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# Oral history interview with Douglas Crimp, 2009 March 8

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## Transcript

### Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Douglas Crimp on March 8, April 18, and August 23, 2009. The interview took place in New York City, and was conducted by Johanna Burton for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Douglas Crimp and Johanna Burton have reviewed the transcript. Their 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

JOHANNA BURTON: To be official, this is Johanna Burton interviewing Douglas Crimp in his home in New York City on March 8, 2009, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

And we will get started with some of the basics, when and where you were born, for instance.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I was born in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho on August 19, 1944.

JOHANNA BURTON: You are a Leo.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I am a Leo, yes. [Laughs.] Yes, my family—my father is from Central Washington State originally and my mother is from Western—sorry—Eastern Washington State. But she moved as a small child to my hometown, Coeur d'Alene, and met my father at the University of Washington. My maternal grandparents lived in my hometown.

JOHANNA BURTON: How big is this town? Is it a small—?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It is small. When I was growing up, it was probably around 12,000. It is larger now. A lot of people [here –DC] moved to the Northwest.

JOHANNA BURTON: And what was your family life like there? What kind of education? What did your parents do?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: My great-grandfather who moved there first, was a blacksmith. And his blacksmith shop [became –DC] a hardware store. My maternal grandfather ran the hardware store, which became more like a general store. And my father worked for my grandfather, so he was a businessman, a small businessman.

My mother was a housewife. The store that my father and grandfather ran was one of the larger businesses in this town. You know, it is Idaho. It was a very Republican, very homogeneous sort of population. So Irish Catholics were considered strange because most people were Protestant. It was that homogeneous.

JOHANNA BURTON: And what kind of education did your family have?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: They were educated. My grandparents on both sides went to college.

JOHANNA BURTON: Oh, wow.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: They did—unlike many people there—believe in education. I mean, it was a—you know, I grew up in a kind of jock culture. And being on the football team was generally more important than getting good grades in school. But my family respected education and encouraged it. And it was a good thing for me because I wasn't—I wasn't a jock exactly.

JOHANNA BURTON: Were you on the football team?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, I was not. Almost everyone in my family played basketball. Not my father, but my mother's father, my mother's mother. My brother was a basketball coach. My brother-in-law was a basketball coach. My niece was a professional basketball player.

JOHANNA BURTON: Wow.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I played basketball, but I didn't play it—I didn't play any team sports in school.

JOHANNA BURTON: Did you go to church on Sundays? Was this a—I mean—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes. My grandparents were—my grandparents were I suppose you could say religious

Protestants, kind of even fundamentalists. My parents were more country club Republican types. So they went to church to please my grandparents, which was obvious enough to any child. So I went to Sunday school, but only because my grandparents insisted to my parents that I go to Sunday school.

JOHANNA BURTON: And what kind of house—I mean, was it just a suburban—were you on land?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I grew up in a house that my great-grandfather built when he married a second time. And it was a house on the lake. Coeur d'Alene is a city built at the head of an extremely beautiful lake. It is about 30 miles long with sandy beaches, fed by rivers, so it has very pristine, clear water. It is in the foothills of the Rockies. It is an extraordinarily beautiful place. It is a tourist place now. When I was growing up, the main industry was logging.

After my great-grandfather died, when I was 4 years old, my parents took [his –DC] house and expanded it eventually. It was a modest house, but it was on the lake and it was one of the few houses on the lake that were in the town. It was a kind of fancy address, I suppose you could say. Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: And did you go to a public school? What was the—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes. I mean, the only possibility of a private school would have been a parochial school. Yeah, I went Coeur d'Alene High School.

JOHANNA BURTON: So you graduated in Coeur d'Alene?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: And so when did you decide—you moved to New York City in 1967. First you went to Tulane [University, New Orleans, LA], right, for your undergraduate work?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: And what took you—what prompted you to go to Tulane?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It was very unusual for anyone to go away to college from my high school. My closest friend—in a way, my girlfriend when I was in high school—was Marilynne Robinson, the novelist. Her brother, David Summers, is a fairly well-known art historian, Renaissance art historian—he is, I think, three years older than Marilynne and I and he went to Brown [University, Providence, RI]. Her family had spent some time in the East. And I think I felt at the time at least that they were a little more sophisticated than other people in my hometown.

Anyway, they were the sort of—they were the sort of kids who wanted to go away to college. So David went to Brown and then Marilynne eventually went to Pembroke. [Pembroke is the sister school of Brown in Providence, RI. –DC] And since she was applying to go away to college, I got the idea of applying to go away as well.

JOHANNA BURTON: I see. Had you traveled before?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No.

JOHANNA BURTON: Had you ever been outside of—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I had been outside of Coeur d'Alene, but nowhere to speak of. I don't even think I went to Seattle until—I mean, no, you know, we had been only to visit my paternal grandparents in Central Washington in a little rodeo town. We had once taken a trip, which was a big deal for us, to the Oregon Coast. So I had never seen a real city. I grew up near Spokane, 30 miles from Spokane, so that was my idea of a city.

And I had the idea that I wanted to study architecture. And it was—it was an uninformed idea. And I applied to schools that were rated well in architecture as an undergraduate [program –DC]. And I got a scholarship to Syracuse [University, Syracuse, NY] and one to Tulane. And I was being heavily recruited by Pratt [Institute, New York, NY]. But the idea of New York City at the time was terrifying to me. And I didn't really know anything about—I mean, it was a blind decision to go to Tulane. I thought that New Orleans sounded more romantic or something.

