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Oral history interview with Caroline Goldsmith, 2004 June 10-21

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Caroline Goldsmith on June 10, 14, and 21, 2004. The interview took place in New York City, New York, and was conducted by Eleanor Munro for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview was funded by ArtTable, Inc.

John Goldsmith and Eleanor Munro have reviewed the transcript and have made substantial corrections and emendations. The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

[First session, June 10, 2004, Caroline Goldsmith, Eleanor Munro, Heather Ruth from ArtTable, and Joan Lord from the Archives of American Art]

ELEANOR MUNRO: [In progress] Caroline, why don't you tell me a little bit about your early childhood? Where were you born and when, if you want to give away that vital secret?

CAROLINE GOLDSMITH: I was born in 1925. I'm 78 years old. I was born in Harlem. Not in a brownstone, in a hospital. But my father was a doctor and he bought a brownstone in Harlem to house his family.

MS. MUNRO: That was a good economic move at the time, wasn't it?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Yes, but it was not good for my mother.

MS. MUNRO: Why, because she had to run up and down?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Because on the top floor were her in-laws – my father's parents who did not speak English. They only spoke Yiddish.

MS. MUNRO: And so she had to go up there to –

MS. GOLDSMITH: And she spoke German, so she could converse with them but she really didn't want to.

MS. MUNRO: It's a very American story – an immigrant family moving in.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Right, exactly, exactly. My grandfather on that side was a tailor.

MS. MUNRO: From where, Caroline? From Germany?

MS. GOLDSMITH: The name is Steinholz.

MS. MUNRO: Good.

MS. GOLDSMITH: It's somewhere in Germany. On the border of Poland or Russia or whatever.

MS. MUNRO: Part of the great immigration –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Exactly.

MS. MUNRO: – experience of America at that time.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And my father housed his eldest sister who was married and had two children on the next floor and my mother and he on the next floor and his office – he was a pediatrician. His office was on the ground floor. But after a year there my mother said, I want to get out of immigration. My mother was born in Denver, Colorado – reformed Jew. My father was born on the Lower East Side, an Orthodox Jew.

MS. MUNRO: Where did they meet?

MS. GOLDSMITH: My mother came with her college roommate to New York to look for a job and find a husband.

MS. MUNRO: What I love is the determined organizational way these forbearers thought exactly the way Caroline would live her life.

MS. GOLDSMITH: [Laughs.] And somehow my mother and her roommate were put in touch with a woman – a

wife of a doctor – who had parties every week to introduce young single doctors to young single Jewish girls – I think Jewish. I'm not sure. And each of them, my mom and her roommate, met their husbands there.

MS. MUNRO: Wonderful. The community supporting the people.

MS. GOLDSMITH: She married a doctor and they lived in Texas and my mother married my father who lived on the Lower East Side in New York. And after a year in the Harlem house we moved to 91st Street and West End Avenue when I was one year old. So I have lived on West End Avenue, outside of 21 years in my first marriage, on West End Avenue.

MS. MUNRO: And where did you go to school, Caroline?

MS. GOLDSMITH: I went to PS-9 on West End Avenue and 81st Street. I went to Hunter High for two weeks and was miserable so I went to – [inaudible] – Country School which I'm sure you have never heard of. And then I went to Cornell.

MS. MUNRO: And majored in –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Architecture my first year – I wanted to be an architect and the following years in art history and studio painting.

MS. MUNRO: What happened to the architecture idea?

MS. GOLDSMITH: I passed descriptive geometry. Did you ever hear of descriptive geometry? I never had. Only boys had heard of it.

MS. MUNRO: That was so much the rule.

MS. GOLDSMITH: We learned plain geometry in high school but boys learned not only plain but descriptive and it's an engineering skill and engineering was not my strength. Design, architecture was what I was interested in.

MS. MUNRO: What you wanted to do.

MS. GOLDSMITH: So I switched out of architecture into fine arts. And I – the only thing I ever wanted to do was work in the arts.

MS. MUNRO: Why? Was your house full of works of art when you were little?

MS. GOLDSMITH: No.

MS. MUNRO: Where did you get the idea of it?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, when I was – my favorite story.

MS. MUNRO: Yes.

MS. GOLDSMITH: When I was three I drew a bunch of grapes on the bedroom wall and instead of my mother screaming and washing it off she said to my father, "She has talent." [Laughs.]

MS. MUNRO: And there you were.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And I went to art school at seven.

MS. MUNRO: Where did you go to art school?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Art Students' League.

MS. MUNRO: At seven?

MS. GOLDSMITH: And Parsons. Parsons at seven. It was on West End – on Broadway and 81st street, Parsons was. And then the Art Students' League and then Cornell. And I have painted from the time I was seven until I was a graduate from college. I never painted again. I have no interest in making art but I'm working with the arts and one of my clients at one time or another in the future led me to spend a day with Sir Kenneth Clark.

MS. MUNRO: When you were at Ruder Finn.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And I asked him if he had ever painted and he said, "Oh, my dear, Caroline, I was the best. I won all the prizes." But he said really the same thing that I just said. "I don't need to make art in order to be

happy and to be professional in the visual arts."

MS. MUNRO: He was a historian.

MS GOLDSMITH: He was a historian, yes, and a – writer. So that's my story – Sir Kenneth Clark and me. [Laughs.] But I was not raised to work. You two were. [Indicating Heather Ruth and Joan Lord]

MS. MUNRO: What were you raised to do, to be?

MS. GOLDSMITH: To be a good housewife, a mother – a good mother – and to do charitable work.

MS. MUNRO: Charity work, yes.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And that's what I did.

MS. MUNRO: Lady Bountiful.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Lady Bountiful. That's what all my mother's friends did. My mother was active in musical organizations and Jewish organizations. I was active in the League of Women Voters.

MS. MUNRO: You became very politically active very early.

MS. GOLDSMITH: The League of Women Voters really led me to politics. We had never trained to be a citizen – big mistake in my high school education that nobody, as far as I know in my years, was trained to be a citizen, to vote. I had no idea why voting is so important. The League of Women Voters taught me that.

MS. MUNRO: That's interesting. How did you find them in New York?

MS. GOLDSMITH: I lived in a housing development that was built right after the Second World War Two of them – Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village on the Lower East Side and they were built because everybody had come back from war, getting married, having kids, and there were no apartments. And apartments in these two projects were limited to World War II veterans and United Nations employees.

MS. MUNRO: You probably heard people talking politics because everybody was just out of the war.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Right and it was interesting was to be with the U.N. people as well. So I lived there for 21 years and became very active in the community, politically and charity-wise.

MS. MUNRO: You mean going around to various apartments and talking to the –

MS. GOLDSMITH: I joined the local Democratic organization. I ran for state – not state assembly, state –

MS. MUNRO: Congressional something.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And I was a speaker at political functions and I learned from speaking for the League of Women Voters.

MS. MUNRO: You learned the power of organization to achieve a social goal.

MS. GOLDSMITH: My first experience, actually, and I met Helene Kaplan who was a member of the League of Women Voters. Helene was the president of the local chapter of the League of Women Voters and I succeeded her as president and we became very good friends and started my first art organization.

MS. MUNRO: Your first thing, yes.

MS. GOLDSMITH: We had an idea of taking people on art tours of New York museums and galleries.

MS. MUNRO: You must have done a lot of gallery-going yourself before then to think that –

MS. GOLDSMITH: No, I think more after.

MS. MUNRO: Really? But what an ingenious idea to cook up.

MS. GOLDSMITH: It was so much fun. Nobody made – did art tours before and nobody really knew, and you will see that in my video if you get to see it at all, that no one really knew that the art world center had been moved from Paris to New York.

MS. MUNRO: Well, it moved actually throughout the '40s and '50s –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Right, right.

MS. MUNRO: But it was a crack in the art world at the beginning of the ‘60s. You got to New York in ‘60 or something like that?

MS. GOLDSMITH: We started Gallery Passport in 1960.

MS. MUNRO: In 1960. That was the hinge between the great days of the European influenced abstract expressionist, surrealist movement in New York and the fully Americanized pop art movement which was coming. That is when you moved in, when there was a –

MS. GOLDSMITH: But galleries were not so notable then. There *were* galleries. A lot of them.

MS. MUNRO: [Leo] Castelli was one.

MS. GOLDSMITH: – had a townhouse on East 77th Street. His name wasn’t outside. Nobody knew that he was there, and he found Jasper Johns and Roy Lichtenstein and who else? Anyway, the manager – the director of Leo Castelli was Ivan Karp. And he was one of our first lecturers. Helene and I interviewed many men and women in the art world.

MS. MUNRO: Describe the whole plan, how you were going to do it. You were going to set up tours –

MS. GOLDSMITH: How we did it was to get lecturers to talk about the galleries and museums in New York, in situ, to our customers who were mostly New York and suburban mothers. Nobody worked in my era.

And we put a notice on the bulletin board of the Institute of Fine Arts of NYU looking for lecturers and we had lots of replies from really wonderful people. They were wonderful then but nobody knew them and now everybody – well, a lot of people know them. Wanda Corn, who is the head of the Stanford Museum in California, Carol Krinsky, Isabella Hyman, professors at NYU.

Ivan Karp, Donald Judd because Ivan said, Donald Judd is a starving artist, he needs the money, please hire him. And we did but he was not very good. But we worked with him.

MS. MUNRO: How did you get the customers to come in from Scarsdale and Westchester and so on – women who had no– particular interest in the art world before you –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Instinct. Instinct PR.

MS. MUNRO: Fabulous.

MS. GOLDSMITH: We sent out a press release. Newspapers and everybody wrote us up. Every magazine, every newspaper.

MS. MUNRO: Because it was a new idea –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Exactly.

MS. MUNRO: Women getting women to come and participate in the culture.

MS. GOLDSMITH: But not only women. Not only women.

