Whitney to have them was that I still had about $35,000 in my Larry Aldrich New York Foundation, and I made a contribution to the Whitney Museum of exactly what those paintings cost me, and the Whitney Museum bought those paintings from me with that money at exactly what my cost was. So that's how I gained financially, so you see you can't believe all you read in the papers."

PC: Right, right. That's true. Well, one thing I don't understand about the funds, you had sold the Monet painting and that went into . . . .

LA: The Larry Aldrich Foundation in New York.

PC: But the other things were kept aside, and that's what supported the Museum initially, wasn't it?

LA: Oh yes. The Museum never had anything to do with the Larry Aldrich Foundation. Those funds were used to complete my commitment of $10,000 a year, making ten a year available to the Modern, which I had extended for five years from January 1, '64 and the five year commitment for $5000 a year with the Whitney which took up $75,000 and some other little contributions I'd made. And I still had about $35,000 left in that foundation and I used it in that manner. So that I made the contribution of what my cost was to the Whitney, and the Whitney purchased these things from me at my exact cost per painting, and I gave them a listing of what I had paid for each painting so that had nothing to do with what it cost me to bring any of them up as they came up from time to time and all the rest of it. That's neither here nor there. But from a standpoint of what it accomplished for the individual artists, I have been extremely pleased with the whole decision to give, dispose of the exhibition. I may say that in light of what happened to me subsequently I very frequently do have the feeling that I wish I hadn't done it, because I could use a great many of those paintings for showing in the museum today. But I think we'd better get on with the basic story. We finish now Lyrical Abstraction, and the next exhibition was the Highlights of '69 and '70 from June 21st through September 13th of 1970. I have to refer to it myself to remember what I said in the catalog. Ten of the artists had their first one-man shows in New York that year. They were Linda Benglis, Natvar Bhavsar, and his name which you recall was mentioned in Newsweek and if you'll remind me I'll come back to that when I've finished with this outline. Jack Brusca, who had been my artist of the year for '68, and I'd placed with him the Bonino Gallery where he'd had his very successful first one-man show. John Griefen; Tom Holland; Richard Kalina; Ronnie Landfield, who had been in my lyrical show, but was having his first one-man exhibition at Whitney; Pat Lipsky who was having her first one-man exhibition at Emmerich (it was a complete sell out); Ken Showell had his first one-man exhibition at the Whitney, he was one of the lyrical painters; and Nina Yankowitz, who had her first one-man exhibition of draped, painted canvases at the Kornblee Gallery. I go on to say, "The trend toward lyrical abstract painting, which had it's beginnings in last year's Highlights show, has developed into a broad movement among the younger artists. The work of most of the artists who had their first one-man shows this year was in this vein." Like to know who was in it? Besides the ten that I mentioned as having their first one-man shows, Edward Avedisian; Darby Bannard; Lynda Benglis; Natvar Bhavsar, I said I would comment about him. In September of 1969 after I had turned in the article for Art in America, I had a list of artists to got to see. This Bhavsar was one of them. I'd been paying anywhere from $500, $600 per painting with the exception of a few that I had bought from galleries, like Pettet and David Diao and so on. But from artists that had no galleries, in other words new people, usually it was somewhere in the $500 or $600 range. Well, I liked this Bhavsar's work very much, but he was one of the last people that I got around to seeing, and while I didn't know it, he had already made an arrangement to have his first showing at the Max Hutchison Gallery. So I came in and looked at the paintings and selected one, and I told him that I was going to have this exhibition the following spring and, this was one that I would like. It was fairly sizeable, and I would give him $600 or $700 for it. He said, "No, no, no. not at all." He said, "I'm having my first one-man exhibition this spring at the Max Hutchison Gallery, and I told Mr. Hutchinson that you were going to come here, and he wanted me to let you know that if you want a painting of this size it would be $3000." I said, "Well, thank you very much, but that's out of my range." He said, "Well, I'd like to be in the show. Can I lend it to you?" I said, "No, I'm sorry, but everything that will be in the show will be owned by me." So that was that. Well, he had this exhibition, and his paintings are absolutely beautiful, but they made the fatal mistake of a first-one man exhibition, even though they're all large paintings, the pricing of them from $3,000 to $6,000, and they didn't sell a single painting. Well, he's had his second exhibition since, which I understand was more successful, and the paintings were priced a lot more realistically. Jack Brusca I'd mentioned before; Ron Davis, and incidentally he was one of those I'd collected from the California artists for the new talent issue that I'd done in 1966 for Art in America; Jim Dine; Robert Duran; Robert Goodnough, whose paintings are beautiful now; and he was my artist

of the year in 1959, I had a large painting of his hanging in the showroom; John Griefen; Alfred Jensen; Jasper Johns -- these were all drawings. I had seven Jasper Johns drawings. And this is rather interesting, because when this drawing exhibition was held at the Leo Castilli Gallery, I told Leo that I would like to have him in the Highlights show, and Leo said, "Well, I can't promise you because these things are all for sale and so many they were reserved and a lot of them were going out of the New York area. And one day Jasper Johns came in the Museum with Philip Johnson, and it was his first visit to the museum. He was very much taken with it and very impressed. Dottie Mayhall told him about our Highlights show and that I had wanted to include his drawings in it, but Leo said that he couldn't guarantee that I could have them or he couldn't tell me which ones in time for the catalog and so on. So Jasper said, "Well, I want them in the show, and I'll make sure you get them." He said, "I'll send you a list of them and sizes and everything else. There'll be photographs for the catalog." And so he took care of everything. I must say I was kind of shocked when I got the valuation on these drawings and had to pay the insurance. Of course, none of them were very large, but they were all insured values from $10,000 up (they came from Mrs. Bliss Parkinson, Dr. Donald Dworkin, Carter Burden, John Powers, Mr. and Mrs. Riklis, and Mr. and Mrs. Horace Solomon). And then Tom Holland; Richard Kalina; Jane Kaufman, and she had been one of the artists without a gallery that I had bought for my Lyrical Abstraction show. Incidentally, her husband is Doug Ohlsen, which I didn't know at the time. Ronnie Landfield; Pat Lipsky -- since then, with all the money they've made, she and her husband have bought a house up in Vermont near that girl's college.

PC: Bennington.

LA: Bennington, right near by. Ray Parker, I own a 1958 or '59 painting of his; Ed Ruda, who'd been one of the original group in Park Place Gallery, whose work I hadn't liked then. It was in the shape of canoes or something of that sort. But he's come through beautifully. I don't own one of his, but he is someone I have in mind if I can find a donor. Ken Showell; Tal Streeter; and Richard Van Buren. Are you familiar with his work?

PC: I've seen one or two.

LA: That hang against the wall.

PC: Oh yes, yes.

LA: And Isaac Witkin; Philip Wofford; Nina Yankowitz; Mario Yrisarry; Larry Zox. By the way, the Highlights exhibition, where things come from the individual galleries, they are available for sale, and we have sold quite a number of things from each Highlights show. What made me think of it is this Larry Zox because Susan Morse Hilles bought one that was in the exhibition for $3500. It was about half the size of what the Whitney had bought from the Fund for $1000.

PC: How many things are sold from the Highlights exhibition? That's really the only exhibition where things are sold?

LA: That's the only exhibition where anything is for sale. Well, it has varied. You know, one time Vera List came for one of the early Highlights shows and bought a Mary Baumeister for $4000 and an Italian sculptor for about $4000 and something else. You know, you never can tell. We know of a great many items that are sold in galleries to people who saw the work of that particular artist.

PC: And go to the dealers?

LA: There's no sign that says of these are available for sale or anything like that. If anyone inquires whether one is for sale, then we tell them about it, of course. In early, oh, 1970 I guess it was, I had dinner with Bill Lieberman in New York, just the two of us, and he said, "You know, your fund has come to an end." He said this is such a wonderful thing for the museum and for artists and so on and so forth. I had made it very clear prior to this time that because of the Museum I was no longer in any position to put added funds into the Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund of New York, that it was in the process of being liquidated and that I wasn't going to be able to carry it on for the Modern or for the Whitney. And he said, "Well, it would be wonderful if there was some way in which we could show what was accomplished by the fund over the ten year period." So I said, "Well, one of the ways we could do it is have an exhibition at the Museum itself, which I suppose you wouldn't consider it important enough to do, and the other way would be if I had the exhibition at the Museum in Ridgefield and you just used your own publicity sources to send potential donors to take up where I've left off and you're on your own." Well, he thought that was a marvelous idea if I would do it. Of course, naturally every exhibition was a cost to me because it involved trucking, insurance, packing, catalogs, and all the rest of it. So the third exhibition in 1970, from September 27th to January 3rd, 1971, was the Aldrich Fund Acquisitions for the Museum of Modern Art. And we reproduced in the catalogue everything in the show and in accordance with years what had been bought through to July 1, 1970, which was the last acquisition made from the fund, plus a statement made by William Lieberman, Director of Painting and Sculpture, Director of Drawings and Prints, the Museum of Modern Art. This helps my memory, our continuities. And, "When I met Larry Aldrich twenty-five years ago, he was a collector of paintings by established masters of the School of Paris, and often of their best examples. Five years later, the

director of his collection changed. He became increasingly interested in what was being done by younger, usually little-known artists, first in France, and then int he United States. This interest became refined, and today his dedication to current American painting and sculpture is complete, evidenced in is collection and a museum with changing exhibitions, and its own program of special events. This commitment is made even more personal through his own writings, his occasional lectures, and his direct contact with artists."

PC: I was thinking about the exhibition. What was it like to see the exhibition installed?

LA: Well, principally, in a way, it was [irritating]. There were two things about it that were irritating to me, but particularly one was that, I think I've told you earlier, when I set up the fund, I had a two-fold purpose. Besides helping the artists and the Modern, I had hoped in a way to use the talents of the Museum to do my shopping for me. But in ever so many instances, it didn't work out that way because I wouldn't see what they wanted my fund to buy until too many months after they had made the selection. One thing that irritated me was I felt what would be of greatest importance from the Museum of Modern Art's standpoint would be to show that on the basis of their ability to select that during a ten year period somebody that they paid $700 for was worth $50,000, and that was the Frank Stella's The Marriage of Squalor and Reason. And we had a hard time with this catalog. It was held up way before the promised statement from Bill Lieberman, and we just managed to do this catalog under pressure and added cost. And when I read his statement, that was the first time I found out a few paintings previously promised for an exhibition cannot be shown here. Frank Stella's The Marriage of Reason and Squalor for instance was included in the Stella retrospective organized by the Museum of Modern Art and was presently on view at the Hayworth Gallery in London. And that really made me furious, but then I went on and said, "I've had it with them anyhow."