And it was a huge transition for me, a small town kid from the Northwest, to go to a city that was—it was a majority black city. It had a genuine history and a genuine culture in the way that the West just didn't have. I mean, it had architecture from the 18th century. The oldest buildings apart from an old fort chapel in my hometown were from the 1920s probably. New Orleans had a cuisine. It had a culture that was all its own. And also, it had a climate completely unlike the one that I was used to. So it was an—I would even say almost traumatic when I arrived there.

But I was a stubborn kid and I had made this decision to do something different from what anybody else in my hometown did. So I was determined to stick it out. And, you know, I was alone at first. I didn't know anyone. I felt like a hick. I didn't have nearly the sophistication that many of my fellow students did.

Tulane was a kind of fancy, private, gentleman's Southern college that drew its students from mostly throughout the South, but there were also students there from New York and, you know, from big cities certainly. And because it was a fairly distinguished private school, the people who went there were—they were drawn from all over.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And so I felt very out of my element when I was first there. I really was—you know, it was hard for me to figure out its culture. I think I still to some degree, [that I am of the mindset of … –DC] the person who didn't know what other people knew, who was less sophisticated, less well-educated, even though I had, you know, gotten good grades in high school and all of that and was sort of considered an intellectual among my—in my high school. When I went to college, it was completely different and frightening in some ways.

JOHANNA BURTON: So you didn't know a single person?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, I didn't know a single person.

JOHANNA BURTON: And did you move into a dorm situation?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I moved into a dormitory that—the dormitory that I was in had suites of four rooms with two people in a room. So I had these seven suitemates—or one was a roommate who were kind of, you know, a group of people that I knew immediately, some of whom became my friends. And then I had my classmates in the school of architecture. And, of course, the study of architecture is such that you spend endless hours together because you are constantly up all night doing these projects. And I didn't really like it.

In fact, what I did like in my first year was my history of architecture class. And it was taught by a very flamboyant gay man and someone who was—

JOHANNA BURTON: What was his name?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: His name was Bernard Lemann. He was a native of Louisiana, but he had gone to Harvard. He was an architectural historian, although I think he did his dissertation on [Honoré] Daumier. And he was a specialist particularly in Louisiana architecture. But he had a kind of passion for his subject that no other teacher that I had in my first year had. And I also loved the subject.

And he was so overtly faggy that people were quite mercilessly teasing him all the time and laughing at him. So I think, you know, part of me identified with him. But I also just loved both his passion and what he was teaching. And so after my first year, I transferred to art history. He did not—he was not in the art history department, which was actually in the women's college, Newcomb College.

JOHANNA BURTON: Of course, that is perfect.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And he was in the architecture school. But through him, I became interested in art history. I don't really remember, but I probably would have taken as an elective an art history class in my second semester of my first year. But in any case, I transferred to that subject because the architecture school was a separate school. And so if I was going to leave architecture, I had to actually go to another college at the university.

JOHANNA BURTON: And your idea at first was that you were going to be—initially that you were going to be a practicing architect rather than an architectural historian, say?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Oh, yes. I mean, it was professional architecture training. And it was a very, very macho field. I mean, it is still is, architecture.

JOHANNA BURTON: Absolutely.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It is an amazingly—it is one of the most unreconstructed masculinist fields, I think, in the arts. And, you know, the professors were all men and there were very few women students. And the women students were treated very badly. There were a number of gay students, but it was—you didn't speak about it at that time.

JOHANNA BURTON: Was this the first time that you came across a number of gay people within your sphere or when you were growing up, had there been any culture or any discussion around that at all? Was New Orleans

sort of your—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No. I mean, when I was growing up, I mean, it was the '50s in Idaho. You can imagine.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, absolutely

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So no, there was no—I think I didn't know the word "homosexual" until I was a sophomore in high school.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay. Did you come out, though, yourself when you were in Idaho or when you—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, no, no.

JOHANNA BURTON: Or after you had moved to New Orleans?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, you couldn't have done that. I mean, not really. No, but I did—one of my suitemates in my freshman year was obviously gay. And his roommate was not gay, but from a kind of bohemian family who had gay friends. I think maybe even his father was gay. And so it was a very—it was something completely new to me to actually, you know, see people who were gay and to see that they could speak about it, at least elliptically and that it was cool with some people.

I mean, this was completely new. This is 1962. But also, New Orleans, as it happened—I mean, the great luck of going there was that New Orleans was I guess we would call it a kind of decadent city. And it had a bohemian culture. And it had a pretty large gay culture. So there were gay bars.

JOHANNA BURTON: So did you join—did you start going to those bars?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I did. I mean, I didn't do it right away, of course. And I can't—I can't really say with any certainty whether it was in the second semester of my first year. I mean, I did—the one thing is that I did, fairly early on, leave campus. I mean, we would do that. And because it was an urban university and because you could take a bus or a trolley car from the Tulane campus, which was uptown, down to the French Quarter, and because everybody always wanted to go to the French Quarter, I mean, particularly people who were studying architecture. But also for restaurants and there was, you know, the famous Cafe Du Monde, which was an all-night coffee place where everybody in New Orleans went.

So it would be students and, you know, people who had come from fancy dressed parties. I mean, everyone went there. And we would take study breaks, you know, and go there even at four o'clock in the morning. So I did—I did explore the city a certain amount. And certainly by my sophomore year, I began hanging out in a—at that time, New Orleans was a very active port city. And the street nearest the river in the French Quarter, Decatur Street, was a street of—it was a very seedy street of sailor's bars basically.

