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Oral history interview with Don Bachardy, 2009 May 21-October 7

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Don Bachardy on May 21-October 7, 2009. The interview took place At Bachardy's home in Santa Monica, CA, and was conducted by Susan Morgan for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Don Bachardy has reviewed the transcript. His corrections and emendations appear below in brackets with initials. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

SUSAN MORGAN: So this is Susan Morgan interviewing Don Bachardy in his home in Santa Monica—did you say Santa Monica or Santa Monica Canyon?

DON BACHARDY: Either.

MS. MORGAN: Either? And it's May 20 [1999]?

MR. BACHARDY: I think 21.

MS. MORGAN: May 21, 2009. And this is for the Archives of American Art, the Smithsonian Institution, Oral History Program.

And they have a fairly straightforward chronology that they begin with, and so, we talk about when and where you were born.

MR. BACHARDY: In Los Angeles, eighteenth of May, 1934.

MS. MORGAN: And then they want to know about your childhood and your parents and—

MR. BACHARDY: I grew up in the Atwater district of Los Angeles, very close to Glendale. My father was born in New Jersey. His name was Jess [Bachardy]. My mother was born in Michigan but grew up in Cleveland. I think they moved to Cleveland when she was two or three.

And her maiden name was DeLand—Glade DeLand. And some aunts tried to persuade her mother that Gladys was a much more respectable name than Glade. And it was an early rebellious position that my mother took, saying—and she would imitate herself as a child saying, my name is Glade, rather than—because the aunts had already started calling her Gladys. [They laugh.] And Glade, I think, is a wonderful first name.

MS. MORGAN: It's a wonderful—

MR. BACHARDY: Glade and Jess, yes. And my middle name is Jess and I always wished I'd had the sense when I left home at 18 to start calling myself Jess. I've never liked Don, whereas Jess—but I didn't get on well with my father, so that's probably what kept me from doing it.

MS. MORGAN: To have it be distinct from him.

MR. BACHARDY: Yes.

MS. MORGAN: But Jess, that's a good name.

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: And your father worked for—did he work for Lockheed?

MR. BACHARDY: Lockheed. Their honeymoon trip—they were married in Cleveland and they set out on their honeymoon trip—California or bust—in a Model T Ford. And I have wonderful snapshots that they took along the way, of each other.

MS. MORGAN: So what year was that? That was—

MR. BACHARDY: That would have been 1928. And of course the Depression was just beginning, and I think in '29

or '30 they—even the aircraft company my father was working for shut down and they had to retreat to Cleveland and stay with my mother's parents and start out again the next year, by which time the aircraft company had reopened and my father was rehired. And he stayed there until he retired in the '50s.

And during the war he was often working swing shift and even the graveyard shift, which was wonderful for my mother, brother and me because we were on our own and we were brought up by my mother, who loved movies as a girl, and made the transition from silent movies to sound movies perfectly, and made me Ted and me her movie-going companions.

And so, it was like moonlighting. My father was away at work and Ted and I were instructed not to let him have any idea whatsoever of all the movies we'd been seeing with our mother. [They laugh.]

MS. MORGAN: I love, in the film, when you are looking at her scrapbook—

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, yes, yeah, yes.

MS. MORGAN: —for a number of reasons. One is also that you say—you point out how neatly she cut out the pictures, and I just—there's something that's very much about you in that line to me because it's that you're looking at what she's done but then you're also seeing it.

MR. BACHARDY: Because I'm like that too. My scissor work on clippings is very expert—[They laugh]—and I can't break myself of the habit. If I cut anything out of the newspaper, I always do it very carefully.

MS. MORGAN: And it's such a nice moment because it's also that you're very—you're seeing very clearly who your mother is in the way she did things instead of just having it be the blur that when it's—I think that when it's someone very close to you, you don't necessarily see them in that way, in such a distinct, identifying way.

MR. BACHARDY: Yes.

MS. MORGAN: You know, it's just what they do. It's part of a—

MR. BACHARDY: Well, when I was a child it would have seemed to me, if I saw any likeness between my mother and myself, I would encourage it. I want to be as like her as I could be. Both Ted and I adored her. We were her devoted fans. And she was a wonderful mother. I think it's very rare when a mother has two sons and there's never any division between her affection.

And always what I remember more characteristically of my mother, saying always, I love you two boys very much. It was never any hint of favoritism. And Ted and I therefore—we bickered when we were very young, largely because of me. I remember clearly enough to know that I inspired most of the troubles we had as boys. But there was never anything to fight over in regard to our mother because we knew she loved us equally. And she maintained that throughout her life.

MS. MORGAN: How much older is he than you?

MR. BACHARDY: Four years and four months, yeah. And you would think that's a wide separation for two brothers who were very close, but our love of our mother and of movies brought us together. We were devoted movie fans and started going to movie premiers—of course, taken to the early ones by our mother.

The first one I can remember was in 1942 when I was 8, and we were sitting in bleachers outside Grauman's Chinese. And the movie was something—I don't know why they ever decided to give it a premier—something called *The Pied Piper* [1942] with Anne Baxter, a weird World War II movie. I've never seen it again but I can't imagine it's of much interest.

MS. MORGAN: And when did you and Ted start going to premiers on your own?

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, really with devotion in 1950, but there were several premiers. Of course in the '40s we would have either gone secretly with our mother on the red street cars when my father was working a late shift, or later in the '40s he would drive us. But he always maintained his independence as a non-movie lover, I think just in self-defense.

But he could be persuaded to drive us to Hollywood for Danny Kaye, his first movie, *Up in Arms* [1944], and *Duel in the Sun* [1946], *Anna and the King of Siam* [1946]—what others? But the first one that I clearly remember Ted and I went to at the Chinese was *All About Eve* [1950] because we were devoted to Bette Davis and we'd never seen her in the flesh.

So we went there especially to see her, and we actually infiltrated—we were dressed up in ties and jackets and we stood behind a couple of the right age as they were standing in the ticket line. And there were, almost

always at premiers, a ticket-taker on either side of the line, so one never knew which tickets had been taken by the other one. So we stood very close to a couple of the right age and got in as their sons. [They laugh.] And we stayed for the movie.

Actually, Ted had infiltrated by himself the *Duel in the Sun* premier, and he had been photographed sitting behind Gregory Peck, waiting to swoop down and get his autograph. And it was in one of the movie magazines that we collected—we got most of the movie magazines, and so we were all thrilled to see Ted photographed with Gregory Peck, and I still have that clipping from the magazine.

And that gave us the idea, after we got into the *All About Eve* premier, we went to others and we always took our camera and began photographing ourselves with the stars. I have a wonderful collection of us with practically every major movie star of the early '50s, and many pictures with the very people who eventually became our sitters.

MS. MORGAN: Well, I love that not very long ago you had Jane Russell here, didn't you, and she signed the—

MR. BACHARDY: And she—oh, there it is. Did I show you?

MS. MORGAN: Yes.

MR. BACHARDY: Yes.

MS. MORGAN: And so you have the photograph of her from the 1950s.

MR. BACHARDY: Yes. That was a premier she went to at the Pantages Theater, which is where RKO movies were shown, and that's probably why she went. It was a movie called *Two Tickets to Broadway*. And it's a lovely picture of her at the peak of her beauty.

And she's such a likable person. I knew she would be because I went to the American Cinematheque for a screening of one of her movies I'd never seen, *The Revolt of Mamie Stover*. And she spoke, and she's totally unpretentious and told wonderful stories, a lot of them about her friendship with Robert Mitchum, which lasted until his death. And she spoke of him while she was sitting for me. I liked her a lot.

MS. MORGAN: In the documentary—Leslie Caron is in the documentary and you had—

MR. BACHARDY: I photographed her.

MS. MORGAN: —photographed her—

MR. BACHARDY: Yes.

MS. MORGAN: —when you were teenagers.

MR. BACHARDY: Actually, most of the other people I've been photographed with by Ted I didn't—I was too shy to show them the pictures. I think Leslie Caron and Jane Russell were the only two I ever showed the pictures of.

MS. MORGAN: So when you—did you begin drawing the movie stars from the magazines?

MR. BACHARDY: From magazine pictures, and I remember when—in the early months when I was getting to know Chris, that I showed him about half a dozen of my drawings, and they were all of movie actors. And there was one of Bette Davis from a photograph of her in *All About Eve*. And Chris saw that—they weren't interesting. It was drawings. I don't believe drawings of people can be interesting done from photographs.

But what I was doing without realizing it—I'll probably say this in the film—do I? I was developing the accuracy of my eye, unconsciously, so that when I started working from life, as Chris early on encouraged me to do—and, in fact, he was my very first live sitter, and I still have that drawing. And I still very much want to do a book of all—not all because there are hundreds and hundreds—of my drawings and paintings of Chris from that first drawing.

And I have most of them. I regret all the ones I let go of. And people nowadays often ask me, could they buy something of Chris? And I haven't sold any of him, oh, since before he died. I wish I had them all.

MS. MORGAN: So I think we should—because this is a separate, you know, stand-alone interview, I don't feel self-conscious about saying things that you've also said in the film and also to talk more directly about, you know, making your own work and the drawings.

I remember when I found a drawing in a library book of somebody—*Stars in their Eyes* [University of Wisconsin

Press: 2000], your collection of movie actor portraits. I had taken the book out of the Beverly Hills Library and somebody had copied Bette Davis, and it was on a piece of typing paper with—and it was a pencil drawing and it was copied from your drawing.

MR. BACHARDY: Oh.

MS. MORGAN: But I thought that it was, like, the next—you know, it was kind of this continuing like of—[They laugh].

MR. BACHARDY: That's kind of double jeopardy.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: I mean, it's drawn from photographs. Well, at least my drawing of Davis was done from life, so that's—it's somehow a little bit closer than a photograph of her. But it's all—[inaudible]—yes. But it was Chris who first got me to draw from life and then kept at me about going to art school. He saw that I had a flair for drawing. And I put it off for four years because I was scared of failing.

And finally I did go and it took immediately, and I went continually for four years, day and night often. And it was such a relief to find my vocation. And because I'd done all that drawing throughout my early childhood, as soon as I had a live model every day, my progress was immediate.

And I basked in the admiration I felt in my fellow students. They wished they could draw as well as I did, and that was just wonderful. That gave me all the more incentive, and of course that too justified Chris's belief in me.

MS. MORGAN: And so, did you start—you went to Chouinard?

MR. BACHARDY: I went to Chouinard [Chouinard Art institute, CA]. I started in the summer term of 1956. And first it was a six-week course, and before the first week was over, I'd signed up for the full term and had resigned from UCLA. I was in my third year and hating UCLA. It was just a miserable experience for me.

MS. MORGAN: And where was Chouinard then? Was it at MacArthur Park or—

MR. BACHARDY: I just passed it the other day. It's on Grandview Street, which is a street just off MacArthur Park. It's a half a block from MacArthur Park. And the building is still there. It's some kind of Asian Society operation, and I couldn't tell for what because it was all in Asian lettering.

MS. MORGAN: And so, what was Chouinard like? Who were your teachers when you started there?

MR. BACHARDY: Let's see. The teachers—I had dissent—hating college so much because I was taking the standard course to get a standard degree, I decided if I were going to be an artist, that a certificate meant nothing to me. I had to learn to draw and be an artist, and I didn't want to have any other proof other than that, that I could draw.