PC: Well, it must have been curious to have seen some of those paintings that had gotten away before . . . .

LA: It wasn't curious it was kind of irritating. Also, quite a number of things I might have had a more open mind about than I did have at the time that could have been available.

PC: Well, you really have some very marvellous things, though.

LA: And then, of course, there were a number of things that I had bought for myself and then told them about it like this Charles Hinman is now famous, and the Nicholas Krushenick, and a number of things. Well, I think that finishes us for 1970, and I'm kind of finished myself. [END OF TAPE, SIDE 15]

PC: Side 16, it's the tenth of June, 1972.

LA: You may recall that during the end of, or Fall of 1970, there were quite a number of newspaper stories to the effect that women artists had formed an organization, and they were having marches in front of the New York museums and protests, and stories appeared in the paper, most of these spear-headed by Lucy Lippard who made the claim that museums were neglecting a great many artists of talent and weren't giving them the opportunity to show in their museums, and there were all kinds of protest marches and sit-downs in front of the museums and so on. Well, I have never in my own activity never talked about whether an artist was male, female, black, green, yellow, pink, or anything else. I was only interested in the work, and since my Museum is a very contemporary one and my own activity is dedicated to whatever can be done for the artists in the way of exposing them and their work to the public, I thought it would be a sound idea in keeping with the meaning of the Museum if I contacted Lucy Lippard and gave her an opportunity to prove what she had been making all these complaints about. So, I contacted her and arranged for her to come and visit me at the Museum, and I told her I would give her an opportunity to do an exhibition of women artists in the Museum in the Spring of 1971. And the only qualification I made was that they be artists who did not have a gallery or had never had a one-man exhibition. In other words, the very kind of women artists that she had been protesting about.

PC: How did she accept that?

LA: I told her I had never ever had an exhibition in the Museum that was selected by anyone but myself and that I was making this exception on the basis of all those stories that had appeared in newspapers. I said, "Lucy, I'm giving you an opportunity to either put up or shut up." I said that I would do the catalog and let her hang and light the exhibition. Well, she accepted very readily and told me what her personal view would be, which I agreed to, and she proceeded. This was in the late fall of 1970, and we set the date for the exhibition. And she apparently spent a great deal of time in the galleries, I later found out that she had 75 or more artists. I also agreed that she could do the catalog, all of the things she wanted; in other words, it was completely and strictly to be her show. Well, I was in contact with her fairly often on the telephone wanting to know what progress she was making, and she finally came up with 26 artists, and we called the exhibition Twenty-six Contemporary Women Artists.

PC: Did she complain about being limited to artists without galleries?

LA: No, no. She liked that idea because this is exactly the complaints that the woman's groups had been making publicly, and so my concept was based on her complaint. Well, the exhibition turned out to be one of the most expensive ones I had ever put on because she selected the work of these twenty-six women artists, and most of them were conceptual artists; many of the things were of such size and nature that they had to be removed by hoist out the window and so on. I had a $500 charge for one item; it was a big fishtank with a motor, and another one was a swamp garden. Another one was a wooden box that was filled with clay that had been broken in various areas, and it must have weighed at least a thousand pounds and had to be hoisted from someone's window. One required great big six-inch screw hooks into the ceiling, and it created quite a bit of damage. Other items required shelves that were nonexistent. It was reallt a very, very costly operation in every way. I was away while the show was being hung, and I returned only two days before the exhibition opened. One of the artists had a lot of strings that were tacked to the ceiling, and these strings were also strewn all over the stairway from the first floor to the second floor, and it was very apparent to me that anybody who attempted to walk up them would break their neck. So, I ordered those removed and called Lucy Lippard and told her about that, and she said she'd get the artist up there the next day to do something different. She recognized the danger, and in fact, I said it was the fire department, you know, not wanting to hurt their feelings. But infortunately, Lucy neglected to inform the artist, so that when she came to the cocktail preview, she was very indignant, and she made quite a scene about a work of art being destroyed and, at one point, was threatening to sue me. The fish tank had a carp in it and a motor and some grass lying on the ground, and the girl had to come up practically every week with new carp because the carp would die. The swamp garden had the most god-awful smell; itpermeated the whole Museum. As a matter of fact, the exhibition with a few exceptions was work that probably would never have been created if it hadn't been Eva Hesse who came first. There were many people, who came into the Museum after the exhibition opened, thought it was so awful that they even asked for their fifty cents back. Grace Glueck came to the Museum and was going to write about it, and she called me and asked what I thought of it, and I guess I was foolishly frank enough to tell her that I didn't think very highly of the work, and I mentioned, too, that many people asked for their money back because they thought it was the worst show that the Museum had ever put on and so on and so forth. And she wrote it up. Prior to this, the women artists, I think, were planning to give me a testimonial or a medal or something of that sort, but after that article appeared in the Times, I'm afraid that instead they would have liked to have hung me up on my walls, I'm quite sure.

PC: Well, was there a great deal of attendance or people interested in all of this activity and the fact that it was so different?

LA: Well, the owrd got around very quickly that it was a miserable show, and it did, naturally, affect the attendance. The catalog was quite interesting, and it was supposed to cost a certain amount; everything cost a great deal more than it was supposed to. In the introduction, I told of why I had done this exhibition, and then Lucy Lippard had a long article in the catalog. I'll pass the catalog on to you, and it will tell it's own story.

PC: What, what did Lucy have to say after all this and while it was going on?

LA: Well, interestingly enough, Lucy came to the preview, and we never saw her again.

PC: What did she say though if anything about seeing it all installed?

LA: Well, she just thought it was marvelous. The critics of the local papers, you know, like Westchester and Stamford and Danbury and New Haven, they didn't even write it up. In other words, they thought it was that poor. They're naturally not really professionals, and actually I think they should have written it up on a basis of this is new. But interestingly enough, as time as passed, a great many of the artists that were in the show are constantly requesting more catalogs, so they have been using it. I believe that one of the artists in the show, Susan Hall, who is also the only one that was really a painter, hardly any of the others were, they were all objects and things, was given a small one-man show, one-woman show rather, at the Whitney Museum not very long after. One of the items in the show was by Laurace James, and I wasn't aware of this, but she was the ex-wife, I guess, of Mark Dzubrow. And when I came in a few days before the exhibition opened and saw this great big, huge piece which was called Homage to Crazy Cat, I said, "My God, this looks like Mark Dzubrow." And it was only afterwards that I discovered that she was his ex-wife. You can see the piece, this is the one that required those great big screws in the ceiling. Well, to begin with, when the exhibition was over, I had to practically repaint because of these various shelves that I had to put up all over. One of the exhibitions consisted of maps from all over the world, and they were strewn in every possible wall space in the Museum and one great room in which we built a great big shelf, and all of these were strewn in that area. Presumably, people would look at, and that represented her work of art. Oh, there were a lot of rather odd things, it just happened that that spring we had agreed to allow a tour of our house for Dr. Rusk's activity at New York University Hospital, and Mrs. Bernard Gimbel, who's an old friend, asked if they could include the Museum on the tour as well. And I think they served tea or something at the Museum. I naturally wasn't present, but I questioned the various people because there were probably about six or seven hundred people in that tour that went through the Museum that day. And I found out that they went in and just made a one, two, three quick tour and out. It apparently wasn't of much interest to them, and of course, this audience was all mostly women.

PC: Well, there were no acquisitions on your part from that exhibition?

LA: No.

PC: Or from any of those artists?

LA: No. I found out that the artists were very, very disappointed that I did not buy any of their works that were in the exhibition. Interestingly enough, one of the girls in the exhibition, Carol Kinne, I subsequently bought a painting from, which is in the exhibition that's at the Museum now. That we'll come to. My next exhibition was the Highlights of 1970-'71, and in that exhibition, eleven of the artists represented were from first one-man exhibitions in the New York galleries. Do you want me to give you the names of every one that was in it or just the ones that were their first one-man?

PC: The first one-mans, I think.

LA: Anne Arnold who was a sculptor of animals; Helene Aylon; Jake Berthot; Rosemarie Castoro; Fred Eversley; Manny Farber; Lila Katzen; Herbert Perr; Stephen Posen; Gary Rich; Jay Rosenblum; Herbert Schiffrin. Those were the eleven that were from their first one- man exhibitions.

PC: Well, were people happy to see more or less regular paintings after the other exhibition?

LA: Indeed they were. And this was an extremely well attended exhibition all the time that it was on. The fall exhibition was all from my own collection and it was titled Sculpture and Shapes of the Last Decade. They're all items that were created in the 1960's. That was on from October 3rd through the 19th of December. Would you like to know who was in that exhibition?

PC: Yeah. It would be interesting because you had done an exhibition of the art of the fifties, and that was rather flat, you said, and it was old hat, and everybody'd seen so many new things. Now this was much newer in comparison.

LA: Well, I'll give you a slight idea of who was in it. Abe Ajay, Carl Andre, Stephen Anatonakas, Larry Bell, Fletcher Benton, Harry Bertoia, Bill Bollinger, Ilya Bolotowsky. All of these, as you know, are from my own collection, and they were sculpture and shaped paintings. Chuck Boterf, Pol Bury, Mario Ceroli, Chryssa, Tony DeLap, Walter DeMaria, Nancy Grossman, Eva Hesse, Charles Hinman, Reggie Holmes, Peter Hutchinson, Robert Indiana, Gyula Kosice, Howard Jones, Craig Kauffman, Justin Knowles, Nicholas Krushenik, Gary Kuehn, Gerald Laing, Leroy Lamis, Stanley Landsman, Joseph Levi, Sven Lukin, Ronald Mallory, Robert Mangold, Clark Murray, Louis Nevelson, Kenneth Noland, Edward Paolozzi, Richard Randell, Earl Reiback, Lucas Samaras, James Seawright, Richard Serra, Frank Stella, Sylvia Stone, Robert Smithson, Seruk Gotorlashima, Ernest Trova, Leo Valletor, John Willenbecher, and Normal Zammitt. All from my own collection. That will give you some further idea of the size of my collection.