And there was one Greek sailor's bar. They were by nationality. And there was a Greek sailor's bar that a group of people from Tulane used to hang out at, people from the art school basically. When I was studying art history, it was a program that was both art history and studio art combined. And so quite early on, I got to know graduate students who were doing studio. And it was through those people, I think, and some studio professors that I began going to a bar called the Acropolis, which was a Greek sailor's bar.

And there, there were prostitutes and drag queen prostitutes and men dancing [Greek –DC] dances together. It wasn't a gay bar as such. But it was a—there was a gay constituency there and a kind of gay element and a kind of gay frisson. So that was my first encounter with a kind of gay scene.

And then eventually I began actually going to gay bars.

JOHANNA BURTON: And were these—I am curious about this because I don't know. Were they also racially mixed or were they—how did that operate because at that time period, race—I am sort of curious.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: New Orleans was interesting in relation to its racial character during that period. It was—I mean, in many ways, it was the South in that period. Tulane, I think, had very recently been integrated at that point.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yeah, yeah.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But it was still very much a situation where the students were white and the cafeteria workers were black. But the city itself, one of the things that was interesting about it was that although there were black neighborhoods and white neighborhoods, they tended to be very adjacent to each other and to be all throughout the city and blending. Of course, there were very large areas that were totally black and very large areas that were totally white. But near the university and where I eventually moved off campus was basically a mixed

neighborhood. I mean, it was a kind of an edge neighborhood where black and white came together.

I took the bus to school from where I lived, but it was also a 20-minute walk. So it was quite close to the campus. I do remember meeting—the gay bars—the gay scenes were small enough in that era in general that they were mixed in every way. So they were racially mixed, they were gender mixed, they were age mixed. It was too early for there to be specialized gay bars. And that is something that I—when I moved to New York and lost that gay culture, I very much regretted it. I mean, there was something about that. You know, it was something I rediscovered when I went in 1984 to Prague when it was still a hard communist country and went to the one gay bar that I could find in Prague. And it was basically completely mixed because it was all of the kind of people who didn't fit in that culture, in that society.

But it was men and women and it was older people and younger people.

JOHANNA BURTON: There is something really powerful about that kind of mode of alliance. That was still the case in Nevada when I was there. I mean, and it is interesting that in these bigger cities, that gets lost. There is this kind of—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, yes. No, I mean, they can specialize. And now they are—but already, I mean, I didn't start going to gay bars in New York as soon as I got here. I hung out mostly—a gay space that I hung out in was Max's Kansas City, in the back room of Max's. And I didn't really start going to village gay bars until after Stonewall.

So there was a kind of—you know, it wasn't that I really went back in the closet. I didn't, you know, not say that I was gay. But I didn't—I was sort of afraid for some reason of venturing into a gay scene. It was a different part of town, a different world for me. But in New Orleans, I had gotten used to it and I went to gay bars on my own a lot, you know, up through when I came to New York, and I liked the gay culture there very much.

JOHANNA BURTON: So it was your second year that you became an art history major.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: And who were you studying with there at Tulane? Was there anyone who left a real mark on you or that you felt kind of helped you?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, there was—I mean, I had a number of professors that I loved and that were wonderful. There is a woman named Jessie Poesch who was a specialist in Northern Renaissance and in American art. She was a young professor when I was there. A woman named Caecilia Davis who was German married to a history professor there whose name was Davis. I don't remember—I think maybe her German—her maiden name was Weyer [her professional name is Caecilia Davis Weyer –DC]. She was a medievalist and a very rigorous art historian. She had studied with Richard Krautheimer—and a really lovely woman.

The chair of the department when I was there was a man named Donald Robertson who was a pre-Columbian—actually a post-conquest—immediate post-conquest Latin American specialist. But he did pre-Columbian art. And Tulane was one of those universities that did archeological digs in Latin America. And so they had—I actually took an anthropology class that was a pre-Columbian class as well. So I did a lot of work in pre-Columbian art.

And, you know, you couldn't really study contemporary art, of course, in those days. And even modern—the modern class, it seemed kind of avant-garde that it came up to abstract expressionism. I had a professor [Peter Hammond –DC]. He was a visitor from England. [… –DC] I wrote a paper for him on [Marcel] Duchamp's *Large Glass* [*The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, 1915-23]. And, you know, it was something that I kind of puzzled out on my own. It was before the [renewed interest in Duchamp after the Pasadena show –DC]. And he was incredibly supportive of this work that I did, I remember.

And he was someone who really made modern art, you know, meaningful to me. I began reading art magazines because of that class, reading about contemporary art. Through that and through having studio art major friends who were—there was a small gallery scene in New Orleans. And I went to gallery openings and things like that, so I began to sort of feel what the world of contemporary art was like. I began to realize—I mean, not right away. It would have been probably in my third year. I was actually there—because of the architecture, I was there for five years. I began to realize that I was interested in contemporary art. You couldn't study it. But I was studying it on my own. And then I was doing—you know, I was doing what art history majors did. You know, I was taking all of the various different courses. And I made a very close friend there, a woman who was a graduate student, a graduate art historian whose name is Marimar Benitez, who is now the director of the Museum of Fine Arts in San Juan in Puerto Rico.

She is from Puerto Rico. Marimar and I became very close friends. And so I also began to see what professional, you know, graduate-level art historians did. She eventually went to Yale [University, New Haven, CT] to get her

Ph.D. And when I came to New York, she went to New Haven. So I think that also—I began to sort of understand art history and contemporary art as a professional possibility.

