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Oral history interview with Charles Duback, 2004 December 15-2005 May 18

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

Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Charles Duback on December 17, 2004 and May 18, 2005. The interview took place in Tenants Harbor, ME, and was conducted by Susan Larsen for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Funding for this interview provided by the King and Jean Cummings Fund.

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

Interview

NOTE: There was an error in recording the final session - the digital disc remained blank - so Ms. Larsen and Mr. Duback sat down again for a "re-do" session in May of 2005. This "re-do" session begins the interview, even though it was recorded after the other session; this placement was chosen because the topics discussed in the "re-do" session occurred earlier in the chronology of Mr. Duback's life.

SUSAN LARSEN: I'm with Mr. Charles Duback, D-U-B-A-C-K, and we are in St. George, Tenant's Harbor, Maine. And today is May 18, 2005 and we're doing Session One of a taped oral history for the Archives of American Art with Mr. Duback on his life and work. And I am Susan C. Larsen, working for the Archives of American Art. So Charles, good morning.

CHARLES DUBACK: Good morning, Susan.

MS. LARSEN: Hi. I have that you were born on March 10, 1926. Is that correct?

MR. DUBACK: That's correct, born in Fairfield, Connecticut, and the first of ten children.

MS. LARSEN: My goodness.

MR. DUBACK: Well, actually it was twins before me, but they passed away at birth. That would have made twelve, and God help my mother. [They Laugh]

MS. LARSEN: Goodness, so and the remainder of your family, how many -

MR. DUBACK: Well, to date there are eight of us left.

MS. LARSEN: And how many brothers, how many sisters?

MR. DUBACK: Now let's see, I have to think about that. One, two, one, two, three, four. There are three brothers left and myself being four. And the rest are my sisters. And I don't see them very much. I see them, if at all, I see them maybe once a year or maybe I see a little more of my brother Earl, I see a little bit more, because he takes the time to come and see me and call, et cetera, et cetera.

MS. LARSEN: Are there any other artists in the family?

MR. DUBACK: Yes, my brother Robert is a sculptor and he's in New Hampshire. He never went to school. He just is a sculptor and he does fairly well. He's got a real nice talent, which is, let's say, a natural talent. And it's like there; he didn't have to go to school. He feels. He's very sensitive. And him and I, he's always competing with me in a sense and I don't, you know, I don't care whether he's good or bad or whatever, I'm just glad he's happy. And he came to Florida when we were down there this winter and we had a big to-do. [They Laugh] Heavy duty.

MS. LARSEN: About art?

MR. DUBACK: Well, no, an argument. And the next day it was like it never happened. [They Laugh]

MS. LARSEN: Oh, how nice. That's nice.

MR. DUBACK: It was funny.

MS. LARSEN: That's great. So you were born in, well, you tell me, where were you born?

MR. DUBACK: Fairfield, Connecticut. And I lived in Connecticut until I was eighteen.

MS. LARSEN: And what did your father do?

MR. DUBACK: My father was a baker, a cake baker from Europe. He came from Czechoslovakia, a little town called Stayonobovna [Phonetic]. Oft times, I would like to go there because as I grow older, I see it's every party who exist has the tracing through their heredity, DNA, and so forth. And they can't get away from that. That's part of who they are. And as I become older, I see how I'm associated in many ways through the heritage of Czechoslovakia in many ways.

MS. LARSEN: And how is-in what ways that you can tell?

MR. DUBACK: Well, one way is when one thinks about costumes of the period and their music and their general joy for life and also their attempt to be in many instances very, what's the word, sensitive and laid-back. They're not an aggressive race. They're very, very passive in many ways. And in some instances in the world as we know it, that can be very detrimental. And I just would like to go there because I understand Prague is quite a lively place for the cultural endeavors, and I just would like to see that before I expire.

MS. LARSEN: Was this town near Prague that your father came from? Was it near Prague?

MR. DUBACK: It was closer to Austria, in fact, there is part Austrian in my heritage too. So the stubbornness in my makeup comes from that side of the family, I imagine. And I look back on my relationships with my grandfather and so forth, and I can see myself in him and his attitude about life and what he did. And he, when he was in Europe before he came to this country, he ran a shoe factory. And for some reason, I have a fetish towards shoes. I like shoes. [They Laugh]

MS. LARSEN: Did you have a lot of shoes around? I mean, did you, as a child? Did you always have nice shoes?

MR. DUBACK: I pack shoes around, yeah. I just like a good pair of shoes. I appreciate, especially now, I appreciate something that is very comfortable.

MS. LARSEN: And what about your father's-now did he have a bakery?

MR. DUBACK: My father had a bakery. And what my dad did with all of us boys except the youngest one, when we became about fifteen or sixteen and we wanted to earn a few cents or dollars or whatever, he took us into the bakery and he started us off. He says, one thing I can do for you lads is to teach you a trade, and it's up to you to pick it up and run with it or do whatever else you want to do. So I became a baker, a full-fledged cake baker, and I used to decorate wedding cakes and all that nonsense. And it came to me very much to my advantage to have learned that, because later, when I was attending art school and I needed a livelihood, I would only have to work one day a week, because, in the bakery, and I imagine other unions-I had belonged to the union-they in turn pay double-time for whatever you pick up as an odd job. So I would go in one night a week, work, and it gave me enough to carry through the rest of the week, more than enough in fact. And I earned a substantial salary when I was working full time, when I was in more of the school. For a young man, I was doing very, very well.

MS. LARSEN: And did you, did you see anything artistic in that bakery?

MR. DUBACK: Oh yes, I thought it was high-caliber, a creative act in itself. My father took great pride in his decorating of cakes. Every cake was a work of art to him, and it proved to be so. And he passed that along, and I think that's part of where the sensitive aspect came from, from that side of the family. My father, who was very, very generous, first off, and he was very generous in his manner in which he handled his sons. He said to us, the main thing I want for you boys to be is happy. He said, I do not care what you do. I'd like you to follow my footsteps but I'm not going to push you in that direction. He says, as long as you're happy. And when I was a kid and there were only two of us, my sister and myself-Ceil, my sister Ceil-my father and mother had a tutor for me, a private tutor. And he was a Russian individual and he taught painting. And I can recall going to this man and working. I don't remember his name, unfortunately, and he would assign me to draw, for instance, noses, thousands of noses, all shapes, ears, eyes, everything. And then, he took and stripped me of all my small brushes, and handed me one big brush. And he said, you could do everything with this brush that you can do with the little brush. And it proved to be so. And over the years, I went back to the old ways, but gradually I'm coming back to using bigger and bigger brushes.

MS. LARSEN: And how long did you work with him?

MR. DUBACK: I must have had him as a tutor for about two, three years.

MS. LARSEN: And how old were you?

MR. DUBACK: God, I must have been about ten. Ten, twelve, about thirteen.

MS. LARSEN: And were you, after you got involved with it, were you the one who wanted to do this?

MR. DUBACK: Oh, I always wanted to do it, yeah. It's something that just, for whatever it is, I just had to do it. I had to do it. And although I may have become skilled in any number of ventures, this was the thing that meant something. The others, they just didn't mean anything. It was something I had to do. In fact, when I'm not working, I feel very guilty. And also, people have treated me very nicely-the members of my family. They gave me many years of support and still do and I'm obligated in many ways to prove myself to myself because they've been so giving. And it's just something I feel I have to do. And early in the conversation, you mentioned a certain thing about a young man who didn't care about money. Well, money doesn't mean that. Money is just the means to buy supplies to live and so forth. But if I wanted to make money, I would have been in another profession, really. I would have been into something like construction work or whatever. Money would accrue, but that has certain benefits and certain feedback, but it's nothing like the rewards I get from what I do. Of course, you pay a price for this venture because as it's proven, people look at you with a sort of, oh God, here's that crazy artist or something. And I finally feel and I've come to realize that they're envious for the simple reason that you have a life goal to do what you want to do and pay the price for it, which is very, very high and it takes a lot of chutzpah, so to speak, to follow that line. It really does, because most of the time you're alone as a creative person of any sort. You're alone. And more so I feel for an artist, a writer, because those really draw the main force from their creativity and it takes a lot to be alone. You have to be a very, very strong individual because you're going to put people's backs up and they're going to say nasty things about you because of their ignorance. And I do this with a capital I, ignorance, they are. And I've come across it all my life and it still has not diminished. You win over a few and then a new crop comes along. [Laughs]

MS. LARSEN: So let's-what did your mother do?

MR. DUBACK: My mother was just a homemaker. But she did a lot of crocheting. It used to drive me absolutely bonkers because there were doilies and crocheted things all over the bloody house.

MS. LARSEN: Now was she also Czech background?

MR. DUBACK: Yes.

MS. LARSEN: So maybe that was part of her heritage?

MR. DUBACK: Yeah, it's part of her heritage, too. But she was never-she always had to do something, keep busy. And it rubbed off on all the kids, myself included. Keep busy.

MS. LARSEN: Well, with that many people in the household, that wasn't hard to keep busy, I'm sure.

MR. DUBACK: Oh, she was busy, all right. I don't know how the hell she managed to this day.

MS. LARSEN: Now, did you go to school in Fairfield?

MR. DUBACK: I went to a school in Fairfield, but then when the war came on, what I did is I volunteered. And I volunteered for the Navy, because I wanted to sleep in a bed. But after one month in the Navy, I was only in the States for one month and then I was shipped out.

MS. LARSEN: To where?

MR. DUBACK: To the Pacific. And when I was shipped out to the Pacific, I realized that I had made a big mistake. [They Laugh]

MS. LARSEN: And where did you go in the Pacific?

MR. DUBACK: Well, we went to New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and then we ended up finally in the Philippines. And then we came back. We were on our way back and we were going to-the ship was going to be outfitted to be a rocket ship, and halfway across the sea coming back home, the war ended.