PC: It's so broad, though. I mean the range of ideas and subject matter and everything.

LA: Well, that sort of reminds me of a story about someone that had a terrific appetite, and when he was questioned about why he wasn't a little fussier about what he ate, he said there's just no such thing as bad food. So I don't know, I wouldn't want to predict how many of my acquisitions will have any meaning ten years from now, but that's something that never even crosses my mind when I see what appeals to me and I have the money to pay for it. I acquire it. As I think I've mentioned before, I no longer have any money to acquire so that I haven't made any acquisitions through galleries at all in almost two years now. It's principally from artists who do not as yet have a gallery, and that's going to bring me into the exhibition that's on now. But first, I must give you some general information that has to do with the new tax law of 1969. All public and private foundations had to refile for their tax exemption. One of the factors that have to do with being granted the tax exemption as a public institution that was that one third of your annual budget must come from public support. In 1970 and in 1971, my costs had increased tremendously because there was a 25% increase in trucking due to a strike that was settled on that basis. There was a large increase in insurance. I was forced by the insurance company to carry a 25% valuation on what came up in the trucks just for the trip alone which came each way to over $500 or $600. Salaries were increased, the electric bills were increased, maintenance was increased, the ground keeping, everything was increased, everything. So that my operating budget, which had started out at about $50,000 a year had crept up to about $85,000 a year. At the same time, my support from the public in '70 and '71 due to conditions had slipped considerably. I lost a couple of my $1,000 a year Patrons, and I lost about half of my $100 a year Friends. At least, it was consoling to me to know that it was not because they no longer thought well of the Museum, because I would see those same people in the Museum paying their fifty cents admission as against free admission, and I never even questioned any of them because, after all, I knew what the financial conditions were throughout the country in '70 and '71 after the stock market break late in 1969. So, I was very concerned that I might lose my public institution exemption. The I.R.S. has set up separate teams in each area, and I received a notice from the New Haven office that my return was to be examined for the

expressed purpose of determining whether I still qualified as a public institution, and I approached that with great fear that I was going to lose it. When the agent came in early January, I had all of the data, and I told him immediately that in '70 and '71 that we had lost so much of our support and our costs had gone up to such an extent that I no longer in my opinion qualified because I did not have the necessary one-third support. But fortunately, he was an attractive young man that had been in the Museum several times from New Haven, and his wife painted, and she had been with him in the Museum. So he was very sympathetic. I also explained to him that if I had to go back to being a private foundation where only 20% of my personal contributions were eligible for deduction, whereas under the new tax law, 50% of your income was eligible for deduction, I'd have no choice but to close the Museum, that the money that had enabled me to open it as a result of the sale and that I had not invested but kept aside for this purpose of operating the Museum was about all gone, and I had reached the limit. Well, he naturally checked our figures, and it didn't take long to see that I was correct in saying we did not have the one third support. However, I was glad to learn that there was something else involved which is called facts and circumstances. If it can definitely be shown that an institution in no way profits financially from the operation of the institution, the I.R.S. can grant you a continuation of a public support, and that's what happened in our case. I won't bore you with all of the details, but it was a very happy, pleasant ending to that situation. It's just that it did involve my showing annually that I make a very definite attempt to get additional support, which I did in the spring of this year with some success. But I also realized that I have to do something about cutting my costs. My principal costs involve the exhibitions that I did that were loaned shows, being the time and effort and staff involved in gathering these things and also the cost involved in catalogs and trucking and insurance and so on. And I decided that I would have to figure out some other way of operating the Museum beginning with 1972 because I had no confidence that despite the facts and circumstances under which I was given this public status, that if I were to continue without getting additional public support, I was fearful I would lose it because the public institution status which I did receive is subject to annual examination.

PC: Oh, annual, that's so you really have to keep at it.

LA: Exactly. And so I decided that I would only show things that belonged to me, that is what I think of or speak of or refer to as part of the Museum collection. Also my experience with the Lyrical Abstraction exhibition, where I had bought the majority of the work from artists that did not have a gallery was a very satisfying one to me because pretty nearly all of those artists did subsequently. I don't know whether it was a result of the exhibition or a result of the magazine article. I think that the majority of them were successful, some of them have had even second exhibitions, and I again repeat that my principal interest has been always in doing what I thought I could accomplish for the new artist. So I decided that I would have only two exhibitions a year. One that would open in April and continue on until Labor Day, followed by another exhibition that would be from various areas of my own large collection. And I decided that the exhibition that I was going to do in the spring would become an annual, and I gave it the title of Contemporary Reflections, the first one 1971-'72, and I began in November to climb the stairs, looking at both painters and sculptors who did not have a gallery and who had never had a one-man exhibition. And I found that I wasn't going to find any interesting sculpture that was new, but I did manage to find a great deal of painting that I liked, and what was interesting is that most of these were younger artists, but there was not any one specific direction. In other words, other than the fact that there wasn't anything new being done in the minimal or in the geometric area, they weren't all lyrical either. There were efforts, very apparent efforts being made to find a new direction for the most part, and while I won't make the claim that they succeeded, they succeeded sufficiently to make their work interesting. That's the exhibition that's currently on, and we did a very beautiful catalog in which every one of the works were reproduced. There are 37 artists in the exhibition. Also, the back page of the catalog has the name, addresses, and telephone numbers of each of the artists in the exhibition. This is now the 7th of June, and up to now, we have been informed by the artists of twelve things that the artists have sold to people who saw them in the Museum and followed up and bought some. I plan to send a questionnaire to all the artists because they have not all necessarily rushed to inform me if they sold anything as a result of someone seeing it in the Museum. I would like to really have that information, and also who the individuals were that bought them. About three weeks ago, we had a visit from the Contemporary Society of the St. Louis Museum, and Mr. Joseph Pulitzer was in the group, and he told me (it was on a Sunday) that he liked two of them enough to add to his collection and he was going to stay over and do so. Well, I haven't heard from any of those artists yet, but I did hear from one of the artists that someone in that group acquired an oil painting. So, that's one of the things that I think there'll be a great deal more of with each one of these exhibitions in the spring. Of course the artists are rather thrilled, both about the idea of the catalog in which something is reproduced and also the fact that, and incidentally I don't think I mentioned that I bought all of these, it's not a loan exhibition at all, and I bought them from my own personal fund which had nothing to do with the operating of the Museum.

PC: Well, have you over the years been able to get any idea of the amount of outside activity created by an exhibition? You know, purchases. Do you find out much about acquisitions?

LA: Well, the first Highlights show that we did was in 1965, and I got the thought rather late in the season. It was very difficult for me to get the cooperation of the galleries. To begin with, the Museum was brand new and unknown, and Ridgefield is not exactly considered an art center, and they didn't really think it was very

important. I had to use considerable pressure in a way, and I think it was only the fact that almost every gallery where I had in the past been an active client that it was kind of letting me have them as a favor to me, they didn't think it had any merit for them. But anything that belonged to the gallery that was in the exhibition was available for sale, and I think in the first Highlights show we sold about $10,000 worth of the exhibition which was delivered after the exhibition, plus the fact that the galleries admitted to me that they sold a considerable number of works of art from artists that were in the Highlights to people who had seen the exhibition, and of course, in the exhibition, the gallery was always listed, and they had followed it up and acquired some of their works. So that after the first Highlights show, I never had any problem about gallery cooperation. In fact, perhaps I shouldn't mention this, but a great many galleries would call me and say that they wish I would include so and so in your Highlights show. I had to be very diplomatic about it, and sometimes it was a matter of I hadn't gotten around to seeing the work as yet, and I did include them. Other times, I had to say I didn't think I had any more room or something of that nature. So that there was constant proof and evidence that the Museum was accomplishing for artists sales from galleries, and also I believe was introducing the idea of contemporary art to a great many people who had been rather passive about it and were just curious up to that point. I'm usually in the gallery almost always on Saturday and Sundays when I'm in the area, and I know I've had the experience many times of people coming up to me and saying, "I don't understand any of this. What is this about or what is that about?" And I very patiently try to give them some idea or lead or feeling about how to approach the idea of art that's new to them. And you know, you can tell when you're speaking to someone that they're not getting it by the shrug of the shoulders, something of that nature. And quite frequently, a week or two later those same people will be in the Museum and come up to me and say, "We didn't think much of what you were telling us, but somehow or other when we got home, we started to think of this particular painting, or that particular sculpture, and so we're back to have another look." Well, all of those things are naturally quite satisfactory to me.

PC: Well, has the attitude of the city and the area changed now? Because the Museum has been there for, what, seven or eight years?

LA: Well, it's been since October of 1964. Of course, everyone is quite pleased about it. For one, people who have no interest what-so-ever in art are pleased with the appearance, how I have improved the appearance of the main street of Ridgefield by various things that I did in my original alteration. That's one factor. It has increased the restaurant business in Ridgefield greatly; that's another factor. The real estate people find it a great plus in selling property -- the fact that the Museum exists in Ridgefield, and of course I get a great many people constantly telling me that they are so grateful that this is here, and it's so wonderful and so on. But I am very sorry to tell you that that has not been followed up by actual contributions. Unfortunately, the town of Ridgefield has the mistaken impression that I am tremendously wealthy, a part of that impression was created by the fact that in the late fifties or early sixties, I contributed 37 acres to the town as a park and it's for one, the home a the little league ball club, and I created the field and the stands and all the rest of it. Also, there's a nature walk of about three quarters of a mile where all of the flora and fauna are marked with various numbers, and at the library you can get a chart that tells you what each one of those numbers represent. Plus the fact that I have a rather sizeable home in Ridgefield with a swimming pool and two lakes and such, all of which I've created since the time I acquired the property back in 1941. So from that standpoint, they don't exactly feel or think that I need any assistance, and there are so many other real charities as against a Museum that require contributions, like the library and boys club and oh, you know, every town has them, district nursing and boys scouts and girl scouts, and it goes on indefinitely.

PC: It's interesting though that the Museum has an effect on things like the restaurant business and real estate and can be used as a tool to bring people in and to increase values of property and all of those things that really have nothing to do with what goes into the Museum.

LA: Well, those are the positive effects of the Museum.

PC: Do you think it creates any problems that work out from the other side?

LA: For the town?

PC: It's controversial I suppose, but . . . .

