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Oral history interview with Herman Maril, 1980 July 14

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Herman Maril on July 14, 1980. The interview took place at his studio in Provincetown, MA, and was conducted by Robert Becker for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Funding for the transcription of this interview provided by the Smithsonian Institution's Women's Committee.

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

Interview

RONALD BECKER: This is Ronald Becker interviewing Herman Maril, under the auspices of the Archives of American Art, Bill [William] Woolfenden, director. We are in Mr. Maril's studio in Provincetown, Massachusetts, July 14, 1980. I have the privilege of interviewing Mr. Maril, both as his nephew, and as an employee of the Smithsonian. Mr. Maril, you were interviewed by Dorothy Seckler here in Provincetown, September 5, 1965, roughly 15 years ago now. And a lot has happened in that period of time. Let's take a look at some of those events. First of all, the University of Maryland experience. You are now retired from the university, and would you care to talk about that?

HERMAN MARIL: My happiest moment of my life occurred not so long ago, when I retired from teaching, --

MR. BECKER: When was that exactly?

MR. MARIL: the University of Maryland. They got, what is that, '78, because now I have a full seven-day period each week to carry on my work.

MR. BECKER: So, you are working every day?

MR. MARIL: I work every day, and every day is a new adventure for me, because I am able now to do certain things that I never had the time to do.

MR. BECKER: Such as what?

MR. MARIL: Well, I am able to do some serigraph prints, silkscreen prints. And I have already done two, actually, two prints, [inaudible]. And I am working this summer on the third prints. I am very happy about the, having the time to do all this stuff.

MR. BECKER: Well, how do you accomplish those serigraphs, what is your process?

MR. MARIL: The serigraph process, silkscreen process has been used for centuries, and I use what is called the touché method, [inaudible]. I make the original, and then we, then I, we trace each color on a silk screen. And we push the color through with a squeegee, each color, one color goes over another. We use transparent colors. We want something to come through to mix with the top color. It's a process that requires a certain amount of labor, and I have a young fellow who helps me with the labor.

MR. BECKER: And that fellow is here, in --

MR. MARIL: Yeah, the fellow is nearby, and we meet, and mix the colors, et cetera.

MR. BECKER: So, do you plan to do more of these in the future?

MR. MARIL: I hope so, I hope so. I'm still, we're waiting to see how this present one will turn out.

MR. BECKER: Okay. Well, you were talking about the University of Maryland, and you did retire a couple of years ago. And I know, of course, that on the occasion of your retirement, or near, there was a very nice exhibition at the University of Maryland. What was that called, and what was that about?

MR. MARIL: Well, it was more, or less a small --

MR. BECKER: Retrospective.

MR. MARIL: -- retrospective, small retrospective. It contained about 60 paintings, selected from as far back as 1929, up to 1967, or -- I mean, '76-'77. And it contained a few tapestries, various directions of paintings I was involved in.

MR. BECKER: And there was also a lovely catalogue at the time too.

MR. MARIL: Yes, the catalogue contained an interview of one of the art historians. And it took two years, in the process of putting it together. I must say, I don't think it would have been successful without the aid, and force and help of my wife, Esta.

MR. BECKER: What other shows have you had since the last interview in '65?

MR. MARIL: In '65, I had a show at the Baltimore museum called "The World of Herman Maril." It also was a, sort of, a retrospective. And it was under the auspices of Mr. Charles Parker, the director of the Baltimore museum. And they published a book, which was written by Frank Getlein of Washington D.C.

MR. BECKER: And recently too, there was the exhibit with your gallery in New York.

MR. MARIL: Yes, I had a show in March, in New York City, at the Forum Gallery, of my work of the last three years.

MR. BECKER: And what about the future, are there plans for other shows in the future?