JOHANNA BURTON: What about other students within your own class? Was there a kind of contingent of folks who wanted to have reading groups or were you invested in thinking about philosophy or other—I am just curious of how you sort of navigated that in terms of a kind of discursive, you know, group of people involved in similar things or if it was mostly people outside in terms of like this graduate student, for instance?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yeah, no, it wasn't—I mean, I don't remember—I frankly can't say that I remember a single undergraduate art history student that I can recall right this moment. I remember quite a number of graduate students—graduate studio people and even some undergraduate studio people. And some of those people eventually came to New York actually.

JOHANNA BURTON: Did you spend time in their studios?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, yes, yes. And, you know, as I said, I went to openings with them. I went to parties with them. I mean, I also had two very close friends who were married who had gone to Antioch College [Yellow Springs, OH] and came to Tulane to study theater. And at that time, The Drama Review [TDR –DC] was the Tulane Drama Review. And there was a very interesting world around the theater department there, a kind of bohemian world also. And there was a lot of mixing between the art school students and the theater school students. Richard Schechner was there, for example.

So I saw plays and this couple, the woman of which is still a very close friend, Jacquelyn McCroskey. She is married to Marc Pally who was the director of LACE [Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions] in Los Angeles, I think the first director of LACE and is a painter. Jacqueline is now a professor at USC [University of Southern California]. And she became—she became involved with psychology. So she doesn't do theater anymore—I mean, she hasn't for years. But they were typical Antioch students, worldly in a kind of bohemian way.

You know, they were hippies, I guess you could say. I mean, this was hippie time. What—the summer of love is 1967. That is when I came to New York. So that was sort of happening. That countercultural world was—there was a bit of that at the university.

JOHANNA BURTON: Were you involved in sort of political—in a sense, this was also a kind of intense time for American politics? Did any of that reach—were there coalition groups? Were there anti-war—I am just curious with Tulane how that figured in or if you were aware of it.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, the theater department actually was one of the sort of hotbeds of that kind of political activity. I wasn't—I mean, it took—you know, I came from like deeply Republican roots.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So it took a while and it was through culture and bohemianism that I became more involved with left politics. So you know, I can't say that I was politically involved. But I was involved with all of these—with this constituency who were politically aware. And, in fact, the theater—I think, you know, the theater department eventually all left Tulane and came to NYU [New York University, New York, NY]. And part of the problem was that—you know, and I don't even actually remember this story well. But there was some political organizing going on at the university and the university, I think, came down hard on that actually.

But what I remember most is that, you know, I was susceptible to being drafted. It was the Vietnam War. And I was, you know, completely preoccupied by that in my—by '66, '67, when I was—you know, I was being called up for a draft physical.

JOHANNA BURTON: So what happened? Did you—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I was one of those people who declared my homosexuality publicly—I mean to the draft board. And with it, I mean, you had to at that point get a letter from a psychiatrist that would testify to your homosexuality because people were using every possible excuse to get out of the war. And it was a very big deal for me because my draft board was in my hometown. A friend of my father's was on that draft board. You know, this was—remember, this was like two, three years pre-Stonewall. There was nothing like a—I mean, with people older than me, there was a kind of burgeoning gay rights consciousness, but not for me.

You know, it was still an extremely complicated thing to deal with as a gay person. And I could negotiate it among my bohemian friends to some degree, although not with absolute ease. But, you know, the idea that it would actually be on my record with the government—I mean, at that point, it was still, you couldn't get a civil service job if you were gay.

So it was a big deal. But, of course, it was a—in a way, I am now, of course, incredibly happy that I was able to avoid the draft in that way. Other friends of mine left the country—

JOHANNA BURTON: And never came back.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: You know, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: So you graduated in '67 and moved—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, I didn't. [Coughs.] Excuse me. Part of the trauma of this declaration of being gay and the draft physical—I mean, just the whole thing that was going on, I suppose you could say the political turmoil of the moment, which was also an emotional turmoil.

JOHANNA BURTON: A huge one, yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I just basically was—I think I was sort of failing. I just wasn't being able to concentrate on my work. So I quit school and I moved to New York. So I left school before finishing very much, of course, against the advice of all of my professors and my family. And I moved to New York. So I came—I came after the end of the spring semester, so I came in June of '67. And I stayed in New York through that year and then I went back in January of '68 and completed my B.A.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay, okay, okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So I did a final semester in New Orleans and then came back.

JOHANNA BURTON: Because that is all you needed was the one semester.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yeah, yeah. I mean, the semester—I would have graduated—you know, if I had not quit those courses that I was taking. You know, I don't even know how I did it bureaucratically, but I managed to, you know, repair it.

JOHANNA BURTON: Did you go with anyone when you left for New York the first time? Did you go with a friend?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, I came actually with—I knew these brothers who were both at Tulane, Johann and Tony Bultman. They were the sons of Fritz Bultman who was an Abstract Expressionist painter. Johann was named from Hans Hofmann and Tony was named for Tony Smith.

JOHANNA BURTON: I see.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And I came—as I recall, I came with Johann who was the younger brother and was married to a woman whose name is Martha Hess who I have recently become friends with again. She got in touch with me through the Internet. I hadn't seen her since '68. But she is a balletomane—so we have become close friends again.