LA: Well, I don't know how it can create problems in any way. I've never had any difficulty in applying, as I had to do, to make the property tax exempt in the town of Ridgefield itself. I don't think that anyone resents the fact that a Main Street property of that nature is not on the tax rolls as far as I know, and if there are any negative feelings about it they haven't come to my notice or attention at all. I think I've told you about the outside sculpture garden, and many people question me as to whether there's been any vandalism. There is plenty of vandalism in the town itself, and I must confess that we've had hardly any vandalism at all. And it's a damn good thing because my outdoor sculpture is not insured. I left New York for Scottsdale on the sixth of February and . . . .

PC: Of this year?

LA: Of this year. And on route in the planem, my thoughts mostly were centered on the Contemporary Reflections show that I was doing since the sixth was a Saturday and the previous day, Friday, I bought the last painting for this exhibition. And because of my ongoing and continuing interest in promoting new art, not from a standpoint necessarily of only helping the artists but from a standpoint of involving more people to enjoy the pleasure of living with twentieth century art, it occurred to me that I would do the artist a great deal of good if it were possible for this Contemporary Reflections exhibition to be shown country-wide after it was shown in my Museum. I wasn't about to, after my experience with the Lyrical Abstraction, to attempt anything of that nature myself. But I was aware that since I followed very closely the activities of the National Endowment of the Arts that at no time has the National Endowment, in any way, come up with any sort of a scheme or plan that could be helpful to new artists, and I thought that it would be very logical for them to use my exhibition and show it throughout the country. So on Monday the 8th, I called New York and dictated this letter to my secretary which went out on the same day. "Dear Miss Hanks, I am taking the liberty of writing to you for the express purpose of offering a suggestion for your consideration as to how the National Foundation might be able to help young artists who do not have a gallery connection and have never previously had a one-man gallery exhibition. I assume that you are aware that most of my personal art activities and the activities of the Aldrich Museum since it opened in 1964 have been concerned and involved with the work of new artists. An exhibition will be opening at the Aldrich Museum on April 23rd, which will consist of between 35 and 40 paintings by young artists who do not have a gallery connection and have never had a one-man gallery exhibition. There will be a catalog in which every work will be reproduced and the artist name address and telephone number will be listed. The title of this exhibition will be Contemporary Reflections 1971-72. I am planning the same kind of exhibition at the Museum every spring. The Museum catalogs are always distributed to the directors of every important museum in the United States as well as abroad. I am familiar with past National Foundation programs which made money grants to visual artists and also know about another National Foundation program that makes a $10,000 national grant to museums for the purpose of acquiring the works of American artists. Both of these programs are unquestionably a step forward. However, I question whether they are of any benefit to artists who are still seeking to achieve some recognition and an audience for their works. I have always believed that the only way to help a new artists is to buy his work, exhibit it and record it in a catalog. I will finally now come to my own suggestion. The exhibition of the work of these young artists at the Aldrich Museum will end on Labor Day. I would be willing, if the National Foundation to be interested, to lend these paintings for a one, two or three year tour to other museums, and I make this offer with the knowledge that the Smithsonian Institute is able to circulate art exhibitions. I will be further willing to do this on a continued basis each year in the future. Incidentally, all of these paintings were acquired by me from November 1971 to yesterday. I will be leaving New York on February 6th for Scottsdale until the 25th of March. If you should be interested in my suggestion, I would be most happy to come see you in Washington to discuss it further sometime in April, or perhaps I could have the honor to have you attend the preview at the Museum on Saturday afternoon, April 22nd. An invitation will be sent to you. This will give you an opportunity to actually see the works as well as the catalog which will be ready at that time." I received an answer which was sent to me in Scottsdale. "Dear Mr. Aldrich: I am writing to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of February 8th addressed to Miss Nancy Hanks, who has referred it to the director of the museum program, Thomas Levant. Mr Levant will not be in Washington until the end of next week, and we will bring it to his attention at that time. We very much appreciate your interest in the Endowment program. With all good wishes. Sincerely, Mrs. Dorothy Myer, Visual Arts Program." About the tenth of March, we had as guest in our house in Scottsdale, two friends from Washington, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Cater. Mr. Cater was an assistant to President Johnson for five years in the health and welfare area, and Mrs. Carter was, from the time it started, on the staff of the National Endowment for the Arts under Roger Stevens. I showed her my letter, which had been sent to me to Miss Hanks. And I also showed her the response which I received on the 3rd of March. Mrs. Cater knew Mrs. Dorothy Myer, and she thought the idea was sensational and told me that all the time she was on the National Endowment (they have left Washington and are now living in San Francisco), that Roger Stevens always said to her, "Libby, can't you think of something we can do for new artists?" But no one had come up with an idea, and she thought this was fantastic. So she insisted, on her own, of calling Mrs. Myer in Washington and got her on the telephone and reported to me that Mrs. Myer said that Mr. Levant is only part time, and that when he comes in so many things are taking up his time that actually he had not as yet read my letter to Nancy Hanks, but she thought that the idea was terrific and sensational, and she was going to see to it that the very next time, which she thought would be about a week, it would be on the top of the pile for him to see. And we would hear further. Well, I heard nothing further. I got back on the 1st of April. On the 12th of April when I still heard nothing further, I decided to call Mrs. Dorothy Myer in Washington, and I was informed on the phone that Mrs. Myer was no longer with the program and that she had been replaced with a Diane Cartallia. So they put Miss Cartallia on and I identified myself, and I told her why I was calling and I asked her if she had read my letter and she said yes, and I said, "What did you think of it." She thought it was a very exciting idea, but she told me that Mr. Levitt was leaving, and he had not read the letter and a Mr. Spenser was coming to replace him, and Mr. Spenser also would be part-time until he was able to end his current connection after which he would be full time, but that she would make certain that Mr. Spenser saw it, and we would hear from him either by telephone or by letter. I heard nothing. On the 5th of May, I called again from Miss Cartellia and found out that

Mr. Spenser had not as yet read my letter. By this time, I was really annoyed, and I said, "Well, when do you think he's going to get to it? I'd really like to know about whether this idea has any merit or it hasn't." And she said, "Well, I'll see that he gets to it as soon as, you know, he still is not here on a permanent basis, etc. And I just can assure you that we will get to it and that I think the idea is wonderful." And I said, "Well, I'll give you a normal amount of time and if I don't hear, I'm just so annoyed about all of this that I'm just going to give all of this information to the New York Times, and they certainly would be delighted to have the story of how efficient and how capably the National Endowment is run. Apparently you are only geared for requests to get something from you and when someone offers a suggestion, that's giving you something it just throws your whole organization into a tailspin." Well, on the 25th of May, this is the date of the letter which I received at the Museum. "Dear Mr. Aldrich, I am sorry that your letter of February 8th has gone so long unanswered but your proposal has fallen between two directors of the museum program. Thomas Levitt has been disengaging from the position while I have been preparing to take over full-time on the first of July. Unfortunately your letter has been shuttled back and forth for too long. Considering your proposal to circulate an exhibition of contemporary works of art, I assume that you know that the Smithsonian Institution might possibly be interested in redirecting some of their activities toward circulating an exhibition such as you propose. You may also know that Miss Breeskin at the National Collection of Fine Arts has been organizing traveling exhibitions of one sort or another as well. Unfortunately, the National Endowment for the Arts would probably not be able to entertain a proposal from you as an individual, however the Aldrich Museum could certainly submit such a proposal. The museum advisory panel would certainly give your project the full attention it merits. There are certain provisions that must be met, however. All of our awards are on a one-to-one matching basis. All museums that conform to the definition adopted by the American Association of Museums are eligible to apply. All grant applications pass through a sub-committee and the museum advisory panel before going to counsel for final approval. This means in practical terms that the grants are not possibly awarded much before the first of the year. Again let me apologize for my delay in replying to your interesting and provocative proposal. Sincerely, John R. Spencer, Director designate, Museum Programs." After I read this letter, I realized that this Mr. Spencer, either he's a half wit or he can't read English because he's talking to me about awards and so on on a matching grant basis when my letter had to with a suggestion in which I would be willing to lend the exhibition to them to circulate. So after receiving the letter, I just had decided to forget the whole thing.

PC: That's incredible. You never heard from Nancy Hanks or anybody like that?

LA: But I might say that I attended a dinner, the Showhegan School, an awards dinner, when Bob Rauschenberg got the medal for graphics and Jasper Johns for painting and Oldenburg for sculpture, and I had been on the committee that made that selection and so I attended. And Nancy Hanks was doing the awards, and I never heard anything. And the rest of the audience would agree I'm sure, as corny as her comments about each artist. It was just something that a high school girl would be ashamed of. I happen to know that each artist had expected to be given an opportunity to say something other than thank you, but she wasn't aware of that at all. She was just only interested in what she had to say, which was in the form of almost a poem each time, and it was really quite sickening. So I found out that Miss Hanks was Mr. Nelson Rockefeller's secretary in charge of the data on his collection and so on, and when Mr. Nixon, who certainly had no knowledge or background of anyone in the art world or art activity got a recommendation from Mr. Rockefeller to appoint her, he did it very quickly because she was a woman and hewas attempting to create a favorable impression and so on. So I really don't know how the National Endowment for the Arts works, but from my own personal experience, I'm certainly not going to ever bother to make any effort to write my congressman or all that sort of thing, because I think it's just a lot of nothing. [TAPE NINE SIDE ONE]

PC: This is side seventeen.