MR. MARIL: Well, yes, I am getting ready for the exhibit of Washington D.C., at the Franz Bader Gallery, and that will open Veteran's Day, November 11, of 1980. But my main concern now is just to paint and work, I have got a lot of ideas in the works. It is flowing, I feel more intuitive, I feel that I am not under pressure. That is the most important thing in giving up the job at the University of Maryland is that I am not under pressure, and I can take my time and think.

MR. BECKER: Well, do you think that this has affected the quality of your painting at all?

MR. MARIL: Yes, indeed. I feel that the painting is more meaningful to me, because my, the wholeness of me, the wholeness of me is coming out better. And I feel this is a more profound expression of my painting totality, shall we say.

MR. BECKER: Well, you referred to the intuitive aspect of your painting. Do you think that represents any kind of a departure for you?

MR. MARIL: No, it is not a departure, it always existed, but I am beginning to feel that my painting is more intuitive as I get older. As a matter of fact, I don't know where thinking ends and intuition begins, but intuitive is taking hold of more. And I feel like that is true for most painters, as they get older. The whole -- that whole background of thinking and analyzing becomes a part of them, and things just flow a little better as you get older. And the painting is more, is richer, shall we say. I think the painting is richer, and more sensitive.

MR. BECKER: Well, does this mean that there is anything on the order of a lack of, or not a lack of, but a less of a concern with formal structure?

MR. MARIL: No, the formal structure is there, but it's hidden more in the sense it -- you don't feel the mechanics of the thing creaking. And that carries out my real feeling about painting. I like the structure to be a rigid structure, I am always for a rigid structure. But I like the painting to look as if it is going to breathe on without any effort, that it really was a work a love.

MR. BECKER: Well, when you were talking with Dorothy Seckler before, you did recur to the fact that at that time, you were attempting to eliminate line, to some extent, in your painting.

MR. MARIL: No, line is always there. What she was referring to, probably I was with here, I left the lines in when I organized the thing, I would have a dark line separating the colors. Now, I eliminated that entirely, [inaudible].

MR. BECKER: Well, now that you are working here this summer, in Provincetown, let's talk about that for a little bit, for a moment. What is going on this summer, what sort of exhibits might you be participating in?

MR. MARIL: Oh, I am really concentrating on my painting. There's a few, they're good about it, however, I am going to have a little two-man exhibition at a small gallery, called the Cutters Gallery, which incidentally, is co-directed by my daughter Nadja, and my son-in-law Cyril Patrick.

MR. BECKER: And the Provincetown Art Association currently has a painting of yours too, don't they?

MR. MARIL: In their [inaudible] yes. A painting which I painted in 1969, which in going through my stack I found this painting that I never exhibited, and I liked it. I liked it more now, than I did when I painted it, and I thought, I have to show this. I brought it up to show it to the art association.

MR. BECKER: Well, what about Provincetown today, what do you think has happened, if anything, in the development of Provincetown as a center for art?

MR. MARIL: Well, the primary thing about Provincetown is that a lot of artists are here, and more, and more galleries are now opening up. There is an activity, and I think it is a good idea.

MR. BECKER: Well, do you think it still has the vitality as an art center, that it seemed to have at one time?

MR. MARIL: Well, it has vitality, which is better, it's increasing the last few years, but when I first, about 20 years ago, when we had people like Thomas Avery Huffman, I think it had a little more strength than it has today.

MR. BECKER: I see. But with all the galleries opening up around here, how do you feel about all of that, I mean, the whole art gallery situation? Is it an improving situation?

MR. MARIL: I don't know what you mean by improving.

MR. BECKER: Well, does the fact that we have so many galleries work well for the artist, or for you?

MR. MARIL: Actually, I think it is a good thing, whether they sell or not, I don't know. But the fact that the art gallery is here, it means that more artists will come here. That's all it means, are far as I am concerned. It stimulates interest, that means more people will come who look at the work, because there are several big places for them to see the work.

MR. BECKER: I see. Well, what sort of things are you working on right now?