MS. LARSEN: Thankfully, that's great.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah. And when we got back to the States, since the war had ended, we were discharged. And then I came home for a very short period of time.

MS. LARSEN: Were you about nineteen or so at that time?

MR. DUBACK: Well, eighteen, nineteen, twenty when I came back. And at that point, I inquired about the G.I. Bill and I went to school, a little school in New Haven, Connecticut, a fine commercial school for commercial work. And while I was there, I heard about a program they had at Yale, so I used to go over to Yale and sit in on

classes. There was no big restriction on that sort of thing. But I didn't like what they were teaching.

MS. LARSEN: Was Elbers there at that time?

MR. DUBACK: No, it was before Elbers' time. If he had been there, I probably would have enrolled. But he wasn't there so I went back to the school I was at, stayed there for maybe a year, and then I looked for another school to go onto. And then I found the Newark School of Fine and Industrial Art in Newark. And I enrolled in that and I picked out some instructors who I felt would give me some feedback, which would be very helpful. After I acquired what I felt they had to offer, rather than just blindly follow and pursue that line of thought over and over again, I said, they taught me what I wanted to know, I'll move on. So I went and acquired another school, the Brooklyn museum. And when I was at the Brooklyn museum, I heard about Skowhegan. So I applied to Skowhegan and I ended up there going, I think it was five years -

MS. LARSEN: Five years, it was in the summer though right?

MR. DUBACK: Yeah, it was there the summer.

MS. LARSEN: And that -

MR. DUBACK: And then I also, I met my friends there who were very influential and we've more or less resided within each other's range back in the city.

MS. LARSEN: And who were they?

MR. DUBACK: Well, Al Katz, Bernard Langlais, Freddie Dipolo, who I don't know what happened to Freddie, and a couple other chaps. And it proved to be very, very beneficial for all of us. And we got back to the city and we got a place. I got a place on 28th Street.

MS. LARSEN: How?

MR. DUBACK: Well, my first place was on 87th Street, I believe it was. There were four of us. We roomed together there. And we did that because I was only getting $75 a month to live on and go to school and eat and pay room and board or whatever.

MS. LARSEN: And by rooming, you just had like a place to sleep? Did you have a place to work?

MR. DUBACK: Well, I was going to school.

MS. LARSEN: Oh, that's right.

MR. DUBACK: And then after school I would work. I worked in a little frame shop called Roko Frame and Gallery. And that's where I had my first show. And Mike Roko was a very interesting man from the standpoint, a lot of the people who became very well known started with him, whether they admit it or not, I don't know. But he was the one who gave them a chance to show.

MS. LARSEN: And do you remember how that was spelled?

MR. DUBACK: R-O-K-O.

MS. LARSEN: R-O-K-O.

MR. DUBACK: Roko.

MS. LARSEN: Okay, and where was it?

MR. DUBACK: Greenwich. In Greenwich Village. I don't remember the number. But when I went into that shop, I was one man amongst five. When I left that shop, I was one man, period. And I did all the other work of all the other four men. Since I knew what the young man was making and I had a family at that time, I wanted an increase in salary for all my efforts. And he said he just couldn't do it. And I said, well, I can't do it neither. So I left and I started my own construction aspect in New York City. And I would go into various apartments, design them, hire fellow painters who were skilled in construction and if a man only wanted to work two days fine, I'd get another man for the other two or three and it worked out beneficial for everybody. Everybody was happy. And I made out very, very wholesomely and it just worked.

MS. LARSEN: And okay, what years are we-I'm just trying to get a timeline here.

MR. DUBACK: This was in the last '50s, '60s. And then I had a place. I got a place on 28th Street between 6th and

7th and I lived with Blackie and Alex. I had, over the lumberyard- we lived over a lumberyard. I had the first floor, Alex had the second floor, and Blackie had the top floor.

MS. LARSEN: And Blackie is Bernard Langlais.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah. And we had a great time then.

MS. LARSEN: So you had the connection between Maine and New York City?

MR. DUBACK: Well, we decided when I went to Skowhegan, I really liked it up here. I just felt it was very sane, so to speak. So I liked the landscape and since I had gone to Skowhegan, I was very familiar with the towns all throughout Maine. And I also liked to fish as a pastime, to get away and have a little sanity in my life. So I moved to Maine. My first house I bought in north Waldoboro for the staggering sum of $500. [Laughs] And it was a wreck.

MS. LARSEN: And when was that that you bought it?

MR. DUBACK: God, I can't remember. It was in the '60s, I believe. But it was a wreck. It had no plumbing.

MS. LARSEN: Was it an old farmhouse?

MR. DUBACK: Yeah, it had no plumbing, no-it had a well that polluted. And it just was a wild place. So I spent-I had a pile of debris, which I lugged out of the house that must have been about fifty feet long and about ten feet high. I mean, I had to make it habitable because I had children. I had to do it, bingo, right off. So I worked, I worked like a jeezer on it. And then over the next couple years, when I was there, we put in plumbing, put in a new well, did a number of things. After awhile, my wife got pregnant. Daphne got tremendous hay fever, so we had to do something about that. Our kids went to a camp where we are now in Blueberry Cove. And one day we came to visit them on parent's day and we stopped in a little mansionette, which no longer exists, but was run by two women. And outside while we were waiting for them to open, we met two elderly women, and I said, would you know of any place in the immediate vicinity for sale? And the woman said, oh, yes. After we have our lunch, if you follow me, I'll show you one. So after lunch, this woman drove us and we followed her and we come to this place.

MS. LARSEN: Right here?

MR. DUBACK: Right.

MS. LARSEN: My goodness.

MR. DUBACK: And then another place became vacant over on that point and that one had 55 acres of land and a little farmhouse.

MS. LARSEN: And that's where David Mumford is?

MR. DUBACK: That's where David, my brother-in-law at that time bought the place. And it came to this. I said to him, look, you want a place. I want a place. I have these two places. Which one would you want? So he came up. He looked at this place and says, it's too pretentious. So I said, okay, I'll take it. So I took it and at that time, I bought this establishment for $20,000, fully furnished.

MS. LARSEN: This is a grand, grand house right on the river. It has a stone front and it's like a lodge. It's a dream of a place.

MR. DUBACK: But, over the years, I've done a lot to it.

MS. LARSEN: Yes, I'm sure.

MR. DUBACK: Unfortunately, now it's getting to be a real headache to keep up with it because it's big.

MS. LARSEN: Now, in our interview, somehow all of a sudden you've acquired a family and I haven't asked you about it. [Laughs] So when were you married?

MR. DUBACK: In the past, how I came to get married, I went to Skowhegan and I met Daphne Mumford. And we literally -

MS. LARSEN: She was mostly an art student there?

MR. DUBACK: Yeah, and we hit it off very well. And I went back to the city after that and went to Brooklyn and

worked. And she used to come down from-she was going to the school in High-[inaudible]-in New Hampshire. And she would come down and visit me and so forth. And then she went to England. After she got out of school there, she went to England to a school in Chelsea. And she asked me to come over, so I had a place in the city. I moved from where I was right next-door and I had a big loft there. No, before, that's before I had that place where I lived with the family. I had a place next door there and that was a very big loft, very beautiful loft, with a roofed terrace and I sold that to get money to go to Europe. And then when I came back, I bought the other place where I lived with the family right next door. I moved in there. But when I went to Europe, we hitchhiked all over Europe for the summer. And when we got back to England, we got married.

MS. LARSEN: How nice. Sounds very romantic.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah, very romantic. [Laughs]

MS. LARSEN: Like a movie. [Laughs]

MR. DUBACK: We got married and then we came back. When we came back, we came back on a big ship that was going to be decommissioned at the end of the voyage and we ran into a hurricane coming back and it was a hurricane. I mean the waves were 60 feet high or so. It was terrifying. I didn't get terrified. I was a little bit put off and people were sick all over the place terribly. Well, you know a hurricane of that nature, there was water in the passageway and so forth. It was nonsense. But anyhow, we came back and then I had my first daughter. Oh, I had my first daughter. And my first daughter, before she was born, I was figuring was going to be a boy and I made out the cards for the first-born Adam. [They Laugh] Of course, I had to change it.

MS. LARSEN: And what did you change it to?

MR. DUBACK: Amanda.

MS. LARSEN: Amanda, oh that's good. [They Laugh] You didn't have to completely re-letter it.

MR. DUBACK: So then, we moved up to Maine and so forth and wanted a second child to be a companion for the first, and then we had Corey. And Corey was born in Maine. Mandy was born in New York.

MS. LARSEN: Now when you acquired the house in Waldoborough, did you leave your loft in New York and cut ties with New York?

MR. DUBACK: Well, let's see, no, I didn't cut ties with New York. But I had a place in Manhattan. And then we moved to Brooklyn Heights. We got a house in Brooklyn Heights. But I renovated that whole house, four floors I gutted. And I had renovated the entire building and made it into a two-family. And we lived there because of the children for a while and I used to commute. I had a studio on the Bowery between-around the corner from Bleaker Street and Houston.

MS. LARSEN: Now at this time we're talking about the late '50s, early '60s?

MR. DUBACK: Yeah.

MS. LARSEN: Okay. At this time, the New York School was already a historical phenomenon, I would assume. Did you-

MR. DUBACK: Yes. I got involved with a group of people when Tenth Street was starting up.

MS. LARSEN: What did Tenth Street mean to you?

MR. DUBACK: What does it mean to me?

MS. LARSEN: I mean, what did that atmosphere signal to you?

MR. DUBACK: I thought it was really the most influential stage that happened to me, like it happened to most of the other friends of mine also.

MS. LARSEN: What was in the air and what were you thinking about?