LA: I think earlier in the tape told you about how in 1965 I arranged for two of my associates to buy 30% of my firm on the basis of my not giving it anywhere near the amount of time I did in the past so that I would be free to do things necessary in connection with operating the Museum. After my scare about losing my public exemption, I realized that I had to do something about making certain that if anything happened to me that the Museum should continue. At least I very much would like it to continue. And in order to do so, I recognized that I would have to find some new trustees who were younger than the trustees I had, whom I acquired only for the purpose of getting my exemption and who were acquired on the basis of just believing in what I was doing in the Museum and also with the knowledge that they would not in any way have any either duties connected with it or be beholden for financial support. Also I realized that in order for the Museum to continue without my being there, one of the factors that might make it possible would be if the Museum had a collection. And so I have come to the conclusion that I cannot accomplish any of these things unless I'm able to devote full time to following up on these plans. I am just now in the process of arranging with these same two employees that as of the first of the year I make it possible for them to acquire the balance of my business with considerable financial assistance from me, and I'm going to devote all of my time to attempting to find additional trustees who would be interested in taking over at any time making them familiar with the total concept of the operation, and also to attempt to acquire a collection. The first thing I have done as part of getting a collection, a permanent collection,and I have rewritten my will so that every thing that I personally have acquired that was created from

1970 on will at my death go to the Museum. The second activity towards getting a collection will be to approach people on a basis of asking them to make available to the Museum a certain sum of money annually with which I could buy works of art, which I would limit only to artists that already have a status and a reputation, which would be bought from the gallery. And they were to be loaned to the Museum on a long term basis which could be ended by the owner at any time they desired and with the understanding that at some time in the future those will be made permanent gifts to the Museum, in hopes that I can find people who will add to make up a total of about $100,000 a year. I'm going to be 66 this month, but if that can roll for five years, why, the Museum should have a rather important, outstanding and still contemporary collection. I have already made some purchases for someone of a Darby Bannard, 1972, that's six feet high and eight feet long and a Isaac Witkin, a unique sculpture, both of which I plan to show in this fall's exhibition. Also, I was very fortunate in being given a Al Held, created in 1970, by Vera List, a dear friend and trustee of the Museum, which is nine foot six by twelve foot long, a white and black from the first white and black series, which I also expect to show this fall. So, those are my hopes, plans and ambitions for the Museum. If I had the funds, it would be very easy to enlarge the Museum, particularly in it's center wing, but that would cost about $150,000, and I can't visualize that I should ever accomplish anything of that sort.

PC: Well, I just wanted to ask here, have people offered you things for the Museum's collection?

LA: Not up to now, no. Excepting that I did receive a gift of eight things which I think I mentioned from Mr. Ira Agress, who's my newest trustee, which I received last fall, and they will be shown in the Museum this fall, and that was an outright gift.

PC: So in other words, you are open to suggested gifts.

LA: I'm not only open, but I'm eager. But they must be something that I think is worthwhile having, and that it will be something created at least from the sixties on. In fact I was offered by Miss List a Jose de Rivera which I understand is very rare, one of his early ones of 1940, that is sort of a horned shaped and painted on the inside. And so I said, "No, thank you, because it isn't anything that I told you I would show in the Museum, and I wouldn't take it with the understanding that it would be part of the Museum collection and then turn around and sell it, even though its rarity would make it a rather high priced item. I don't believe in having works just to add to storeroom space and have it sit in storage as they do in so many museums, unless they're things that I would be wanting to show, at least for an extended period over, at least once every couple of years. I'm not interested."

PC: Well, with your new program, how far back will you go, or will you start from today and go forward?

LA: Well, the things I would acquire would be things that I'm hopeful would be as of today even though they would be the work of today by established artists.

PC: I see. So it would be new works by old artists.

LA: Exactly, exactly. Things that I would accept as a gift for the Museum would have to be things that were created no earlier than 1960. In other words, I want the name of a contemporary museum to continue to have its current meaning.

PC: Well, how much planning can you do as far as development of the collection of these lines goes? Would you acquire things that you haven't been able to or artists that you might have missed before?

LA: Yes, I would if they came within a price range that I would have the money for. Because the funds would be coming from a number of people, there wouldn't be any large sum from one particular individual. In other words, if there were a painting that was currently $15,000 or $20,000 or $25,000, I couldn't acquire it, and so it would have to be within the price ranges of the limitations of the commitments I get from specific individuals. Also as you are now aware, from having seen the various lists of the exhibitions that have been shown in the Museum from my own collection, I own a great many artists who, while they weren't important when I acquired them for the most part, are important artists today. And at the present time, I'm not in a position to give any of those to the Museum because of the fact that I have to donate so much of my own funds to operate the Museum, but if I have success in building up a larger list of Friends at $100 a year and Patrons at $1,000 a year, so that I will no longer have to contribute so much cash funds to operate the Museum, I will then be in a position to donate some of the works of art from my own collection, created in the sixties, that are important artists. In other words, with that hope in mind, I'm not very likely to buy the works of artists that have made it that are already in my collection (unless like in the case of Darby Bannard, I do have one of the early sixties) unless their current work represents a specific change in direction. I'm not likely to buy a new Stella, for example, but the one I have is quite fabulous, fifteen foot long. If the time should come that I do have sufficient financial support for the operating budget, that would be something I could and would most certainly donate to the Museum for its permanent collection, and many other things.

PC: But you'll continue buying just painting and sculpture, you won't go into prints or drawings?

LA: No, no. I'll not attempt to take on any other area or aspect. I will stick to paintings and sculptures. Of course, with the Contemporary Reflections show being an annual, I will naturally continue to buy anywhere between 35 and 50 depending on how many are sculptures and how many are paintings, which I will buy personally from my own funds for that annual show. And as I have stated before, in my will, all of those will become part of the permanent collection. How many of those in the future will be considered works of importance? Well, that's of course in the lap of the gods.

PC: Well, how many of your annual acquisitions appear in that exhibition? I mean, is it everything you buy through the course of the year, or do you select?

LA: The Contemporary Reflections?

PC: Yes.

LA: Oh, well, the Contemporary Reflections are, as I've mentioned before, only bought from artists who do not have a gallery or have never had a one-man exhibition. And I'm certainly going to continue with that idea, and there will always each year be a catalog in which everything is reproduced and also the address, telephone number, etc. In other words, the concept and the idea of the Contemporary Reflections is one that I'm going to continue with just as long as I can find sufficient works to make an exhibition with new artists graduating from schools all the time and coming to New York and beginning to work. I'm optimistic that from the New York area alone I can indefinitely, as long as I'm able to climb stairs, continue to find an exhibition for the contemporary show annually. I plan to start looking for next year's show in September, and I will have been sufficiently disengaged by then from my activities here that I will be able to devote all of September, October, November, December and January just to finding the work for that next spring's exhibition, and in the meantime, seeing all the galleries' shows as well with the hopes that I'll have some commitments that I can acquire things that will be on loan.

PC: But in other words, you show all the new acquisitions then of artists who have no gallery. I mean, there are not things that you've bought that you don't exhibit in that exhibition?

LA: No, there aren't.

PC: Are there other acquisitions that are not exhibited, things that you buy from galleries or through auctions or, you don't buy much from auctions?

LA: I don't buy. Not only that, but from my own personal funds I don't buy anything from auctions, and I don't buy anything from galleries either.

PC: So, it's really all the newest people who are still in their studios and still unrepresented?

LA: That's it. Oh, incidentally, so far there are five or six of the artists in this current exhibition who will, some are already in this exhibition, they've opened at the downtown Emmerich Gallery, and three are in that and one is in a group exhibition at another downtown gallery and two are going to be in a group exhibition a the O.K. Harris gallery and one is going to have his first one-man exhibition at the Bykert Gallery this October.

PC: Well, you get lots of activity. Apropos of all this, but from another point of view, is have you noticed over the years since you have been meeting the younger artists for a long time, do you find they are a different type of person say now in 1972 as opposed to in the sixties or later? Do you find them thinking differently, acting differently, or are they pretty much the artist all the way through?

LA: That's a difficult question to answer because I don't think I've been that much of an observer plus the fact I haven't in any way over a period of years been mixed up socially with any of the artists. And art has always been purely a relationship of seeing their work and acquiring it or not acquiring it, and while they contact me from time to time for opinions and advice and assistance and that sort of thing, I don't know really much about their individual lifestyles after their working times. In other words, there are very few artists that I ever see, in fact, none that I see socially, so I'm not really that familiar with what their lifestyles are as against what they may have been ten or fifteen years ago. I have observed this much; that there is a change in individual artists' lifestyles which is mostly based on their success. I have known artists from the beginnings of their careers when they lived in miserable, dire surroundings, then have seen how they live and what they're doing ten or twelve years later, the ones that have made it big. And of course, what comes to mind is that just recently, only a few weeks ago, I ran into Bob Indiana at a party that Charles Cowles of Art Forum gave. I was with my wife, and we decided to have dinner at a restaurant that hadn't any name on the corner of Spring Street and West Broadway where I had lunch several times since it opened less than a year ago, and I told her we'd stop in there and have dinner and let her see what it looked like. We ran into Bob Indiana, and I invited him to join us and Mr. Adolph

Gottlieb and his wife, and Adolph's assistant (who was pushing him around in his wheel chair since he had his stroke) were also at this party. When we left and came into the restaurant, Adolph and his wife and his assistant were having dinner, and they insisted that we join them. And I remember for example, Adolph's studio and residence was on 23rd Street, and I visited him in his new studio on West Broadway which was a building that he and two other people bought and did over, and it is really fantastic. He occupies two floors, and there is a beautiful elevator and close circuit television. Anyone that rings the bell, a picture shows on his television both on the second and third floor, and if it's someone that they are expecting, they press the button. And they have a home in East Hampton; in fact, they bought the home of someone we know personally, who is an aunt of Jackie Kennedy Onassis, And that's what I mean. You see a great deal of this is in accordance with their success. After dinner, we walked back to Bob Indiana's studio, and I know a great deal about how Bob Indiana lived when he was on Old Slip or whatever it was.

PC: Old Clinton Slip.

LA: And the wood sculpture that Bob made then was all made out of stuff he found in that particular area, and now he has three floors in that building, and he just spent a great deal of money making a personal gallery on the lower floor that is beautifully done. It has quite a number of his paintings in it and carpets that aren't really carpets that hang on the wall, and it's just like a little chapel. It's beautiful, you know. You see, there's a lot of difference in Bob Indiana from 1960 and 1972. And I think that even though artists presumably are artists because they can't help but be artists, they couldn't be anything else whether they'd like to be or not, that once they meet with material success, they are inclined to take on the attributes of any other young non-artist person who starts with nothing and makes a financial success in so far as their mode of living and everything else. I recall when I was attempting to get paintings for the Whitney Museum for their auction, I called on Bob Rauschenberg and came to see him one morning about ten-thirty at his Broadway studio at that time. He was already a very, very successful artist and this bare, bleak, concrete floor place and small area in which there was a bed and a kitchen, and a lot of dogs and crap all over the floor and what have you, and after that, I understand he bought a fabulous building somewhere downtown, an old Federal Church or something of that nature.

PC: Oh yeah, down on Lafayette.