MS. MUNRO: Were there many men who came in?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Enough. I mean, the Barnes Foundation tour, which was a big seller – which was out of town, or that we added later on, had men as well as women. Ruth Bowman, who is a member of ArtTable was one of the star lecturers. Well, that’s enough.

The other important one was Sam Sachs, who was a graduate student at the IFA at the time and he applied for the job and he just six months ago resigned from the Frick – as director of the Frick. He was director of the Detroit Institute of Arts before that. Both of our husbands – Helene and I – both of our husbands were lawyers. So we had a contract drawn up for the lecturers and everybody signed it – $25 for two hours of homework and two hours of lecturing.

MS. MUNRO: $25 fee to the lecturer.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Yes. I went to an exhibition of Romare Bearden – at the Detroit Institute of Art when Sam was a director. I brought the contract – [laughs] – to remind him of how cheap he was.

MS. MUNRO: How long did the lecture last? You brought the women down by train or bus. And then they met – you met in a gallery.

MS. GOLDSMITH: In a gallery, and we went to – The first idea was going to galleries and having lunch.

MS. MUNRO: And how many galleries would you go to before lunch? Two or three or –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Five or six.

MS. MUNRO: In the neighborhood.

MS. GOLDSMITH: In a neighborhood. The idea was in a neighborhood – 57th Street, Upper East Side. SoHo didn't exist then, Chelsea didn't exist then. And I still remember the restaurants because they were terribly important.

MS. MUNRO: And the women would – or the people would gather in one gallery and the speaker would come in and talk about the place of that art in the culture and what it meant and –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Yes. And that particular artist. And then he would join us for lunch and we would have a roundtable discussion and lunch. We charged more to our clients than –

MS. MUNRO: What did you charge? I think you should say –

MS. GOLDSMITH: I can't remember.

MS. MUNRO: Maybe $50 a trip or something?

MS. GOLDSMITH: I'm sure at least $35 for a two-hour lecture and lunch.

MS. MUNRO: Well, you were just getting started, you know.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And, as I say, you couldn't pick up a newspaper or magazine without reading about Helene and Caroline, two young mothers: she [Helene Kaplan] has two girls, she [Caroline] has two boys, both husbands are lawyers. Whenever we met at a bus on the out-of-town trips, everybody would say, who is it, Caroline or Helene? [Laughs.]

MS. MUNRO: How soon did you begin to schedule out-of-town trips like the Barnes Foundation?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Maybe after three years. We had a trip to Yale – art and architecture at Yale, trip to the Barnes Foundation, a trip to Winterthur. A trip up the Hudson to 17th, 18th, 19th century mansions. I guess we were real good at that, and we still are, Helene and I. [Laughs.]

And it came to pass that Helene had always wanted to go to law school and she said, "I'm going to go to law school."

We had put in an investment of $1000 – each $500.

MS. MUNRO: At the beginning.

MS. GOLDSMITH: At the beginning – for brochures, stationery, postage, mailing, telephone service –

And Helene said, "I'm leaving." So I bought her out for $500. [Laughs.] She didn't ask for anymore. [Laughs.]

She was my lawyer when I sold the business. When I went to Ruder Finn some years later, I sold the business for $10,000 – which was big money then.

MS. MUNRO: And now. Well, that was marvelous success and such an interesting, innovative idea. But it was brand new.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And museums, particularly the Brooklyn Museum, sent spies in the development office to see what we were doing.

MS. MUNRO: That's wonderful.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And Brooklyn was the first one who offered tours to members – art tours. Now, everybody does it.

MS. MUNRO: Everybody does tours.

MS. GOLDSMITH: So we innovated.

MS. MUNRO: The idea of having a public – a general public – take interest in avant garde art was new at that point.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Yes.

MS. MUNRO: There had been an art world but it had been very exclusive with its own patrons, but to bring in the Westchester ladies – plus a few men, was such a wonderful idea.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And they really dug Carol Krinsky and Isabella Hyman's lectures, and they loved Ivan Karp but they could not stand the art he was talking about.

MS. MUNRO: They didn't like the art. What did they say about it? This was in the '60s.

MS. GOLDSMITH: They said, you know, "We love Ivan but don't give him to us anymore." He's so entertaining but –

MS. MUNRO: But they didn't like the art.

MS. GOLDSMITH: They didn't like the art.

MS. MUNRO: It was minimalist art, very abstract, very austere, very anti-subject matter.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Betty Parsons had black paintings by –

MS. MUNRO: Ad Reinhardt.

MS. GOLDSMITH: – Ad Reinhardt. You walked into the gallery and all you could see were black paintings.

MS. MUNRO: If you looked hard you saw messages.

MS. GOLDSMITH: If you looked hard on the side of a painting you could see some color – some.

MS. MUNRO: And the ladies didn't like that.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Ladies –

MS. MUNRO: Didn't dig it.

MS. GOLDSMITH: That's right. None of them – some of them wouldn't still.

MS. MUNRO: No, but they – today, they would be picked up and flung forward by the whole culture. All their friends would be – I mean, it was that this was such an original and playful idea.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And I was very lucky to hear about Ruder Finn.

MS. MUNRO: How did you hear about them? It was a pretty new firm then, wasn't it?

MS. GOLDSMITH: It was founded in the early '50s.

MS. MUNRO: By David Finn?

MS. GOLDSMITH: David Finn and Bill Ruder and their idea was – their first idea was to name the company – the firm – Art and Business. To interest corporations in sponsoring art – the arts. That was innovative. Nobody could understand what they were talking about.

MS. MUNRO: Was it David Finn because he is a photographer of art? David Finn is a photographer of sculpture, principally.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Both of them were –

MS. MUNRO: Who was Ruder?

MS. GOLDSMITH: He was a college friend of David's who was interested in intellectual things and the arts but not to the depth that David was. David Finn was – is a painter and a sculptor and a –

MS. MUNRO: Photographer.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Photographer. But nobody could understand their idea. I mean, both business and the arts had no idea what they were talking about.

MS. MUNRO: This was in 19 –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Early ‘50s. And then Nina Kaiden, who was the first president of our department which is now called Ruder Finn Arts & Communications Council – she had the same idea. She worked for Tom Messer at the American Federation of Arts as a secretary. And Tom Messer didn’t know what she was talking about. But somehow she found out about David and Bill’s idea and she came to work for Ruder Finn and made it work.

MS. MUNRO: How did it proceed? Would somebody go to a burgeoning or budding business and say, “We can help you by enlisting certain artists to –”

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, the first – the first real client that I knew of, who was a big client, was Phillip Morris and that came about because George Weissman, the president of Phillip Morris, went to college with David and Bill – and he was in love with architecture. And they persuaded George Weissman and Phillip Morris to sponsor the arts, long before the controversy about cigarettes and tobacco. To sponsor exhibition projects.

[Summary from notes taken during interview: Caroline Goldsmith joined Ruder Finn in 1966. Philip Morris was her chief client; she was public relations for their sponsorship.

“Frontier America: The Far West” Ms. Goldsmith worked on this exhibition with Philip Morris. The curator was Jonathan Fairbanks, curator of American Decorative Arts at the Boston Museum of Fine Art.

“Fifteen New York Artists” organized by Nina Kaiden and Caroline Goldsmith with the client American Greetings, Cleveland Company. This was at the time the time of the Charter for the Studio Museum of Harlem. Carter Borden, Jacob Lawrence, Romare Bearden.
Nina had an idea for an exhibition on black artists, 1968 “Contemporary Black Artists” was the traveling name, but it was “15 New York Artists” while in the American Greetings New York space. Roger Mandel now president of Rhode Island School of Design, then Chief Curator of the Minneapolis Museum of Art happened to be in New York and wanted Caroline Goldsmith to expand the show to a traveling show, with Caroline Goldsmith as the curator. The title changed to “30 Contemporary Black Artists.” It traveled for a year or two. Caroline states it as a highlight of her career with Ruder Finn. Artists in the exhibition included Emma Amos, Jacob Lawrence, Richard Hunt, Romare Bearden, Benny Andrews (later became head of Arts division at the NEA), Mel Edwards and others. All papers regarding the exhibition went to the Studio Museum in Harlem. Slide collections were made and sold for lectures. It was an important exhibition for the visibility of the artists.

“Indian Art:” Nina Kaiden went to Jack Bauer at the Whitney Museum of American Art, sent him books to convince him to do the show, finally persuaded him to do the exhibition, this show became the second most visited show at the Whitney, 1971.]

[Audio break.]

MS. GOLDSMITH: The other really, really important exhibition that I created was Henry Moore.

MS. MUNRO: Tell about that.

MS. GOLDSMITH: We had a client – I got a client. This man from Wichita, Kansas was in real estate and oil – lots of money. And he fell in love with sculpture.

MS. MUNRO: What was his name?

MS. GOLDSMITH: George Ablah. A-B-L-A-H. And he bought some work from Marlborough gallery: 20 Boteros, 14 Francisco Zuniga, and 100 Henry Moores.

MS. MUNRO: What a man. What was he like, Ablah? Is he still alive?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Oh yes, I speak to him now and then.

MS. MUNRO: Short man? Tall man?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Yeah, short man – with polyester trousers, cowboy boots, and polyester shirts. He and his wife came to New York a lot and the salesmen at Marlborough told me about him. And George’s idea was to share his good fortune with the public in Central Park.

And David Finn and I went to see Henry –

MS. MUNRO: Henry Moore?

MS. GOLDSMITH: No, no. By the way, David Finn was an old friend of Henry Moore's. I really think Henry Moore was David's mentor.

MS. MUNRO: Really, that's very interesting because David Finn's photography – photographs of sculpture seem really to derive from Henry Moore. They're so concerned with volume and contour, physical contour.

MS. GOLDSMITH: That's right. David Finn and I went to see Henry Stern.

MS. MUNRO: Stern.

MS. GOLDSMITH: The commissioner of parks in New York.