Anyway, Martha and Johann had a small child. They got married when they were 18 because Martha got pregnant. And I stayed briefly with Johann's parents. They had a brownstone on 95th Street just off of Lexington. And then I sublet an apartment for the summer, which was around the corner and they knew about. I think Bob Moskowitz had just gotten a grant or some kind of a summer gig or something. He and Hermine Tworkov—Hermine Ford who is his wife and their young son were away, so I sublet their apartment for the summer.

And Jeanne Bultman, the mother—the wife of Fritz Bultman, who was a very, very elegant woman, was one of Charles James' clients. And it was she who knew that Charles James wanted an assistant to help him organize his papers to write his memoirs. She got me a job for the two weeks that I was able to stand Charles James, which is something that means a lot to me now, but at the time, was really, really difficult. I mean, he was such a crazy person.

I think it is testimony to how much I remained the hick that suddenly finding myself in the world of Charles James at the Chelsea Hotel in 1967, I really was not ready for that.

JOHANNA BURTON: Did you really work for him only for two weeks?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yeah. I mean, I basically worked for him until my first paycheck was due and then he said that he wasn't—you know, he was a financial finagler among other things. And he was also completely broke. So he said that rather than paying me, he would open a charge account for me at Barney's, which in those days was not the store that it is now. And, you know, I couldn't afford to do that. And also, it was only probably out of some loyalty to Jeanne and her finding me this job and also [… –DC] determination that you can make anything work.

But from the first day, I knew that this was not for me. It was a world that I couldn't comprehend. It was a world of—you know, one of the fanciest worlds and also one of the most decadent worlds in the sense that he was destitute, but he knew everybody. He had memorabilia from everybody and his place was chaos. Everything about it was just—was a little incomprehensible to me.

And I felt like I was totally over my head from the moment I walked in. And I had never encountered somebody who was so just out of his mind basically, I mean, you know, that I was having to deal with on a daily basis.

JOHANNA BURTON: Was he living in the Chelsea Hotel?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, yes, yes. He had a kind of suite of rooms like many people, you know, in that era living in the Chelsea Hotel. [… –DC] You know, the Chelsea Girls was shot in 1966 in the Chelsea Hotel largely. And Chelsea was a rough neighborhood at the time. And so it was just, you know, I didn't have the—this was very shortly, a few weeks after I had arrived in New York. And I just didn't have the capacity to comprehend what I had gotten into.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, they threw you right into the room.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, right.

JOHANNA BURTON: What did he ask you to do in those two weeks? Were you going through papers and actually —

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, yes, I mean, I was meant to be kind of—I don't know—separating—like he had letters from everyone. And I was, you know, separating them by who wrote them. And, you know, then he would come in. I would have piles of letters around on the floor or something and he would come in and throw them all up and say, "What are you doing?" He was just a lunatic, you know?

JOHANNA BURTON: A lunatic, yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: He was basically involved in a kind of con game that had to do with getting clients, former clients to give him dresses that he had made for them, which he would then sell to museums in order to have money to live. It is a sad thing. He was a genius. But he is so—I mean—it is obvious from the scholarly work that has been done on him. He was very self-destructive, went through oodles of money and never really was able to live—I mean, somebody who lived in fancy hotels all his life and just, you know, never made a wise financial decision in his life.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right. While you were there during those two weeks, did you end up running into a lot of people in the Chelsea Hotel and kind of meeting folks that way or not so much?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, no, I didn't. It was only later. I didn't—I had seen the Chelsea Girls at that point. I saw it when I was in New Orleans. I saw it in its national run in 1967 before I came to New York. And it was, you know, a memorable experience. But I wouldn't be able to say that I would have recognized Ondine if I had seen him in the Chelsea Hotel.

And also, I was mostly in this squalid suite of rooms with Charles James or walking his beagle around. That was one of my tasks, walking his dog. No, it wasn't until a couple of years later when I moved to Chelsea and started hanging out at Max's that I had some real sense of the Warhol scene.

JOHANNA BURTON: The scene, okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: So you have been in New York for a month and you have worked for Charles James and you are living at the—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Third Avenue—

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes. So what happens after you effectively sort of quit Charles James? What do you begin to do for money or how do you make your way into—you start writing for *ARTnews* pretty soon thereafter, right?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, not until 1970.

JOHANNA BURTON: Oh, it is not until 1970?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay, okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, in that year that I—I mean, before I went back to—[telephone rings]—I'm just going to see who this is.

JOHANNA BURTON: Should I stop it, do you think?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, wait.

JOHANNA BURTON: All right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, do because—

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay, I will stop it.

[END OF TRACK AAA_crimp09_3252.]

There is that one. There is this one. Okay. So we left off with what you began to do for money after your first month in New York the first time around.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right. Well, I mean, I am sure that I got a certain amount of financial help from my family. But what I do remember that I—the job that I got eventually that I had before I went back to New Orleans—I worked in the slide library at Columbia. And I do remember, you know, in those days, it was before remotes. And there was always somebody who was hired to push slides for a class. So I did—I worked in the slide library and I actually pushed slides for the likes of Meyer Schapiro.

JOHANNA BURTON: That is kind of amazing.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yeah, that was kind of a nice job.

JOHANNA BURTON: Did you have a plan for what you were going to do when you came to New York or did you just know you wanted to get here?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right. I just wanted to be in New York. And as soon as I got here, of course, I was so enthralled by it. And that summer, I do remember after the Charles James thing, there was a period of time where I was living in, you know, the Upper East Side, Third Avenue and 94th Street, and I used to walk down the Met like virtually every day. I mean, I saw a lot—you know, I was thinking that, for example, like now that the Dia [Art Foundation] has opened at the Hispanic Society up near where you live, most people—pretty much everybody that I have talked to had never been there before.