MR. DUBACK: Well, there was a spirit of discovery and how to really be a painter. And it was an effort by those parties who weren't known to establish themselves if possible. And a number of the parties who were there involved in Tenth Street tried to gain access to galleries in the 57th Street area and so forth, but it just wasn't to be at that time. So they all banded together in many ways and started these co-ops, which in turn were the fuel for the movement that was known as abstract expressionism.

MS. LARSEN: Now, what were some of the co-op galleries that you were-

MR. DUBACK: Well, there was the Tanager and then the one that I was affiliated, which I was one of the proud movers in making was the Area Gallery. That was just two doors from the Tanager. And the other galleries-what was the other gallery? I forget what they were. There was one across the street from us, two across the street from us. But within the block and in the surrounding area, there were a number of galleries in they used to all coordinate their opening nights on a Friday. And it was a phenomenal thing. It was one of the most lively things ever because if you figure there were five members of each gallery, five members had friends. They had friends and then it was like a festival atmosphere that existed. And it was a spark, the spark of creativity, of learning a new attitude away from Europe, severed from Europe that was the impetus that created this.

MS. LARSEN: Now, who were the artists you admired and what did you folks aspire to do?

MR. DUBACK: Well, one of the big ones was one I really liked-was Arshile Gorky, for instance. Then his compatriot there, de Kooning-de Kooning had a studio right on Tenth Street just above where we were. And then there was Rothko in the vicinity. And you name it, they were all down there, and then other obscure painters who gained a bit of recognition, Al Jensen was there. And they were all fed. And what was very interesting about the whole movement was that they were always seeking an answer to this problem, which was created, and out of that, people ventured out into other aspects of individual expressions, and therefore, you got a very pluralistic type of approach to creativity, so that you had a number of very, very valid viewpoints.

MS. LARSEN: What were some of the issues? I mean, there was abstraction and figuration, for example.

MR. DUBACK: Well, one of the big things that started was just color field paintings and then stripe paintings of all sorts. And then a mixed bag of stripe and trending more off the surface, projections off the surface, so it was wide open. Everything was thrown in the blender and it was all mixed up at once, and out of it came tremendous efforts by various individuals exploring all these factors and factions, which were brought forth. So it was a very, very lively period. And what happened was, for me, personally, I found it very exhilarating and I was able to explore, for my own needs, many avenues, which I don't think I would have done if I wasn't in the mix.

MS. LARSEN: Because you have some very-you have some rather lush and beautiful flattened figurative works that are from that time, and then you have some non-objective stripe paintings.

MR. DUBACK: Well, the stripe paintings were-they were the start. And I did that for a very simple reason, I wanted to paint very large works. So in order to paint very large works, I had to gain control visually and in my mind the geometric proportions of what I wanted to state. And this was a means of denying influences outsides, such as trees, people, you name it, in this very simplistic statement. In other words, it was just color. And I took that there expression and I applied it to landscape painting. And I find it very rewarding, because as I delved into that, I was able to very matter-of-factly and concisely conceive of big spaces in the most simplistic forms. And after I did this for a very short period of time, I said, what am I going to do if I'm going to paint wider, longer, narrow stripes. I said I'd get bored with that, so then I started to put in and incorporate figures. And they were in a geometric pattern also. And then it allowed me to play with color, and I could juggle the color around to suit what I felt was an interesting hole. And it just evolved. And after I did the color, I also figured, well, maybe I should have some projections off the surface, additives onto it. So I went into that.

MS. LARSEN: You even did collage on your painting, didn't you?

MR. DUBACK: That's right, the collage aspect. And then I figured, okay, where am I going to go? And this all started, basically all of this started, because in my very early work, I questioned every square inch of the canvas. So in turn, I figured, I'll strip everything bare, which I did, and I started with the stripes, and then gradually over the time, I started to add this, that, whatever came into view. But just the essence of that, whatever it were. And it's led me to where I am at present, and that is, the main ideology I want of whatever I'm working with and whatever inspires me to work is the paint itself. And as I'm applying paint, more and more, it's just the paint in its gestural aspects, much like the abstract expressionist did, but in a purer state because there is no overlapping. It's just whatever I put down in that sector is isolated.

MS. LARSEN: You don't go back into and rework your surfaces.

MR. DUBACK: No, I just try to isolate each, what I call, meter. Now, it could be a big swirl with a big brush or a multitude of swirls with a small brush, but I try to isolate that. And much like a child when they paint, they're not thinking technically of anything. They just put the paint down. And in that sense, it's the most honest truth that one could probably arrive at because it's done with no ego. It's just put down, bing, straightaway. And that's where I feel my work is leading more and more. But there's another element, which is creeping in little by little, and that is the conflicting element of a very stark element of stripes, shall we say, or a form of that nature, against the very active, conflicting type of thing. A chaos against a very placid -

MS. LARSEN: Oh, I remember seeing some of those last fall.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah. This is one who did that once, which was very-in Cézanne, there's a painting of a quarry with-in one corner he has a diagonal of an orange, yellow shape. Now, it has that characteristic of the geometric form with a total chaotic type of execution. And people approach this-many artists are involved with this in time of this conflicting type of application, but nobody has really pushed it. It's always there.

MS. LARSEN: It's not easy.

MR. DUBACK: No, it's a very hard thing to do.

MS. LARSEN: Actually, to make the whole thing fall apart into-

MR. DUBACK: Right. Because one could cancel out the other and you would not have a complete whole. So it's a very, very intriguing aspect to work with amongst many others. But that is where I'm at in my work at present.

MS. LARSEN: So I'm still following my chronological line here, so you left the Waldoborough farm place in what, the early-

MR. DUBACK: When I left Waldoborough, I sold that to a painter named Ray Taroke [Phonetic]-no, I'm sorry, I sold it to John Grillo first. John Grillo was a very close, and is to this day, a very, very close friend even though I don't see him that often. When we do, it's just like we never parted. And I respect John very much and I found John to be one of the most truthful, sincere, sensitive people. He's a flirt for all women. He loves women, but he's a damn good painter. And he's not afraid to venture out on new avenues of expression. He was having a marvelous time with Howard Wise Gallery at one time, which was just phenomenal, phenomenal. I dare say, I feel he was better than de Kooning, much better. He painted with such gusto and control. It was just amazing. I just attended - last year? Last year, I just attended a show he had of work done from the period of Howard Wise, and it is just as vibrant today, in fact, more so than it was then. And he's just a marvelous man.

MS. LARSEN: Where does he live now?

MR. DUBACK: First of all, let me say this. John has to have people around him. He demands people. So he only stayed there one summer. Then, he in turn-I sold it to John for, I think, I forget whether it was $900 or $1,000 and he in turn, turned around and sold that same house, which I bought for $500 for $18,000-[They Laugh]-to this painter called Ray Taroke. Ray Taroke took it over and he in turn did more to the house, and I don't know what he finally sold it-and I understand he was living in Europe now.

MS. LARSEN: So when-what year did you come to this house?

MR. DUBACK: It must have been in the late '60s. I found this house here and we came here. And I didn't live here year-round. We lived here six months and then I lived in New York six months.

MS. LARSEN: That's nice. That's very nice.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah. And it proved to be-well, most of us did that. Blackie did it. Alex did it. We'd spend six months here, six months in the city.

MS. LARSEN: And when you were here in Maine with them, did you see them a lot?

MR. DUBACK: When we were here, when we first came to Maine, I drove Al Katz and Freddie Dipolo, and I forget who else came up, because I had wheels and they didn't. So we came up and that's when I acquired the house in Waldoborough, and Alex acquired the place he has over in Lincolnville, and Freddie never got a place. But we used to see each other once a week. I mean, we would work all week and then it came to pass that one of us would have a dinner and everybody would come and then the other party would have a dinner, and it rotated around.

MS. LARSEN: And you'd look at each other's work?

MR. DUBACK: Oh yeah. And we used to swap work every once in a while. I thought, oh, okay, I'll come over and pick up these-[inaudible]-so we did that. And that went on for a while until my family started to take more time. And they, in turn, had influences, which took up more time, so gradually that petered out a little bit. And then again, we would just work. Work all the time.

MS. LARSEN: Now, when you went to Skowhegan-did you go back to Skowhegan at all?

MR. DUBACK: I only then went back to Skowhegan once, many, many, many years later. And that was a very amusing thing because, of course, Skowhegan has changed and they've had some new buildings put up. But a

studio that I used to use, after Skowhegan closed, when they were finished with the season, oft times they needed somebody to stay on, so Blackie, Alex, and I, we got jobs around the place. And we were given a place, Bill Cummings let us use the red farmhouse, his house, when he left. And we also were given a cook, somebody who cooked for us. And we had a studio to work. After we got through working, we also had a studio to work in. And I got in the studio, which was used by Sid Simon at that time. And the reason I'm mentioning this is because when I went back many, many years later, I drove up past where the offices were, which was opposite where Sid's place was, Sid Simon's studio, and there was an easel outside with my name on it.

MS. LARSEN: Oh, how nice. [Laughs] Now did you know Henry Varnum Poor?

MR. DUBACK: Oh yeah. Henry was a very, very influential person in my eyes, because he wasn't the greatest painter, shall we say, but he was a born, fine teacher. And he had a sense of everybody's endeavors, as to where they might go. And in his own way, he would encourage that their outlook, and he said, you know, landscape is where you truly learn. He said, from there you can do whatever you want. And it proved to be so.

MS. LARSEN: Not drawing the figure, but landscape?

MR. DUBACK: Landscape. You're drawing, you know. If you can do a landscape, you can do about most anything. So in that score, he opened Maine up for me, basically. And he opened Maine up for a lot of the young men who were there at that time. And he just was such a very nice man. Also, he was a very fine potter, one of the best I've ever seen. Speaking of potters, this young man on our road here, 131, Pearlman [sp], he's a very good potter, a very creative potter.