MS. MUNRO: S-T-E-R-N, wasn't it?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Yes. And we posed this idea to him. And Henry said "I can't give you Central Park. That's sacrosanct." But, he said, "How about all the parks?"

MS. MUNRO: [Laughter.] The swashbuckling idea.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And including Central Park. We figured out seven parks in the five boroughs. And 25 monumental Henry Moores were in these five parks – five boroughs for a year. He was my favorite client. He was wonderful.

MS. MUNRO: Ablah?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Yes. He paid for everything. The traveling, the installation. Money was no object. He just was having the time of his life. And I was too. [Laughter.] And one last thing about – he paid for an insert in the *New York Times* with a brochure, a whole big brochure of all the Moores and description of them in the parks and a map and a plan.

MS. MUNRO: So people took it with them as they traveled. This wasn't at the time that the Henry Moore was put in front of Lincoln Center was it?

MS. GOLDSMITH: No, I think that was earlier.

MS. MUNRO: It must have been marvelous. Were there any kind of installation, celebration, or opening event, or Ablah on a horse up 5th Avenue?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, Henry Stern of course was at the –

MS. MUNRO: Inaugural –

MS. GOLDSMITH: - Inauguration. Ed Koch was the mayor then, was at the –

MS. MUNRO: Which park had the inaugural?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Central Park.

MS. MUNRO: Do you remember where in Central Park?

MS. GOLDSMITH: The pond.

MS. MUNRO: The pond. Was it a water piece, a piece?

MS. GOLDSMITH: There was a piece –

MS. MUNRO: In the water?

MS. GOLDSMITH: - in the water.

MS. MUNRO: There must be a lot of photographs of that. Did you meet Henry Moore?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Yes, I met him several times. Twice in England where he lived and several times in New York.

[Audio Break]

MS. MUNRO: Tell me how, in your view, the changing world has affected women who had high aspirations,

especially in the creative field.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I had no aspirations.

MS. MUNRO: Well, now, wait a minute. You can't say that. You came out of your family as a person with a sense of structure and organization, with enough energy and momentum to pick up on ideas and move ahead. So you did. Did you ever feel hampered by the fact that you were a woman, to put it stupidly?

MS. GOLDSMITH: No, I was an accidental executive. And an accidental success, and I only went to work – real work – because I needed to.

MS. MUNRO: When? When you were married and you started –

MS. GOLDSMITH: When I was being divorced. My parents supported me for 21 years. My first husband supported me for 21 years. I had no other means of support. Gallery Passport was fun money. It was not a living. But then when I needed to get divorced I needed to earn a living, I never had to before.

MS. MUNRO: And that's when you went to Ruder Finn.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Exactly, and I was lucky to have found Ruder Finn and now, I think they are lucky to have found me. [Laughs.] I have been there 32 years – 35 years, 35 years.

MS. MUNRO: And you have had a good time in your life. I know that because I have seen. You have hosts of friends. You traveled everywhere you wanted to travel.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Except Ireland. Except Ireland.

MS. MUNRO: Which of the arts has made most impact on your life?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, the visual arts. Second is architecture. I'm manic about architecture.

MS. MUNRO: What is it about architecture that excites you?

MS. GOLDSMITH: I just follow the architecture world and buildings, everything I can read about. And luckily, at Ruder Finn, we have wonderful clients – Frank Ghery, Jim Polshek – and Richard Meier. Those were not clients. But our client was the J. Paul Getty Trust, which is: Getty in California.

MS. MUNRO: What work did Ruder Finn do for Getty?

MS. GOLDSMITH: The lead-in to the new buildings and the opening of the city on top of the mountain. All the strategic planning and publicity.

MS. MUNRO: How a public relations firm engages with art world. I don't quite understand – the artist, him or herself, is really not very functional in publicity, public relations.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Our clients are of two kinds – corporate clients like American Express, Paine Webber and museums like the J. Paul Getty Trust.

MS. MUNRO: And what will the museum expect or want you to do?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Publicity, or strategic planning first and then publicity. And strategic planning is planning in advance – well in advance – the public relations steps that we recommend taking.

MS. MUNRO: Did Ruder Finn do public relations planning, strategic planning for ArtTable, for example?

MS. GOLDSMITH: No. I mean, ArtTable is a standalone, not for profit, volunteer organization.

MS. MUNRO: What kind of planning did Ruder Finn do for the Getty, for example?

MS. GOLDSMITH: The Getty had a lot of serious problems because they were being talked about as this remote, unattainable building on that top of the mountains. And that's not for the public, that's for the inside public. So we had a lot of problems – to counter that. But the head of our department could answer your question much better than I. Of course, I wasn't in on this. We worked for the Miho Museum. Do you know about that?

MS. MUNRO: No.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Which is an hour outside of Tokyo, designed by I.M. Pei. The PBS program is called *The Museum in the Mountain*, Pei uncovered this mountain, designed and built the museum inside the mountain and

put the mountain back on top. It's so beautiful. So wonderful. A museum of antiquities that are priceless. Greek, Roman, Turkish, Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian – Fabulous, fabulous things. So that was a client we started from scratch, way ahead.

MS. MUNRO: Did you work on that project – on that program?

MS. GOLDSMITH: No, no.

[Break – Ellie wants to move the next section to an early portion of the interview]

MS. MUNRO: Talk about your family a little bit if you want to, Caroline. How was your family supportive or not supportive?

MS. GOLDSMITH: I think I wanted to be a doctor, but I wanted to be a medical illustrator. And my father said, "If you go to medical school, you will never practice and meanwhile, you will do a young man out a place in medical school." That's my generation.

MS. MUNRO: Whereas medical illustration is a marvelous skill. Joyce Cutler Shaw in California is –

MS. GOLDSMITH: I read all of my father's medical magazines in the bathroom at home and they had one illustrator who was my hero – illustrations of arteries and bones – and I painted landscapes. But, I was not good enough. Kenneth Clark was good enough but I wasn't. I was not good enough.

And my mother was a pianist.

MS. MUNRO: A professional pianist?

MS. GOLDSMITH: No, a piano teacher in her young years before she got married, and a wonderful pianist. And my parents went to concerts at least once a week and I went to Carnegie Hall every Sunday. My younger sister [Eleanor Keats]. She died a few months ago [2004]. So I have always been in the visual arts and she has always been in music.

MS. MUNRO: And how about being married for a career woman in our era? Has it been a trial? Has it been a help? Has it been necessary?

MS. GOLDSMITH: I grew up with the idea that my mother didn't want an old maid. That was her goal for me – to get married and do good works, and I did whatever I was told. And my first husband [Mortimer Lerner] was brilliant and crazy.

MS. MUNRO: What was his profession?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Lawyer. And four years after I divorced him I married John Goldsmith. 32 years and I'm very lucky. I'm very lucky in my life to have met Helen Kaplan, to have met David Finn and to have met John Goldsmith.

MS. MUNRO: Well, those are three wonderful mentors, though, not exactly because you and Helene were more peers. And I think with David Finn, was a peer, too.

[End of section Ellie wants to move closer to the beginning]

MS. MUNRO: I think it's important to say how the change in the social structure has either allowed, or inhibited, or empowered women. There's no question that women have come forth in a flood into all the professions. But in the art world women are flooding into leadership roles, not as artists, but as exactly what you represented.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, in the first years of ArtTable, we had a program to which we had invited all the women museum directors around the country. Most of them didn't come but eight came. But there weren't very many more than eight at that time. Now there are about probably 30.

MS. MUNRO: And the membership at ArtTable is enormously enlarged. And think of almost any other field. Music criticism, or architecture, or medicine, medicine, for example, medical illustration. You would've been in the mainstream.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I still resent the fact the Pritzker Award [Pritzker Architecture Prize] was given only to Louis Khan – Not – Louis Khan. To an architect who practiced with his wife. And the Pritzker Award for only given to him and – And not to his wife?

And the Pritzker Award has been around 15 years, about 15 years. Until this year, they've never had a woman –

Zaha Hadid.

MS. MUNRO: These things are coming very slowly. The power still is with the men. The power in all the organizations. The power resides with the men but women are coming up fast. I think in 50 years it's going to be radically different, if there isn't a war.

I want to ask you to think about and talk a little bit about the difference in the political world and the social world that the presence of women across the board in organizations can inspire, because it was you who said that women have a slightly different view of relationships, power relationships, what power means, and so on. I think that's important to begin to talk about. We're living in this militarized period.

MS. GOLDSMITH: An organization that I've been active in without even realizing it is the Women's Forum. Women's Forum is like ArtTable but the board represents in every profession – law, scientists –

MS. MUNRO: Medicine.

MS. GOLDSMITH: – bankers – doctors – very few people in the arts, just a few – Wendy Wasserstein is a member. And maybe one more and me. And Carol Fuerman.
Then there is an organization called Catalyst, the purpose of which is to get women on corporate boards.

MS. MUNRO: Are you a member of that?

MS. GOLDSMITH: No. I'm not a member of any corporate board. Helene Kaplan is the member of several, really. She is the only female member of Exxon Mobil, one of three female members of the Getty Trust. The Carnegie Corporation – the May Company.

MS. MUNRO: Well, law is certainly an entrée into power structures.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And she is very well-known in the philanthropic world. To be a board member of a Fortune 500 company is really quite astonishing and she's a member of a dozen.

MS. MUNRO: What does it take for a woman to measure up in that competitive world?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, contacts.

MS. MUNRO: Contacts? Very interesting.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Contacts and high intelligence and charm.

MS. MUNRO: Humility? [Laughter.] No, not really.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, Helene is not arrogant. I know a lot of women who are arrogant.

[Break in tape.]

[Second session, June 14, 2004, Caroline Goldsmith, Eleanor Munro and Heather Ruth]

MS. MUNRO: Why do you think it was important, effective, significant, historically, to have a women's organization in the art world at that point?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, because – the glass ceiling, of course.

When Lila – it was Lila's idea. And we joined in, five of us. We all knew about the old boys' club. So we founded an all the girls' club.