LA: I understand that Jasper Johns, too, has a fabulous place. Donald Judd, who I met for the first time in 1966, I believe, when he was one of our Artists in Residence in Aspen, now has bought a big corner building on Wooster Street where he not only lives and has a studio, but the ground floor is a showcase for his work. And so that's what happens, I think, with most artists that hit it big. The ones that don't I guess are bitter. I imagine that there is plenty of bitterness and backbiting among artists, and the only thing that probably doesn't change much is their mode of dress.

PC: Well, they generally tend to be colorful in their clothes, or they cling to some things.

LA: Well, not necessarily colorful as much as -- in other words, I don't think they dress in a certain manner as artists of old probably did who always wore a beret, a flowing, soft bow-tie, and capes, but the contemporary artist isn't that way at all. I think that what they wear is purely something that is practical and hard-wearing and comfortable. I don't think, in my opinion anyhow, that they are not attempting to achieve any particular effect, nor are they attempting to advertise themselves through what they wear.

PC: That's true. It's interesting because the abstract expressionists were noted for wearing used army clothes, and all of the young artists whose studios I've visited are generally dressed that way.

LA: Well, the conventional uniform is blue jeans and a shirt and rolled-up sleeves and most of the time sneakers. All of the young artists whose studios I've visited are generally dressed that way.

PC: You had mentioned, just to jump around here, that you'd stopped going to France for some reason that you never really got into. Why was that?

LA: It was a combination of things. I was very unhappy with De Gaulle for one, and for another, when I opened the Museum, it was sort of a new toy to me, and for the efforts that I was putting into it, I wanted to get some pleasure out of it, and the pleasure consisted mostly of being in the Museum and talking to people that came there trying to help them understand what we were showing. Unusually, my trips to Europe were in January and in the end of July for the purpose of principally seeing the European collection and not necessarily art, anymore, after I became more involved with the American scene, but the fashions and fabrics.

PC: What was it about De Gaulle's activities that you didn't like?

LA: Well, you may recall, we have a short memory, but De Gaulle definitely, in spite of the aid and assistance this country has given to France after the war, when De Gaulle came into power he attempted to raid our stock

of gold to bring the value of our dollar down. And whereas most countries would have a surplus of American dollars, in the case of France, every American dollar they got they immediately changed into gold from our own treasury. He was not a friend of the United States for quite a long time. He was attempting to become a super individual in Europe in controlling Europe. And you must have read a great deal about his activities at that time. Then also, it was, you know, towards the end of his regime that after the State of Israel had paid for fifty airplanes, he didn't permit Israel to get them. And that was another factor in my dislike for De Gaulle, So my going to France personally ended, and we stopped using French fabric almost entirely. I would not buy any French wines, and in the restaurants I normally went to when I was out to dine in New York, I had them stock American wines and things of that nature. It was sort of silly when I look back on it, I suppose.

PC: Well, but still, it's something that happened and had meaning at that point. And did your attitude towards France change? Have you been there since?

LA: Yes, I returned in 1969 for the first time for just a very few days. Actually, I went to Paris in order to get on the ship which was leaving from Le Harve and made a fourteen day return trip to this country going by way of Kenneth Reef and some of the Caribbean Islands. And so I was there for just those four days, and I must say that from my last trip, which was in 1963, there were a great many changes in Paris. And as far as I was concerned with all these various new highways and buildings, Paris had lost its visual charm for me. I did return again to France last summer. I made a round trip getting off at Le Harve and going to Deauville for a few days and then returning to Le Harve and coming back. I happen to be ship happy. And my idea of a pleasant vacation is a round trip on a ship. I would even prefer going on a ship for a few weeks that didn't stop anywhere, just circled around and came back.

PC: One way to get away from the telephone.

LA: Well, the fact that once you get on a ship and it leaves port, you know that no matter what happens, there isn't anything you can do about it until the ship docks. You just try to relax and truly relax and forget any problems or any fears about what might happen.

PC: You had mentioned before your activities at Brandeis, but there was one specific thing you wanted to talk about.

LA: Oh, oh yes. I recall. Bill Sikes went to Brandeis, and I was the one who had recommended him for the job, and when I recommended him, I said I doubt very much whether he'll entertain taking the job because I believe that he's being groomed as successor to Alfred Barr when he retires, but it won't do any harm to approach him. And they approached him, and much to my own surprise, he took it. I asked him after that why he had taken it, and he said because just the activities at the Modern became far too hectic for him, and he was interested in writing, and he felt as though if he took this job, even though he would have to do some teaching, he'd have far more time to write, and it would be much more relaxing. Unfortunately, it didn't work out that way, and so I believe he's now in Virginia teaching. But he had a board of overseers of the Rose Art Museum, and I was asked to be on this board which consisted of the man who was then, I don't remember names too well, head of the Baltimore Museum, the Boston Fine Arts, and a few other collectors. We came for our first weekend meeting, and it was the first time I had seen the Rose Art Museum which had been given by a family by the name of Rose that had an important collection of ceramics, and the Museum was basically built around exhibiting this collection of ceramics. And when I was the Museum right before our first meeting, I realized how difficult it would be to have any kind of an art exhibition because all you had was a continuous wall, and one wall only, around a fairly large area, and the center was a stairway. Down below that was sort of fenced off, and at one end were all of these glass cabinets that contained the china and ceramics and so on. And after our first first business meeting, which had to be held the following day, Sunday, at the President's home (I wasn't aware that Mrs. Rose, who had contributed the Museum was among those present), when I was asked what I thought of what they ought to do and so on and so forth, I said, "Well, the first thing I think you need to do is get a new Museum. That this building is totally unsuited for the purpose of showing art. I can't visualize how you could have exhibitions that in themselves could tell any story because you have a continuous flow of one wall and so on." I outlined where and how I thought an addition should be made and that the ceramics should be in one building and have nothing to do with the paintings and sculpture, prints, and drawings or what have you. That they would be a definite conflict and so on and so forth. And when I finished speaking there was a very deep ominous silence, and then the discussion after a while when on, and only later did I know that Mrs. Rose, who had contributed the building and determined its design, and the architect was also in the audience, and they were both very, very personally offended. But Bill Sykes came to me later, and he said, "Larry I could kiss you. That was the greatest thing." He said, "I wouldn't have the guts to put it out in the open, but you did, and you did me such a big favor." And I said, "Well, I didn't realize what a faux pas was created, and I certainly would not have said it if I had realized that the donor of the building . . . " and so on. But in any event, plans were made to create a whole new building, and I think one of the principle reasons why Bill Sykes left was because Brandeis was never able to come up with the funds to put the plans into motion. He found out how discouraging it was to do anything about exhibitions in that particular space.

PC: Thinking of the various people that we've already discussed in the tapes, you mentioned Alfred Barr a great deal. Have you been involved with his ideas, or have you spent much time with him talking about art and museums, the idea of museums and things of that nature?

LA: Well, no. Because very few of our meetings were particularly planned as such. I had lunch with him several times while he was still director of the Museum, and of course I would see him at various exhibitions. And at the time they had this auction, I was in very frequent contact with him regarding my own personal activities in acquiring things for the Museum. But actually, it was only after he was retired that we spent any great deal of time together. Several times that he had been to the Ridgefield Museum when he visited Philip Johnson, who brought him over. Then after seeing the Museum, he would come over to our house for dinner, and then we'd put him and Mrs. Barr on a train back home. I think I mentioned that we have a small house on the grounds of Aspen Meadows in Aspen, Colorado, and one summer when we came out towards the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th of July, we found that Alfred Barr was in the house next door. He'd been loaned a house by Mr. Armand Bartos who was our next door neighbor. And we spend a great deal of time together then. In fact, they had no car, and whatever we were going to do that day, we would inform them, and they would join us for all of it or part of it or none of it as they chose. I became extremely fond of Alfred Barr during that two week period because most of my earlier contacts with him had to do either with his Museum or my Museum. He's a very warm person, but it takes a little time, not before he can warm up to you, but before it's possible to warm up to him because he seems to be, you know, a very cold sort of brusque type of person, which he may be in the Museum; never having worked there, I don't know. Everyone that ever worked for him apparently adores him, but yet I understand that he can be very cold and very cutting and very short. But in Aspen, of course, he was already retired from the Museum, and we had many a long walk together. In fact, one of his principle pleasures was bird watching. That would be taking the day to some mountain areas with his glasses. He'd see a bird, and even though he looked so frail, he'd go bounding down the hill. You'd think he was a mountain goat. It was really astonishing, and he had a great thrill out of the fact that I think he saw during those two weeks four or five firsts. And he told me that he retired with a $25,000 a year pension for life and he was cataloging some of their collection up to a certain point. He still had an office there, and it was going very, very slowly, and I understand that it's still going very slowly even after all of this time. When I got back at the end of the summer, I had lunch with Dorothy Miller who was still at the Museum, and I was very amused when Dorothy Miller said that Mrs. Barr had told her I handled Alfred perfectly. I said, "What the devil are you talking about? I didn't handle him at all. What do you mean by perfectly?" I said, "I just told him what our plans were for the day and if he wanted to be included he could. If he didn't, it was fine too. I made no effort to handle him at all." But the times that I have seen him since the Aspen situation where we were on a much closer basis that we ever have been. I don't know that he greatly despairs of what has been happening at the Museum of Modern Art since he has gone. I don't know the details, supposedly public, of what has happened there. Just that the things I read in the paper and so on. And also now that Dorothy Miller is, even before she retired, she too was very unhappy about the things that were happening at the Museum of Modern Art. I confess that, since I opened the Aldrich Museum, I haven't had a great deal of interest or given a good gosh darn what's been happening at the Modern or the Whitney or any other museum. I've been more concerned with my own problems and attempting to solve them. I think I did mention that when I first bought the building that I had no intention of having it be what it has turned out to be, a contemporary museum with on-going exhibitions or anything of that nature. I had planned to just have it be some place where I could see the works of art which I own and allow the public to see if I were so inclined. But Rene was among those that came to see what I was doing before the Museum opened, and he was one of those that really sort of first put the bug into my head of attempting to create a truly contemporary museum of art that would be showing what happens all the time. And he maintained his interest in what I was doing. In fact, he had the catalogs sent directly to his house, and I would talk to him fairly frequently on the telephone, and he came up fairly often too. And his love, I found out from him, was a little house that he bought in Key West, and one winter I was fishing on the Keys with my wife, and it was a windy, rainy day, and so we drove down to Key West. And purely from his description of the house which he was really building, he had bought a piece of land and a huge banyan tree in the yard and the wall, he'd described it so clearly that we were able to find the house, which wasn't really much of a house, but it just had a great big huge porch for a great big huge man like him. The rooms were really quite tiny. But he was looking forward to spending more and more time there. It was tragic, that senseless accident that ended his life. The last time I saw him was in the spring of the summer in which he died, and he was officially out of the Museum the end of that month and he and Mrs. d'Harmoncourt came up for lunch and then we went to the Museum, and afterwards we went into my office at the Museum and had quite a long conversation in which I told him that I was already concerned about the future, that I would like to see the Museum continue, and that I was not in the position to financially endow it, and would there be any virtue in offering it at any point in the future to the Museum of Modern Art as a training place for young curators and anything of that sort. I said that of course the museum doesn't own any collection but it has this building and the three acres and the storerooms and my cost is far in excess of $100,000 worth of sculpture out here which I would give with it and so on. And he said, "Well Larry, I don't think you ought to do that. I have promised Nelson Rockefeller a whole year of work to do for him the Primitive Art Museum." And he said, "After that I will be a free agent, and now that you're no longer going to be open in the winter time, I would like nothing better than to come in and run this Museum for you. And I'm sure that with my connections there wouldn't be any