MS. LARSEN: Yes he is.

MR. DUBACK: And he's not afraid to speak out neither. It's gotten him into some trouble. [Laughs]

MS. LARSEN: What does he speak out about?

MR. DUBACK: The injustices of politics, especially in the town here. People don't like him too well.

MS. LARSEN: I go in there and I find the things very interesting, very creative.

MR. DUBACK: He is.

MS. LARSEN: I'm glad he's here.

MR. DUBACK: No, I am too. He's a very nice man. I like him. I like his work. He's not afraid to take a chance, you know? And he's got some good taste too. He gets some interesting people in there, you know, that he shows. No, he's a good thing, very good. You know, and he has to work like hell too to push his work around at various shows. But he is a creative individual and it's nice to see. It's not just the usual nonsense of pots. He's willing to take chance and stick his neck out and come up with something. So he's very nice. And where were we now?

MS. LARSEN: Well, let's see. So Alex Katz settles in Lincolnville and Barry Langlais has the house in Cushing.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah, when we lived in the city, we used to transfer ourselves one after another via the fire escape when it was warm. And that's where Blackie met his wife. She came and-

MS. LARSEN: That's Helen, right?

MR. DUBACK: Yeah. She came in my place and then we took her up the fire escape and she met Blackie and they hit it off. And eventually they got married.

MS. LARSEN: Now Blackie passed away rather prematurely, didn't he?

MR. DUBACK: Blackie, yeah. Blackie-unfortunately Blackie became an alcoholic. He was a very social man and he just drank, I felt, a considerable amount like a lot of young painters I know. They overindulge and then, in turn, I guess I've been lucky because I didn't like to lose a day, and that's what I did if I overindulged. I was gone for two days. I couldn't work, so I just didn't. And Blackie just succumbed. He drank a lot. In fact, once when I had to come back here to Maine because my house was ripped off by some burglars, I had called the Thomaston-or they called me, the Thomaston police and said, Mr. Duback, we have some merchandise here at the trooper station that I think belongs to you. So I said, okay, I'll come up. So I drove up, but I didn't want to come to the house because it was winter and I didn't want to open it up just for one day. So I asked Blackie, I called him up and I said, could I spend some time with you. And he said, oh, absolutely. So I arrived and Blackie arrived and he had just come back from shopping, and he had two brown paper bags and they were loaded with alcohol. So that evening, of course, we sat around and talked and reminisced and drank and talk and reminisced and drank and the next day, I found that I had to spend another day over here, so I said, no, I can't go back

down. [Laughs] So I got, at that time, there was this Knox Hotel in Thomaston there. I got a room there for the night, but I just couldn't face another night. It was too much for me. And I thought Blackie was a tremendously creative man. I mean, when he had his first show of wood paintings, shall we say, he just did such beautiful things.

MS. LARSEN: He did, didn't he, yeah.

MR. DUBACK: They were beautiful. Those abstract pieces were gorgeous.

MS. LARSEN: Where did he show in New York?

MR. DUBACK: He showed on Tenth Street with those in the Area Gallery, and then he went uptown. Castelli saw them.

MS. LARSEN: That's what I thought I remembered.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah, he got in with the Castelli with those abstract pieces. And then when he came up to Maine, he left the city and he moved up to Maine. And then he started those folksy-

MS. LARSEN: The animals, the farm animals?

MR. DUBACK: Animals, yeah. And he started those up here. And I liked them, but I really like the early pieces, the beginnings of everything. Those, I felt, were very, very powerful. Powerful image, powerful creatively, and just beautifully done.

MS. LARSEN: And some of the big, big figurative ones were outdoor pieces and they've kind of faded away in the-

MR. DUBACK: Well, it takes a lot to keep those up because they were done with just pine or spruce and subject to all sorts of insect infestations, rot, you name it. And unless you keep them up, it's a big thing. I understand they had quite a problem with the piece he done for Skowhegan, the Skowhegan Indian. And they cost him almost as much if not more to restore it and keep it up than when he originally did it.

MS. LARSEN: Oh, sure, that's not surprising.

MR. DUBACK: So those pieces and Helen can't do that anymore. I mean, she is in charge of all it.

MS. LARSEN: It's a real shame because they are so good and intrinsically they're worth a lot, but there doesn't seem to be the wherewithal to take care of them.

MR. DUBACK: Oh, the cost, and Helen doesn't have that capital to do it.

MS. LARSEN: I know, and no one else steps in to do it. Where are our great museums in the area? Yeah, that's a project that they should be.

MR. DUBACK: It's a sad state of affairs.

MS. LARSEN: It is. Okay, so I think we have duplicated our session that we had lost and so this is it, 56, 57 minutes. Good.

[Break]

MS. LARSEN: This is the second session with Mr. Charles DuBack. We are in St. George, Maine. It is the 17th of December, 2004. We are speaking about his mid careers and later, and it's a lovely winter day. Our volume is pretty good. Okay, this is Susan Larsen for the Archives of American Art, interviewing Mr. Charles DuBack. When we finished our first session we were-you had described to me your loft on 28th Street and your affiliation with one gallery and then the beginnings of your involvement with the Landmark Gallery?

MR. DUBACK: Well, that came a little later, actually. That came when I went into SoHo.

MS. LARSEN: Okay. Could you tell me about sort of 10th Street and-or the atmosphere of the mid-'50s in New York and-from what I read and understand, it seemed that de Kooning had a lot f influence on younger artists and people were very aware of the abstract expressionists all of a sudden and the market was starting to heat for American art. Was that something you took into consideration?

MR. DUBACK: Well, at that time-being young, you're always open for various new ideas. And the abstract expression movement freed us, so to speak, and it allowed us to endeavor-to invade other lines of thought-

multiple, pluristic types of lines of thought, and experiment with each of them to see what they had to offer.

MS. LARSEN: What would some of those be?

MR. DUBACK: Pop, minimal, a slight, oh, shall we say mystical approach in painting, figurative but with a new twist. It permitted great freedom for young people to really become investigative and in turn find out where they wanted to go. For myself, I was involved with various aspects of this endeavor and I worked it through till I got what I want out of each individual event, shall we say, and then I pushed on to the next one. But always behind all my work there was a leaning to go back to nature. That remained with me and is the prime moving force today. Now, nature can incorporate people; it isn't just the landscape. Or it can be termed better "life," as you're associating with another human being and with the world around you. And I am extremely interested in color because it just can make a person very happy; it can invoke all sorts of moods. And I'm also, at this particular time, after many years of plotting in various directions, trying to establish something which has been attempted many times but with few end results, because they are always attached to the literal aspect of vision. I consider myself to be an abstract realist, basically, because I use nature as my departing point. And I find that through this you can get the same response if people are willing to look and put out from themselves what you get from a very literal transcript. And I feel this is more pertinent today for the simple reason if you want a literal transcript you can take a photograph of it, and now, even with digital, it is even more astounding. So it's a different viewpoint. I'm of a different age than a lot of young people coming up today, but they in turn continually stir my mind. Now, all these factors come out-come about because of the activities that transpired in 10th Street. And at that time de Kooning-you name it, Roscoe [sp], and a personal friend of mine who I thought very well-very highly of-Milton Resnick. I mean, he took paint and he made paint mean something. And the image was totally incidental. He made paint live. And this appealed to me. And also when I came to Skow- even I met an elderly painter, very realistic painter and a great potter, Henry Varnum Poor. Now, this man could see beyond the end of his nose, so to speak, and read into every student as to what they were trying to attain. And he was a very moving force for me because of my affiliation and love for the landscape.

MS. LARSEN: What did he say to you? What did he demonstrate to you?

MR. DUBACK: He just brought out everything which I believe, and that is the landscape is where we all sprang from basically, and we have a direct affiliation towards it. Like you go to the city, Manhattan; the crowning jewel there is the park. If you take that part away, people would be going stir crazy who couldn't get away from the city, but they can go to the park, they see a little green, they see some birds, they see some ponds with fish in it or wherever, and it gives them a moment of sanity in this fast and faster-paced world we live in. And another influential factor which occurred in my life were two books; one called Faster.

MS. LARSEN: And who is that written by?

MR. DUBACK: I forget who that is-[Inaudible]-I think, something like that. And the other was Chaos. These two books were aligned with much of my philosophy about art because the abstract expressionism, and before that, the impressionism, broke up the surface of paint and started a whole line of thought, which is still prevalent and being explored today in many ways. Technically into the digital age it's come full round. And this is a moving thought process open for everybody to investigate. And what happens is everybody sees it differently in the matter of painting. I mean, they interpolate it differently, and that's what's so unique about it. In the abstract and expressionist days, everybody was able to break out, become free, because of this movement. It's like movements in the impressionism in France; this happened here. And out of that we had all sorts of pluralistic approaches. You name it, they're out there. And this is what was so marvelous because it afforded each and every artist the opportunity to be himself.

MS. LARSEN: So that period of the late '50s did have many paths.

MR. DUBACK: Oh, many paths. It opened up a multitude of paths. And it's proven- when you look back at that and see who came out of it, it's just amazing.

MS. LARSEN: During that time you had a recent show of some very beautiful paper collage done at that time -

MR. DUBACK: Yes.

MS. LARSEN: - and where were you living and what was going on when you were making those?

MR. DUBACK: Well, the summers I would spend in Maine in North Waterboro, and the winters I spent in Brooklyn Heights, but my studio was on the Bowery. And those collages basically were an outpouring of simple flat surfaces. And these were brought out and come about because I wanted to break away from every detail that you visually have in front of you when you look. I wanted to deny all that and get at the basic essence or basic structure of what you see. And I found that this was one way to do it.