MS. MUNRO: Now this was what was the year again?

MS. GOLDSMITH: 1979. So we tried out the idea. First of all, five of us met for lunch.

MS. MUNRO: Who were those five? Can you remember?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Maybe. Lila Harnett and Clementine Brown from the MFA in Boston. Carol Morgan, who was then the PR person for the Craft Museum [now the Museum of Arts & Design]. She's now the PR director of Abrams. And I think Mimi Poser who was the PR director of the Guggenheim. And we had lunch. It was a social occasion. And Liz Robbins, she was then the PR director for Sotheby's.

MS. MUNRO: This was January, 1979.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Lila was at that time the art critic of *Cue* magazine. And *Cue* magazine is now the back of *New York* magazine.

Lila Harnett has the idea. She invited Clementine from Boston and Clementine invited the rest of us.

MS. MUNRO: I see. And where'd you go?

MS. GOLDSMITH: I don't remember. In fact, I wasn't there.

MS. MUNRO: You weren't there! How'd that happen?

MS. GOLDSMITH: In my notes to myself – that begin my typed file: On February 28th, a month later, or two months later, 1979, eight of us got together at Pang's Chinese Restaurant. It was in the 40s, on the East Side.

MS. MUNRO: Eight of you at that point?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Now eight of us. Finally, I was there. Liz Robbins, Lowry Stokes Sims, who is now the director of the Studio Museum in Harlem. Holly Solomon, well-known gallerist – well-known already. Now dead. Carol Morgan. And Joyce Pomeroy Schwartz, who then worked for Arne Glimcher at Pace Gallery. And she is now a consultant for – Public Sculptures.

Then go ahead ten years because Mimi and I wrote the history of ArtTable, including these two nuggets about lunch and the Chinese dinner for the 10th anniversary of ArtTable.

We had a big brochure.

MS. MUNRO: What was the conceptual development between January and February? You decided to go ahead and –

MS. GOLDSMITH: We decided to get together at a breakfast and talk about the idea and how we could implement it.

MS. MUNRO: This was the third meeting then of the group?

MS. GOLDSMITH: This was a more formal.

MS. MUNRO: Right, and where was that? Do you remember?

MS. GOLDSMITH: No.

MS. MUNRO: Somewhere.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Because we decided to invite people to a big dinner. Sixty-five people came. And we chose the invitees from our ideas for members. And Barbara Haskell, who was the chief curator of the Whitney Museum now – and the wife of Leon Botstein – was the membership chairman. And she and I put together a list of 100 New York women who were important enough – to join an organization like ArtTable. And we had – at this dinner we had a questionnaire for everybody and the whole group decided the idea was a wonderful one – an old girls' club in the visual arts.

MS. MUNRO: In the directed, organizational side of the visual arts.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Right.

MS. MUNRO: We're not including artists at that point.

MS. GOLDSMITH: We never included artists, not even from the beginning. And there are still some question or questions from the public and from members about why artists are not included. And it's very simple. Artists have their own organizations. In fact, the Women's Caucus for Art – is a big, specific one.

MS. MUNRO: And writers have their own.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And writers and musicians and architects. We're excluding architects as well as artists.

MS. MUNRO: And that was correct, conceptually, correct?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Yes. And then we decided on a modus operandi, who should get the invitations, actually joining, what should be the fee to join, I can't remember, and we had an organizing committee. And the organizing committee – excuse me. Since we're doing history – Pang's dinner had eight people. This is all 1979.

Then we had dinner at Hungarian restaurant.

MS. MUNRO: Hungarian? What is that? You were having a lot of dinners in those days.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And we were eleven. And then June 11th, six months after the first, our luncheon for five, Joyce Schwartz invited 18 to her house.

Well, 18 people came. And the next meeting was in the fall, September 18th, 1979 at Holly Solomon's and 23 women came. And in November at Lila Harnette's 33 people came. And it was really amazing because each meeting was larger, more enthusiastic.

MS. MUNRO: And was there political talk or talk about strategy or goals, strategic goals? I mean, specifically, to move into the directorship of museums? To take on galleries?

MS. GOLDSMITH: That would have been very interesting, but there weren't. There was nothing strategic, just artful, emotional, maybe I'm remembering incorrectly, but I don't really think so. Then we formed an organizing committee. And there were 10 to 12 of us. I was among them and most everybody that I mentioned, including Alexandra Anderson, Sandra Rouge, Elizabeth Shaw – Ingrid Sischy. Those people were added to the ones that I mentioned in the first few minutes of this session. And in 1980 and '81, this organizing committee met many times to, as I think I said before, to strategize.

MS. MUNRO: Strategize. So you had to turn to a legal advisor?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, we didn't start with that. We did eventually go to Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts and have them draw us up a contract, or whatever it's called. A non-profit, 501c3, whatever.

MS. MUNRO: Were there women on that group of lawyers or –

MS. GOLDSMITH: The head of the Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts at that time was a woman.

MS. MUNRO: Who was that, remember?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Arlene Schuler, possibly. S-C-H-U-L-E-R. That's my memory.

MS. MUNRO: So then you sent out, presumably, invitations or announcements?

MS. GOLDSMITH: And an invoice for a fee, whatever it was. And then we started programs.

MS. MUNRO: That was the first organizational step? Well, people sent in membership applications and paid a fee. What was the fee?

MS. GOLDSMITH: I have no idea – no memory of it. It could have been $25? That seems appropriate for the time. Maybe 50 [dollars], no more. Now it's only $125, which is very little. All of this I have in files. ArtTable has the files in New Jersey.

MS. MUNRO: Oh well if it all exists then let's talk more about your own personal feeling of excitement or interest or.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Oh, very important. I found myself volunteering to head this organization.

MS. MUNRO: Oh really? How did you do that?

MS. GOLDSMITH: I can't remember. I took notes. I'm the one who only has these notes about where we had dinner and things and I organized.

MS. MUNRO: You are.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And I enjoyed it.

MS. MUNRO: You enjoy the organizational process.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And the organization, as I say, really took off. And eventually – I don't – I have to compress the time. Eventually, we went to California – and started ArtTable West.

MS. MUNRO: Who's "we"?

MS. GOLDSMITH: The board at that time – me and the board.

MS. MUNRO: How many people – a big board or small board or?

MS. GOLDSMITH: There were never more than a dozen or so on the board. Less than 20 on the board. We had identified from the beginning some women, important women in California.

MS. MUNRO: Right. Who would they have been?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Ruth Bowman, Jean Collins, who was the PR Director of San Francisco MoMA, and many others. ArtTable West really never worked and I found this absolutely fascinating.

MS. MUNRO: Why?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Because L.A. doesn't like San Francisco and San Francisco doesn't like L.A. and each group of women told us at the time, we go to New York more than we go to each other's cities. So we broke it up into northern California and southern California.

MS. MUNRO: And then did it work that way?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Perfectly.

MS. MUNRO: An organizational breakthrough. [Laughter.]

MS. GOLDSMITH: And eventually Washington D.C. became really a good, working chapter. So we have had for a number of years four really fine looking chapters. And you started with the idea of 100 women in New York City and we are now at the point of 1300 members around the country.

We did try to get members in Paris. We had a trip to Paris and we held a party for all the important gallerists and curators in Paris to interest them in the idea. The French didn't get it. They didn't get it. And only two or three Americans in Switzerland and Paris – Americans joined in actuality.

Then we went to London and tried the same thing. It worked a little better, but not much, and we don't have chapters in Paris or London. But three overseas trips minimum.

MS. MUNRO: They would have been in the 80s?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Paris, London, Berlin.

MS. MUNRO: But that wasn't a strategic, organizational trip.

MS. GOLDSMITH: No, it was just an ArtTable trip. October 1993 we went to Paris. London was probably 1998. And Berlin was 2002. And we continued with some overseas trips but we began with American trips, to Florida, Chicago. Those were always connected with an art event. And in each case we went to the art event, you know, Art Chicago, for instance, every Mother's Day we went two or three times, two or three years in a row. And we also went in these cities of Miami and Chicago to collector's homes.

MS. RUTH: Why did you choose the name ArtTable?

MS. GOLDSMITH: It goes back to a Ruder Finn client, which at the time was Time, Incorporated. And the person at Time with whom we were working was Zacharias Morfogen, in the book department at Time, Inc. He was my client contact with an exhibition called *The Search for Alexander*, which Time, Incorporated sponsored. He and I were flying to Athens on this project and he, along with David Finn, my boss at Ruder Finn, belonged to an organization, which they formed 20 years ago called BookTable. They were 15 and 20 men probably, only, in the publishing business. And when I said to Zach – I told him about ArtTable and its idea and I said we're looking for a name. He said "How about ArtTable?" And that was it.

MS. MUNRO: Zach said that. That's great. Nobody had to be –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Practically nobody asks that. And a lot of people don't like it. I don't care one way or the other.

MS. MUNRO: No, it works. And it's a sort of vivid tactile image, you know? Here we are at the table, you know?

MS. GOLDSMITH: And our first, our first logo.

MS. MUNRO: Very good, a table.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And our recent logo is much, much like it, 25 years later.

MS. MUNRO: Did you ever meet with the people from BookTable and tell them you –

MS. GOLDSMITH: No, no.

MS. MUNRO: Would have been fun. I wonder if it still exists.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Oh yes, oh it does. BookTable does. I've been meaning to ask David Finn for a list of the names of the people who had –

MS. MUNRO: Oh that would be good.

MS. GOLDSMITH: It's on my to-do list.

MS. MUNRO: Are you still in touch with David Finn? You see him a lot?

MS. GOLDSMITH: – I see him every day I'm in the office. I mostly work with David –

MS. MUNRO: On projects.

MS. GOLDSMITH: – on projects. But mostly on the artwork on the walls of Ruder Finn.

MS. MUNRO: You mean on possible purchases?

MS. GOLDSMITH: No.