MR. MARIL: Well, I am working on the group of interiors, and actually, the subject is not as important to me as the painting idea. And the subject evolves from the painting idea. I guess that would be a close to one Gris, the French painter in that sense. I start something from an idea from nature, and then I, immediately I am putting something down on the canvas. The canvas takes hold, and the abstract elements are the things that push beyond and develop. And though the subject was still there, it's -- the abstract concepts transcend just the substance, they become the important element.

MR. BECKER: Is there a particular problem in the abstract development that you are working with, or can you --

MR. MARIL: Problem, no problem, it is just trying to make a good painting which all the elements work. To me the important thing is the strength of the painting, as a oneness of color, and shape and space. The subject itself is the tool. I say he is going to put the tool, on which we can hang a clothesline of ideas. But I always retain the figurative image, that started my mind working.

MR. BECKER: Unlike the current movements we have in art today. How do you relate to the whole movement from abstract expressions, and through all these sub-developments.

MR. MARIL: How do I relate?

MR. BECKER: Yeah.

MR. MARIL: Well, it exists, that's what, it had to exist. And I think it is a good thing for activity and thinking to go on. Naturally, it will affect me, in the sense that I live today, and it is probably, unconsciously, released me from a certain rigidity that I used to have. I think I did, rigidity in my structure, you know. And I don't like all the work that's being done, but I think I can understand how it came about, a lot of this work came about, I can understand.

MR. BECKER: What don't you like in what's happening today?

MR. MARIL: Well, I have found that the good proportion, some of the new art of today, some of the new things that are being done, involved a tremendous amount of leaning on associative values which to me didn't have a lot to do with painting.

MR. BECKER: Such as, what do you mean by that?

MR. MARIL: Well, I would rather read you something that I have written. I keep a somewhat of a journal every once in a while, when I think about things, I would rather read you something if you had the time here.

MR. BECKER: Please do.

MR. MARIL: All right. Well, I feel that a lot of it goes back to Cézanne, who to me, is a giant. My period of involvement in painting, since I was a kid, since I was 15, I feared that Cézanne opened up all the gates to new

thinking, and new concepts. I am not sure whether he would be empathetic to a great deal of what is happening in painting today. However, he is indirectly responsible for breaking down the barriers that invented some of today's paintings. In his painting, though he still retained the figurative authenticity of the object, he freed the painting of the rigidity of confining the object in its space, and breaking up the object into a variable, and he broke up the object into a variable space concept without losing its figurative authenticity. Picasso, Braque, and others of their contemporaries picked up the cue, and removed from painting the rigidity of adhering to the authenticity of the figurative aspect of the [inaudible]. They completely rearranged the object into a design, primarily, configuration, whose whole responsibility was to the spatial concept of the picture plane. Despite this step, these contemporaries almost always made evident in their work, [inaudible] to adhere to their sources of nature. Once these gates were open, the involvement in the purest space of the picture plane then became more, and more evident, the purest space of the picture. Mondrian and others, their type of interest, and concern with the painting structure was a logical direction from what preceded it. However, painters like Duchamp picked up the cue, and suggested in their work some directions of thinking that opened the gates further, a concept that I feel began to involve the literary and the psychological more, and more. I believe that a great deal of the painting and structure, with the exception of Op painting, relies heavily on associative and literary factors [inaudible], and I think that is too bad.

MR. BECKER: Well, and do you think that these associative factors have, in some way, detracted from modern art?

MR. MARIL: To me, yes. And there is a lot of things that happen that, I call them not [inaudible]. And I think that sort of thing may satisfy these people, I guess because of the type of the type of activity alone satisfies you, I guess it could be considered in the category of art, I don't know.

MR. BECKER: Well, then what do you think of this period of art, that we are living in today?

MR. MARIL: I think this is an exciting era, but what will ultimately, will remain as a seed for future growth and development, but I do not know. I however, believe that since we are affected by the product of our environment, background and other things, the confusion, and the lack of a purpose for the core of our society is responsible for some of the changes and direction of art, which affects many of the young.