MS. LARSEN: Those of us who have seen the paper collages by Alex Katz at that period note a great similarity with yours. Were you seeing each other at that time?

MR. DUBACK: Yes. We had talks amongst ourselves, but we worked separately-very much separately. Look, you were bound to be influenced with your thought process because you conferred and discussed these things.

MS. LARSEN: Yours have a more architectonic quality, to my eye. They're a little more built.

MR. DUBACK: Basically I consider myself a painter who builds paintings. I put things on, I take them away until the structure is sound. So I do have this here trait. And plus I have built-I've built a couple of homes and so forth, so it's part of my nature. It's like you lay a brick and you lay another brick, and then you lay another brick. And this is the same attitude which I've applied to may painting. I mean, it's ingrained. I just-I didn't force it upon myself; it was there and I just utilize it.

MS. LARSEN: Well, those collages are much admired in recent days and I'm glad about it -glad to see that they've found their place.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah, so am I. I found-that was a very nice little show for me to see a reawakening in these particular ideas because they're so closely tied with a lot of the work I do today. And every aspect of my endeavor has been to lead on to what I'm doing today. And when I look back, the people who look at the various phases, they look at it, and at first they said, what is this chap trying to do; he has so many avenues of expression. But upon closer examination if they really want to partake of that examination, they can see why they were done.

MS. LARSEN: Now, for example, some of the paintings-the larger paintings you did at that time incorporate physical things. They have cut-out pieces of wood or fabric or a variety of elements attached to these rather massive canvases. How did you see yourself fitting in that endeavor at that time?

MR. DUBACK: Well, I got involved with a conversation with George Ortman, who was working with projections of a sort, and it was a problem which was very intriguing to me because to project anything or add anything which is other than paint on a canvas, you induce another line of thinking, and I set up a problem-whenever I do a painting I always set up a problem for myself to solve it.

MS. LARSEN: By "projection" do you mean that it projected into the room space, into the viewers' space?

MR. DUBACK: Into the room more, even off the surface of the canvas an inch, or whatever, anything that comes off the surface, which is a challenge because you encompass a number of problems, like shadow. All these aspects are involved in your attempt to project, and a lot of people, it's very exciting to project things because you've invading the space you actually are in. And few people who are involved in this line of thought solve what they started out to do. And one party who I admire by the way today, a present-day painter, Frank Stella-I admire what he does, and it's titillating, it makes me want to see more. But upon close examination I find it's exciting but he hasn't solved, as an intellectual person-which he is-hasn't solved what he started out to do. A lot of the accidents which occur are just that; they aren't planned, they're just accidents, and they don't fully resolve what he wants. He projects off the surface-tremendous space; three or four feet some of these structures-but how can he figure the shadows that are occurring or the volume of color that occurs as you go from a light surface to a dark surface? You have to have a mind which is really almost like a scientist in investigating something because there are so many unknowns which you have to confront and solve.

MS. LARSEN: Now, some people have said that work that projects in that way is akin to something theatrical. I think of an artist like Red Grooms, for example.

MR. DUBACK: Well, I knew Red. He was a friend of mine. And Red's work is a little folksy because of where he comes from. Let me insert this also. I was trying to figure out for myself where my desires and leanings are for painting with color, and I traced it back basically to my heritage of being Czech and all that folk aspect in the background. And it comes out-these things come out unbeknownst to even yourself. They just are there and they blossom. Now, Red Grooms comes from Tennessee and it shows, and he's a city boy with a country heart.

MS. LARSEN: That's well put. That's very nice.

MR. DUBACK: You know?

MS. LARSEN: Yeah.

MR. DUBACK: He is. And he-I like Red; he's a nice fellow. He's a very human man-a human being. He's not pushy. He just does what he does and that's it.

MS. LARSEN: Now, how were those projected paintings received at the time, when you showed them?

MR. DUBACK: They were never shown except in my studio.

MS. LARSEN: Goodness, why is that?

MR. DUBACK: [Laughs] I just didn't push them. The only one that went out is "The Coopers." That's the only one.

MS. LARSEN: So we've just shown them here in Maine a year ago.

MR. DUBACK: Right, the first time out after -

MS. LARSEN: And one of them was purchased by the Portland Art Museum.

MR. DUBACK: Yes, and it looks great there, by the way.

MS. LARSEN: It does look great there.

MR. DUBACK: It really looks good. And Susan was telling me that a group of children came in and they sat down and mimicked the painting.

MS. LARSEN: Oh, how nice.

MR. DUBACK: Very big figures they made-very, very nice. Very nice. So I felt very gratified.

MS. LARSEN: So it's a work that's now alive in the world and it's fulfilling a role. Isn't that wonderful?

MR. DUBACK: It lives well

MS. LARSEN: Yeah, it does. It looks great there.

MR. DUBACK: Oh, another thing about it is I'm there because all the clothes in it are my old work clothes.

[They Laugh]

MS. LARSEN: That's great.

MR. DUBACK: This painting, which I was unable to bring back from New York State, is another big painting. It's about that big.

MS. LARSEN: It was too big to move?

MR. DUBACK: It's a three-section-yeah, I have to get a truck for the bloody thing. But it's two heads with appliqué. I used appliqué on this-felt appliqué. And it's sort of like Adam and Eve. It's a very nice painting.

MS. LARSEN: You better get it so we can all see it.

MR. DUBACK: I'm going to get it up here because I have to get it up here. It has to-

MS. LARSEN: Now, one of the important chapters that I recall you telling me about sometime was the Landmark Gallery experience. Can you tell me when that was?

MR. DUBACK: The Landmark Gallery evolved because of the same situation that 10th Street evolved. A number of painters, myself included, ran at odds with a lot of things that were going on. And we decided to have a gallery of our own, just like they did in 10th Street. So we got together-Daphne, my wife, and Sideo Framboluti, and Nora Speyer, his wife, Tom Boutouis-

MS. LARSEN: How do you spell that?

MR. DUBACK: Framboluti?

MS. LARSEN: No, Boutouis.

MR. DUBACK: B-O-U-T-O-U-I-S I believe it was, yeah. And Jean Cohen, Alex Katz's first wife. And we got this gallery on Broome Street, and I worked a deal with the owners-it was a co-op taken over by a number of people. I worked a deal with them that we would have a certain rent to pay, and it only would accelerate so much per year, nothing beyond that, and we had a legal document drawn up, and it ran for 10 years. In the ninth year the co-op members' board asked us if we would increase our monthly payments, and I said, no, we've got another year. And we ended up paying less than the co-op members themselves were paying for their maintenance factor, and they were very, very nasty to us that last year. So what we decided to do-I mean, we knew what was

going to happen; they were going to go through the roof with the rent. So in the ninth year we put it up on the market for sale, and another group came in and at the end of 10 years we moved out and they moved in. But that gallery was a gallery which allowed us to have a show every other year or so, but we could choose the artists that we wanted to show.

MS. LARSEN: In that 10-year time, who else came along who showed with you?

MR. DUBACK: Oh, George McNeil, Doug Moore [sp]-oh, god-Bob Beauchamp-god, there was a whole slew of them. Let's see-and it went on and on and on-Al Held, Lester Johnson, Alice Mason, who is Emily-

MS. LARSEN: Alice Trumbull Mason?

MR. DUBACK: Right. Reub Kadish, sculptor, Ronnie Bladen, George Ortman, Burt Hassan, Wolf Kahn.

MS. LARSEN: How do you spell Burt's name?

MR. DUBACK: B-U-R-T.

MS. LARSEN: And the last -

MR. DUBACK: H-A-S-S-A-N.

MS. LARSEN: Okay, thank you.

MR. DUBACK: Emily Mason was there, Wolf Kahn, Lois Dodd, Si [sp] Boardman, Herman Cherry, Al Jensen [sp], Rocky [sp], Al Katz.

MS. LARSEN: And was there a director or a curator or-

MR. DUBACK: Well, we all-when we chose work, I-Sideo, Tom and myself would go out to galleries-not galleries, studios; I'm sorry-and we've view work, you know. People would come in and they would like to show, and we would go out and we'd see maybe three or four painters a week.

MS. LARSEN: Wow.

MR. DUBACK: And if we were lucky-if we were lucky we might see one that was a painter. And we took [?] the shows that way. And it didn't matter if it was man or a woman-a painter. We were quite surprised; we put together a show once and we realized that over half of them were women. So it was a very well received gallery in the art world. In fact, we had a Christmas show at which we'd have maybe 100, 110, (hundred) 20 people. Each one would have a work in the show. And it was a nightmare to hang. Oh, absolutely-you know, the last painting, where do you-[They Laugh]-and we're bound to make people very unhappy.

MS. LARSEN: Sure.

MR. DUBACK: The repercussions that hit you after the show were not very nice sometimes. But you did the best you could. And the gallery was just marvelous. It was something that we relived what was done on 10th Street in SoHo. We were sort of like a belated extension.

MS. LARSEN: So what were the dates of those 10 years?

MR. DUBACK: Oh-

MS. LARSEN: I'm asking you hard questions here.

MR. DUBACK: That's-oh, god. I don't even remember when the hell we started it, frankly. Let me see. You know, I don't even have the dates on these things. Oh-it was from the '60s sometime-I don't remember exactly when-to the late 70s or early 80s, somewhere around there.

MS. LARSEN: From the late '60s to the late 70s you think?

MR. DUBACK: Yes, the late '60s, that's about it, yeah.

MS. LARSEN: Maybe I can look through that-get a sharper fix on that when we're finished.

MR. DUBACK: Somewhere around there. You know, my dates-

MS. LARSEN: Well, I know, but art history is about dates as well as facts, and also concepts.

MR. DUBACK: It just was a great period of time. We put on a hell of a lot of nice shows. And a lot of these people weren't being appreciated by galleries uptown. And what happened quite often, after they had a show at our place they were picked up by a gallery uptown.