MS. MUNRO: His photographs?

MS. GOLDSMITH: His photographs, his paintings, his watercolors, his sculptures.

MS. MUNRO: He's a fine photographer of sculpture – there's no question.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Eighty-five books. In 85 books.

MS. MUNRO: He's done?

MS. GOLDSMITH: He's done photography of sculpture from antiquities to the present day. But the texts weren't written by a scholar. He's a remarkable man. I'm very lucky to have been working for him for 35 years.

So where are we in ArtTable story?

MS. MUNRO: You've put the organization together more or less and –

MS. GOLDSMITH: More or less. I think I should give you a paragraph on what ArtTable is. "ArtTable is a not for profit national organization of professional women of achievement in the visual arts."

MS. MUNRO: One of the interesting things ArtTable has begun is to reach out to young, upcoming people by starting a program – what's it called?

MS. RUTH: The National Leadership Alliance.

MS. GOLDSMITH: The purpose – "is to provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge and ideas. And its members are museum directors, museum and corporate public relations people, art professionals, art critics, art consultants, curators, educators, art gallery owners" – I just said that, I think – "and federal, state and city appointees in the arts like the New York State Council on the Arts and the Commission of Cultural Affairs in New York," and so forth.

MS. MUNRO: What is an art professional, apart from all these other categories?

MS. GOLDSMITH: And at one point, my organizational instincts had me break down how many publicists, how many gallerists, how many curators, how many government people and so forth.

Now, it's 25 years and I was in on the beginning which was 27 years ago, actually, when we first had the – had lunch – [laughs] – and the Chinese dinner. And I remember a lot, but not everything.

MS. MUNRO: Well, what stands out in your memory about these early meetings – the sense of momentum? The sense of –

MS. GOLDSMITH: The creativity of the programming. I still remember several things. One in particular, which is relevant to some of the issues that you have raised – we invited – I think I said this last week – we invited every woman museum director.

MS. MUNRO: Right. There were only about eight, you said.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Right, and now there are probably 30.

MS. MUNRO: Right. It's an enormous increasing power in the art world.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And the – what you just said about the new leadership in our alliance, we have reached out in advocacy, bringing the younger women up to the status that we are.

MS. MUNRO: That's right.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And we are doing good. It was very self-serving to begin with and –

MS. MUNRO: All those groups are.

MS. GOLDSMITH: – we were – we didn't make excuses for ourselves, we were having fun. And the networking was not only sociable and informational but agreeable, and it led to many real business contacts among the women.

One I remember very distinctly in the early years – we had a member who was the head of museum stores and she and another member – Her idea was when they were moving their offices to have a bookshop which sold urban planning and architecture books.

MS. MUNRO: That's now in the – in that Helmsley Palace.

MS. GOLDSMITH: That began at an ArtTable conversation.

MS. MUNRO: Really? So, bit by bit, you are bringing architecture in through the – through the –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well that is one of my passions.

MS. MUNRO: I know it is.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I'm trying to remember who started the bookshop at the Helmsley Palace.

MS. MUNRO: So the member who was head of museum bookstores – was the catalyst?

MS. GOLDSMITH: The catalyst. And we had a lot of members who were involved with touring exhibitions – the AFA, the ICI and –

MS. MUNRO: Right.

MS. GOLDSMITH: – and that was an opportunity to put together exhibitions or to find outlets for exhibitions.

MS. MUNRO: And so they would network with people who were in museum jobs and so on –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Yes, yes.

MS. MUNRO: And slowly expand their own reach.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Exactly. I don't know how many people used this outlet for contacts and networking, but you can go to any city and look up in the roster of the ArtTable names who lives in that city in ArtTable and contact them in advance and go to meet them, whether for business reasons or social reasons.

MS. MUNRO: Social. A couch to sleep on. [Laughs.]

MS. GOLDSMITH: [Laughs.] That is interesting because we have been trying to get people to loan their homes for ArtTable members who are traveling and can't afford $300 a night.

MS. MUNRO: Great idea. And what has been the response? Not so –

MS. GOLDSMITH: A little bit. Not much, but a little.

MS. MUNRO: Anyway, so how about these young people? Do you notice any difference or do the people at ArtTable notice any different attitude or ambition or sense of energy of the young people? Are they as interested in the networking possibility.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I don't know. It's interesting, I was the executive director for the first 14 years of ArtTable. And

when I retired or I left – whatever it was – there were about 500 members around the country, and I knew at least 450 of them –- And now I go to a meeting and I know maybe half or fewer.

MS. MUNRO: That's right. That's life.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Aging is something we all have to live with.

MS. MUNRO: People who don't even know who you are –

MS. GOLDSMITH: [Laughs.]

MS. MUNRO: Don't even remember –

[Audio break.]

MS. MUNRO: Well, you have seen a lot and from your contemporary ArtTable connections, do you get any sense of the difference? The dealers [in Williamsburg] are young people without any apparent worldly power, self-presentation, casual young people –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Do they present themselves well, or at all?

MS. MURO: If I were asked, I would say they presented themselves well but without enough forethought about how to present the idea. It's ideas that are lacking today because there is so much proliferation of visual imagery. There is very little conceptual power in each person's understanding of what his or her job is, I think.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I think ArtTable has really grown in ideas –

MS. MUNRO: Yes. Think of one example of that, Caroline. What about the program committee? What kind of programs are you particularly proud of or interested in? I mean these trips are just wonderful, I think. These walking tours are great.

MS. GOLDSMITH: The idea of going with the curator of a major exhibition at the Met or at the Whitney or the Guggenheim. At the very beginning of an exhibition, timing is always quite wonderful.

The – not only the information that you get, but the insight in advance. Some of the panel discussions – I think we call them public programs now on very pertinent subjects, have been absolutely fascinating.

For example, last month. Kinshasha Conwill moderated a panel of four women museum directors, building new buildings.

MS. RUTH: It was called "New Spaces, New Challenges." Kinshasha Holman Conwill mediated, and Vishaka Desai from the Asia Society spoke, Holly Hotchner from the Museum of Arts and Design spoke. Cary Ceruti from the Sculpture Center spoke, and – Mary Ceruti from the Sculpture Center and Lisa Phillips from the New Museum.

MS. MUNRO: And what was the thrust of it all?

MS. RUTH: It was about moving into a new spaces or renovating old spaces and what one has to do to make that happen and make it happen well and – they've dealt with their own controversies, working with the – architects, under the selection process, and everything involved in that.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And government entities. Terribly important.

Holly Hotchner, for instance, is trying to open the old Huntington Hartford [Gallery of Contemporary Art] museum on Columbus Circle. It's not a done deal yet.

MS. MUNRO: So where is the art world going, as you see it? I mean, where is the culture moving – not the art world, because it's proliferating so wildly.

MS. GOLDSMITH: [Laughs.] Where is the art world going?

MS. MUNRO: I mean, the number of artists is expanding wildly.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I would suppose you could say, nobody much cares except the auction houses and collectors and gallerists. It's money, money, money.

MS. MUNRO: Yes, it is.

MS. GOLDSMITH: But I don't know that it was not ever so. Money is not the root of all evil. Money is what makes

the world go round. And do you think Alfred Stieglitz, who was more open and idea-oriented –

MS. MUNRO: And women are being lifted into positions because no big organization dares make a move without including women today, I think.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I don't think that's true.

MS. MUNRO: You don't?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Boards – corporate boards are still very male.

MS. MUNRO: Maybe ArtTable ought to take on some of those issues on behalf of women. You could have programs for example on the constitution of boards.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Many financial and women's organizations have that already. The Catalysts I mentioned – their goal is to get women on boards.

I think women are approaching equality with men because I think men now realize that women are equal mentally.

MS. MUNRO: Perhaps with a different –

MS. GOLDSMITH: More organized, more self-sufficient, more rounded.

MS. MUNRO: So would you say that ArtTable has played a role in that?

MS. GOLDSMITH: No.

MS. MUNRO: It's just a function of this – slowly emerging picture of women in the 21st century, coming into their own.

MS. GOLDSMITH: It's happening slowly, but it's happening, but not as speedily as some would like. I personally never had any trouble being a woman because I was never ambitious. I didn't need to – I didn't, at first, didn't need to work, and then I entered a field – one, the arts, and two, public relations – that are very women-oriented.

MS. MUNRO: Is public relations so women-oriented?

MS. GOLDSMITH: I think so. I think our company is probably one-third male and two-third women.

MS. MUNRO: Really.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Maybe that is only Ruder Finn's because of cultural interests and because David Finn has three daughters and one son. [Laughs.]

MS. MUNRO: [Laughs.] And a very good eye for the female contours of bronze sculptures.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Jonathan Fairbanks is – do you know Jonathan? Jonathan Fairbanks was a curator of American decorative arts at the – Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the one – I mentioned this last week – who organized "Frontier America: The Far West."

MS. MUNRO: Yes, right.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I didn't say something more about that exhibition which I think is still fascinating. It went to four museums in the country under the title of "Frontier America: The Far West." It went to four European museums and they changed the name to "The Far West" only because – and I don't think anybody thinks of it unless they are told to think of it – a frontier in American terms is wide open. In Europeans terms, it's closed.

MS. MUNRO: Yes, it is. I can see what you mean. As a mountain range defines the frontier beyond which the barbarians are. It protects us. It protects us.

MS. GOLDSMITH: So the "Frontier America" – didn't make any sense to Europeans. So we eliminated that notion from the title. My favorite image of that exhibition was – the then director of – the Boston Museum of Fine Arts was the organizing museum – the director then was Jan Fontaine –

MS. MUNRO: I remember him.

MS. GOLDSMITH: – who was the former curator of Asian art at the museum, and he was a Dutchman who had lived in Indonesia –

MS. MUNRO: That's right.

MS. GOLDSMITH: – for many years, and is now married to a Japanese woman as of last year.