So I just took all the classes where I knew there was a live model, whether it was magazine illustrations, live drawing, fashion illustration. If there were a live model, I signed up for the class. And that was one of my smarter earlier decisions.

And I went from 9 to 4 [o'clock] and often back from 7 to 10 [o'clock]. And of course Chris was always waiting when I got home to—"Let me see what you did."

MS. MORGAN: And where did you live then? You've been here since '59?

MR. BACHARDY: We were already living in the canyon. I think this house is the fifth house that we lived in within walking distance. And in '56 we were already in the first house that we bought together. Well, Chris bought it but, I mean, we lived in it together. And that was on Sycamore Road—434 Sycamore.

And so, I drove to Chouinard every day, all the way downtown. I almost always took Olympic. And in those days it was crowded, because I would have been in the 8 o'clock classes. To do that nowadays would be just unthinkable. And, of course, the freeway didn't exist.

MS. MORGAN: Exist, yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah. And, yes, I remember those years very clearly.

MS. MORGAN: I like in his diaries where he mentions where you start going to a gym, and I thought—before anybody really went to a gym. It wasn't commonplace at that—

MR. BACHARDY: There was one gym in the entire area of L.A.—one gym—and it was on Beverly Boulevard. It's still there and it's still a gym. It's under quite different management. It was then run by a man named Harvey Easton.

MS. MORGAN: It's Easton Gym. I was going to ask—it's still there.

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, it's Easton Gym on the second floor, and I used to go on my lunch break from Chouinard. And I got it down to a system I could—we had an hour and 15 minutes. I could get to the gym in 15 minutes and get back in 15 minutes, and that gave me 45 to do a workout, which was more than enough time. And within three months I'd totally changed the look of my body.

Harvey, who became a friend, who eventually sat for me—I have drawings of him—he was amazed, even he, that his method, his instruction worked. And I remember his offering, if I had early pictures of myself in a pair of trunks before I started at the gym, he wanted to take pictures of me three months later, got a before and after, which was very flattering to me but I was too shy. I refused. Can you imagine being so silly? I ought to have flaunted it.

And Chris had known other young men who had started to go to gyms and he said he'd never known any of them to develop a body like I did, and so quickly.

MS. MORGAN: Well, I remember reading it in the diaries and thinking, oh, this is so—you know, because he said, "Oh, Don has started to go to the gym and he's really"—you know, how you had changed. But I was thinking, the idea that there was one gym is—

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, yes, my teachers at Chouinard—the only—Billy Al Bengston taught. I never had a class of his. I don't think he—I think his teaching there was before I got there because otherwise I think I would have taken it.

Robert Irwin—in that first term, that six-week term, I did have a design class with him and I didn't understand a thing he said. It was way—it was kind of conceptual even then. And he later sat for me years later. He wouldn't have known—he wouldn't have remembered. I don't even think I told him I had been in his design class.

And Eva Dickstein and Marcia King were the two teachers who I got most from. And they were both fashion teachers. And why I got Marcia was because she could draw, and she would—usually at the end of class, she would sit down on one of our benches and draw the model that we had all been working with all evening.

And it was just so exciting to me to see somebody who could draw—sit down and do the very same person I'd been struggling with all evening. Eva Dickstein I don't think knew how to draw, but she, in some way, could create excitement about draftsmanship. And also she praised me, which made me respond to her, of course.

And then there was a man named Bill Moore, who taught design, and I did love the design class. That was the—I did take more than that for a summer term because I enjoyed him, and he was ruthless. He once burned a design that one of the students had hung up that—he put his lighter to it, he found it so—[They laugh].

And I remember sitting up until 2 and 3 [o'clock] in the morning doing design problems that he had given. But that was only in the first two terms. I then stopped the live model classes.

And Ed Ruscha was a classmate. Joe Goode—by "classmate," they were at Chouinard at the same time. I didn't know either of them. McMillan—Jerry McMillan—

MS. MORGAN: Jerry McMillan, yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: —they were three I knew. And I knew Jerry best because he once sat for one of my drawing classes. And, also, I thought he was very attractive so I was happy to draw him. But none of those three did I get to know in school because I was very much—even in 1956 and through the late '50s I felt very much an outsider because all I wanted to do was pictures of people. And that was the height of abstract expressionism.

And I felt these much more modern contemporary artists would just have foul scorn for somebody who only wanted to learn to draw. So I didn't get to know any of them until later.

MS. MORGAN: And do you think because Jerry McMillan is a photographer, he was—I mean, he took all of the photographs—they were living in—I think he was sharing a house, wasn't he, with Ed Ruscha at that time? So a lot of the pictures you see from that period are his photographs, so he was interested in the more—

MR. BACHARDY: I didn't even know that he was photographing then. For years he did exhibitions of his artwork. There was no suggestion of photography, and I guess he must have been doing it back then too, yeah.

MS. MORGAN: Oh, interesting. And so, what was his artwork then?

MR. BACHARDY: You know, I can't remember but I know it was paintings and drawings. It didn't interest me particularly and I just can't remember really what it looked like. I remember very well what he looked like but not his artwork. I was more interested in him than his artwork. But, I mean—I knew he was utterly straight. And I even knew the girl that he was going with at the time at Chouinard.

MS. MORGAN: So in terms of—in some ways, art school created this perfect opportunity where you really were in a situation where you could do exactly—you knew what you—it was clear what you were going to be doing forever.

MR. BACHARDY: It was so exhilarating to have an idea of myself and to have an objective. That was the great release of the art school experience for me, and of course with Chris's support and encouragement. And to have a reaction to my work at school and then come home and to have reaction from Chris, yes.

And, you see, I was after an identity, and I knew that it was essential, if Chris and I were to remain together, that I had to have an identity too, and that was it. And that gave me great motivation.

And then, in 1961, I'd done my four years at Chouinard. I then went to the state school in London. Stephen Spender arranged for me to get in because he knew the artist who was in charge at the time. I'll think of his name in a moment. I know him very well and I have reproductions of his work.

Stephen got me in midterm because I wanted to go there not for credit, not for a certificate of any kind but just to be in school. And Keith Vaughan, who did that painting up there, right over here, he was my tutor.

MS. MORGAN: What's his name?

MR. BACHARDY: Keith Vaughan.

MS. MORGAN: Oh, Keith Vaughan.

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah, V-A-U-G-H-A-N.

MS. MORGAN: A-N, yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah. He only had—and that wash there of the two figures holding hands, that's from his only show in L.A., and that would have been at the gallery where I had my first show in L.A., the Rex Evans Gallery on La Cienega. And Rex showed—gave Keith Vaughan the only show he ever had in Los Angeles, and Chris and I bought that picture out of it.

And Chris had known him—he'd met him his first trip to England after the war in '47, '48. And, oh, there is a little Keith Vaughan painting beside the front door that Chris had in his studio when I first got to know him.

MS. MORGAN: I was interested what artists he knew and was interested in, I mean, because I understand him supporting you as an artist, and I was thinking, oh, I wonder what visual artists he knew before—

MR. BACHARDY: Francis Bacon. And they were—Francis adored him, and he actually gave Chris—and Chris's friend Bill Caskey, at the time—actually gave him a little picture of his. But when Chris and Caskey split up, Caskey got the Bacon, alas.

And whenever Chris and I went to London, we always saw Francis. That was one of the great draws for both of us. He adored Chris and was always available. And in the early years we often shared our dinner with Lucien Freud too because they were good friends. And then suddenly they split up and spoke badly of each other, I'm sorry to say. But for a long time Lucien would join us too.

And, frankly, he was the most fascinating artist I ever met, with just that wild face, that wonderful, wonderful face. And he sat for me twice and—

MS. MORGAN: Here? Was it here or—

MR. BACHARDY: Both times in London.

MS. MORGAN: In London.

MR. BACHARDY: Once in '61 and then again in 1970. And the first time, I did three drawings of him, really very quick drawings that were probably done in half an hour, 45 minutes maybe at the most. And he was a very good sitter, surprisingly so.

MS. MORGAN: He was still?

MR. BACHARDY: He was really still—not only still but very intense. And I remember the second one because by then—well, he was my—whenever anybody asked me my favorite living artist, it was always Bacon, always. And by 1970 I was so in awe of him that I remember trembling for days before the sitting that he'd agreed to, even though I'd already had a sitting with him.

And that's when I did my two best pictures of him. And he was just one of the greatest faces I ever looked into. Yes, I'm very proud of having been able to do a sitting with him. And he was so apparently—whenever he spoke about painting, both Chris and I just were all ears. And I often regretted having been drunk, because they were often quite drunk in the evenings. We couldn't remember everything he had said.

MS. MORGAN: But the David Sylvester book, the interviews with—*Interviews with Francis Bacon: The Brutality Of fact* [Thames & Hudson: 1987]

MR. BACHARDY: Yes –

[Cross talk.]

MS. MORGAN: —it's such a wonderful—and it doesn't—I mean, it's appropriate for a writer or an artist—visual—just the—

MR. BACHARDY: He was so incredibly intelligent about what he was doing, and so exciting to hear these—yes, I remember when I read these Sylvester interviews, recognizing many of the things that he told us, yeah.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah, I think that's one of the great interview books.

MR. BACHARDY: And Chris loved to get down to the nerve, and he often used that when talking—just about art in general, to get down to the nerve.

MS. MORGAN: And so, did you first meet Francis Bacon in '61 when you went to—

[Cross talk.]

MR. BACHARDY: No, I think we—our first trip to England was in '56, and we did another in '57 and then a quick one in '59. And I think it's possible, on all three of those occasions, we—I met Bacon on the first trip because he really, really was fond of Chris, and so he was always available. And he was always among the very first people we would call when we got there.

And when I first went to England by myself after Chris was dead, I did call him but he wouldn't see me. He wasn't the least bit interested in seeing me. And I was—I wrote him again but he was very firm, no. And it was in character, and I realized—

MS. MORGAN: But that was—what year was that? That's probably like in—

MR. BACHARDY: Let's see, that would have been probably '88? Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: It's funny that you mentioned—it came to mind when you said that was—you know, how encrusted his studio was, you know, and it kind of—debris up to your knees, wasn't it? You know, to—

[Cross talk.]

MR. BACHARDY: —great heaps—

MS. MORGAN: Heaps.

MR. BACHARDY: —in the corner—really a heap. Oh, he used to have a—I don't remember; I forget now—[inaudible]. It was a mountain of rubbish; old painting tools, painting rags, great clusters of trash. And on the easel is a picture—the current picture he was painting, absolutely pristine, just so fresh and pretty, and just standing up in the middle of this one room next to this great heap of trash.

MS. MORGAN: So the studio has been preserved.

MR. BACHARDY:

MS. MORGAN: But I was thinking, that's a sort of picture of his mind –the absolute clarity of the work.

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, and some part—the painting radiated the intensity that had gone into it, and it was just so

incredibly fresh, as though it might have been painted in half an hour, and yet so powerful at the same time.

MS. MORGAN: And for you to see someone who worked with the figure the way that he did, how did that—

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, it was beyond me. I did, for years, especially when I started working at Cutter [ph], I used to have moments of confidence when I would try to do a Bacon portrait at my studio. I still have a few I've kept, but it was far from the best.