JOHANNA BURTON: That is right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But I went there, you know, in my first year in New York because I just was like a tourist in New York and I was going to all the museums. I was interested in art and so I went—you know, I went to the Hispanic Society and the Museum of the American Indian, which was there at the time. But I went to the Met [Metropolitan Museum of Art]. The Met was free. And it was a kind of stuffy old place that would be more or less empty of people. There would be some German art historians wandering around. And you could just go whenever you wanted.

And they had—I remember often eating lunch in the cafeteria, which was where the New Greek and Roman galleries are now. It was a big cafeteria that had been designed, I think, in the 1940s by Dorothy Draper. And it was the most—it was mostly a reflecting pool. It was an incredibly beautiful room and an inexpensive cafeteria, but in the most luxurious setting imaginable, you know, around this big pool. It was a place where Upper East Side ladies would go for lunch.

And so I would go there and I would look at—you know, I would say, oh, I will look at [Johannes] Vermeers today or I will look at whatever. And so I spent a lot of time looking at art that summer and, you know, exploring the city.

JOHANNA BURTON: Were you spending time looking—it sounds like obviously the Met had older art, but also MoMA [Museum of Modern Art] or—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yeah, of course, I went to MoMA and the [Solomon R.] Guggenheim [Museum], which was near me and the Whitney [Museum of American Art]. I remember seeing a Joseph Cornell show at the Guggenheim that Diane Waldman had put together, and eventually, of course, I worked with Diane.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes. And I had a few friends in New York that came with me from—one of the people that I met on my first day—literally my first day in New York—was Abigail Solomon-Godeau. And she was a high school—well, the woman, Martha Hess, who was married to Johann Bultman, with whom I came—a high school friend of hers came over to visit her. They all had gone to Music & Art High School. And that woman's name was Norma Akamatsu. She was a close friend of Martha's. And Abigail was a close friend of Norma's. And so she came along.

And so we became friends, Norma and Abigail and I. I went to parties with them. I think Abigail was a student at Hunter College at the time. And there was a person named Paul Issa who came to New York with me, someone who had been at Tulane, and eventually he lived in a loft next to me in Chelsea. We were good friends for a period of time. He was the person with whom I went to Max's every night. But this was later in '69 or so.

JOHANNA BURTON: So after that first short stint, you went back and you finished the degree. Did you immediately come back to New York after that?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

JOHANNA BURTON: And at this point then, you have not left the United States, right? Have you traveled outside of the United States ever?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, no, I hadn't, no. I went to Europe for the first time in 1969 actually.

JOHANNA BURTON: You know, I am always curious about sort of when that happens, especially given the conversation about how when you move from somewhere—for me with Nevada. When you move to like a city like New Orleans or New York, suddenly it seems like really old compared to where you are from. There is a lot of history. It is almost like going to Europe in a funny kind of way.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, yeah. I mean, definitely New Orleans was like that. As I said, it had a culture, a cuisine. I mean, it was foreign. It really was foreign.

JOHANNA BURTON: So when you came back to New York then the second time, it was for good in a sense?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, and I had kept an apartment—before I left, I rented an apartment. By the end of the summer, Bob and Hermine came back to the apartment. [I had sublet from them. –DC] And I looked for an apartment. I remember that apartment search well. I remember going to an apartment in the East Village and walking into it and deciding within a second that I wouldn't take it because it was a flea bag—literally it was a flea bag. On the way back uptown, I realized that I had fleas.

JOHANNA BURTON: Oh god.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And, you know, that was the moment of the East Village, of the hippie East Village. So that was one of the possible places to look. I remember looking also at an apartment—I actually mention this in my memoir—in what is now SoHo, but was then part of the South Village. It was an Italian neighborhood. And I found the neighborhood just too rough to imagine living in. This is all part of my innocence and naïveté.

And then I found an apartment in Spanish Harlem on 98th Street near Park Avenue. And at that time 96th Street—I mean, it still is—but 96th Street was an absolute divide. And I had been living on 94th. But I had made friends in that neighborhood, so I think that I felt comfortable in the neighborhood and so I took an extremely inexpensive apartment, a tenement apartment in Spanish Harlem.

And so I kept that apartment. I can't remember who stayed in it, but someone sublet it from me when I went back to Tulane. And then I came back to that apartment.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay, okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And then, you know, as soon as I came back, which was in the—well, I came back in the summer of '68, so a year later. And I don't remember when exactly it was. But I think it was—it must have—I mean, what I did for that summer. I may be confusing those two summers. I might have worked at Columbia during that period. I am not sure. But eventually I decided that I would try to get a job in a museum. And, you know, I told this story in my memoir. I was on my way to the Met thinking I would ask for a job at the Met. And then I walked—I was walking down Fifth Avenue from 98th Street and I walked into the Guggenheim.

And I got a job because they were doing an exhibition of pre-Columbian Peruvian art. And they wanted someone to run the information desk and they—the story is that Thomas Messer had fought with the curator who was a specialist in pre-Columbian art and then all of these objects arrived from Peru. No one in the museum knew what they were. And so when I walked in and said I am looking for a job—I remember the person I spoke to was somebody who did public relations for the museum—he was the first person I encountered in the administrative area of the museum. And I said, "I am looking for a job." And he said—he just blurted out, "Do you know

anything about pre-Columbian art?" And I had studied it at Tulane. So I said, "Yes, I do. I studied it." So you know, they hired me on the spot. And so that was really a piece of incredible luck that I walked into a job at the Guggenheim Museum as somebody with a B.A. in art history.