MS. MUNRO: Really? I didn't know that.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And Jan, the Dutchman, wearing a cowboy hat and boots at the opening of "Frontier America" was so fun.

MS. MUNRO: Was he?

MS. GOLDSMITH: And Jonathan Fairbanks, who was the organizing curator, was – is a Mormon – and he was wearing his Mormon cape, or robe.

MS. MUNRO: How wonderful. Really?

Has there ever been a Mormon woman involved in your organization? It just interests me suddenly to wonder –

MS. GOLDSMITH: How about a Muslim? I don't think there is a Muslim member of ArtTable.

MS. MUNRO: – but there will be because they are coming up. They are critics and novelists and commentators and so on. They are very articulate.

So what would you say ArtTable gave you, provided for you – that's one of Katie's [Katie Hollander, Executive Director of ArtTable] questions, here. What have been the benefits to you, personally?

MS. GOLDSMITH: I think that the success for me was in running this innovative organization and running it well.

MS. MUNRO: Yes.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And meeting people whom I love.

MS. MUNRO: Yes.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And in return, they've given me a lot of –

MS. MUNRO: Life.

MS. GOLDSMITH: A life, support, affection. I mean, that meeting at Laura Krueger's – it really brings tears to my eyes.

MS. MUNRO: Yes, it was wonderful. I was thinking yesterday along the way on that ArtTable tour of Williamsburg that, really, ArtTable now has meshed with the Gallery Passport idea, where you began. Now you have given birth to this enormously enlarged organization but at the ground level, it operates in the same way.

You have created that idiom in a way. How would you define what it's all about – taking people from one world and introducing them to others

MS. GOLDSMITH: Satisfaction – self-satisfaction, and maybe that's selfish, but it's true.

MS. MUNRO: What do you mean satisfaction?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Self-satisfaction. I'm being selfish, but that's okay.

MS. MUNRO: Well, everybody who does their work is selfish in the sense of wanting to do their own work as best they can but –

MS. RUTH: It's relevant to ArtTable. Since the power shift in the art world, even though it's still held by men, more and more women are in leadership positions. I think Vishaka Desai – after hearing her speak last month, I feel she is in such a role in the Asia Society. That's very recent, though. She was promoted very recently. I think that Lisa Phillips at the New Museum is in a position of power.

MS. MUNRO: Well, how does her power manifest itself? Not huge money. I mean, the money still resides with the old institutions like the Metropolitan.

MS. RUTH: The New Museum is more – their goal is – is to be more tapped into the current culture. They do contemporary shows and they are creating an entirely new building. And I think that that's the power of youth. The average age of a visitor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art is 47. I think at the New Museum, it's probably –

much younger. That is a sense of power. It's having that level of the culture influencing the youth.

MS. MUNRO: Yet, the big money and big power is going towards military buildup.

MS. RUTH: Well, do you think perhaps then that ArtTable should shift it's focus more towards advocacy?

MS. MUNRO: Probably.

MS. RUTH: So maybe that's the role in 25 years. What do you think, Caroline?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Advocacy has always been the weakest link of ArtTable. But I think we are aware of it and trying to do something about it. It's not glamorous.

MS. MUNRO: Oh, I think it is – true advocacy. It's a different kind of exhilaration. You were working for the individual woman's ability to move freely in the world and develop her own sense of minor power in the culture. But the big money was still going from the collectors to the museums to the dealers to the major dealers.

I mean, it's a difference between the high art and low art. ArtTable had to connect itself with the high art institutions in order to survive and to provide reason for women to join it. I don't think women would have joined just to have a clambake once every couple of months and maybe do a tour of Williamsburg. They wanted connection with the big collectors and if now they take young collectors on gallery tours to try to sell them on the idea, it's not bad.

MS. GOLDSMITH: There is another question, which is also terribly important, which we have not talked about at all – diversity. And that is something that we have talked about in ArtTable membership –

MS. MUNRO: Really, but it is a very diverse membership, isn't it? Well, maybe not.

MS. GOLDSMITH: No.

MS. MUNRO: No black women – or very few – half a dozen.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, more than that, and two presidents – two in a row, as a matter of fact – Pat Cruz and Kinshasha Conwill.

MS. MUNRO: So it could exist as a model organization in which women really have a chance.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And I think the Archives should – not concentrate on, but if they go ahead with other ArtTable interviewees, they should not only be Lila Harnett, who is the founder, but either Lowry Sims and, or Kinshasha Conwill.

MS. MUNRO: I'm sure they will.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I would imagine they would. I'm personally proud of the fact that we have had two African-American presidents of ArtTable.

MS. MUNRO: Has it broken any taboos or pushed into any corners that were embarrassing or difficult or – where you felt that you were in unfamiliar or alien country – no. You were working with your own kind – intelligent.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, people don't go to 125th to the Studio Museum in Harlem on a regular basis. We have tried to include their exhibitions in our mass of exhibition touring and I don't know if we would have done that if Lowry Sims and Kinshasha had not been the directors.

MS. MUNRO: Caroline, you did the heroic putting of the big stones in place, but maybe, as Heather says, the next generation of leaders of ArtTable will want to take a more activist –political role. I don't know how they can, really, since most of them – most – a lot of the women work in PR, which immediately puts you in jeopardy.

MS. GOLDSMITH: A friend of mine went to Washington to march [March for Women's Lives, Washington, DC, April 25, 2004] last month. She went to Central Park with MoveOn and made telephone calls – 60 phone calls from the park to swing states about Kerry.

MS. MUNRO: Caroline, sum it up. Sum up what – not this loose last 10 minutes, but your wonderfully, enthusiastic, excited memories of the early days of one organization feeding into another organization feeding into another organization.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, that's very interesting, Ellie. You proposed that as a – as a possibility, and I think that's quite fascinating.

MS. MUNRO: Well, it's true. It's the way you lived your life, and now, I thought it was so interesting, the tour really echoes, as I said, the Gallery Passport idea. You have been a kind of missionary to open up the art world to the interest and curiosity and eventually, then, the money –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Yes. I agree. I agree, and I also have been calling myself a missionary for a long time on black artists for instance.

MS. MUNRO: That was great.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I really felt good about that.

[Audio break.]

MS. RUTH: I think it's a galvanized movement now and whenever – if I can speak for my generation –

MS. MUNRO: Do.

MS. RUTH: – we understand our place in the sense that we see that there has been this glass ceiling and we see that we can change it.

MS. MUNRO: That's right, that's right.

MS. RUTH: Absolutely, and we all – we all are very ambitious and we don't see how being women is going to stop us. We just take for granted that that's the way it is, that we are going to just do what we want to do and follow our dreams. And I think that because we were all born during the women's rights movement when things were really strong and it wasn't a change of ideals for us because we were brought up in it.

For example, the galleries in Williamsburg are open on Sunday, Jessica has her own gallery because she was aware that she could have children and bring them to her own business and have them there and that has been her plan and that's exactly what she is doing.

MS. MUNRO: The baby is three months old.

MS. RUTH: It's tough, and I'm partly the gallery assistant and partly the nanny but I knew that going in –

MS. MUNRO: Well, maybe it will work. Maybe it will be a new tribal system, you know.

MS. RUTH: Absolutely, I really do. We have discussed that – Jessica and I have, and Andrea Rosen – she has a blue chip gallery, and she took her kids to work until they were school age.

MS. MUNRO: And then – then who is with the kids – oh, I mean –

MS. RUTH: The kids are in school now but everybody that worked for Andrea Rosen understood that they would, at times, have to care for her children.

MS. MUNRO: Well, I love that.

MS. GOLDSMITH: That's fabulous. I didn't know that.

MS. RUTH: And so there is a generation of women who are starting to understand that they can change not only their own lives, but that they can change the whole working structure to fit their needs.

[Third Session, June 21, 2004, Caroline Goldsmith, Eleanor Munro, and Heather Ruth]

MS. MUNRO: This is Eleanor Munro in New York with Heather Ruth of ArtTable interviewing Caroline Goldsmith. And we're cutting in now to the third session of our interview. We're going to focus on several phases of ArtTable: its beginning, its maturity and where ArtTable feels itself to be today.

And I'd like to lead off with Caroline and ask what were the important issues in the back of your mind, yours and Lila Kaplan's [sic] when you began thinking in an informal way about putting together such an organization?

MS. GOLDSMITH: To have an organization of professionals, serious professionals, experienced professionals –

MS. MUNRO: Yes, not volunteers – that was the cutting distinction.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And not for social reasons.

MS. MUNRO: Exactly.

MS. GOLDSMITH: It was all professional all the time. One of our first decisions was getting bios of people who should be members to see if they had served a minimum of five years in the field.

MS. MUNRO: In those days, women's careers in the professional art world were being improvised all around. I mean, there had not been so many advisors to new collectors. New collectors were mushrooming by the dozens. The galleries were encouraging it.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Interesting. I never thought of this in connection with new collectors. I think almost all, if not all, of the art advisors were women.

MS. MUNRO: I'm sure that that was the case.

MS. GOLDSMITH: That may be a niche, an opening that had never been filled before.

MS. MUNRO: Well, it was a niche that was created, that was imagined. And why was that? Because young, new collectors were being cultivated by young, new galleries and there was urgency to raise the economic token in those encounters. The old titans were gone. Or more or less.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Yes, people had died.

MS. MUNRO: And also priced themselves out of the market, out of the emerging market anyway. This was an emerging market wasn't it?

MS. GOLDSMITH: It was a shift from old masters and impressionists –

MS. MUNRO: And abstract expressionists as well. To a new art world – diverse, lots of women exhibiting.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Not many women exhibiting.

MS. MUNRO: Well, they were coming.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Lots of women gallerists.

MS. MUNRO: That's right.

MS. GOLDSMITH: But not very many women showing. I mean, to this day, I can only on the fingers of one hand talk about Helen Frankenthaler, Jane Wilson –

MS. MUNRO: Oh, Caroline, there were more than that. They're in, you know – my book [*Originals: American Women Artists* by Eleanor Munro, 1979, 1982, 2000].