MR. BECKER: I see. Well, you refer to some of these other artists in your earlier comment, would you care to talk at all about some of the others, besides Cézanne; Matisse for instance?

MR. MARIL: Oh, Matisse, for me is a great artist, also is one of the greats to grab an empathy. I am empathetic to -- I think he is one of the greats.

MR. BECKER: What is it, in his paintings, that stimulate you?

MR. MARIL: He has got his space, his color, the large areas he uses. The simple statement, the relationships, everything seems to be there that has to be there, and no more. And it has the quality even of -- when he puts the paint on which I am empathetic to him.

MR. BECKER: You refer to space often, what is it you are striving for?

MR. MARIL: To make a good painting.

MR. BECKER: [Laughing]. But I mean, there are open spaces in your paintings, and how do you use that?

MR. MARIL: I am glad you asked me that, but I don't think I can verbalize it entirely, because so much of painting is non-verbal. But you cannot explain things, that total. I can give you some idea about feeling. This desire for the big, open area has always been with me, ever since as far back as I can remember, the desire for that. And I feel that the large, open area is as important as the complex areas, and are just as much a part of the structure of the paintings. So, this is important to me, and intuitively it has some meaning to me. And I like to work to make those areas work with the right color, in relation to the other area as a [inaudible]. Probably, even though I spoke about the psychological point, I think it has underneath some psychological, but I have an empathy for paintings with large areas, and I like to make them work as part of the structure of the painting.

MR. BECKER: So, in other words, both from an aesthetic point of view, but I also perceive that perhaps you are more comfortable with open spaces, --

MR. MARIL: Right.

MR. BECKER: -- like you might find in Provincetown, at the beach.

MR. MARIL: Right, that's right. You can probably link to the large, open spaces, yeah.

MR. BECKER: Well, how about some of the other artists that you have known during your own time?

MR. MARIL: Oh, I have known a few others, been friendly with them. I respected [inaudible], Milton Avery, Mark Rothko, who was my neighbor. And I miss these people, because I used to see them during the summers, when they were alive. And I met [inaudible] first in Washington D.C., when he would come down to the Phillips gallery. We became friends, and every summer when I came up, he would visit and talk. And even though my work was not like his, but there was an empathy in our attitudes about painting. And I respected Milton Avery highly, because his work is more empathetic to mine. And we really had a nice, small friendship. He even sent a prospective buyer over to see me. Nothing happened, but at least he felt enough for me to do that.

MR. BECKER: But today, since these artists are gone, do you still find that you are having friendships and associations with some of the other artists here?

MR. MARIL: I really don't mix around much now. I don't have too many people up here whom I really associate with in painting, in any way. I am friendly with all the others here, but I don't have the empathy. Maybe I don't need them as much as I used to, years ago.

MR. BECKER: But you do have a former student of yours here.

MR. MARIL: Oh, I have several former students here, whom I am friends with, who I have a nice relationship with them.

MR. BECKER: So, do you still continue the student/teacher relationship with them?

MR. MARIL: No, we are friends now, but they have a certain respect for me, and do things for me every once in awhile, physical things, like moving pictures for me. [Laughing].

MR. BECKER: Well, I am sure that they --

MR. MARIL: And I have done my little bit by encouraging them, and also trying to make the gallery connections for them.

MR. BECKER: I see. What about Rothko, he was a neighbor here in Provincetown?

MR. MARIL: Yes, he lived next door to me in Provincetown for two years, and I respected and admired him. He was a warm human being, and a rich personality. And I always felt he was a little depressed, but he was a kindly, warm human being, and we had a nice relationship. And I know his daughter, who has grown up since then, she lives in Baltimore.

MR. BECKER: How was he toward the end of his life, in terms of his development as a painter? Do you think that he was producing then?

MR. MARIL: You know, I didn't see him much after he left Provincetown. I didn't see him the last few years of his life, I didn't know what happened to him, actually, I don't know.