problem about financing it." And I said, "Well, Rene, that would my idea of heaven, to be working closely with you and be relieved of the problem of the finances." And this was before I had managed to get a designation as a public institution.

PC: Why was he against your idea of giving it to the Museum? Did he say?

LA: I didn't ask him, but if you ask me now, I assume because he liked the idea in the back of his mind.

LA: Oh, something for him.

LA: He loved the town of Ridgefield. It's a beautiful town, and he loved the idea of the Museum, and he thought that that was something that he could enjoy playing with, I imagine. After we drove to Howard Lipman's house in Wilton (he wanted to see Howard's sculpture), that's the last time I saw him. Then that summer, Bill Lieberman telephoned me in Aspen the day of his untimely accident and death. And I often wondered afterwards why Bill took the trouble to call me in Aspen to tell me about it, and I wondered perhaps Rene had said something to Bill about the fact that he had at the back of his mind that someday he might step in and run Larry's Museum or something of that sort. I never really did get around to asking. But he was a very loveable, wonderful character. and Dorothy Miller -- I just love her personally as a person and all of our contacts have always been a great source of pleasure to me. I still see her fairly often, and, as you know, she's starting a business of finding art for various corporations, and I constantly let her know about new artists whose work I acquire. Even though I never bring it up, she always speaks of how terrible what's happening at the Museum of Modern Art. And I never follow it up by asking her what is happening because I really couldn't care less at this point.

PC: There was something that you said about Bates Lowry and the opening of the Contemporary Museum in Chicago.

LA: Yes, when the new Contemporary Arts Museum opened in Chicago, because it had been, to a certain extent, inspired by the existence of my Museum, I was there as an honorary guest. It had already been announced that Mr. Bates Lowry was going to be the new director of the Museum of Modern Art, and he was completely unknown to the staff. I don't think that Mr. Barr knew him. I know that Dorothy Miller didn't know him or didn't know anything about him, and he was to be the keynote speaker at the black tie dinner at the Ambassador Hotel. And his subject, most unfortunately, was (here he was, making a big speech of the night for a Museum that was based on the idea of my Museum and was going to function without a collection) almost entirely on the fact that it's necessary for museums to give much greater curatorial care to what they own, and that the time is coming when museums will not lend to other museums, etc., which couldn't have been a more wrong subject for the occasion. And when I returned from Chicago, and Dorothy Miller called and said, "You must have lunch with me just as soon as you can and tell me all about Bates Lowry." And so we met for lunch, and I told her about the evening's talk. [BEGIN SIDE TWO TAPE NINE]

PC: This is Side Eighteen.

LA: I found out later that the reaction that I had to his talk which was slightly disastrous was one that was shared by others who came back and told her the same stories. And she was very fearful, and she felt as though his background was of such a nature that she couldn't understand how he had been hired for that job because he was, I believe, an art historian and that his specialty was art of about the eighth century or something of that sort. And she was fearful that he'd have no sympathy towards contemporary or modern art, which of course was the area that interested her more than any of the others. But oddly enough, it didn't work out that way. After he got the job, Bill Lieberman called me and said that (of course my fund was still operating at the Museum then) Bates Lowry was very anxious to meet me, and so I arranged to have dinner with Bill Lieberman and Mr. and Mrs. Lowry. We had a nice talk, and in the course of the conversation, I mentioned that a couple of years before I had been at the opening of a Dubuffet exhibition, and I'd been sitting at the same table with Bill Paley, and they were at that time thinking of attempting to raise another 25 million dollars or 35 million dollars. And they had hired a fund raising organization, and the fund raising organization apparently had picked about fifty people to interview and ask questions about the Museum and the direction it ought to go and what chance they'd have of raising this money and questions like the fact that everyone knows the Rockefeller family are so closely allied with it and would that interfere with their ability to raise money and all the rest of it. And Bill asked me had I gone through his interview, and I said yes, He was then president of the Museum, and then he said, "You know, your Museum of contemporary art, how's it going?" And so I told him quite a bit about the activity of the Museum and what it was doing and so on. And I said I'd like to make a suggestion which is that he take a small area in the Museum somewhere and get a curator whose responsibility would be purely that small area, who would not have to come to a director or a board of trustees for permission to do a specific show. I said as curator, director, sponsor, founder and everything else of my own Museum, I find it's so wonderful that I don't have to go to anyone to ask if I can do this, do that, or do the other. That whatever I do I stand or fall on what I do or do not accomplish. I said a great many museum directors all over the country come to see the Museum,

and I know them personally, and they all envy the fact that I'm able to conduct my operation without having to get anyone's approval. I said this person should not go to galleries but to studios and ferret out new work and show it in this small area, maybe just a place that could hold 15 or 20 things and change it every month, and that should be his sole job. I said it would give the trustees, the director and everyone else a chance to see this new work and if any of it you find interesting or appealing you can acquire it while the price is low, and at the same time, it will serve to overcome the objections that I hear on all sides about he fact that the Museum of Modern Art isn't very modern. He said, "There's some merit to that thought, but we feel as though people can see the latest thing by doing the galleries on Saturdays in New York, there's no need for them to come to the Museum. That's the number one factor, and we feel that our exhibitions should have some historical importance at this point. However, please send me the catalogs of all the exhibitions that you have done, and let me study them to get a slight idea of what you're talking about." So I sent them to him and got a letter of thanks, and that was the end of that. But I notice that they are doing pretty much that now, I don't know what they call that area. He also stated that the board felt that the Museum was responsible for anything showing in the Museum, and the fact that it's being shown in the Museum would make it an endorsement by the Museum. And I said that through a proper printed card at the entrance, one could make it very clear that this is just the work of new people, and it doesn't represent an endorsement by the Museum, but it is just an effort by the Museum to show what is happening today. Haven't they taken a space of that nature?

PC: Yes.

LA: They have now.

PC: But they suffered for a long time from that problem of "whatever we show we endorse," and I think it's given them more trouble than it's worth, really.

LA: Well, in any event, I had dinner with Mr. Lowry, and much to my own surprise, besides finding him a very attractive person socially, I found that he's vitally interested in the contemporary arts. And I told him of my conversation with Bill Paley. He made various notes. He thought that was a suggestion that ought to be carried a little further, more thought given to it. And then he was very anxious to see the Museum, and so I invited him to come up with Mrs. Lowry, who's very charming, and with Bill Lieberman. They came up to our house for lunch, and then he went through the Museum, and I took them through my various storerooms. I don't recall what exhibition was on at the time. And then we sat down and chatted in the office, and I told him that the thought I had expressed to Rene d'Harmoncourt about having the Museum of Modern Art take over at some point when I got to be a certain age, and now I thought again it would be a good training ground for new curators and so on. And he was very enthusiastic about the thought, and he said he would take it up with Mr. Paley and one or two other trustees. Much to my and everybody else's shock and amazement, about ten days later, he was gone. I know that from Bill Lieberman that he was very devastated. I think that the Museum had bought an apartment for him to use. He had a fabulous, easy job where he was and he had the use of a house, and he didn't have any financial means outside of his salary, and this was a terrible setback for him. He did have, he told me, a small camp of some kind up in the Adirondacks, and I know that when he was thrown out on his ear, he did spend a couple of weeks up there trying to recover from the shock. It was a case of they wanted him out of the apartment in a hurry, and it was really, from all I gather, quite a messy experience for him. I've had a couple of notes from him since, in response to Christmas cards, and now I understand he's teaching somewhere, but I don't know quite when or why he was discharged, excepting apparently they expected him to be an administrator, and he said he wanted to get involved in every aspect of what was going on in the Museum.

PC: I made a note here that you said there was something interesting or special about the Steichen 90th birthday party at the Museum of Modern Art which you attended.

LA: Oh, yes. This was while Bates Lowry was still at the Museum. It ws this 90th birthday party for Captain Steichen, the photographer. And before that, at my suggestion, Dorothy Miller had picked out a Kaufman and a Mangold that were quite sizeable, and Dorothy Miller called me to show them to me. One was $1500 and the other was 1600, which of course was above my fund requirements of $1000. So I said, "Well, suppose you let me take over, and I'll call the Fishbach Gallery and the Feigen Gallery and see if I can't get them to reduce the price to the $1000 limit of my fund." And so I called the Fishbach Gallery and talked to Earl Groves, and he contacted Mangold and Mangold said sure. It was important to him to have it be in the Modern, and the young Kaufman, same thing, and they both agreed. And so I called Dorothy and said fine, she should just send me the letter on these, $1000 apiece, and I'd send her the check. Two days later, it was Captain Steichen's 90th birthday party, in which both Bates Lowry and Dorothy Miller and Bill Lieberman and a lot of people from the Museum were there. And Dorothy came over to me and said, "Larry, I'm in great trouble." She was in tears, and I said, "What is it?" Well, she said, "When I told them that you had arranged to get these for the Museum within the confines of your fund for $1000, they said no, that would never do. That they didn't feel as though they ought to force the artists to sell their works for less money to get within the confines of a fund." And she said, "The problem now is that we've committed ourselves to buy them, and I haven't got the money. I haven't got the funds to pay for them." In other words, the powers said no, but they didn't say that the museum would buy it from other

sources. "And so I'm begging you." She said, "I'm in great trouble about this. Would you please let the fund pay for these at above the limit of $1000?" I said, "Dry your eyes, darling, of course I will." And that was the last two items that were acquired by the Museum from the fund that Dorothy Miller had anything to do with. It was not long after that that she retired, and Bill Lieberman became curator of painting and sculpture, and the last acquisition that the Museum made through the funds were his doing.