MS. MORGAN: There's a quote, you know, coming back to Esther McCoy, where she said that, you know, she wanted to be an architect and then after she had worked with Schindler—you know, she worked as a draftsman in Schindler's office—she realized that he moved quickly from A to H while she was still moving from A to B. [They laugh.]

And when you see that, you think—because even just talking about Bacon, you know, that searing kind of red, or just see, you know, the torqued figure or—you know, how did he—

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, and then it was heads. I mean—and I remember asking him did he ever do his portraits of people from life? "Oh, no, no, no, I couldn't. No, I couldn't. I'll maybe invite the person over and maybe sit for half an hour, 40 minutes, talking and then I send him or her away and then I paint the picture." He said, "Oh, no, no," instantly, he couldn't possibly work with the person in the room.

MS. MORGAN: It's such a different relationship to time and attention from what you do.

MR. BACHARDY: Well, maybe that's why I couldn't please myself with my Baconesque efforts, because I'd gotten so—wedded to working from life that—and of course—it's tough to really work with the freedom that would be necessary because even with all the confidence I could muster, I always have to know that my sitter is going to see what I do, and that inhibits me.

I've tried it maybe a few times but I never felt that I could work with sufficient abandon from a live sitter because there's always that moment when my sitter is going to look, and I just didn't—I didn't ever trust my sitter enough not to faint or—[They laugh].

MS. MORGAN: But what about Lucien Freud? I mean, he worked with—

[END OF CD 2]

MR. BACHARDY: And particularly the early work—very, very careful. Now, those were done from life. Stephen Spender told me he sat for Lucien, oh, hours. And then he showed this kind of pudding face that Lucien had painted.

But what I can't remember is whether Lucien let Stephen see the painting as it developed. I would guess not, but I'm not sure. And certainly I would have asked Stephen but I don't remember.

MS. MORGAN: So at that point you were still—you were working—you were doing drawings.

MR. BACHARDY: I was doing drawings and I went on doing drawings. I would dabble in color on the side secretly, always with great dissatisfaction. And my intent was to be so sure of my draftsmanship that I didn't have to think about it.

When I went into color, I could put all of my concentration on my sitter and on the color without having to worry, could I draw this or that detail? And I think it was a bright decision, and also it gave me a great appetite for color to deprive myself of it for so long.

MS. MORGAN: And because you became completely fluent in drawing—

[Cross talk.]

MR. BACHARDY: By this time I started doing color pretty much full time. I knew I could draw whatever part of the person I was working with without—almost without thinking about it.

MS. MORGAN: And you said to me once that you've been doing this—you've had sitters for—is it 50 years that—

MR. BACHARDY: Fifty, yes, yeah. Oh, more than 50. Let's see—well, that first drawing of Chris would have been in '53, and in '56 I started drawing from life almost every day at Chouinard. So yes, it was over 50 years. And I have a great, great deal of my work even from those early years.

I did throw out a lot in the first years. I've always been—purgatory—but after about 10 years I just stopped

trusting my immediate opinion of my work. In the early years I often destroyed things because they weren't nearly as good as I wanted them to be.

MS. MORGAN: Were you the best judge of that?

MR. BACHARDY: Well, it was not until, oh, I'd been—I had my first—I had my first show, one-man show, in London that year I was there in '61.

MS. MORGAN: Is that the Redfern?

MR. BACHARDY: At the Redfern, but it was, oh, probably more than 15 years after that that I did a show in which it was a retrospective show. And so I started reviewing my earlier work. And the first years of that early work I used to have two portfolios: one was the "A" portfolio, containing the work I thought was the best, and the "B" portfolio, the inferior work.

And I think every picture I chose for that retrospective show came from the "B" portfolio, so I then made up my mind I wouldn't destroy anything until it was at least a year old. So I actually destroy very little of what I do now.

MS. MORGAN: The photographer, Helen Levitt, who died recently, had a box in her studio that said "not good enough."

MR. BACHARDY: It said what?

MS. MORGAN: It said "not good enough."

MR. BACHARDY: And what was it?

MS. MORGAN: Photographs.

MR. BACHARDY: Ah.

MS. MORGAN: But she didn't get rid of them. She had them in this box that—

MR. BACHARDY: Oh—

MS. MORGAN: —they're not good enough.

MR. BACHARDY: Not good enough, yeah. Well, same principle, yes.

MS. MORGAN: But, you know, it also—you know, because Chris was also very prolific, and did he toss things out or keep things or return to things? You know, how—

MR. BACHARDY: He polished endlessly. He would do draft after draft after draft. And, no, I don't think he—I think most often he destroyed those early drafts because—it's too bad but it's very interesting. There are a few early drafts of some of the books. And of course he destroyed all of his diaries when he left England to come here, which I was so shocked when I heard.

And his defense was that he felt he'd gotten all the best parts into his work, published work, and also, leaving England just as the war was coming on, he had visions of leaving them behind and their being found and maybe by the German invaders, and getting people into trouble, his friends. But he regretted it later, he admitted, especially when he wrote *Christopher and his Kind* [North Point Press: 1987].

MS. MORGAN: *And His Kind.* That's what I was thinking—

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: —and we talked about—before about how that person isn't—it is a separate character from you, when you look back 30 or 40 years. Then it's surprising to see the things that, you know, seemed crucial or upsetting that occupied you when you were, you know, 20 or—

MR. BACHARDY: He found it impossible to refer to that Chris as 'I'—and so he spoke of him in the third person and a lot of critics said, "Oh, how pretentious; how affected." And he didn't really bother—and I don't either. I think it freed him to talk—to write more objectively about himself—

MS. MORGAN: Oh, absolutely.

MR. BACHARDY: —by saying "he."

MS. MORGAN: And because the context and the—it's separate; it exists separately from the person who's writing the story now.

[Cross talk.]

MR. BACHARDY: —somebody totally different.

MS. MORGAN: So this is almost an hour. So do you think we should stop and then you can have a little—

MR. BACHARDY: What time is it now?

MS. MORGAN: Well, my watch is fast but I think it's about 20 past 12 [o'clock].

MR. BACHARDY: Yes. Yes, I—

[Cross talk.]

MS. MORGAN: I don't want you to go straight to the studio—

MR. BACHARDY: And also, I'm very nervous about this sitting. It's my first in over a month. I haven't taken a month off in I can't remember when. And I haven't even done any work on this non-objective thing I've been doing. The young architect I've lived with in this house for 10 years has got AIDS.

MS. MORGAN: Oh, I'm so sorry.

MR. BACHARDY: And I just found it out a month ago. I had no idea. And I knew he was HIV positive. It turns out he hadn't been taking any medication whatsoever and how has 35 T cells.

MS. MORGAN: Oh.

MR. BACHARDY: And I went up to Oregon the week before last and I slept in his house for four nights, and the doctors would come in and say, "Well, I think we've licked it." And I said to myself, I doubt it. He came from the hospital on Monday and he doesn't have a caretaker. He's in this house alone. He weighs less than I do and he's a big guy. He just has one friend who looks in on him. I'm going up again the first of June, but I'm just so worried about him, and I just haven't been able to get back in the studio. It just seemed so fruitless.

MS. MORGAN: But the studio will still be there.

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, I do feel—you know I'm used to doing it every day—doing it every day, but it's good for me to. I've been dreading getting back to it, particularly to do a sitting. I'd hoped I could warm up with some of these nonobjective pieces, but I haven't even been able to do that.

MS. MORGAN: Do you do your workouts? I like some of those—you had some of those in the show at Craig Krull [Craig Krull Gallery. Santa Monica, CA], your nonobjective paintings.

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, I did, yeah, and I've been—I did a whole series just before I stopped. It really gave me a great appetite to do more and I just haven't been able to. And I—it makes me realize what a luxury it is to do them. And I could work six, eight hours standing up without a break. I don't know where the energy comes from but—and be really engrossed in it.

And that's wonderful but—I guess I just must get myself into a state where I'm sort of hardly thinking what I'm doing, but I'll be thinking about what I'm doing today. [They laugh.]

[END OF CD 2]

MS. MORGAN: [In progress]—Francis Bacon and Lucien Freud. And I was curious; was your first gallery exhibition in London or was it here? Where did you first—

MR. BACHARDY: The first one was in London in 1961 at the Redfern Gallery in early October. I think it was the 7th of October. Yes, that was a big event for me. And I had the show in the downstairs gallery. A theatrical designer had the show in the main part of the gallery on the street level. And he was also a painter and he had his big paintings in—I think there were two big rooms upstairs and mine was just one room downstairs but hung very densely with framed drawings.

And he was the main exhibitor in the gallery and everything at the opening was happening downstairs. The upstairs was deserted because of Chris and all the people he knew in England. [E.M.] Forster was there, [W.H.] Auden was there, Henry Green, John Gielgud and even [Somerset] Maugham came, because we'd already visited

him twice at his villa in the south of France. And he was fond of us both, and that made a great sensation.

So there was coverage in the newspapers, not about the fineness of my artistry—[They laugh]—but anyway, that was okay.

MS. MORGAN: Well, you have always been—you know, you deflect—I think it's interesting; you're very observant but then you also deflect the kind of attention. So what did—you were doing drawings then, and were they portrait drawings that you showed?

MR. BACHARDY: They were. I'd arrived in January of '61 and enrolled at the Slade School in midterm, and Stephen Spender arranged it for me to be accepted on the condition that I wouldn't expect any kind of credit for my time there, and that was fine with me.

And I just wanted to be in London and to have that anchor of a school to go to, and I did. I was in faithful attendance throughout the rest of the term, which I think ended in June. And my tutor was Keith Vaughan, whose work is right there—

MS. MORGAN: Oh, right, yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: —and the third one down there and a couple more. And he and Chris had known each other from Chris's first visit to London after World War II. And so it's all connected. And I didn't go to school every day. I had at least two or three days off a week and always I set up sittings with, really, everybody I was meeting, and really worked more away from school than I did in.

I think the main objective in going there was to get myself to start painting, and that's what I was working on in the classroom but not making much headway. And I remember Keith Vaughan coming to visit me occasionally and just kind of smiling, if not laughing outright, at my attempts at painting, which just made me all the more determined to keep doing the drawing on my own because I knew I could do that.

And I suddenly had all these people I was meeting at my disposal because I was young and presentable and eager and shameless about asking favors of practically everybody I met. "Would you come and sit for me?" And at the end of the summer I had really quite a collection, and I showed it to the people who ran Redfern Gallery and they were impressed enough to offer me that show. So that was my official initiation to professional artists.

MS. MORGAN: And did you have a studio at the Slade or did you have a studio where you were living?

MR. BACHARDY: Did I tell you that I was given Richard Burton's house in Hampstead?

MS. MORGAN: No.

MR. BACHARDY: Well, that was just extraordinary good fortune. On my way to London in January '61, I stopped in New York. And for the previous few months we'd been seeing Richard and Sybil Burton. He was out here making a movie called *The Bramblebush* [1960], which I don't think I even saw. And so, he was doing *Camelot* by January in New York, and—

MS. MORGAN: And now we get back to Tony Duquette.