MR. BECKER: I have noticed, walking around the house here, a little cat that you have, "Molly Midnight," and she has figured into some of your paintings. Would you care to talk about Molly as a subject.

MR. MARIL: Oh, Molly is more than a subject, Molly is a person, even though she is a cat. She means a lot to me. When I am home alone, painting all day, she is my companion in a sense, she doesn't bother me. She lies on the couch, or something and looks, and falls asleep. She is nice, I like to have her around.

MR. BECKER: And --

MR. MARIL: She is old now, she is 16 years old, my God.

MR. BECKER: And then of course, after companionship, you can put her right into a painting, if --

MR. MARIL: Once in awhile, I have black color, she works right against something, and I use her as a color shape, but with a little bit of love.

MR. BECKER: [Laughing]. Well, talking about Provincetown, let's compare that now to the other places where you have worked, like Baltimore. And you spoke, in your interview with Dorothy Seckler, a bit about what it was like working as an artist in Baltimore, removed from the New York scene. How do you think about that today, would you have done anything differently, for instance?

MR. MARIL: Well, I lived in New York for a while, but I couldn't afford it. I could live in Baltimore, live better on a

small amount. But Baltimore is close enough to New York, that I can go leave in the morning, and come back at night to see all the shows. It is also close to Washington. And when I go up to New York for the day, I don't look up anybody, I merely go to the shows I want to see, enriching my life for the day and come back filled up.

MR. BECKER: Well, can you say that if you had to do it over again, you would do it the same way, or would you consider seriously, working in New York?

MR. MARIL: I really don't know, I never think about what I would have done. I just look at the present, and the future, mostly at the present.

MR. BECKER: Well, you can see my line of thinking here. I am wondering whether the whole idea of being around New York, where the action is, so to speak, affects you in any sense?

MR. MARIL: I probably lose a lot of things, lose out on a lot of things, but these things are primarily in the way of PR, public relations, and also a little economics. But that is the price you have to pay to get some serenity, and be able to work. And I would rather have the serenity to be able to work, than to have less time to work and get the PR. I feel that if a person has something to say, and their work has real, and genuine quality, and if it's unique, eventually the right people will see it.

MR. BECKER: You do have a lot of faith.

MR. MARIL: I do.

MR. BECKER: What about your materials? I have noticed that you have talked, some of our conversations before, about the fact that you attempted to use the very best materials --

MR. MARIL: I always do.

MR. BECKER: -- paper, and cloth and so on. Is that true for all artists?

MR. MARIL: Well, I think that one of the criticisms, if I had to make about some of the contemporary painters, is that materials that they use are not lasting. I had, I don't want to mention the name, I was on a committee at the museum of art in Baltimore. Well, we were considering some paintings of a very well-known artist. And I noticed that the painting, which was only several years old, was already cracking, and the paint was lifting itself from the canvas. I feel that if you are going to do something, try to use the best materials to do it with.

MR. BECKER: Well, how are the museums doing today, in terms of their conservation and other practices. Do you feel that they are doing their job?

MR. MARIL: Oh, they're doing a tremendous job, but they have a tremendous job, concerning some of the works that are being done, I really believe that. You know, I was one of the few artists who served as a board member, a board of trustees member at the museum.

MR. BECKER: At the Baltimore museum.

MR. MARIL: Baltimore museum, yes. I resigned, and had the exhibition there, they made me honorary trustee there.

MR. BECKER: Well, how did that come about?

MR. MARIL: How did what come about?

MR. BECKER: Your sitting on a board.

MR. MARIL: Oh, that was quite a few years ago, before World War II, they allowed the artists of the city to elect the representative of the board, and the artists selected me. Well, that's the story.

MR. BECKER: Was this --

MR. MARIL: I was a poor man.

MR. BECKER: [Laughing].

MR. MARIL: I was the only board member, economically poor, member sitting on the board.

MR. BECKER: Well, do you think that was a productive relationship?