A lot of these names are forgotten today. But there were many women painters. But they didn't have collectors except for Helen [Frankenthaler], Jane Wilson, Jane Freilicher.

MS. GOLDSMITH: A member of ArtTable, because she collected women's pictures, was the founding director of the National Museum of Women in the Arts [Washington, DC, incorporated November 1981]. Wilhelmina [Cole] Holladay. I don't know what started her. I think it would be interesting to ask her.

MS. MUNRO: I saw her small collection in Washington at her home. She had the greatest Alice Neel in the world. The *TB patient*.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I remember seeing the collection at her home through ArtTable. Everything in my life in art had been funneled through ArtTable.

MS. MUNRO: Heather reminded me that you spoke about the League of Women Voters and how it taught you aspects of citizenship that you hadn't understood. What were you beginning to get about the culture world as you began to think and structure ArtTable? I was just thinking of some of the aspects of citizenship: how to take responsibility, how to express your strong, political allegiances and so on. So bringing you out of your enclosure into the wider world was one of the functions of ArtTable.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I always said the beginning of my intellectual life was working for the League of Women Voters. And then it turned out the beginning of my professional life in public relations was also learned at the League of Women Voters, where I was a press chairman. And I learned the ins and outs of press releases and contacting –

MS. MUNRO: That's a huge professional technology that you've brought to ArtTable.

MS. GOLDSMITH: But first I brought it to Gallery Passport. Gallery Passport was a PR success and all that was with me when I went to ArtTable.

MS. MUNRO: You're talking about the importance of PR in this new culture we live in, which is so much generated by and dependent on the media of all forms and shapes, media personalities and so on. But this was an early phase. And most professional women, and certainly women artists, with the exception of one or two, led pretty secluded lives, pretty unworldly, unpublic lives. In fact, it was a kind of privilege one felt *not* to get involved in the grimy world of money, and power, influence. But you were opening it up to a new way of thinking, which was to use those technologies.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Yes. And I never even thought it –

MS. MUNRO: You, in a way, may have been the Typhoid Mary who brought it here. [Laughter.] Forgive me for putting it that way. But it was your grip on power, really, Caroline. I don't think other women had had that experience, particularly the Ruder Finn experience, and so on.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, yes. The Ruder Finn experience was – clear and terribly important.

MS. MUNRO: So let's talk about that.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, the plan for David and Bill was to create a PR firm based on business in the arts. It was really odd.

MS. MUNRO: It sounded odd at the time but it was prescient.

MS. GOLDSMITH: It was prescient but nobody could understand it at the time. In the early fifties.

MS. MUNRO: It wasn't that they opposed it, they just didn't dig it.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And now it's just a matter of course.

MS. MUNRO: Normal. But women have responded to it. Women have flowered in that ambience as media attention of all kinds has been brought to bear on women artists, and women gallerists, women photographers.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, did it begin with the exhibition about Native American art? Or Black American art? And then went on to women's art?

MS. MUNRO: It's possible. You were looking in hither to unexplored corners.

MS. GOLDSMITH: You've been putting things together beautifully – [laughter].

MS. MUNRO: Time has put things together, not me. The times. And the need of women. I mean, if you think of thousands of women with burgeoning expectations and hopes and intelligence and education because they've all come out of top colleges. Not many of them have graduate degrees but some of them do. They come to New York or Detroit or St. Louis and they want to do something. What are they going to do? Be fetching coffee for the director for the rest of their lives? No.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Maidenform.

MS. MUNRO: Maidenform.

MS. GOLDSMITH: One of our clients. Sponsored an exhibition that we didn't think of.

MS. MUNRO: "I Dreamt I went to the Metropolitan Museum with my Maidenform bra"? [Laughs.]

MS. GOLDSMITH: The exhibition was *Making their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream1970-1985* [Randy Rosen, Chatherine C. Brawer, compilers, Abbeville Press: New York, 1988, exhibited at the Cincinnati Art Museum and others starting February 22, 1989].

MS. MUNRO: And this was underwritten by –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Maidenform. And organized by an ArtTable member named Randy Rosen.

MS. MUNRO: Wonderful. And the large color catalog was published by Abbeville.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And it traveled around the country.

MS. MUNRO: Marvelous show.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Philadelphia, St. Louis – I don't remember.

MS. MUNRO: But there are wonderful artists here, Deborah Butterfield – [Ana] Mendieta who's having a big play in the papers these days. ["Ana Mendieta, Sculpture and Performance 1971-1985" at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, July 1 – September 19, 2004]

Very interesting and tragic artist, of course. But this was a sort of cutting edge. Louise Nevelson never was a feminist, on the other side, Alice Neel was so pro-women. She was one of the icon goddesses of the Women's Movement.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I wanted her to do my portrait.

MS. MUNRO: She would have asked you to take your clothes off.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I might have acceded to that. I might have.

MS. MUNRO: It's all right. [Laughter.]

MS. GOLDSMITH: But she would have had to accept me, and John and I would have to have had to pay for it.

When I saw Mimi Gross' exhibition ["Mimi Gross: The Charm of Many" September 5 – 28, 2002]at Salander-O'Reilly – a portrait – it reminded me of – Alice Neel. John then asked Mimi to do my portrait –

MS. MUNRO: Oh, I see.

MS. GOLDSMITH: – because of my –

MS. MUNRO: [Laughs.]

MS. GOLDSMITH : – desire to have a portrait.

MS. MUNRO: Absolutely.

MS. GOLDSMITH: [Laughs.]

MS. MUNRO: Well, listen, let's get back to where we were. We were talking about the earth-shaking but slow impact of public relations as a technology through you, really – but there must have been other people, too – on the art world and on a burgeoning world of young women dealers, young women curators and young couples collectors, and a lot of the young couples were motivated, I'm sure, by the women.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I think so. Not always, but – largely. I think largely, you are correct because women are shoppers.

MS. MUNRO: Women are shoppers and decorators, too, and homemakers. That is an interesting thought because the first wave of collectors created by ArtTable curators were not going for the hugely and expensive work right away, were they?

MS. GOLDSMITH: No.

MS. MUNRO: They were looking for idiosyncratic – to put themselves on the map as young collectors, perhaps. What do you think?

MS. GOLDSMITH: I'm sure you are right but it had nothing to do with women artists.

MS. MUNRO: Except that it was women who were advising these young collectors.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Have you realized, just last week Adam Weinberg, the new director of the Whitney, hired three curators.

MS. MUNRO: All women?

MS. GOLDSMITH: All women, all ArtTable members – sometimes and sometimes not – the three new ones – Elizabeth Sussman, who was a curator under David Ross at the Whitney some years ago; Donna de Salvo, who is leaving the Tate after having been a curator at several museums in this country; and Joan Simon, who is a freelance curator who lives in Paris. She is going to stay in Paris and be a consultant curator. And Donna is going to be more or less the deputy director of Whitney.

MS. MUNRO: So there you are. This is the flower of –

MS. GOLDSMITH: And Barbara Haskell, who was in on the beginning of ArtTable, is the chief curator, I think. I

don’t know what she is.

MS. MUNRO: Now how old are these women? What is their generation?

MS. GOLDSMITH: I think Joan is the youngest because she has young children. 40s, 50s – early 40s, late 40s and early 50s.

MS. MUNRO: So they are just in the emerging prime of their professional lives.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Right, right. But each of them has worked at the very top of the profession –

MS. MUNRO: Right.

MS. GOLDSMITH: – in organizing very important exhibitions around the country.

MS. MUNRO: Do they all have doctorates in art history, do you think? Or you don’t know.

MS. GOLDSMITH: That’s such an interesting question. I don’t think any of them.

I met Liz Sussman when she was a volunteer at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

MS. MUNRO: Well, that’s a great story because she began at the volunteer, low-grade situation.

MS. GOLDSMITH: She worked for Jonathan Fairbanks and we worked on “Frontier America: The Far West.” And then, she was hired as a full-time curator, again, by David Ross when he was the head of the ICA in Boston, and then he brought her to New York at the – the Whitney. But her first job in the field was as a volunteer, and Mimi Poser, one of the first six members of ArtTable was a volunteer in the PR department of the Guggenheim.

MS. MUNRO: That was the only way women could get into these institutions in those days, and also volunteering in a museum was considered socially acceptable. It wasn’t like becoming a social worker and carrying baskets of food into Harlem, it was a different class of work. It was an emerging economic class – professional class – highly educated, highly skilled and highly ambitious women who were not content to stay in the volunteer category.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And wasn’t this simultaneous with the stock market boom and affluence?

MS. MUNRO: Probably. I’m not an economic expert. Somebody who knows the economic trajectory would be able to add that. So people were beginning to think about larger houses, more room for display –

MS. GOLDSMITH: More walls. [Laughs.]

MS. MUNRO: Their young husbands were becoming CEOs who had to jostle for prestige and power.

MS. GOLDSMITH: We opened up a lot of interesting subjects.

MS. MUNRO: So what was the effect on the culture itself? Well, many more women streaming into the art world, as we say, picking up this huge 300-page lavishly illustrated book – all women. I interviewed Alma Thomas, who was an ancient African-American woman living in Washington.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And she is my age. She was my favorite – black artist.

MS. MUNRO: Wonderful artist, wonderful woman. Hanna Wilke, who finally made those photographs of herself dying – unbelievably major.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Her photographs were shown at the Ronald Feldman Gallery, which was owned by Ronald Feldman and his wife, Frayda. They are partners, and I only mention that because we are talking about women.

MS. MUNRO: You see ArtTable has generated a lot of electricity – maybe not ArtTable so much itself, but it was the cradle in which these women were sheltered, one might say.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I think none of this was evident to anybody – including ourselves, in the first 10 or 12 years of ArtTable. And now as we are entering our 25th anniversary –

MS. MUNRO: We are now talking about the maturity phase of ArtTable that’s the 80s, would you say?