MR. BACHARDY: Yes. Oh, yes. Yes.

MS. MORGAN: Didn't he design *Camelot*?

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, he did. Yes, I'd forgotten that. And I saw the show, went backstage. There were Richard and Sybil, and they asked what I was doing and I said, "I'm on my way to London. I'm going to go to school." "Oh, why don't you stay in our house in Hampstead?" And I said, "Oh, that's very kind of you, you know, but I'll just get a little flat somewhere in London close to school."

And so, in a few days, I took off for London, got there. I was staying with Stephen Spender for a few days and immediately started looking for flats. Well, did I get sobered up. They were not only very expensive but drab, awful, dreary places. And after a couple of days of looking, I called up Sybil and said, "Is the offer still good?" She said, "Darling, yes, of course."

And so I got this lovely little two-story house in Hampstead. And his brother and his wife lived across the street to introduce me to the house and help me with whatever needed doing to it. And he said, "Well, I'll be out of *Camelot* in May or early June but you can stay in that house. We'd be delighted to just have somebody house-sitting."

And so, come May or June, what happens instead of going back to London, he got *Cleopatra* and they went

immediately to France. And Chris had joined me in the house in early April, and we stayed in it—I stayed in it all year. Chris was there from April to—he left shortly after my opening in October and I stayed on a couple of months. I got lots and lots of commissions after the show and it took me more than two months to do them all. And then Chris and I rendezvoused in New York in December.

So we had this lovely two-story house. And at that time it was one of the only houses in London that I visited that had central heating. So it was just perfect, just the greatest good fortune. It had a living room, dining room, kitchen, two bedrooms upstairs—it was perfect—and a little courtyard in back.

MS. MORGAN: And Hampstead is—

MR. BACHARDY: In Hampstead, and the northern line was—I caught it right in the middle of Hampstead—it took me directly to Slade. I didn't even have to change trains. It was just, what, about seven or eight stops. I could get to school in under 20 minutes.

MS. MORGAN: It's funny; I told you I read this letter from John Collier—[inaudible]—and he was living in—I recognized the address. It was so funny because he was back living in England. She described him once as a small man who likes large houses—[They laugh]—and that he always lived in, you know, amazing houses.

And I was reading this letter and I thought, I know what house he's describing because it was—I don't know if you know this, but on Willow Road there is a modernist house that the architect was Ernö Goldfinger. That was in —

MR. BACHARDY: I don't know it but I'll bet I saw that house, yeah.

MS. MORGAN: You would remember it because you're sort of walking along and everything is, you know, quite old and then there's this very modern—

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, yes, I'll bet if I saw a picture of it I'd remember because I know Willow Road, yeah.

MS. MORGAN: But that's a fantastic place to be, to find yourself.

MR. BACHARDY: And it was just, what, about four houses from the edge of the heath. And it was a new house, the one that I borrowed, and Gwen [ph]—his brother and sister-in-law lived in, was an old row of houses across the street. And theirs was a proper old one and very nice for it. But ours was so comfortable and—

MS. MORGAN: And central heat.

MR. BACHARDY: And central heating. Chris really minded the damp in England, so that was very encouraging to him, yeah.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah, in '61 that's really unusual for a house like that.

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, it was. And it even had a shower. Showers were unusual in England, yeah.

MS. MORGAN: And, so, where was the Redfern Gallery? What part of London?

MR. BACHARDY: On Cork Street.

MS. MORGAN: Oh, yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, just a few steps away from the—

MS. MORGAN: It's still there.

MR. BACHARDY: —Burlington Arcade. It is still there.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: And it's still called the Redfern Gallery. I have no idea who the people are who run it. Everybody I knew there was long since dead.

MS. MORGAN: So I can actually—I can picture it. When you said Burlington, I know where it is. So then did you come back here?

MR. BACHARDY: Chris and I rendezvoused in New York in December, stayed through New Year's and then came back here.

MS. MORGAN: And in '61 you were in this house already, weren't you?

MR. BACHARDY: Yes. Yes.

MS. MORGAN: I think you've been here since '59?

MR. BACHARDY: Fifty-nine, yeah. And I'm less than two months from the fiftieth anniversary of the day we moved in, the last day of September. I've been sort of vaguely thinking of maybe giving a party here but—

MS. MORGAN: And it's September 30?

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah, the last day.

MS. MORGAN: It's our twenty fifth wedding anniversary.

MR. BACHARDY: No kidding? [They laugh.] No kidding. My goodness.

MS. MORGAN: It's also—September 30 is also Truman Capote's birthday but that has nothing to do with any of our personal—

MR. BACHARDY: We already knew him. Well, Chris had known him a long time and he certainly came to this house several times.

MS. MORGAN: So were there any publications when you had the exhibition or reviews or—

MR. BACHARDY: I got a spread in *The Queen* magazine, which thrilled me, with several reproductions of my drawings—one full-page reproduction of a drawing of Angela Lansbury. And, yes, I was thrilled by that. And The London Times, with a notice about the show, published a drawing of Thornton [sp] I'd done, but the article, as I'd said, was more about the people who showed up to the opening and about who worked there.

But there were some reviews, complaints that the actresses—I included drawings of actresses in the show—were drawings more of makeup than the real person, just because, for instance, I'd drawn Gladys Cooper in her stage makeup because it was on matinee day, and she sat for me in between the matinee and evening performance. And I was thrilled by the heavy stage makeup. And I loved the challenge of finding or at least suggesting the real face under the makeup.

MS. MORGAN: And we've talked about that before because also, when you're doing a portrait, or if that's what's presented, that's what—

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, I can—I couldn't possibly draw anybody without the makeup, just leave them. And, in fact, doing a person in makeup like that is like doing two drawings at the same time—the drawing over the face as well as the face. But, at the time, I enjoyed that a lot. That was fun for me.

MS. MORGAN: And so then when you came back here, what was that like? Did you have a gallery here? Did you show—

MR. BACHARDY: I immediately got one on the strength of my show in London, the Rex Evans Gallery on La Cienega, and quite an attractive place. It's still there, the building. It was a walk between shops, which led to a building in back. It was kind of a little mall at the time, and still is. And it was upstairs in quite a nice space, two rooms, one that was for receiving people and the other for the exhibition, and that was my first Los Angeles show and that was September '62.

MS. MORGAN: And La Cienega, that was when there were loads of galleries—

MR. BACHARDY: Lots of galleries and one night a week—I think it was Tuesday—used to be gallery night when all the galleries would be open and people would come and stroll and look into various galleries. And I was on hand for those evenings, and Rex Evans and his friend became good friends. You'd know him right away. He was a big man, a fat stomach, blonde, red-faced with a blonde mustache. And you would recognize him from movies. He's in countless movies playing small character parts.

He was a good friend of George Cukor and he's in a Garbo *Camille*. And he's—I just saw him in a movie the other day. I can't think what it was. But he shows up briefly in all kinds of films. And he was very nice, and I had two, three shows, I think, with him. And then Rex died and his friend, Jim Weatherford turned on the gallery for maybe a year or two by himself before he gave it up, but after Rex's death, Irving Blum invited me to show with him.

And I had one show in early 1970 at Irving's gallery, also on La Cienega across the street. And that was around

the time that I met Nick Wilder. And Nick Wilder became a good enough friend that he told me in confidence that Irving Blum had referred to my show, to friends of his, rather as a joke on the art world because I showed all kinds of drawings of artists. And he made it sound—so Nick said—and I believe it; I don't think he made it up. Irving mustn't be really serious about representing me; he didn't really believe in my art, whereas Nick did.

And to this day I've never found anybody who understood my—anyone in the art business who understood my work as well as he did. And when he invited me to show with him, I was delighted because he had, really, the best gallery in town certainly, from my point of view, and represented all kinds of people that admired art. So that was a done deal.

MS. MORGAN: So did he have Blum and Helman then or is he—it wasn't Ferus—

MR. BACHARDY: No, Blum and Helman really was his first New York gallery.

MS. MORGAN: But it wasn't Ferris; it was a separate gallery.

MR. BACHARDY: It was the same building, the same space as Ferus Gallery but it was then, by that time, called the Irving Blum Gallery.

MS. MORGAN: Irving Blum Gallery.

MR. BACHARDY: Gallery. And then when he left for New York, that's when the Blum Helman Gallery came into existence there.

MS. MORGAN: So Nick Wilder—so many things that I've read. I mean, people—since I didn't know him—it's sort of their education came through knowing him, or their experience of what that gallery—

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, he was very, very smart and very shrewd about art, and he was one of those rare dealers who was in the business because he loved art. He wasn't in the business to make money. He managed —to make money if he could, but he was a very bad businessman, and even though he made a lot of money with the gallery, he spent a lot of money and he finally got himself deeply in debt.

But for the few years that he was running that gallery, he had the top gallery in town and more prestige than anybody else, so I was very delighted to be one of his [10 ?].

MS. MORGAN: And what was his background? Where did—

MR. BACHARDY: Gosh, I can't tell you. He was Ivy League education. He was very smart, very intelligent, very well educated person. And Chris and I knew him for a few years because he was David Hockney's dealer, and we didn't much like Nick. We thought he was rather superficial. And it was a long time before he showed any interest in my work.

And, in fact, what—and we used to see him at David's a lot, and when David came here, he would often ask to bring Nick with him. But I never suggested taking Nick out to my studio. And when I had the show at Irving Blum's, it was entirely a show of people in the art world, mostly artists but also collectors and a few gallery people.

I'd done a drawing of the famous man in art—oh, god, my memory is really slipping here. I'll think of him in a minute. And so, I asked Nick to come and sit for me, and he was—I thought when I asked him, there was something odd in the way he agreed. He was sort of skeptical, it seemed.

Anyway, he came down and sat perfectly for me, and I did a drawing that was very, very like him. And he agreed and he signed it and dated it, and we shook hands and he left. And I only heard later that he told friends he was absolutely astounded because he thought the whole objective in being asked to come sit for me was that I wanted to show him my art, and I didn't. It didn't occur to me. I'd just assumed long ago that he could have cared less about a portrait artist. I didn't show him anything.

And that so flabbergasted him that he wanted to see my work. [They laugh.] And that's how it all began, and he finally offered me a show. And I've never shown my color work—and I've been doing a series of very loose washes of people and not necessarily—nobody famous. And, in fact, they weren't intended even to be identifiable likenesses.

And at the same time, I was doing these very careful, precise drawings of well-known people, and of course I thought that's what I would show at Nick's. Chris said, "Why don't you show him the color work? Why don't you show him the color work?" I said, oh—and Chris kept insisting. And, really, to appease him I finally said, "Okay, I'll show him, well, twelve"—or whatever. And Nick came down to see them and immediately said, "Oh, let's show these."

And when later his friend, Jack Woody, became a publisher and asked Chris and me to do a book together and we did the *October* [Twelvetrees Press: 1981] book for him, and then he suggested doing a book of my celebrity portraits, like a fool I didn't speak to Nick about it. I didn't ask his advice.

And it was already going to press when Nick found out about it, and he was very against it because he said that was just perpetuating my image as a celebrity artist and that he'd envisioned an art book which was much more of this—much looser color work. And I've always regretted—I don't know why—

MS. MORGAN: Was that the stars—that book—which book was it with the stars—

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah, it was called *One Hundred Drawings* [Twelvetrees Press: 1983]. And Jack did three books and after that a book called *Male Nude Drawings* [Twelvetrees Press: 1986], in which there was supposed to be a section of color nudes as well.