MS. LARSEN: Good. That's great.

MR. DUBACK: Like George McNeil, for example, hadn't had a show in about 10 years, and he wasn't getting anywhere. We gave him a show; it was picked up immediately. And he rode on a wave after that.

MS. LARSEN: Yes.

MR. DUBACK: And he's still-

MS. LARSEN: Right, I knew George McNeil slightly.

MR. DUBACK: A good painter, and a nice man.

MS. LARSEN: And a very great fellow-very great.

MR. DUBACK: Very bright.

MS. LARSEN: Yes.

MR. DUBACK: Very bright.

MS. LARSEN: I really appreciated his-

MR. DUBACK: A nice man.

MS. LARSEN: Yes.

MR. DUBACK: So, after that-after we folded the gallery there, I just went and just painted, because I had-one gallery I had gotten into ran for about two years, and prior to getting into the gallery I was approached by 12 galleries, and I finally chose that one because I liked the stable one.

MS. LARSEN: Which one was it? Do you remember?

MR. DUBACK: Oh-[pause] - let me see here; I'll have to check. David Herbert Gallery.

MS. LARSEN: David Herbert Gallery.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah.

MS. LARSEN: And where was that? It says-

MR. DUBACK: New York on-I've got to put my glasses on-69th Street. And at that time I was working with those stripes-

MS. LARSEN: Yes.

MR. DUBACK: And I was in great company. Oh, Myron Stout-[inaudible]-the whole bit. It was a great show. And it was just a great gallery; that's why I went with them. But what happened was, like all too often, the backer pulled out and the gallery folded.

MS. LARSEN: Too bad.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah. So I was left hanging, just like all the other chaps who were left there. What do you do then? You can't go back to those persons who you turned down. They won't touch you with a 10-foot pole, so to speak, so you plod on-exactly what I did; I just went on and did what I had to do, regardless. And I found that when you have a tendency to be your own man and not get involved with any set restrictions, you're in trouble. You're like an old saying of mine: a round peg in a square hole. You're in trouble. And that's been the story of my existence-[They Laugh]-for so long.

MS. LARSEN: Well, now, when did you come here to Maine? You were in Waldoboro-

MR. DUBACK: Yes, that was in the '50s.

MS. LARSEN: Okay, and we're here in St. George, and when did you come here?

MR. DUBACK: When did I come here? I had the Waldoboro place for about-well, I should say, oh, 10 years, and so that would be-it was in the '60s that I came here, late '60s. I bought this place because the girls-we found this camp over here and that's how I found this place.

MS. LARSEN: And this house was what at the time?

MR. DUBACK: Excuse me?

MS. LARSEN: What had this house been?

MR. DUBACK: This house was run as an Inn at one point. It was a big-it's a big house.

MS. LARSEN: Yes.

MR. DUBACK: And I looked at it, and also I found another piece of property over there close by, which was a toss-up-which of these should I buy, you know, get involved in? It didn't matter to me, basically. And I offered the other to my brother-in-law and he-I said, which one do you want? And he said, oh, I'll take the one over there. And I said, okay, so I'll take this house here, the big house. So what I attempted to do then was turn it into two studios and a one-family house, so to speak, because my wife painted and I painted, so in the house I put two studios. And it evolved out of that. Now, this house has been worked upon by me and other persons in order to bring it to this shape. It wasn't insulated, it wasn't winterized; it was just a summer place. It originally started out as a boathouse and then they excavated and put a cellar in the other half and built-and then built over the boathouse, and it just mushroomed. It's like Rube Goldberg in the carpentry trade; you know, you keep adding on, adding on, adding on. And when I took it over I started taking away, taking away. [They Laugh]

MS. LARSEN: It's right on the river, so it-

MR. DUBACK: Oh, the river-actually the road-Wallston Road is named after this place.

MS. LARSEN: Really?

MR. DUBACK: Yeah.

MS. LARSEN: Well, Wallston was the Inn or the person who-

MR. DUBACK: Wall of stone-Wallston.

MS. LARSEN: Oh, Wallston Road. So there's a stone wall out there.

MR. DUBACK: Right. That's why they named it Wallston.

MS. LARSEN: Oh, that's very interesting. And this chap who bought this place was a hotel entrepreneur in Boston. He had a number of hotels, I gather. And he-when he passed away he left it to his caretaker, Hocking.

MS. LARSEN: Hocking?

MR. DUBACK: Yeah, who was the Hocking Quarry over here. And they in turn had it for many, many, many, many years, and then when they-Hocking passed away, his heirs split it up into a couple of sections. And of course it ran-from Clark's [sp] land it ran all the way down to Malcolm's place, the tax collector, that whole strip. It was a big strip.

MS. LARSEN: Nice stretch.

MR. DUBACK: And then they cut it up, you see. They divided it up. And when I bought this place, this place here has 12 acres, and I had an option to buy the one on the north side of the property. But I did a very astute thing when I purchased this. Being that that didn't have a house on it but just had the remains of an old icehouse, and ice pond, I figured if anybody built there, they'd want to build down by the water as close as they could get. So I laid a restriction on it when I bought this place and it was incorporated into the agreement that you couldn't build 25 or 30 feet from the line, and the shape of the property cancelled out any building down by the water.

MS. LARSEN: It made it undesirable.

MR. DUBACK: Right. But Zacharias [sp], when he bought the place, he figured right across from the pond, you see, could comply with what he wanted and still comply with what was drafted. So he built a very, very nice place. In fact, I just got a letter-we just had a phone call from him and then we just got a letter, and I think he did the wrong thing by moving out.

MS. LARSEN: When his wife passed away.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah, he did the wrong thing.

MS. LARSEN: It was very quick and very abrupt, wasn't it?

MR. DUBACK: Yes, it's too bad. And I spoke to him and he didn't sound very happy where he is. He's out in Washington State. He didn't give it a chance after that; he should have-

MS. LARSEN: Maybe too many memories.

MR. DUBACK: I don't think that was it. I just don't think he gave it a chance and ran it. You know, he was a handsome young man yet.

MS. LARSEN: Yes.

MR. DUBACK: Come on. He could have remarried.

MS. LARSEN: It was a big shock.

MR. DUBACK: I should have put him onto my sister who-her husband died. It would have been a perfect union. I was out there and I think he's sorry he moved from where he-

MS. LARSEN: Well, it's beautiful here. So you-at some point you left New York and lived fulltime in Maine. When was that?

MR. DUBACK: Well, what I did was-before I did that I had a very big loft in New York space. I had 4,500 square feet. Half of it was studio; half of it was living. And my wife and I, at that time we decided, we don't use the living-it was a beautiful space, gorgeous space. I had done a real job on it. It was the top floor and beautiful-but it was wasted. So I said, why don't we sell the living sector and I will construct in between the two studios an area for us to live in-you know, kitchen, have a little bedroom. We had the bathroom there already. So that's exactly what I did. I sold the other section and we in turn found the place in New York State. I found the place there with 148 acres, a little house. It was on a river that ran into the Hudson called the Rosanne Peel [Phonetic]. And it's about-

MS. LARSEN: How do you spell that, do you know?

MR. DUBACK: Oh, god. It's about-it was about seven miles from the painter's place who had it on the Hudson there.

MS. LARSEN: Church.

MR. DUBACK: Church. It was about seven miles from Church's place. And it was very nice-very nice. So what I did there is I tore down-in the process of fixing that place up I tore down four buildings, I renovated the house, and the barn, I made two studios in it. And the house was very reminiscent of something I gather I've never saw-I never saw it, but that Cagney [sp] had in upstate New York-very quaint little house, very little windows. The drawback was it was in a little valley.

MS. LARSEN: A notch [?] they call it?

MR. DUBACK: So you never really got the sun for the house. The studio was a little further away where it was open so you'd catch the sun. And my driveway was about over half a mile long to get to the house. It was real wretched thing in the winter. Oh, terrible. I mean, you'd get one snowfall after another and before you know it you have four feet of snow. So I got a tractor at that time and I used to plow it myself to gain access for it. But eventually I found that the taxes elevated. When I purchased the place-140 acres, mind you-I was paying $600. A year after I fixed up the place, my taxes went to $5,000.

MS. LARSEN: Wow. And this is in the '60s, right?

MR. DUBACK: So I said, oh, my god, I can't handle this. I had New York, I was there, and I had this place here in Maine, and I had that place and it was just killing me.

MS. LARSEN: Sure.

MR. DUBACK: I mean, I was trying to figure out, how the hell am I going to work this damn thing? So finally I figured, okay, we'll sell the house off. First I sold a piece of land. You only can divide the property three times. So I sold the piece of land and a painter there, Joseph, bought it, and he built a house and studio, combined. And

then I refinished the house into-I did the studio into a living section again-the kitchen, dining, living room, bedroom and so forth, and still two studios on the upper floor. Then, after a number of years my wife and I-after 40 years of marriage-

MS. LARSEN: Forty?

MR. DUBACK: Forty years-it wasn't a nasty split of any sort, and thank heavens my girls were grown up then-we went different ways. And that is - I lived there for -

MS. LARSEN: On the farm in New York.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah. And I finally said no; I'm up to my-so I moved to Maine. I was spending six months here out of the year anyhow, so I moved up to Maine.

MS. LARSEN: Do you know the year?

MR. DUBACK: Hmm?

MS. LARSEN: Do you know the year?

MR. DUBACK: Well, all right, figure about 12-figure 13 years from today. That would be what?

MS. LARSEN: 1991?

MR. DUBACK: Yeah, that is about-1990 or 1991 is when I came here and lived full time, somewhere around there. And I have been here ever since. My wife took over-I did a big job on our place down there. It is beautiful. It is gorgeous.