It was also frankly difficult because museums paid nothing in those days and most of the people who worked at my level were young wealthy women whose parents were supporting them. I didn't make enough money to really, you know, to even to be able to afford the sort of clothes that I should have been wearing at openings and things like—I remember what I was paid. My salary was $4200 a year. [Of course –DC], that went further in 1968 —

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, of course, but yeah.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But it was really slave labor. And literally we worked seven days a week and around the clock. The Guggenheim was so ambitious in those days. They had a relatively small staff. We were very small. And we did a lot of major exhibitions with full catalogues and everything.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right. What was your title at that point?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, I started out—I mean, I literally was working at an information desk during the pre-Columbian Peruvian art show. And then I managed to convince them that I was interested in contemporary art, that I had studied modern art. And I became a sort of research assistant. And what happened was that Diane Waldman was working on a [Roy] Lichtenstein show at the time. And I worked with her on the catalogue. She was impressed, I think, with my editorial skills at that point or whatever it was that I did with her.

And she then took me to be her curatorial assistant. The staff was so small that if you were there and they needed someone to do something, then you were an obvious candidate to do it if you were capable.

JOHANNA BURTON: So did you have an office then at that point?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: When I was first there, I was in the corner of the library, which at that time was in the space that is now the cafeteria. And then I was in the corner of Diane's office. And I think actually Diane—as I recall, Diane shared an office with Ed Fry. So the two curators—there was also a collections curator whose name was Louise Svendsen. And then there were Diane Waldman and Edward Fry. And I believe that we were all in the same office. Eventually Linda Shearer became Ed Fry's assistant.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And so we all worked together and I also was very good friends at the time with a woman named Lucinda Hawkins who was the director's secretary. And that was all in the administrative wing of the Guggenheim, which is now gallery space.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It is the smaller spiral next to the—

JOHANNA BURTON: And how long were you there?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Until '71.

JOHANNA BURTON: So what were some of the—can you name some of the shows that you worked on specifically? Agnes Martin?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, there was not an Agnes Martin show.

JOHANNA BURTON: Oh, I heard that you—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, I did the Agnes Martin show myself.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right. But didn't—why am I thinking—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But not at the Guggenheim.

JOHANNA BURTON: Didn't you borrow something from their collection or am I making some crazy—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I couldn't—they wouldn't lend to me. But that was toward the end of my time there. I was asked—I had already started teaching at the School of Visual Arts.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay, okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And, you know, Paul Waldman, who was Diane's husband, kind of ran things from behind the scenes at the School of Visual Arts. And he hired me. Then I was asked to do an exhibition.

JOHANNA BURTON: So I am rushing—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well,—

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay, okay. Yes, of course, she wouldn't have had a show by then at the Guggenheim.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No. I mean, there were a couple of paintings in the Guggenheim's collection. And I think I first knew her work through seeing it there. But then also I saw it—by the time I did the exhibition, I had been around in the art scene enough to know of her status among the minimal generation of artists. And I had—you know, I can no longer say for sure whether I saw the "10" exhibition at the Dwan Gallery [Robert Smithson's "10" Exhibition, May 2-29, 1967] because it is now completely confused with—you know, I know of its existence and I was going to the Dwan Gallery in those years. Actually maybe the "10" show might even have been—might even have preceded my coming to New York. I don't really remember exactly when was it.

JOHANNA BURTON: I felt like it was—I feel like it was right around that time, wasn't it?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But I might not have—I mean, I didn't really start going to galleries until '68, when I started working for Diane. It was only really in getting to know Diane, '68, '69 that I began doing the gallery circuit. When I really knew that I was more and more involved with contemporary art of that moment, when I was first interested in contemporary art back when I was in college, it was like Abstract Expressionism because that was all I knew really.

It took me a while to figure out what was happening at the moment. Well, let's see, I worked on the Lichtenstein show first. I worked on a Carl Andre show. The main thing that I remember, of course, working on was the Guggenheim International, which is also why I [had to leave the museum –DC].

I did some work before I was working with Diane on some Guggenheim—they were putting together, I think, a collection catalog at the time. And I did some research on things in the collection. So I did—you know, as I said, we were a small staff so I did various kinds of work. There were these—there was something called the Theodoron awards, which was a group [show –DC] of younger artists that [was done –DC], I think, annually or something like that—that Diane would have worked on, [and that I worked on with her –DC].

JOHANNA BURTON: Did you enjoy working with her?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, I did actually. She was very meticulous. I mean, she was really—she really liked me, so she was very supportive of my involvement with everything. I went often with her to galleries. She was very close friends with Betsy Baker and so I met Betsy through her. And it was through Betsy that I began writing. Diane thought that I was capable of writing and suggested me to Betsy. And so I began through that connection to write criticism.

JOHANNA BURTON: Were you writing criticism while you were still at the Guggenheim or did it sort of—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, I started—the first article I wrote was on Georgia O'Keeffe. She was having a big show at the Whitney and I wrote a piece for *ARTnews*. Betsy [Baker] was then the managing editor of *ARTnews*. Tom Hess was still there. John Ashbery was the senior editor. And so I met the whole *ARTnews* crowd at that moment as well, through Betsy and John also.