But Jack couldn't get a publisher, and even the Japanese, they finally published it, but because of the subject matter, the Japanese, who really invented publishing pornography. And these weren't even pornography; they were just frontal male nudes. They whacked on a price, extra money, because of the subject matter, so that precluded the color section.

And Jim Corcoran, who was my dealer, he took over Nick's gallery after Nick gave it up. And he'd agreed to donate $25,000 [sic] to that book of male nudes. Or was it—one of the three books that Jack Woody did of my work. And he didn't know Jack Woody well, so Jack Woody came into the gallery to discuss the book and, I suppose, receive Jim's check for $2,500.

And I happened to be in the back of the gallery and Jack Woody was in Jim's office for under three minutes before suddenly he was making an exit. And after he'd gone, Jim said to his girl Friday, "Don't ever let that creature into this gallery again." So there went the $2,500 donation to Jack Woody for the book, which then Jack Woody asked me, would I loan it to him, and I did.

And Jack Woody is such a crook that I never got the money back. And I probably never should have gotten—but I assumed with that *Hundred Drawings* book that since Jack Woody was an intimate of Nick Wilder that his suggestions were backed by Nick. I had no idea that Nick would turn out to be against that celebrity book. So anyway, to this day I still am dubbed a celebrity portraitist, yes, and it's my own fault.

MS. MORGAN: You know, I think it's really hard to gauge that because you know what goes on in the studio and what it is to make work, and people respond only to what they see. I mean, and I know that when we first moved here and I would, you know, interview and write profiles of movie people, that the response I would always get would be like, oh, I love this—you know, it wasn't—they didn't acknowledge what I had done to bring that person to the page. It was only—

MR. BACHARDY: About the person.

MS. MORGAN: —the person, the subject.

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah. Yeah, yes.

MS. MORGAN: And it's like, oh, well, you know, I actually wrote something.

MR. BACHARDY: Yes.

MS. MORGAN: And so, I think that the subject ends up eclipsing the work of the portraitist, whether it's the writer portraitist or the—

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, of course it does.

MS. MORGAN: —art portraitist. Everybody—it's like, oh, it's the picture of this; it's not what—and you know that when you're doing it, you have the same, you know, struggles and decisions in doing it, and sometimes even more so because –

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, more so—more so because the subjects are so stellar that they're awesome, and also they're always pressed for time and also very restless, bad sitters. So it's sometimes three or four times harder to get a decent drawing of a well-known person.

MS. MORGAN: And also because they'll have a very kind of canned, contrived way of appearing, and they're trying to tell you that. And as an artist—

MR. BACHARDY: They want to see that.

MS. MORGAN: —you want to see something that's revealing or genuine or that is interesting to you as an artist.

MR. BACHARDY: Yes.

MS. MORGAN: And so, I always find that part—you know, it's always—I found that very frustrating because people would say, "Oh, I love"—you know, and I was thinking, oh, I remember I was up at night trying to, you know, find something that was going to make this person in the profile be very specific—

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: —and say something that they haven't said before.

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: And I don't—you know, we're not creating press releases. We're not just reiterating what's been said before, and the reaction is always like, "Oh, I love him," or, "I hate her," or—

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: And then, also, I would always think, well, gee, I was writing about them and they just made this movie and got, you know, this—and it's like, you know, they didn't pay my mortgage. [Laughs.] They didn't—you know, they didn't—

MR. BACHARDY: And I still think some people imagine that the movie stars, at least in those quainter days, that the movie stars kind of wrote their own parts in their movies, that somehow they were so all-powerful that any article about them would in fact probably be assumed to be more written by them—

MS. MORGAN: By them.

MR. BACHARDY: —than by anybody else.

MS. MORGAN: There's an artist in London who—he's one of these people that whatever he finds out, he's the only one who knows—like, he'll tell you about a piece of music or a film as though—I mean, it's just—I guess it's just classic narcissistic behavior. It's like he's found this out and nobody else in the world has ever heard about it until it—

And one time he wrote this piece, and it was some film, and it was, you know, this actress that nobody had ever heard of, and it was Helen Twelvetrees.

MR. BACHARDY: Ah.

MS. MORGAN: And I said, "Not only have people heard of her, but wasn't she Jack Woody's aunt or something?"

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, his aunt or—

MS. MORGAN: Or grandmother or something?

MR. BACHARDY: —his grandmother.

MS. MORGAN: It was his grandmother—

MR. BACHARDY: I think it was his grandmother, yeah, and that's why he calls it Twelve Trees Press.

MS. MORGAN: Twelve Trees Press.

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: And I said, not only do people know who she is, but she has this other presence in the art world because Jack Woody's press was called Twelve Trees after—

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: So Nick Wilder—so, then it became Corcoran Gallery when he—

MR. BACHARDY: And then Jim Corcoran took over the same space and he was there for several years, and he also surprised me because when he took over the gallery, he took over several of Nick's artists, and I was certain I wouldn't be among them. And I got a big surprise because Jim did ask me to please show with him.

So that was the beginning of a friendship with Jim, which has lasted to this day. He hasn't represented me in any way for many years but we still see each other and I'm very fond of him.

MS. MORGAN: So who are the artists at Nick Wilder's gallery when you were—

MR. BACHARDY: Let's see, Bruce Nauman, Billy Al Bengston, Joe Goode, Larry Bell, Ken—

MS. MORGAN: Oh, Ken Price?

MR. BACHARDY: —Ken Price and, oh, Ron Davis, Hockney. Those—I can't remember—I don't think Chuck Arnoldi—I might be wrong. Gee, I really have to think about it. But, anyway, those are the key ones I remember.

MS. MORGAN: But that's quite a range.

MR. BACHARDY: That's quite a range. And Ed Moses; did I mention him? Yeah. Yes, I think that was pretty much it.

MS. MORGAN: And when did you meet David Hockney? When did you—

MR. BACHARDY: In 1964. I was in New York for a few weeks and Chris and I used to speak every evening, and he said, "I met the most extraordinary Englishman. He has bleached-blonde hair and wears owl glasses and rides all over town on his bicycle. And he's only been here two days and he already has a studio in downtown Los Angeles, and I think you'll like him."

And I came home the next week and met him right away and I did like him. Plus, we've been friends ever since. Oh, yes, he had a powerful effect on this town. And Chris I think was the first person he called here "the queer connection."

MS. MORGAN: The queer underground.

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: You go to town, you know who to—

MR. BACHARDY: Look up, yeah. And, yes, and David and Chris always were very warm friends, yes. Well, Chris loved David for the way he sounded. He had a Yorkshire accent—

MS. MORGAN: The Yorkshire—

MR. BACHARDY: —which Chris would have had if he hadn't been sent away to public school. And he loved the sound of it and always regretted losing his. So even though Chris was actually from—was born in Cheshire, it's very near the Yorkshire border.

MS. MORGAN: And so, David Hockney, he was downtown then? Is that when he first arrived?

MR. BACHARDY: His first studio was downtown, yeah, and it was so—I think he hardly knew anybody here. I think he came—wanted to come to Hollywood because of the movies and because of the boys, and that famous male nude photographer—I forget his name—Picture Pictorial, that little magazine he published of male nudes. David already had a collection of them.

MS. MORGAN: [Laughs.] So he came to the source of it?

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, yes, yes. And that's what—that had been a strong draw for Chris too, not only the movies but the idea of the American West and the wonderful climate. Yes, that was all part of it.

MS. MORGAN: Well, and also, if you're from the north—

MR. BACHARDY: And the beach.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah, from the north of England, you know, the darkness and—

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, the bitter darkness and damp and—

MS. MORGAN: You know, when you're a child and you go to school in the dark and you come home in the dark and it's—

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, yeah. And Chris always was sensitive to cold, never wanted to go to cold climates.

MS. MORGAN: So as an artist, meeting Hockney—because, I mean, at that point he was making a lot of portraits too, and—

MR. BACHARDY: Well, he wasn't. He started doing those sprinkler paintings. Those were very early. And his double portraits; that started here. And I, of course, immediately I knew him, asked him down to sit for me and he came.

And it was a few years before he then started doing portraits and I thought I'd maybe given him the idea of doing portraits. But then I realized when he had the retrospective here, his portrait show, that he was doing—he'd started doing portraits already in England, even before he left.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah, because the Ossie Clark, Celia Birtwell was—

MR. BACHARDY: That I call part of his two-figure portraits.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: That was here, what, in the late '60s. And, in fact, the first one was of the Weismans.

MS. MORGAN: When you said the double portraits—

MR. BACHARDY: Frederick and Marcia Wiesman.

MS. MORGAN: —Weisman—that was the one that immediately—

MR. BACHARDY: That was the first one, the one of Chris and me was the second, and I think Ossie and Celia was the third. And I thought David had really never done portraits before then, but in fact, a lot of the early work of the show I was very interested to see because they were, in fact, portraits, and I thought they were rather good ones. They were all dark grays, browns, tans, which is—so many British paintings—

[Cross talk.]

MR. BACHARDY: —all that gloomy light, of course. And I think the Southern California light was really what just pushed David into—oh, he must be the meter inspector. Hello?

MS. MORGAN: Yeah, we always talk about the brown paintings—you know, those brown paintings they had.

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah. Oh, how dreary. As if England needed anymore of that dreariness, yeah.

MS. MORGAN: So I think I told you one time that I had a friend who, when he went into painting portraits, he said it really solved that problem when people would say, you know, "Oh, you're a painter. You know, what do you paint?" And he realized that—when he started portraits he would say, "You." [They laugh.] And he said, "You don't have to say, 'Oh, well, I'm interested'"—all those kinds of, like, I do this or that or something. So he would just say, "You." [They laugh.] So that was a great answer.

So at that point you had—I think when you started to do the washes and using more color, I was interested that you said that you weren't going to show Nick Wilder. Was that because you didn't feel confident about it, that you felt you had—

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, actually, I mean—I started out with a terrific lack of confidence in myself, and even when I was doing the portrait drawings I was really hiding behind the celebrity of my sitters so often, and especially when I started having them sign and date the drawings, which started out as a device just to prove to people I didn't work from photographs, that—

[END OF CD 3]

MS. MORGAN: So it's Susan Morgan talking with Don Bachardy, and it's October seventh , 2009, and this is our third session for the Archives of American Art.

And, you know, something that came up when I was away that I wanted to—I thought was interesting, you know, you had talked about Nick Wilder's gallery, and when I was in New York recently, a friend said that—had Judd Marmor been an investor in that gallery?

MR. BACHARDY: I can't tell you. I do know of him and I must have met him somewhere along the way. I have no way of knowing if Nick knew him or what their relationship was. Remind me—

MS. MORGAN: He was an associate of Evelyn Hooker's—is that her name—at UCLA—

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: —who did the early studies, or the studies there that showed that being homosexual had—you know, was not an illness and did not have any—

MR. BACHARDY: He was involved with that?