MS. LARSEN: Your wife has the loft in New York?

MR. DUBACK: No, no, she sold her-she sold that loft in New York and then she just-I don't know what Daphne did but she just had to move out of the house that we lived in. That is how come I had to move out all of that stuff. I left it there, you see. And then she has another little building that she is in turn fixing up in the studio.

MS. LARSEN: Are you talking about Brooklyn Heights?

MR. DUBACK: No, no. [Germantown?], New York. And she is fixing that up. Brooklyn Heights I got rid of many years. I sold that to Victor Gotbaum, the labor leader. And a very amusing thing happened. I was having a show and I was having a brochure printed in Japan. And you do that six months ahead of time and so forth because of the transaction back and forth. And Michelle [sp] was coming down in two weeks and I hadn't gotten my brochures. And I found out that they were down on the dock, but there was a dock strike. How is this? What am I going to do? So I mentioned it to Victor, who hadn't owned the house yet, but was in the market of buying it, I told-[inaudible]-he said don't worry about it. I said, okay. The next day-

MS. LARSEN: You had your brochures. [They Laugh]

MR. DUBACK: I had my brochures. [They Laugh] And he said-

MS. LARSEN: [Cross talk].

MR. DUBACK: He said a very amusing thing to me. He said, you owe them-[Laughs]- he meant the mafia. But I never-nothing ever-[inaudible, cross talk]. What is it to them, you know?

MS. LARSEN: Some art brochures.

MR. DUBACK: Couldn't care from Adam about the whole thing.

MS. LARSEN: So, now, you came to live in Maine fulltime and you were by yourself, yes.

MR. DUBACK: Yes.

MS. LARSEN: Yes. And what relationship had you established with whatever art world there is here in mid-coast Maine?

MR. DUBACK: Well, in Maine I approached the Caldbeck and that didn't gel. And then I got involved with Chris Huntington [sp] and O'Farrell. He came up and he lied what I did.

MS. LARSEN: The O'Farrell Gallery in Brunswick, Maine.

MR. DUBACK: And I had a show there and was affiliated with him for a number of years, but then again he didn't give it a long enough run. He spent a lot of money foolishly in my eyes and it caused him to jeopardize his endeavor, which was the gallery at that time. So that folded. But out of that, he had a man working, Wes LaFontain, and Wes himself was involved with Greenhut Gallery in Portland. And he asked two people. He asked Bill Manning, who he liked, and myself if we wanted to partake of some show there. So I says, for you, since you'll there, I went down and looked at the stable and it was interesting but it didn't shake me. But I knew Wes.

MS. LARSEN: He is terrific.

MR. DUBACK: Wes is absolute top of the line. He should have his own bloody gallery really.

MS. LARSEN: Yes, he should.

MR. DUBACK: He really should.

MS. LARSEN: It is only a matter of money I'm sure that he doesn't it.

MR. DUBACK: That is it. He should have his own gallery. He puts together a good package and he knows what he is doing.

MS. LARSEN: And he is very professional and a very nice person.

MR. DUBACK: He is just a nice man, very nice man. So I got involved in Wes and he has been very, very nice to me. And through him a number of people have purchased things over the year, and I feel very gratified.

MS. LARSEN: So who are the artists in the community that you talk to, if any, on a regular basis?

MR. DUBACK: Lois.

MS. LARSEN: Lois Dodd.

MR. DUBACK: I don't see her often but we stay-because I don't go around that much. And I see Blackie Langley's [sp] wife, Helen, occasionally, not as often as I should. And I see Nancy Wisseman, and John, I see them. And who do I know? I don't partake of a lot of the people around. I'm here, work, that is it, that is it. Oh, Dennis Pinette I might see once in a while. In fact, it was through my observation of looking at work, I put in-sort of jumped started Dennis.

MS. LARSEN: How so? Tell me.

MR. DUBACK: Well, I purchased a couple of pieces of his and mentioned him to various people. And I liked what he did when he started. I liked geometric factory approach. What he is into now reminds of his-his uncle was a painter, by the way.

MS. LARSEN: Really? What was his name?

MR. DUBACK: I can't remember what his name was.

MS. LARSEN: Was he also a Pinette or he was some-

MR. DUBACK: I imagine so, but he was a very figurative painter; very, very realistic. And it has rubbed off in many ways on Dennis. Dennis has a-I understand where Dennis is. I mean, economy-wise is what prompts him and drives his work I do believe, you know. He hasn't broken out of my eyes to greater horizons, which he is capable of, very capable of. And I just-he settled in a niche and he feels comfortable there I gather or else he wouldn't pursue it.

MS. LARSEN: He is what, in his late 40s now or something like that?

MR. DUBACK: No, no. This isn't really-

MS. LARSEN: No, no. That is age. I was talking about his age now.

MR. DUBACK: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. He is comfortable in it and I just wish he would- you know, but when you do that, you are going to put yourself out on a limb and I don't know.

MS. LARSEN: That is true. That is true. And do you keep in touch with friends elsewhere?

MR. DUBACK: Oh, yeah, one of my dear friends is John Grillo. And I have another dear friend who is not around anymore who is Ed Dugmore and Earnie Briggs. John is-I just got a card from him but I didn't get it from him. He

usually sends me a card, but it came from his wife, Cassie. So I have to call and find out what is -

MS. LARSEN: See how he is doing.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah, you know, he is 86 now and he had a stroke once so who knows whether he is still viable.

MS. LARSEN: So now you are spending time in Florida part of the year.

MR. DUBACK: Well, we were-I had been to Florida a number of times for short periods of time. With my first wife I was down there on the Keys, for winter, and I worked as a carpenter then. And now my daughter and her husband are in a position to help. So they purchased the building down there, a little house, and they said we could use it.

MS. LARSEN: Okay, so when did Phyllis come into your life?

MR. DUBACK: Phyllis is my daughter's husband's mother.

MS. LARSEN: Oh, my. You just told me that long ago and I forgot.

MR. DUBACK: And at my age, I am, you know, I'm not about to pursue women at my age.

MS. LARSEN: But Phyllis is adorable and wonderful and very talented.

MR. DUBACK: But we have a mutual interest and Phyll didn't know anything about painting or painters or the life of a painter, but she took a gamble and came up here. We hooked up. I mean, it's not a bad, youthful thing.

MS. LARSEN: But you're wonderful together. You are just great together.

MR. DUBACK: Well, you know, we are different, we have different interests, and maybe that is what happens. But we're companions. You know, at our age, you don't look for this wild romance, come on. [Laughs] Anybody that pursues that has got rocks in his head, really. [They Laugh] I mean, I want somebody who I can rely on and talk to and so forth and share certain interests. She doesn't share all of mine but that is all right. But she does have a very-she is very compassionate.

MS. LARSEN: She is kind and sweet-

MR. DUBACK: Very kind.

MS. LARSEN: She is cute, she is just great.

MR. DUBACK: Just a nice woman.

MS. LARSEN: She is a great lady.

MR. DUBACK: And she is a great cook.

MS. LARSEN: Yes, she is.

MR. DUBACK: She's a great cook.

MS. LARSEN: We all agree on that.

MR. DUBACK: And she loves it. But you have to take her out once a week.

MS. LARSEN: She is also bright, very smart lady. [They Laugh]

MR. DUBACK: She reads.

MS. LARSEN: I'm going home and telling my husband that.

MR. DUBACK: She reads-you wouldn't believe the amount of books she reads. I mean, she reads every afternoon religiously until about 4:00. And she prepares our meal.

MS. LARSEN: Good for her.

MR. DUBACK: I mean, I go out there in my studio and I work all day, you know, and she calls over or comes and gets me. [They Laugh]

MS. LARSEN: You have got it made here. You both do.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah, we have-we're not extravagant. We live within the small means we have. I am a little concerned about this coming year. If they up the bloody taxes again, that is going to hurt. I don't know. I mean, I will have to talk to the kids about that because if they keep up with their taxes here, it gets prohibitive. I don't know what the hell I'm going to do. I mean, if I have a good year, okay; if I don't, whatever I have goes to the taxes. I hope that the show, [Kennedith [sp]?] show supposedly in Florida, it will gel enough; I'll put it aside for the taxpayers. The tax of the house, the taxes on the excise, tax on the car, the insurance-they upped the insurance on the house already and I get very annoyed at the insurance companies. Because of their catastrophes elsewhere.

MS. LARSEN: Yes, they take it out on all of us.

MR. DUBACK: Right, they raise everybody else's. They don't-they cover themselves all over. So I went to the insurance agents for the sake of talking. I mentioned it to the insurance company. I said, look, they didn't give me any notice; they just said you pay. And I said, they should then notify that they are going to insure, you know, and so forth. I got very upset. I mean, you know, and they don't care whether you pick it up or not.

MS. LARSEN: You can go elsewhere.

MR. DUBACK: Right, but you have to have it. Did you see what that fire happened down the road?

MS. LARSEN: Yes, I did, but that's a tragedy.

MR. DUBACK: That is amazing. The firehouse, with the engines-and it's quarter of a mile away from them. So you and I, we don't stand a chance. The only thing we'll have left if they come and hit this place with fires is the chimneys, that is it.

MS. LARSEN: Well, so what do you hope for in the future for your work? Your evolution?

MR. DUBACK: My work, I don't know. I mean, I have thought about what is going to happen after I go. The kids are going to have a problem because a lot of the pieces over the years I have just given to them to cut down on the heritance factor.

MS. LARSEN: Which is smart.

MR. DUBACK: I learned that early. You do that and then in turn it doesn't amount to much. And one of the reasons I came up, really settled finally in Maine is because of the law that is written here for inheritances.

MS. LARSEN: Really?