MR. MARIL: Well, that somewhat -- I was very young, very young, and I was somewhat in awe of the millionaires

that were sitting around me. [Laughing].

MR. BECKER: Yeah, well, how did that work actually, the artists interacting with these management people and directors?

MR. MARIL: Well, I was kind of quiet, but I only interjected a word here, and there, when I felt that some of these things bothered me. However, they put me on the acquisitions committee, where I went through the director, and a few other people, and I really put my two cents in.

MR. BECKER: [Laughing]. Well, now I take it that you do not have any connections with the museums any more, and you are painting completely full-time.

MR. MARIL: I am painting completely full-time, yes.

MR. BECKER: Well, looking back again, even further, I listened to you refer many time to the Roosevelt administration, and the fact that he inspired, or his administration inspired many artists and provided opportunities. Is there anything more you want to say about that?

MR. MARIL: Well, I think Franklin D. Roosevelt did a tremendous thing for the artists, for the public too, in a sense, because the artists, for the first time, were considered workers like anybody else, and when the PWA was organizing, artists were also workers given jobs to do, you see?

MR. BECKER: Uh-huh.

MR. MARIL: And of course, that was preceded by the treasury art project, helping buildings administration, of which I worked, see. But he opened up the gates to the concept that the artist is also a human being, and is a worker like anybody else. And he, also, was indirectly responsible for a lot of the universities having studio departments.

MR. BECKER: Well, do you think that was an important development?

MR. MARIL: Well, in one way, yes, in another way, no.

MR. BECKER: Well, explain.

MR. MARIL: Well, I feel that it was a good thing for an artist -- when I got the job at the university without having any kind of a degree, because there weren't enough artists with degrees to give jobs to when they opened up the studio department.

MR. BECKER: Uh-huh.

MR. MARIL: I got in the basis of background, and experience. Of course, today you have to have some kind of MFA , or Ph.D. I guess, to get a job, unless you are a great name. I feel it enabled the others to realize that they could get a job teaching at a university, then. However, today I feel there is somewhat of a danger. I don't want to go into this too long, but there is a little bit of a danger in that the -- in teaching at a university, you have to categorize, and put into a format, your teaching methods, that will relate to other teachers, so that the student [inaudible]. And therefore, it academies, is that the right word, academizes?

MR. BECKER: That'll do.

MR. MARIL: It academies the situation, and the granting of an MFA to a student who has painted in six years, less than I painted in one year, when I went to school, and I don't think it gives the student enough experience to allow them to go out and teach again, because they haven't found themselves. That is one of the dangers of these degrees given to students who go out and teach. And what do they teach? They teach what they have -- they are [inaudible] primarily, what they are teaching [inaudible] has given them. They all go out, and I don't know if I am rambling now, but they don't go out to work by themselves for six to ten years, and find out who they are and develop an idea, so they can give something fresh to this group, to the next group, if they teach.

MR. BECKER: So, do you think that --

MR. MARIL: That is the danger, I feel, in the what I call, the 'academy of the university setups,' you see.

MR. BECKER: Well, that contrasts very much with what happened here in Provincetown, versus we say, Hawthorne [phonetic], is what --

MR. MARIL: No, no, Hawthorne is a different thing. No, Hawthorne was a fresh, little sort of setup. You could go, and then no degrees were given, no credits were given. You went in, you worked, you got what you wanted

from it, you go to another teacher, you know.

MR. BECKER: Well, that's what I mean.

MR. MARIL: It was a different setup. Oh yes, that contrasts with that very much. I am sorry, I misunderstood you.

MR. BECKER: Is what Hawthorne did still being done today?