MS. MORGAN: With that, yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: Oh. It's certainly a name I've heard a lot, and I feel I should know something about him but I just—I couldn't have told you who he knew or what he was up to.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: But I do know that name. But it's a distant association. I don't have any face or physical image to attach to the name.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah, it was kind of surprising when I heard that name and I thought, hmm, I wonder—but with the galleries at that point—because when you showed at Nick Wilder, that was what year? I mean, that's—

MR. BACHARDY: Seventies, yeah. Yeah. Certainly '77 and maybe earlier than that. I could check up on it. It's certainly all in my date books and certainly in Chris's date books too. And that's why it's so useful keeping date books. I consult mine so often and his too. They're really golden, and they're so succinct.

MS. MORGAN: And do you—how much do you write? Because I know that you write a journal but then just writing down where you've been or who you saw or—

MR. BACHARDY: If I worked in the day, my sitter, if I saw a movie, if I went to a restaurant, who I did such things with. And I got the habit from Chris. Mine was styled exactly on his. And in the older years, I used to keep his for him. I asked if I could do it. And some of the early date books are in my hand and then sometimes a little arrow up; he added something that I hadn't included.

And often in later years he would come to me and say, "What did we do last night; I can't remember," or the night before, or what was so and so's name. And so, we were interactive.

MS. MORGAN: No, I've gone back to see, you know, just did I go to see—you know, when was that exhibition or what film did we—you know.

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, it's so useful. And instead of wading through pages of journal trying to find some reference, if I have even just the roughest idea of a date, I can—and for Kate Bucknell, I've found so much information that she's asked for from those date books.

Yes, I've so often quoted whole passages to her from them. And she'll call up and ask—there's a stretch of days—"Did Chris, by any chance, mention so and so in this week?" And it's so quick. I can check in five, 10 minutes at most.

MS. MORGAN: And so she edited all the diaries, or she's—

MR. BACHARDY: She's nearly finished. And, in fact, the volume two is going to be in two parts, the first one called *The Sixties* [Harper Perennial: 2011] and the second one, which is the '70s, called *Liberation*. That's Kate's idea. And *The Sixties* is already at the publisher's, and in fact I, just last week, sent off pictures of Chris to be considered for the book jacket. Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: And what about your diaries?

MR. BACHARDY: Well, I've been reading—since my friend Tim got sick and went into the hospital, I've been reading all of the journals I kept of those 10 years with him. I'm nearly at the end of them. And then, when I finish, then I'll go back to the years with Chris and really seriously consider whether or not I think they're publishable.

And I really don't know. And that's the only difficulty—practical difficulty that has been created by Kate's taking so long. My mind just isn't as sharp as it was and I don't know if I've really got the wherewithal to go through all of the decisions that will come up about publishing. But, anyway, I'm going to read through everything and make up my mind, because if I don't do it now, I never will.

MS. MORGAN: And what was your—do you write at the same time every day? Do you write—

MR. BACHARDY: No. In the years with Chris, my entries were usually made mornings after breakfast, and I would sit up in the back room with my feet stretched out on the bed and just write in a little notebook about that with blue lined paper and write with a pencil.

And after reading Chris's and then reading mine—this all after he was dead—I did regret that I had never shared mine with him, but then I couldn't have without transcribing them because they were so messy. I am very neat but then I would draw little arrows and then cram tiny little pencil lines up above. I could barely decipher them myself but I did.

And so, I do have nice, neat, clear typed transcriptions of them, which I did myself, which—and I haven't read them now in several years, so I will have a fairly fresh eye. And after reading all the—they're more than—I think there are something like 12 thick ones about the years with Tim. And a lot of it is certainly very interesting to me. And Tim was a real character to write about. And they're very graphic and they would certainly have to be seriously edited.

And I just don't know whether I—even if I decided to, if I could do it myself. But the ones with Chris I will because—and they'll need commentary from me too, and that's what I'm wondering, if I'm up to doing that, because in the year since Tim moved out of the house—and that was '97—I've kept very little diary.

And I think I probably told you, a recent discovery of mine was that all of my diary keeping, if I'm really going to be regular about it, I have to be living with somebody. By myself, I don't seem to have the urge. I've written some, certainly, and I wish I'd written more, but it does seem to require living with somebody else in order to really make me feel like there was something worth recording.

MS. MORGAN: That's so interesting because I've felt that living with somebody, I write—I stopped writing a diary because so much was expressed in our conversation that had been sort of, you know, a conversation with myself in a diary. And I know that at other points I have—I remember kind of having a half-finished diary because I thought, oh, I'm just complaining about the same things I always complain about and I'm really boring myself to—

MR. BACHARDY: That was the first bit of advice Chris gave me about keeping a diary: Try to avoid the complaints.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah, because if you just are complaining, you know, to the diary, then it's just, you know, why do you—

MR. BACHARDY: Yes.

[Cross talk.]

MR. BACHARDY: You don't realize that you'll wind up boring yourself, yes. And it was the best advice. And also, you see, living with him—

MS. MORGAN: I wish—

MR. BACHARDY: Living with him, he was so witty, and we would—often our conversations, we were in gales of laughter. And that made me want to record it, remember it. And Tim also, he's very witty. Even when we were having terrible fights, the dialogue was pretty good. [Laughs.]

MS. MORGAN: So it's interesting, really, that the diary really is a dialogue, that it really is not, you know, this kind of inner monologue, that you really view it as—but that's also what your—the portraiture is too, is that it's a dialogue.

MR. BACHARDY: It is certainly a keen collaboration, yes. Yes. Yes, exactly. Yes, and that's true too because I'm doing some kind of identification with every one of my sitters. So it is a double thing, a double experience in that way. And that gives me more to write about. It's not just writing about my thoughts; I'm bouncing off someone else.

MS. MORGAN: You know, we've had this conversation before, but I just wrote about someone who—well, Maya Lin, you know, who—

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, yeah.

MS. MORGAN: And she's been in the public eye for 30 years, and so she really speaks publicly. So trying to get something else is challenging because everybody is like, oh, well, she's so—you know. And I said, "Well, she's very composed and"—

MR. BACHARDY: Very composed yes.

MS. MORGAN: —you know, as a writer or a portrait—you know, as a portraitist you don't really want very composed; you want—

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, yes. Well, that documentary, it comes over very clearly how public she is, and you'll feel you're not getting anywhere under the surface.

MS. MORGAN: And, when that starts—you know, the Vietnam War Memorial—she was 20 years old.

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: And so—

MR. BACHARDY: Well, she learned early, yeah.

MS. MORGAN: I mean, she was thrown into it but, you know, you realize 30 years of—I'm trying to get something else—

So I'm trying to think of where we were. You know, we had talked about the galleries, you know, and Nick Wilder and doing the book, and the book that you did with Jack Woody that you felt you shouldn't have, that that wouldn't—

MR. BACHARDY: It was Nick who—

MS. MORGAN: Nick who felt—

MR. BACHARDY: He felt, I shouldn't have done it. And it just hadn't occurred to me, and I assumed that Jack had really consulted with Nick and that he wouldn't lead me into something that Nick wasn't in favor of. I was totally wrong. I don't think Jack had consulted Nick at all, and in fact probably disdained consulting him.

And so, I was led into doing something that Nick felt was very bad for my reputation as an artist to just go on plugging this celebrity portraitist plug, just plugging that incessantly. But it was too late by the time—and, see, Nick only found out about it when Jack asked him to write an introduction to it.

So he was put in the position of writing an introduction for a book he thoroughly disapproved of. And I was dismayed and Jack Woody was irritable because Nick was making an obstruction.

MS. MORGAN: So what happened when the book came out?

MR. BACHARDY: Nothing much. Jack Woody is really—I discovered by degrees—not really a likable person at all, and really sort of mean and cold-blooded, and also very dishonest about money.

I told you about Jim Corcoran, didn't I?

MS. MORGAN: Yes.

MR. BACHARDY: Their meeting.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah, you did.

MR. BACHARDY: And I've never gotten that money back from him.

MS. MORGAN: So after that did you feel—I would like to kind of follow the type of work because I was thinking more recently you have shown the abstract paintings with the portraits and making the shift when you began to use color, when you went from doing the pencil portraits to working—you talked a little bit about the use of color and when you had first seen Francis Bacon's work and, you know, your relationship to using color.

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, Bacon was certainly a large inspiration for those wet washes of people that I was engaged in, which was—and you see the—the first show of Nick's was all the wet washes of nobody in particular, I mean, of—I don't think a single one of them was any kind of celebrity, any kind of name that would have been recognized.

And why didn't I get it through my head that that's what Nick was interested in, in me as an artist rather than in

me as an artist who relied on celebrated models? But I have a great capacity for denseness.

MS. MORGAN: For?

MR. BACHARDY: Denseness.

MS. MORGAN: Denseness. [Laughs.] No, you don't. I don't think it's denseness; I think it's that it's more about deflecting that kind of attention.

MR. BACHARDY: Whatever it is, it used to exasperate Chris. And it's not just a denseness but an obstinacy along with it, which he was often trying to combat. And, well, just getting me to show that work to Nick was the real campaign. And finally when Nick did come down I said, "Okay, I'll show him a dozen"—or whatever. And as soon as Nick saw them, he said, "Yes, that's a show I think we should do."

But I didn't stick to it. I then—I think the next show with Nick I just had to drag in the celebrity work to, I mean, which—I don't mean I showed anything of bad quality. The work I chose was very well done, very professional, but I just felt—I seemed to think my work couldn't stand alone without some prop from a celebrated subject. And Chris was at me so often, "No, no, no," but—

MS. MORGAN: But it's a way—I mean that attaching it, you know, having the celebrity as the subject—I mean, we've talked about this—because then people respond to that and then you're not so vulnerable or exposed because they're not really looking—you know, the people who do understand the work that you put into it will appreciate it, and then the other ones that it might be more troublesome with, they're so preoccupied that the subject matter is somebody famous that—

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, it doesn't occur to them to look at the work itself—

MS. MORGAN: Yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: —and how it's done. And what I was wanting to show was the fact that after the first years of doing a lot of celebrity work, I had really set my sights higher, and I really wanted to do as expert a work of a celebrity as I did with just my friends.

And I did manage it a surprising number of times, and I still to this day think an awful lot of people who admire that work, never understood just how difficult it was to do and how exacting I had to be and how—also, how much collaboration I was able to eke out of my celebrity sitters.

And when I got one who really could sit still and could collaborate, the work was just as good as my drawings of unknown sitters. So I really wanted to show off that ability, and indeed I look back at that work now and I don't know anybody else who was—would could produce a celebrity drawing from life, including David Hockney. I think his celebrity portraits are way below the quality of mine but he just didn't take enough trouble and he couldn't draw as well as I could, and he knew it. He wouldn't admit it, but he knew it.

MS. MORGAN: I think they don't have—I mean, what you—it's not just the facility but also the engagement that occurs—

MR. BACHARDY: Yes.

MS. MORGAN: —and the attentiveness. And—

MR. BACHARDY: I was so committed, and I was like a kind of Svengali. I was hypnotizing my sitters into—casting a spell on them to help me do it, help me to finish it. Yes, and I realized—it's only really in later years that I've realized what an ordeal I've put an awful lot of people through and how I managed, at that young age, to get them to cooperate with me at all. That, in a way, was what was most extraordinary. That was my genius of persuading people to let me harass them to that extent. [They laugh.]