PC: Right, which we've talked about. What was there about pop art that you didn't like or weren't interested?

LA: It just had no appeal for me. You have to understand that I'm neither an art historian nor an art critic nor anything of that sort, and all of my acquisitions are on a visual and emotional basis. My own feeling about what I saw of pop art was that it was purely trite and not anything that moved me at all. And for that reason, I just didn't acquire it. I don't buy anything I don't like. It can be good, it can be bad and a hell of a lot it, I'm sure the history will say, is bad, but at least it's what personally moved me, and I have to stand or fall on that.

PC: You know, there's one thing that in listening to this and thinking about the interview is that you're engaged in a visual business. I mean fashion. There's color, shape, line, movement, all of these things. Do you think there's any relationship between that activity and the collecting as far as how you look at things or how you get interested or not interested in things?

LA: Subconsciously it may be, I don't know. I do know that I'm one of a great number of people who are in the fashion business, but I don't believe I know of many other people in the fashion business who are particularly interested in art or collecting, certainly not in contemporary art, and it's very wise of them. Not to the extent that I become involved where I again I can say it's an obsession that's almost a disease. It is a disease, not almost.

PC: Why do you say that? Because other collectors have said identical things.

LA: Well, you know usually if one gets a disease in medical terms, there's not much that doctors can do about it. It just has to run its course. Some diseases will run their course and then come to an end, and other diseases only get worse until the patient dies.

PC: So it goes on and on. You had mentioned in your office you have this marvelous furniture. When did you start getting interested in 18th century furniture? Was that, again, a collecting activity?

LA: Oh, no, no, no, never a collecting activity. It was purely furniture originally for my house in Ridgefield Connecticut. When we bought our house, which was a small house at that time in Ridgefield, intending it only to be for summer vacations, we had been living in apartment hotels, and we didn't have any furniture. We furnished it in rather a country style, very chintzy. Also, we didn't have any art either at the time, as you know, that amounted to anything. And when I became more involved in art and when it became a permanent home, which we greatly enlarged over a period of about twelve different alterations, then I was no longer satisfied to live with the colorful victorian furniture, and I didn't think the paintings went well with it either. And I must confess that I did not and still do not like so-called modern furniture, although many of the homes that I visit that belong to people who are collectors of modern art, if I see another one of those -- if I see another Mies van der Rohe chair and glass top tables with steel tubes -- seems to me that this just represents no feeling of elegance, and from my own visual standpoint, it's totally lacking in beauty. In Ridgefield, we're fairly close to Route 7, and that's rather a well know antique shopping area, and I began going to these antique shops and finding the kind of things that did appeal to my eye. They were always 18th century North American and English, and I started with one thing and another and then started to go to the antique stores in New York, like Stare and various others on 57th Street. We gradually replaced almost all of our furniture with the exception of things like couches, with eighteenth century furniture, and then we did the same thing with our apartment in New York and here currently in my office. And as you see, with the exception of this couch, every thing else in here is 18th century American and English.

PC: Have you been involved with studying furniture or just buying things that you liked from good sources?

LA: I have never been involved with studying furniture. I do not own a single book on 18th century English or American furniture. It's just always been my specific eye appeal, and I have only bought from top dealers who are known as legitimate people. It would be very easy to sell me a fake because I have made absolutely no study, and for that reason, I'm not one to go poking around in junk shops for that little gem. I could very easily be fooled.

PC: At lunch, we chatted a moment about Lippincott, who at your expense ultimately lent you a sculpture. I'm curious about that.

LA: Oh, that must have been, I think it was, about October, November, December, something like that (in my mind's eye, I see snow on the ground) of 1964 that I got a telephone call from a young lady who said that she

was calling for Mr. Lippincott who is just opening a plant in North Haven, Connecticut, to make large sculpture, and she wanted to know if she could set up an appointment for Mr. Lippincott to come and see me at the Museum. So I set up an appointment for a Saturday, and he came with that young lady who had called me on the telephone. Tall, nice looking young man, and he told me that he was in the insurance business, and he had a brother that was a sculptor, and he had opened this plant to make large sculpture, and he had already made quite a number of pieces, all of which were his brother's work. And he was seeking some place that could be a show case, closer to New York than North Haven, which is close to New Haven, I believe, in which it could be shown and that it was all made in a new material called Kortan steel. That was the first time I had heard of it, and he said that in setting up the plant that he had gotten from the United States Steel as much Kortan steel as he could want or use in his plant for free because this Kortan steel, which was of a brownish color, was suppose to rust and then when it stopped rusting it would turn a beautiful shade and would never rust anymore, and it would be eventually a permanent color. And his aim was to make large sculptures with people, and while he knew that larger sculpture had been made in industrial plants, the people who were working on it were not at all interested in the things that they were making or weren't very cooperative. So his aim was to have workers that would only be working on sculpture and therefore would be interested in what they were doing. He had a portfolio of pieces that had already been made in the plant, all of his brother's work, and he showed them to me, and they were semi-figurative or semi-abstract, I don't know which you prefer to call them. Anyway, I chose probably one of the biggest, which is at least twenty feet high and ten or twelve feet wide, and at the time I chose it, I told him that he may be his brother, and that I hoped I would'nt hurt his feelings, but I didn't think that those were too terribly good. However, I certainly would be interested in having it out here for a year, and he could bring it. And I showed him the spot, quite a distance from the end of the building, what was going to eventually be the sculpture garden. So that was one thing I had not gotten around to doing much about up to that point, there were just a couple of pieces out, and they were fairly close to the Museum. I told him that I thought the idea was an excellent one, but that he ought to get in touch with sculptors of note and merit. I might say that his plan was that he would make the pieces, and they would be jointly owned by the sculptor and Lippincott, and when they were sold, it would be shared fifty-fifty, and his costs would be minimized by the fact that he was getting this steel for nothing. And he said he would be interested in knowing which sculptors to contact. So I gave him a list. I'd happened to put on the top of the list Robert Murray because I had a piece that Robert Murray was having fabricated as one of the first acquisitions that I made for the outdoor sculpture garden, and gave him a list of all the rest of them, Bob Morris and the whole crew of the people who were doing meaningful sculpture at the time. I know that he got in touch with them because I know what they have at the Don Lippincott plant since. But, after this piece was out four or five months, every time I had to see it, it just made me a little bit ill, and finally I had a person who was in daily charge of the Museum contact him and ask him if they would please come and get it, and since I realized I had agreed to leave it out for a certain length of time, I would be glad to pay the cost myself of removing it, and did. I've never been up to their plant, but I should go sometime. I know all of the wonderful things they've done in the plant ever since.

PC: I just wonder, are there any critics or curators or museum people that you would like to say something about or who you feel have been especially helpful, influential, or interesting to you in one way or another, or have we touched on them pretty well?

LA: I haven't any personal contacts with any of the critics either of the local newspapers other than things I've already stated in the tapes. I make no effort to develop a relationship or a friendship in any way; I recognize that it would be beneficial from a standpoint of the number of visitors to the Museum if I were to do something about getting more publicity than we do. I very often read in the Times of a show that's done in Canada or somewhere out of town, and apparently Mr. Canaday has gone to see. And my own personal feeling is that a great majority of them are hardly important enough to have spent the New York Times' money and wouldn't be of any special interest to their readers that I can see. It has been suggested to me that if I'd like to have Canaday come to the Museum that I should personally call him and invite him and offer to send a car to bring him and take him back, but I've never done anything about it personally, and I doubt whether I ever will.

PC: Well, over the years, are there any dealers who you've had particularly interesting relationships with, or have they all been fairly simple?

LA: No, all of my dealer relationships have been very straightforward on a basis of going to exhibitions and when I would buy from galleries, seeing anything that I liked and agreeing on a price and getting it, they've always been cordial. I can't think of any dealer that's ever made any effort to put anything over on me or anything of that nature. And they are all pretty much aware now that my personal acquisitions are going to be purely from artists, and I have no hesitancy in calling Ivan Karp of O.K Harris or Goldowsky, what is his name?

PC: Dick Bellamy.

LA: Dick Bellamy or Paula Cooper or any other dealer and asking them if they've seen any work in any artist's studio that looks good to them. After all, I'm aware of the fact that there's a limit to the number of artists that any individual gallery can handle. I know that very often they'll see somebody's work that looks terribly good to

them that they can do well with, but if their stable is full, every show lasts so many weeks, and the season is just so long, and there isn't much they can do about it. They never hesitate to tell me about anything they have seen. I'm in contact too with artists whose work I own, I'm referring to artists that have already made it, and ask them what they have seen, because I know that those artists frequently go to the studios of new artists to see their work and pass on a word. Larry Poons is constantly doing that. Marcia Tucker of the Whitney Museum is someone else that I'm in touch with quite frequently to find out, because she goes to lots of studios, and if I find somebody whose work I like, I tell her about it, and she gives me a list every --

PC: Trade names.

LA: Trade names. The Bykert Gallery is one that I do that with. Since the Emmerich Gallery has opened downtown, there's a young man in charge there by the name of Gary Smith who has artists in the area come in with slides all the time, and he's given me a few names that I've followed up. In fact, one of the names he gave me is Bill Barrett, a sculptor, and the last sculpture I bought for the garden that went out this April, but I bought it last January, an aluminum piece about twenty foot long and about ten foot high and that's been seen by the people of the Storm King Mountain, and they're arranging to get one of his. Well, that all stems from this young guy Smith at Emmerich, and when I start in September looking for the artists for next year's Contemporary Reflections show, I'll be in touch first with all of those people and the various artists, and I'll manage to get a whole list together. Then I'll start telephoning and make an appointment to follow up. [END OF INTERVIEW]

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