MR. MARIL: That sort of thing, yes, you have a few schools. I think the Art Students League of New York, they are more open, and probably the Pennsylvania Academy. There are a few others whose names I do not know. But most of the schools are, the Maryland Institute that I went to years ago, in the 20s, late 20s, is now a college of Art where they give you a degree you know, and they only let you take this course, or that course or this course, history course. And I also taught at the Philadelphia Museum School of Art. Now, it is called the Museum College of Art, where they give degrees. You see, of course, I guess since they are primarily an art school, they just are a little more free than the regular university. This is one of the dangers that I observed when I was teaching at the University of Maryland, and I tried to, in a way, in my own teaching, fight against it.

MR. BECKER: I see. Well, looking at the Maryland Institute, takes us back into the 20s, I guess. When you look back at that period, what impression do you have, what did you take out of that, actually today?

MR. MARIL: My student period up there?

MR. BECKER: Yes.

MR. MARIL: Well, it was a rough period. I was working at a job at night to pay for my schooling. So, not only I was eager at learning, it was also a very rough period.

MR. BECKER: So, you were just trying to make ends meet, and keep your studio?

MR. MARIL: I was trying to make ends meet, I was reading, that is when I first read Cézanne. I was 16, I had a book on Cézanne. I had to go far to look at paintings you know, I don't think, yes, there was a little museum, a Baltimore museum, small, yes.

MR. BECKER: To change the subject, I noticed that in the house in Baltimore, that you have a number of African pieces, how did you acquire those?

MR. MARIL: Well, I got those in exchanges. But the interesting thing was how I got started.

MR. BECKER: Tell me about that.

MR. MARIL: In the early 20s, the Weyhe Gallery, under the direction of Carl Zigrosser in New York City, I used to handle some little water-colors, drawings, and I would pay period visits to them, because I enjoyed talking with Mr. Zigrosser. And one day I came there, and I see them unpacking objects, crates, a lot of straw around it. So, I said, "I will pitch in, and help you." And so, I was cleaning one object, taking the straw in, and noticed a beautiful, wooden, sort of a strange piece of sculpture. I was fascinated by it. I cleaned the mud off of it. I think it just arrived from Africa as it was shipped. And I really, am very much taken, forms, the basic forms of some of those structures, as a piece of sculpture. Interestingly, I asked Mr. Zigrosser about it. He said, "it is an African sculpture just arrived, and we are going to have an exhibit from a famous collector's collection." And I said, "gee, I would love to own one." He says, "we can make it possible, I can make it possible for you." So, I made a deal with him. He kept a little watercolor for the gallery for half of it. The other half, I paid five dollars a month for about a year. The end of the year, I was, the piece of sculpture arrived. I still have it, it is a beautiful piece, it is a fetish. And I studied it, and I really got a lot out of it, I really got a lot out of it. I saw the importance of this type of basic approach to problems of sculptural form, and the magnificence of its simplicity. The slight use of decorative factors, everything just melded together. And I looked into the thing a little more, and studied it a little more and became more interested in other sculpture, which I still acquired by various ways and means. And for me, I think it has affected a lot of the painters of that period. You notice Picasso. A lot of Picasso's paintings of the early 20s were influenced by his experience with African sculpture.

MR. BECKER: In summing up, how do you feel about your situation in the art world today?

MR. MARIL: Well, I feel somewhat alone. I am somewhat in the middle, between the naturalistic paintings, and more highly figurative paintings on one side, and the purely non-figurative paintings on the other side. And it is a unique situation for me. I don't mind it, because I am more, or less have been somewhat of a loner, and I believe in what I am doing, and this is the road that I probably will follow, as far as I know.

MR. BECKER: So, you don't feel uncomfortable with your position?

MR. MARIL: No, I am living a rich life, painting. And I hope, as time goes on, my paintings will increase in richness, and profundity.

MR. BECKER: Well, I hope so too. Thank you for the interview, and thank you for your time today.

MR. MARIL: Ronnie, I enjoyed talking with you, and it has been a good experience for me. I hope that what I said doesn't sound too oversimplified, but in an interview, you have to expect that, I guess, once in awhile.

MR. BECKER: Okay, thank you again.

MR. MARIL: All right.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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