MS. MORGAN: You told me that you always asked when Chris was in earshot so that they—you thought you kind of got them on the spot; they couldn't—

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, yes. And of course that's really why the majority of them did sit for me. They were doing it to please him, or if not to please him, at least he was my collateral. He was my backup. He is my guarantee.

MS. MORGAN: You know, because I think it—you know, plus you're well-spoken and incredibly good looking yourself. I mean, that helps too. [Laughs.]

MR. BACHARDY: I wouldn't believe that—I couldn't be sure of that. Of course I used it but I wasn't aware of how I was using it.

MS. MORGAN: And that's even better. I think that has more—I think that's more charming.

So who do you think—after Chris, who have you done the most portraits? Who has sat for you?

MR. BACHARDY: Well, I guess Tim Hilton, but he got my number after a few years and he started chastising me for tormenting sitters that were friends of his. I remember when he liked Francesca DeLaurentiis very much, and when she sat for me—she was a very spoiled rich girl but I managed to get her to sit very well for me.

But Tim took her side, and after the sitting said that—he told her I really exhausted her and that I'd really made her sit too long. And then he got very difficult about sitting for me and wanted to do it less and less and for shorter and shorter times until finally, in the last years we were together, he refused to sit for me at all.

And then, finally, when he would come to openings of my shows, he wouldn't—he'd be in the opposite corner of the gallery from me and finally wouldn't even comment on the work I'd shown in the show and stopped looking at my work altogether, and after telling me, when we first got together, that it was my work and my persona as an artist that had attracted him in the first place. He did a complete reversal on me. [Audio break.] It was a very difficult question.

MS. MORGAN: Also, I mean, there are so many facets of this story that are—because, you know, the shifts of that that's what initially attracted him to you, and then the resistance, and then the—I'm surprised too that the relationship—that someone would say you were exploiting a model, you know, someone who was sitting for you.

MR. BACHARDY: And I remember saying in defense—for instance, I don't think it was about Francesca, in particular, but I would defend myself, "Okay, all right, I kept him or her in the studio for three, four, maybe five hours and they were frozen, paralyzed with aches and pains by the time they left, thoroughly exhausted." I said, "But, you see, that's probably the only time in their lives that they would have ever been put through such an ordeal, once in a lifetime. Well, at least they'll remember it." [They laugh.]

And also, you know, these professional portrait painters who maybe take 40 or 50 sittings of maybe only an hour or an hour-and-a-half each, okay, that's much easier on the sitters, but then, what a lie it is about portraiture that you can tell everything about a person in one picture, whereas I give you maybe three or four or five pictures of one person, all of which are accurate likenesses and yet they're totally different from each other.

That seemed to me a much more organic, truthful version of a personality because we're all changing every minute, and even a portrait that takes an hour is, in a way, a lie. And I had to work like blazes to make all of the different changes in mood somehow or other hang together just within an hour.

And, all right, I then had three or four to show you what a single personality is capable of in a single afternoon. That seems to me much more real and much more defensive than one portrait which is maybe taken 50 hours on different days. That seems to me probably a total lie or just—and, anyway, most of it, nowadays certainly, done from photographs than from real live work.

MS. MORGAN: I know I've mentioned this before, but the performative aspect, the kind of dance that occurs, the collaboration that occurs—and when you were just describing what happens, of watching a face over a period that's not just these little installment—you know, these installments but actually the organic process—

MR. BACHARDY: I'm chasing the change in moods, the change of expressions, and that's why stillness is so important. At least that helps me to kind of hang on to the thing that I'm after and imagine what it's like when the person isn't sitting still.

Like, I had Lauren Hutton sit the other day. Oh, she looks wonderful. I took one look at her—we really hadn't met before—and the first thing she said to me—she pointed—

MS. MORGAN: Oh, that she—well, you have—

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah, and I thought, oh, boy, this is going to be great. And she's now of an age—she's 66—she looks exactly like Lauren Hutton but she also looks 66, and that's just right up my alley.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: And, oh, I was just ready for it, and then she absolutely wore me out. She never stopped talking. And it was only at the end of the sitting—I did three pictures of her, and at the end she was run down enough to give me maybe as much as three or four minutes without talking.

And I really—I had to—I hadn't done it in a long time; I had to say, "I'm just about to start on your mouth." [They laugh.] And I try to avoid that because usually that means my sitter either gets very nervous or one of those ghastly fake smiles appears. I only do it in desperation. But even that, she didn't get the idea.

And then, oh, even before I started working—and I suppose it was inevitable—except she's been around artists enough to know better—what does she do but pull out of an envelope about a dozen photographs of her, recent ones. Maybe they were two or three years old or maybe even more recent than that, but by a professional photographer. And of course she looked much more like the Lauren Hutton of 20 years ago, 30 years ago even.

And here is a sophisticated woman coming to an artist. Okay, she's a famous photographer's model, but does she think I have to be given evidence of what she looks like? It's like canceling me out, isn't it? And of course it's saying, this is what I want to look like, not, I want you to tell me what I look like. I would love to hear that. But, no.

And so, that's a very dampening experience to begin a sitting with, and then to deal with somebody who is just determined to impress me about who she is and what has happened to her and what she knows about this and that. And I liked her. I'm sounding like I'm describing somebody awful, but what was awful was the experience of trying to work with her.

And it was made even more frustrating because if she'd really let me do it, it was a perfect face for me. She looked exactly like her famous self and yet all that other stuff that one never sees in a photograph, which is so fascinating and which I—people don't realize that everything they're not used to seeing in pictures of themselves is evidence of how much I'm loving them, how much I'm doting on every wonderful aspect of them.

And instead of saying, my god, how wonderful of you to have seen all that and to have recorded it; no, what they're saying is, oh, I look so sad. They never say, you've put in things I've never known about myself or I've never seen before. That's what I would die to hear and what I never hear—rarely.

I did one drawing of Beatrix Lehmann, and that is one of my really best works. It's something the Huntington [Huntington Library; San Marino, CA] owns now. It was the only drawing I ever did of her and she sat magnificently. And she was certainly in her 60s, late 60s, and it was a wonderful old—raggedy horse's face, but she had real intensity.

And I finish and I just know it's a first-rate work, and I heard afterward that she was telling people how cruel I had been. She signed and dated it but she was just determined that I'd exposed her, I'd ravaged her. And that's what I deal with way too often.

And, you know, I don't want to hurt people's feelings, but if only they'd realize that I can't get enough of them, that I want everything about them. I can't leave things out. Leaving things out is unspoken criticism.

We all know what is considered unattractive about our faces, our bodies. We all know. And of course if we see a version of ourselves in which those things are left out, isn't that a criticism? That's like saying, I agree with you that what you think is awful about you. I think it's awful too. It's too awful to draw or paint.

MS. MORGAN: I think there's such directness that creates the—I want to sit for you again. [Laughs.]

MR. BACHARDY: You what?

MS. MORGAN: I want to sit for you again. [They laugh.]

MR. BACHARDY: I want to work with you again, yes.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah, I thought it was great.

So with the—have you—is there anyone that you know or speak to who also works in portraiture, or have you—

MR. BACHARDY: Who is also—

MS. MORGAN: Do you know other portraitists, do you know other—I mean, the way the way—it's interesting to me because so much of it I relate to writing, but then I was thinking, are there other visual portraitists?

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, there's nobody living. No, I don't know any artist who is like I am.

MS. MORGAN: Who does what you do.

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah, and who has that appetite for it; not only who sees like I do but really goes after it. No, I don't know. And I asked Frances Bacon, when he sat for me, did he—did he work from life? Did his pictures of people—did he ever—and he said, "Oh, no. Oh, no, I couldn't possibly do that."

He said, "What I do sometimes is just invite the person to my studio or wherever I am and we just talk and I look, and then I send the person away and then I go to work," he said. But, no, it was out of the question to actually

have the person in the same room while he was working. I wish I could do that. It would certainly be an awful lot easier.

MS. MORGAN: And so, what artists did you look at historically?

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, I discovered in art school Egon Schiele and [Gustav] Klimt. I'd never heard of them before that, and that got me going. I love [Chaim] Soutine. His pictures of people excited me because they were so loose and alive at the same time. And now, [John Singer] Sargent; I've always adored Sargent.

I guess early on I actually preferred women sitters, so [Paul] Helleu [French artist, 1859-1927 –DB] and the Italian [Boldini]—I can't think of his name—of the same period. I have several books of his. But then, you know, certainly [Diego] Velasquez, [Hans] Holbein drawings—just stunning and so spare. That's what's exciting to me about Holbein is that he catches that unmistakable thing you can only get working from life.

And he can be very, very specific and clear—the head, the shoulders, the [costumed torso –DB]—and then maybe just a couple of marks for what the hands are doing. And if I could do that—yes.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah, because when you were describing the Beatrix Lehmann, I was thinking—I had a flash of Holbein—thinking of Holbein and the kind of exacting spareness.

MR. BACHARDY: But when you put that into the head and shoulders—and then I remember for Beatrix I just very laxly indicated what she was wearing and what her hands were doing. There just wasn't time. She sat for me so well; it was probably more than two hours without moving, and very few people can do that.

And I thought, you know, that she was getting something out of it, and all she was getting out of it was that I'd done this awful thing to her.

MS. MORGAN: And so that's in the Huntington? Is that part of the collection that went—

MR. BACHARDY: They showed it in—

[END OF CD 4]

MR. BACHARDY: [In progress]—appreciate it. The first drawing I thought, my god, she's going to hate this. And I was very hesitant to show her, and I was sort of preparing her for it and she said, "I don't have to see it. I'll look at the end." So I did do three pictures of her that I didn't have to worry—

MS. MORGAN: Because it's very inhibiting to have someone that in the first—

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, and I'm always afraid that they'll see the first one and say, "That's it; no more." And people have done that to me. They've insisted on seeing the first picture, and no matter what I say—that it is preliminary, that it's not good, I can do better—they [… then say –DB], "No, that's it."

MS. MORGAN: That's not very collaborative. [They laugh.]

So in Los Angeles, maybe—what have you shown—I saw the show in '94 at the Huntington, and the shows—[… –DB]

MR. BACHARDY: It must have been 2004.

MS. MORGAN: —2004, rather.

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: Sorry, 2004, because it's recently—so, where have you shown—because the—

MR. BACHARDY: Nick's was the best gallery that I've shown with, and Nick far and away the only art dealer who ever understood my work, who really got what it was that was unique about me and believed in me and supported me like I've never been supported before, except by Chris.

And then Jim Corcoran took over Nick's gallery and I had several shows with him. And I'm very fond of Jim but I don't think he ever had any idea what my work was about. And Rex Evans was the first one to show me here, but he really just treated me as a good-looking young man with a certain flair.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: And he treated me like a celebrity portraitist, yes. And then Irving Blum—after Rex's death, his friend and his partner, Jim Weatherford, continued the gallery. And I had at least one show with him after Rex

was dead, and then Irving Blum invited me to a show, and that was before Nick.

And Irving, at the time, I suppose, had the most prestigious gallery, so I was very flattered. And Irving suggested a show of just my [… –DB] portraits of artists, and so I really did knock myself out.