MS. GOLDSMITH: And we are a power now.

MS. MUNRO: Now, you are a power, and the power was acquired in an organic way as you drew in women with capacity and will and began to affect the culture.

MS. GOLDSMITH: And as more women of power or authority became known, then other women were willing to align themselves with the organization.

MS. MUNRO: Right.

MS. GOLDSMITH: At the beginning, a lot of women –

MS. MUNRO: Didn't want to because they thought it would be an isolating organization, separating them from the mainstream. There was so much stupid anti-feminism in the culture world in those days. But Nevelson didn't. Nevelson was very haughty, but she was one of those titans who had made themselves out of nothing against a background of war, immigration, personal suffering, deep sense of exile and loss – it was a completely different culture than what we are talking about. Those women came out of the 30s.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Remember the 30s, Ellie? [Laughs.]

MS. MUNRO: Not very well – a bit. I do a bit.

So all that is – is really the history of our time. But what has it done to the art world? Now, Heather, you were saying about your friend who was commenting it's much harder now because of this money, aggressive thing: it's harder to be a private artist.

MS. RUTH: It was the difference between artists in the 60s and 70s and an artist today, and how artists of today need to be more business people, need to promote their own careers much more. That shift in the culture – that the artist needs to be – can't just be the secluded artist. Allan Kaprow [Ms. Goldsmith donated the original script and 36 color slides of an Allan Kaprow "Happening" with Yvonne Rainer on John Segal's farm on May 19th 1963.] wrote about this: should the artist be a man of the world?

MS. MUNRO: Right.

MS. RUTH: And he sensed the shift. But it's even more extreme today.

MS. MUNRO: I mean, what's an artist to do today without backing? And women – what did the women curators have to do with the development of artists' reputations?

MS. GOLDSMITH: I have no idea.

MS. MUNRO: Well, follow the trajectory of a painting X. A curator notices it and sells it to a young collector who puts it on the wall. The curator knows somebody who has access to a magazine and it's reproduced. I mean, it's organic, the connection.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Yes, but we are talking about something much more deliberate, I think. It's very hard to get a PR person, a professional, to publicize a single artist's work.

MS. MUNRO: That's a good point. Are there many PR professionals – women – in ArtTable?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Yes.

MS. MUNRO: Could you risk a number?

MS. GOLDSMITH: At least 20, at least 20.

MS. MUNRO: And how are they identified in the ArtTable catalog?

MS. RUTH: As public relations. We do have that category in the membership application.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Look at this – 1983.

MS. MUNRO: Oh, I see – public relations – 16, government – 14.

MS. RUTH: And that was in 1983. The organization was five years old, four years old.

MS. MUNRO: Independent art services, legal – only one. Corporate art consultants, registrars, freelance curators, journalist print radio – 25 – that surprises me. I didn't know there that many. That's one of the top categories – journalists.

MS. RUTH: It depends on how women identify themselves, too. Many women do freelance work in several different areas – and it's their choice to identify themselves with a certain profession or a certain field –

MS. MUNRO: Their boundaries are a little more porous, perhaps – have to be because that's the way they had survived.

MS. GOLDSMITH: 1300 members and maybe 30 PR people.

MS. MUNRO: Well, but Heather may be correct in that there may be a tendency to mask public relations behind another professional self-designation like journalist or art advisor. Do the public relations people work for galleries or for individual artists in your experience?

MS. GOLDSMITH: Not individual artists.

MS. MUNRO: Never? But individual artists do have public relations advisors, I have always heard that David Hockney and others do.

We are talking about the indirect or deliberate relationship between eminence and historical importance and creativity. Since the women's movement has come into its flowering own, exemplified by ArtTable in its mature decades – the late 80s and 90s. The close relationship between, not public relations as a of something wrong, but as an attitude in the culture that the world has to know about an artist, has to know what an artist is doing, has to know what the thought processes are.

MS. GOLDSMITH: The beginning of ArtTable – outside of Lila Harnett – four or five of us, we were all in the public relations business. Clementine Brown – Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Carol Morgan – American Craft Museum, Liz Robbins – Sotheby's, Mimi Poser – the Guggenheim – we were all PR people. And at one point, people were irritated by the fact that so many of us were PR people.

MS. MUNRO: Yes, I can well imagine.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, that's quite diminished.

MS. MUNRO: But, it was the point of the arrow. It was the point of the arrow that carried an organization that mediates between the intense private narcissism of the artist – of a certain kind of artist – and the voraciously self-aggrandizing money-oriented purchasing power in this country. It's a capitalist society after all.

MS. GOLDSMITH: But the people who are PR professionals work for museums – work for galleries – sometimes, rarely work for individual artists.

MS. MUNRO: Right, but they do work for museums – and it's through the sieve of the museum – first of the galleries and then of the museum – that an artist achieves world prominence in our time.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Oh, I forgot one other area – the corporations –

MS. MUNRO: Exactly.

MS. GOLDSMITH: – who have a public relations staff – which is often not geared to their art sponsorship. But that is part of their assignment, their work. Ruder Finn began by working not for artists – never – but for museums and other not-for-profit institutions, and then – corporations. So there was a group of high-level players.

MS. MUNRO: There was an enormous amount of money and prestige to be tapped into here. The – as Heather says, the forgotten chess person – chessman, chess woman – in the whole equation was the neurotic, financially strapped, solitary artist who is either subject to some kind of fits of personality derangement or – [laughs] – great wrath and fury against the vulgarity of our world – or else sails across it with all sails catching the wind. The artist is at the root. What a strange world.

MS. GOLDSMITH: [Laughs.]

MS. MUNRO: Really. What does that make one think about the – about the art world and about the potential role of all these bright, gifted women?

MS. GOLDSMITH: The idea was invented beyond me – I mean, beyond my service. We always were interested in philosophically mentoring younger women. To bring young professionals up to the level of the ArtTable members' achievements. But it was never a – a formal mentoring process –

MS. MUNRO: No.

MS. GOLDSMITH: – and now it is. Yes, we have fellows. I have recommended some young women as ArtTable members who had been accepted as NLA [National Leadership Alliance] members. I was hoping they would be ArtTable members – but they were not at the level – professional level that ArtTable was looking for.

MS. MUNRO: So they were then recommended to the young NLA group so they might spend a year or two and get a slightly higher – position or something.

MS. GOLDSMITH: [To Heather Ruth] What are you?

MS. RUTH: I'm an employee.

MS. MUNRO: And a splendid one.

MS. RUTH: Thank you.

What are the aspects – ethical or philosophical, if you will, or cultural – the defining characteristics of someone who measures up to ArtTable's standards? They don't lie – [laughs] – they don't cheat –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Just amount of time served in a professional visual arts role. There are young women who are my colleagues who just are not ready to be promoted. They have to have been around long enough, have enough experience.

MS. MUNRO: Well, if you are talking about a doctor getting experience, it's number of operations performed. If you are talking about a musician, it's numbers of concerts played, perhaps, or something like that. What –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Well, an assistant curator does research for an exhibition. A curator organizes an exhibition.

MS. MUNRO: It's an administrative issue.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Right. Not a creative one.

MS. MUNRO: People are overlooked for the Nobel Prize, even, so there is nothing invidious about –

Do people bring pressure at ArtTable to accept people who don't have measure-up standards?

MS. GOLDSMITH: That's a good question, and I don't know how to answer it. I'm sure that had to have been from time to time, but I don't think it has been responded to.

MS. MUNRO: Anyway, that is the way the world moves.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Yes, it is.

MS. MUNRO: You know, in any professional field, there is jostling.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I tried, in some cases, to get members to be accepted, and sometimes you really have to rewrite their bio and stress the arts. I have a good friend who was accepted as a member of ArtTable and she is a very valuable member, or could be, but she doesn't have a lot of background in the visual arts aside from one, she majored in art history at the University of Pennsylvania, she is a trustee of the board of the Archives of American Art – those couple of things – not an art – she doesn't work in the arts. In fact, she works in Wall Street – she is a financial person, has an interest in the arts and she collects glass.

MS. MUNRO: Well, as it spreads out in the next decade, the boundaries will become even more porous probably – because – feminizing power will, I think, spread into all the institutions. The wall labels [for the recent China exhibition] at the Metropolitan? Seemed to have been touched by a woman's, or a feminizing, consciousness rooted in the curatorial offices. A directive that said, "Let's give the people who come to these shows a little more emotional support and encouragement as they look at the paintings, to identify with individual figures –"

MS. GOLDSMITH: I'm curious as to how that came about.

MS. MUNRO: Certainly ArtTable as one element has had an influence in the last 20 years, opening up the museum world which used to be exclusively well-born Anglo-Saxon men in English suits. [Laughs.]

How about you? Oh, I know what I wanted to say. Yesterday, or maybe it was this morning, on the radio there was – on NPR – there was a feature story about – by women – about a new women's organization to create resumes for women who have been idly at home or in the corners or the periphery of things. These people market bios, not with lies, but just rephrasing –

MS. GOLDSMITH: Creatively.

MS. MUNRO: – creatively. You pay, I think, $75 or maybe 10 times that, for a resume that will get you a position in a corporation. Isn't that interesting?

MS. GOLDSMITH: It is wonderful.

MS. MUNRO: And that is what we are talking about here – empowering women to move through the cracks, through the interstices of the culture. Now, what they have to do is begin to move into the military industrial culture. Then we will be getting somewhere.

MS. GOLDSMITH: Women generals in the past year have not –

MS. MUNRO: – have not shown –

MS. GOLDSMITH: – made themselves very proud of us.

MS. MUNRO: No, but you see, that is a whole area of the culture that needs the infusion of women's consciousness.

MS. GOLDSMITH: I think that is a very good ending to our discussion: that women should be encouraged to branch out into all different areas including the military and industrial conflicts.

MS. MUNRO: Right, okay. Well, I think that is terrific.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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