MR. DUBACK: Yes. It is the only state in the union to date that allows your heirs to, in lieu of taxes, to donate pieces to various institutions.

MS. LARSEN: Helen Langley did that.

MR. DUBACK: Blackie was the one who got that started through the art [learners?] of New York, and it's very feasible for artists up here, otherwise, the heirs are stuck with a big problem.

MS. LARSEN: With a big tax bill.

MR. DUBACK: So this is one of the reasons that I-it isn't the main reasons but it's one of the reasons. But in turn I'm here. And what happens? I don't know, I have thought about that often. What am I-how am I going to resolve this for them and so forth, and the only thing I can see is I leave it in their hands.

MS. LARSEN: I guess what I was asking, in the [lights?] that you have, what do you hope for in terms of things you're going to create?

MR. DUBACK: I didn't hear that.

MS. LARSEN: What do you hope for in terms of things you are going to create? Do you have some unfinished, unfinished problem or issue or-

MR. DUBACK: I still have more resolve in certain of what I am working towards. I mean, I'm just in the position of aligning two diverse approaches and trying to [conjoin?] them into one aspect or part.

MS. LARSEN: And what are the two diverse things that you are working on?

MR. DUBACK: One is a very chaotic approach and the other is a very minimal approach. And it doesn't have to be

a hard edge I thought. And the minimal can incorporate aspects of Rothko and the way he clouded the colors so you get a penetration in and out of the color I field. So it opens up tremendous opportunities but to arrive at them, you have got to put in your time and experiment.

MS. LARSEN: And both exist in your work in the past.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah, it stems from various aspects which I have done in the past. Like, when I was in Dabort Herbert [Phonetic] I just did strike and that has always been with me because it's part of the structural aspects of the works that I do. In order for a work to live it has to have, like a human being, it has to have a strong skeleton upon which you can hang whatever. Our skeleton is the human body we hand all of the muscles of the organs, whatever. The same thing exists for the painting. In order for a painting to be very sound, sturdy, it has to have an underpinning as such that it can bear the weight of whatever you put on it. It can just be a big field, but unless it's conceived with the skeleton and soundness of it, it will fold and it won't ring true. So the same conditions are what I'm striving for in my work, to get this stuff all as a unit. It can be two different types of approaches. If they can align themselves and be solid, then I have succeeded. And when kids-when people say to me my work looks like children-[audio break, tape change]--I feel very flattered because-

MS. LARSEN: I can't imagine someone saying that.

MR. DUBACK: Because it's-I strive for that. As an adult, it's not an easy thing to do, when you've been corrupted by an education. And to get at that basic simplicity, which a child has is not an easy thing to obtain. It's something, which is very difficult and it's only through tremendous effort and trial and error that you get to that state. Some people are a little lucky; it happens automatically. But it's not an easy process. And I get involved with basically the color aspect of the whole thing. I make mental notes. And it isn't exactly the color that you rely on really production-wise, because that's not what I'm after. I want to go beyond a mere image that is presented to one. It's got to go beyond that. And you're dealing-what you have to deal with is a paper, a canvas, brushes, paints. These are the things you work with.

MS. LARSEN: Well, your work is always surprising. There's always a-season-to-season, there's a new thought. It's consistent, but new thoughts come in and then you resolve, you work to resolve them.

MR. DUBACK: Right, it's sort of to keep alive. Look at the man who was changing more every day, Picasso. He changed every bloody day. Everything was a new experience, a new experience, a new experience. This is what keeps a man alive. You know, a lot of people approach me and I tell them how old I am and then they say, wow, you hold your age well. And I say, this is what it is that I do.

MS. LARSEN: Sure. Artists are notorious for-

MR. DUBACK: I discuss with my seminars. I've been very lucky in the sense that I have something, which keeps me going. It's a challenge just every day I get up, there's a new thought. Whether I solve it is another thing, but it's a new thought. And it just perpetuates itself more and more. Like as it is now, I'm packing here to go to Florida for five months. I've already got all the canvasses primed. I'm taking down a number of stretch canvasses so I can just start in, and I'm looking forward to the problems, which I'm going to be confronted with. And I already have one, which I brought back from last year, which I wish to-[inaudible]. And I'll see, I hope it comes off. But I don't know what I'll end up with. I never know what I'm going to end up with. People who tell me they're going to end up with this and this, I look at them, I say, oh, they're blessed or they're cursed, one or the other. I look at a new endeavor not knowing what I'm going to end up with. I have an idea of what I'm going to do, but I really don't know what I'm going to end up with because there are so many unknowns, which are to be incurred, and you have to solve them. And the only way you solve them is through your manually, mentally working at it.

MS. LARSEN: There's a factor of time and how you feel and what happens. And isn't it like a conversation with the canvas? It speaks back to you and then you say something and it says something?

MR. DUBACK: Yeah, you speak back and forth. Sometimes you speak once, and it comes out perfectly, very rare. And there have been occasions when I'm working, I don't even feel it's me who is working. This is a very strange feeling I've come to. I don't know whether other men feel it. But occasionally I get so engrossed in my work that I am oblivious to everything else that is around me. And the work just flows like a river, no impediments at all. It just keeps moving right along. And before I know it, it's finished. That doesn't happen all the time. It's a very rare occasion, but when it does, it's absolutely a glorious feeling. As you look at it, you say, gee, did I do that? Where did it come from? Being a painter, I don't know about other men, but it's something you don't turn off at 5:00. It's with you all the time until that problem is solved. Years ago, in my studio in North Waldoborough, the kids used to come in and I used to have them knock on the door, you know, to gain entrance to the studio. Or Daphne would come down, my first wife there, and I would be sound asleep. And then, when I'd wake up, they'd say, you were sleeping. I'd say, no, I was working because it's strange. It really is strange. If I have a problem I can't lay my finger on and solve in my conscious hours, oft times when I take a short nap, when I get up, the

problem is solved.

MS. LARSEN: In your mind, you've been working on it.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah, subconsciously, your mind continues to work and maybe because of the fact that you're at rest physically, your mental capacities have more energy to solve what you're after. I don't know, I mean, it just works that way sometimes with me. So they laugh, when I tell them I'm working, but it is. It's a fact. It may be fifteen minutes, a nap, five minutes, whatever, but boom, it certainly helps me. And because I work sometimes long into the evening if I'm engrossed, once I put a mark on a canvas to start on a work, that's it. That canvas is my child. I can't stop because one reason is the matter in which I'm working. I mean I'll put stuff down and I'll take it off and I have a grace period of a week to ten days to do this in. So as I'm building a canvas, I keep changing, altering shapes, feelings, volumes, weights, whatever, distance between colors and so forth. And when I finally get this thing that I can't change or add anything else, stop, because anything else one might put on it is completely superfluous. It doesn't need to be. So I am lucky, because I have this curse, if one calls it that to keep myself-[inaudible].

MS. LARSEN: That's great, it's-any creative life, you are your own boss and taskmaster and no one can say, like Donald Trump, you're fired.

MR. DUBACK: I mean, as I've said early on, I'm driven. I really am. I mean, I can do many other things, but the only thing, which is gratifying to me is the painting. And so I paint. And I come upon a little something when we were talking earlier about projections off the surface. Well, I think it's very exciting, but I come to, at this state in time, if you can't do it on a flat surface, you can't do it, because therein takes separates the men from the boys. You can have all sorts of tricks, but if you can't do it on that simple flat surface, whatever it be, it just won't work.

MS. LARSEN: I think most artists have felt that with some exceptions.

MR. DUBACK: I think it's true. You know, you're operating with something, which is flat. Make it alive. Do it. No tricks, just make it alive. Make it sing. Make it so that people feel something friendly. If they don't get that, you don't see-

MS. LARSEN: Well, one of the things I found so rewarding when we did that retrospective of yours was that people would walk in the door and they would suddenly smile. And there were so many smiles in that show that it was a very joyful environment.

MR. DUBACK: It was very well received, thank heavens.

MS. LARSEN: It was, it was, and the upbeat aspect of it, the joy in the work was obvious to all, including the reviewers.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah.

MS. LARSEN: And that was so gratifying. Serious and joyful at the same time, that's a hard thing to put together.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah. I mean, I've had people call me too serious at times. Listen, if I'm not serious, I'm in trouble. I can be serious and playful at the same time, you know. And I can laugh at myself, which I do often, and more so now than I did before-[Laughs]. It's funny, it's true. It's like Picasso. I was at this showing-I'm telling you this some time ago really-I'm at the show Picassos at the Museum of Modern Art and from the time I walked in to the time I left, I was laughing. And people were looking at me, you know, what is this fool doing? This is serious art. Art is serious. But this man made me laugh, he made me enjoy being there looking at him. He laughed at himself. You know, he was a virile, vibrant young man, and then he got to middle age. Then he got to be an old man and he looked back on all that and he was amused. It was funny. And people don't see this. You know, they go in there with a super-serious attitude and they miss the point of the whole bloody thing. Really.

MS. LARSEN: Yes, I agree. I quite agree.

MR. DUBACK: Have you been to the MOMA yet?

MS. LARSEN: Not yet. I'm going next month.

MR. DUBACK: Oh, good for you. I'll catch it on my way back, I think, but boy, it looks great.

MS. LARSEN: Yes, it does.

MR. DUBACK: It looks marvelous.

MS. LARSEN: Just a relief to see all that art again.

MR. DUBACK: Yeah.

MS. LARSEN: And have it in a real public place.

MR. DUBACK: I want to see, you know, my favorite painting of all time is-[Inaudible]- [Avignon ?]. Oh, I love that painting.

MS. LARSEN: Really. Oh, you're a tough guy? That's a tough painting.

MR. DUBACK: It's a tough painting. It's a profound painting. It really is.

MS. LARSEN: It is. It's a--[audio break.]

[End of audio.]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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