And I went to—and I went to New York and I got a sitting with Jasper Johns and Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol. So that was really a big coup. And I found out that Irving was talking behind my back about what a joke it was having invited me to show at his gallery. And Nick was one of the people who told me that Irving was being so amusing about the absurdity of showing me in his gallery. So you [… can guess –DB] what I think of Irving Blum.

MS. MORGAN: So what kind of a sitter was Jasper Johns or Roy Lichtenstein?

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, very intense. And he let me know that this was absolutely unprecedented, what he was doing for me, so I was working under maximum pressure. I did two drawings of him, and the first one was probably under an hour and the second one maybe an hour and five minutes or so, and really just heads of him, but they're both like him.

Roy Lichtenstein, I did also two drawings of him, and both pretty good. One of them [, the second one, –DB] I'm really pleased with. And he was a very sweet man. I liked him. He really charmed me—

MS. MORGAN: Yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: —and didn't let me feel like he was [wasting his time –DB]—

MS. MORGAN: He had that beautiful hawk-like head too.

MR. BACHARDY: And, really, those almost *Village of the Damned* eyes, the almost circular globes. And [then –DB] Andy Warhol, who wasn't a very good sitter, and he was—

MS. MORGAN: You told me you had—he didn't want to sign.

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: He thought you were going to pass it off [as a Warhol self-portrait –DB]—

MR. BACHARDY: And he was—well, people would come and go in the factory, and he would say to that big guy who appears in some of his movies, "Come over and stand behind Don and take your dick out. Let Don draw it. Stand behind me [… and let him draw you with your –DB] big dick over my shoulder." I said, "Andy, Andy, I just want to [… draw –DB] you."

[… And Andy kept –DB] saying, "It's a wonderful thing what you're doing, very smart. Draw everybody you know, and when you've drawn them all, draw them again," which is pretty much what I've been doing all along.

MS. MORGAN: But I have to find—somebody sent me—and I didn't print it out; I'll have to check it—somebody sent me an e-mail, and they had looked up—there was this—you know, now you can download images—instead of, you know, getting slides, you can download digital images for teaching.

And she was looking for something by Vija Celmins and something came up and it's one of your drawings.

MR. BACHARDY: Huh?

MS. MORGAN: But it's not a drawing—I don't know if Vija ever sat for you—

MR. BACHARDY: Yes, she did. I did one drawing of her.

MS. MORGAN: But I don't think it's—I'll have to look at it because I don't think it's a picture of Vija, but I'm thinking, well, how did it—

MR. BACHARDY: You mean a picture of mine came up in reference to her?

MS. MORGAN: Yeah, to Vija. Maybe it's your drawing of Vija. I don't know if it's a drawing of Vija. It would be from —

MR. BACHARDY: It was certainly—

MS. MORGAN: —in the '70s.

MR. BACHARDY: —25, 30 years ago. So she looks quite young in it. And she sat well for it. And it's only one and it's pen and ink, and I don't think I made any mistakes. And she did sit pretty well, but I probably had to ask her 20 times [… before she actually did sit –DB].

MS. MORGAN: She's a very resistant person.

MR. BACHARDY: Very resistant and very suspicious. [… She –DB] thought that I was going to wreak vengeance on her in some way, [… but –DB] I think it's a pretty fair drawing of her.

MS. MORGAN: You know the story when we were—when Tom got the job out here, he ran into Vija on the street in New York and he said, "Oh, I got this job at CalArts. We're going to move to L.A." And she said, "Oh, I just decided I liked you." [Laughs.] I think after she—

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, how dreary. How dreary and how old-fashioned of her. Even years ago, how old-fashioned.

MS. MORGAN: I mean, we decided—it was like, you know, that she was so—we just thought it was funny, and I think that's all you can do in something like that, you know, is have—

MR. BACHARDY: And then, I know she sees herself as a shrinking violet, that, oh, she's so shy and she's so really interior, and just this tight, tight, fierceness in her.

MS. MORGAN: I just copied out something from another writer that I thought was very funny, and Tom saw it on my desk and he said, "Who said that?" And I said, "Oh, it's this writer, Elizabeth McCracken." She said something about, "It's not that I lack ambition; it's that I lack forethought." [They laugh.]

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, I like that. That's—

MS. MORGAN: And he saw it and I guess he thought that it was something—because it was just written out in pencil on a single sheet of paper, and I guess he thought that I'd written it because it sounded like me. [They laugh.] And I said, "No, I wrote it out because I thought it was a very good description"—

MR. BACHARDY: I like that, yes. [Laughs.]

MS. MORGAN: —of that kind of—I mean, it exactly defines a certain—you know, that of course, you know, you value what you're doing but it's not these people who have a plan.

So in showing in Los Angeles—I remember we were talking one time about this one thing—oh, it was so exciting that David Hockney, you know, who was from here, was having a show at L.A. County Museum, and you said, "Well, he's not really from here, is he?" I mean, I know he's your friend, but—how do you think the museums in Los Angeles have been in supporting Los Angeles artists or—

MR. BACHARDY: Well, the county museum hasn't supported me in any way whatsoever. They don't own any of my work. One drawing was exhibited—Billy Al Bengston. He had a big show at the County Museum and had all kinds of—his motorcycle and all kinds of paraphernalia.

MS. MORGAN: Oh, and he brought all the furniture in and it's—

MR. BACHARDY: And he put up a drawing that I'd done of him, one that he owns. And I think that's the only time, to my knowledge, that I've ever been shown at the County Museum, and that was [at –DB] Billy's insistence.

MS. MORGAN: I find this perplexing, you know, just in terms of—it's funny; there are a number of things that I think will—the lack, the kind of—I'm trying to think of what to call it—of not regarding things in a more comprehensive way, the kind of factionalization or looking away; you know, that things have to come from somewhere else. I think those are all the kinds of things that keep places provincial.

MR. BACHARDY: Yes. Well, L.A. for years was just the most provincial place, and so many of the artists I knew in the '60s and '70s and even the '80s, as soon as they got any kind of attention here, they moved to New York. It was just the thing to do. If you wanted a career, you just had to do that.

Billy Al was one of the few—and Peter Alexander, they pretty much stayed home. They have New York shows but this has always been their base. And L.A. is famous for decades of not believing in itself as a home to any kind of art or culture.

MS. MORGAN: It's so curious to me, you know, because I feel this is like—when we first moved here, I had written—I think I've told you this, but I wrote an aperture monograph about Edward Weston's portrait photographs. And I was looking for a book that would really be—you know, and I was doing the research.

You know, the sort of book that I like—I like kind of these cultural histories so that you know how all the people knew each other and why certain things, you know, developed in places and—you know, Paris in the '20s or, you know, Weimar, Berlin or—I mean, those are these cultural mixes. You know, and there seemed to be, you know, between the wars—the kind of 1919, 1939 period there was so much experimentation and not looking to New York; you know, much more—

I mean, it's interesting with Weston's photographs, you know, he showed them in Little Tokyo in one of the, you know, Japanese photography clubs. And those were the people who bought his work.

And so, there wasn't really a book that kind of showed that—you know, that mix. There were books about the architecture, there were books about the art, but there weren't, you know, the kind of cultural, you know, cross-pollination that really occurs.

So that was something that I kind of read all these different things about, but then more recently what—you know, from my own experience is the kind of divisions or stratifications that are about, if you weren't here then or if you didn't know about—and I thought, well, you know, we've been here quite a while now and it's still like, oh, you weren't here in the '70s. You don't know what it's—but I feel like those are the things that kind of keep it small—

MR. BACHARDY: Yes. Yes. I think it is—

MS. MORGAN: —is that view, is that's what—

MR. BACHARDY: It's a small-thinking mentality still. There is no tradition for independence, any kind of tradition or really respect for what has gone on here. It's all way after the fact.

MS. MORGAN: I mean, because this is something that—it's something that I've been working on—and not to get away from you, but you're included in this—is to kind of develop a more kind of comprehensive view.

And I was thinking, well, maybe because I'm from somewhere else and I'm not in any of the factions—you know, at first I was thinking, oh, I'm going to run up against this, or you're not—and I thought, well, maybe that's what it kind of takes to not say, oh, this group or that group or, you know, the people who only—you know, so we're—

MR. BACHARDY: We're so selective. I mean, these shows of the early artists of the '60 and '70s, it's never occurred to anybody to include me. And I've not only known them all, I've done portraits of them all.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: But that simply doesn't fit. That's kind of—and I'm more L.A. than any of them. Even Billy Al is from Kansas—

MS. MORGAN: Right.

MR. BACHARDY: —and Joe Goode from Oklahoma, and I'm one of the very few indigenous ones but I simply don't belong. And I was showing at the same gallery as so many of them but it never occurs to anybody to—and wouldn't you think it would give some depth to shows of the L.A. artists of the '70s to show an artist of the '70s portraits of them done in the '70s?

MS. MORGAN: Yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: No, but that doesn't fit. And, you know, maybe it's too L.A. or it somehow isn't culturally defensible. Also, I suppose my association with Chris, with Hollywood, with a lot of Hollywood subjects and, horror of horrors, even a screenplay credit or two, that simply doesn't fit. But, anyway, what does it matter?

MS. MORGAN: So I—this is, you know, for another time to talk about this but, you know, there is this big Getty thing about Los Angeles, 1945 to 1980. Did you know that this is—they've given out a bunch of grants, you know, for exhibitions and publications and research about this? And that's why I'm feeling that it seems like a good moment to—

MR. BACHARDY: Nineteen-forty-five to 1980?

MS. MORGAN: Yeah.

MR. BACHARDY: Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: And that includes you. [Laughs.]

So let's see. I'm looking at their questions. One of them is about your travels that's had an impact on your life and work. You've had lots of travels that have had an impact on your life and work, but I think we've talked about that.

This is interesting. They have questions—do you think of yourself as particularly American or part of a global tradition?

MR. BACHARDY: Oh, intensely American, I would say, yes—

MS. MORGAN: I was going to say—

MR. BACHARDY: —and very L.A. And I always felt so lucky, even as a kid, to be living in the same place that the movies were made in. And growing up, I was devoted to the movies, and then finding this older English writer who loved movies as much as I did, and, oh, really insanely lucky in life as I always feel, really, despite all the slings and arrows.

MS. MORGAN: So I think this is good. Maybe this is a good place to stop this.

[Audio break.]

MR. BACHARDY: —place really that's added up to an influence on me. Of course, I looked at pictures everywhere I went, all over Europe, but it was London because they not only had art museums but they had an awful lot of people who spoke English who sat for me. And whatever influence travel has had on me, it had to be through the people who I contacted that I could do pictures of.

MS. MORGAN: So with the Huntington, do they have your—they have Chris's papers or do they have—

MR. BACHARDY: They have most of his papers—

MS. MORGAN: —most of them, don't they?

MR. BACHARDY: —and his books. And there are a few things of his that they don't have. There are wonderful letters that he wrote me that they haven't even seen. We were very seldom separated for long stretches, but when we were separated, if it was just for a month or two, we wrote a lot. And he was a wonderful letter-writer, and of course I did my best to amuse him. And I have a couple of volumes of our letters if it would entertain you. I think they're funny.

MS. MORGAN: So I think—

[END OF INTERVIEW.]