JOHANNA BURTON: I want to talk more about the writing in a moment. And though I know it is a bit of a famous story, if you could quickly talk about the Guggenheim International, you know, what happened there just because I think it is an important story in terms of your own, you know—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: You know, the show—the Guggenheim International was a biennial or a triennial exhibition, a survey exhibition of the type that was thought possible in those days. And I think it had been, you know, one-time painting, one-time sculpture. I don't really remember because this was the only one I worked on. But its nature was changed into a more coherent, thematic—it was going to be minimalism through conceptual art. And it was just at that moment when a number of shows were being done [of that type –DC]—it came after "When Attitudes Become Form", for example.

And this was pretty much Diane's idea, although Diane and Ed Fry were co-curators, but Ed Fry was given, I think, Latin America and Japan or something like that—and I think he only put two artists in the show. And the rest was Diane, so it was really Diane's show, I would say.

And so she was very much the person who made the selection. I had nothing to do with that. I wasn't at that level. I really was her assistant. And I dealt with some of the artists. And actually just coincidentally, Buren is one

of the ones I dealt with pretty exclusively. I mean, I dealt with him probably more than Diane did. I mean, really back and forth kind of communication about the piece.

She had negotiated with all of the artists who would be given what space. I can't remember how that was done. Obviously, there were certain artists that she would have been more deferential to than others, and who would have gotten more choice. And the idea was sort of site specificity. A lot of people were making work for the show, although some work was, I think, just chosen for the show. But mostly, it really was made for the show or at least the choice of works was in consultation with the artists.

For example, there was a Mario Merz piece that was a Fibonacci series in neon that went up the internal side of the spiral, the rotunda side of the spiral. That [Dan] Flavin piece on the top ramp was done for—the lights were done for the bays [the divisions of the upper ramps –DC]. There was a [Donald] Judd piece that was actually made to—it was like concentric circles that were cut so that it could sit on the slope of the ramp, but then be level. It was a show that we worked on for a very long time. It was very—everything was—I mean, none of this would seem odd now. But the idea of doing a show where you were getting all of the artists to make work for the show and that it would be specific to the site was a completely new phenomenon.

The catalog itself was a very different—I mean, it was kind of an innovative idea. I don't remember actually who designed it. I do remember working with a designer in—I think we had a printer and maybe a designer who was in Providence, Rhode Island at the time. I don't remember if he did that catalogue. In any case, it was a box and it had individual sheets for the various artists. So all of those details of compiling all that information, what would go on the sheets, I did a lot of that.

And Linda Shearer did it as well because Linda was working with Ed at the time. And I think we both did a lot of that bibliographic research. You know, all of the information that went on those sheets and I think the decision about which photographs was done more with Diane in consultation with the artists. But she was more involved —I mean, when she would write an essay for a catalog, she would—you know, you couldn't bother her. She might be even at home during that time. So we were involved in those other sorts of details.

And so that is what I did. But I also met a lot of the artists through that. I met Lawrence Weiner. I think I had already known Richard Serra. I met a lot of these people with Diane going to galleries. The [art –DC] world was so small at that point. In any case, I had worked with Buren and I had a kind of—I don't know, we were communicating mostly by letter, I think, in those days. But there was a kind of—he was very pleasant to deal with and I remember it fondly.

And so then, you know, everybody descended upon the museum to make their pieces or to have them installed. It was a complex installation. There was a Serra prop piece on the main floor. It was a lot to do. But the Buren was probably the most complicated rigging piece. And it was meant to have for the banner in the rotunda and then one across 88th Street, which was never installed.

The banner went up, kind of took all day. It was very spectacular. I mean, really it was—you have to say it was spectacular. And I guess immediately—I mean, I am not aware of who went to Diane and said what. I wasn't privy to that. But I became aware by—I remember there was a party, a cocktail party at the director's apartment. He lived nearby on Park Avenue, Thomas Messer. And at that party, it was—this is what I remember. You know, [… –DC] there was all this negotiating going on because it was determined somehow that the piece should come down. And Buren was talking to people to get them to sign a petition to keep it. And that was all happening at a party.

JOHANNA BURTON: Wow, yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, it happened—it all happened very fast. It came down, I guess, that night because the opening was the next day.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So yes, this party was after the installation—the first installation day or the installation day in which the banner went up, in any case, or the painting went up. And I was kind of devastated. I was—the majority of artists were on Buren's side, of course. It was a kind of solidarity thing if nothing else. And also, the politics of the moment were such that you just didn't do something like that. And so I thought—I think I actually thought that Buren would win because I thought that you just can't do anything like that. But they did.

JOHANNA BURTON: But they did, yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And then there was a long negotiation with Buren about, you know, they wanted to kind of cover themselves, so they wanted to basically say, "Well, we will give—we will show the piece for two weeks after the show comes down by itself." And, of course, you know, none of the possibilities were, I mean—

JOHANNA BURTON:  Were good.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  That is not the way he worked, you know. His notion was that the piece was an intervention in the phenomenon of the group show and to demonstrate the way in which the museum as a space pulled the viewer toward the center and all of that sort of thing. It doesn't say the same thing, obviously, with the other work gone.

JOHANNA BURTON:  Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  So you know, this was in like February [I believe –DC], February of 1971. And, you know, it was one of those moments when I disagreed with the decision. I was disappointed by it. I had become friendly with Buren both by letter and then after he came to New York. We had breakfast together a couple of times. I liked him. I guess he is the artist who was in the show that I became friends with, let's say, a bit.

So I don't remember well what happened in the next months. It was awkward. I remember that because I didn't agree with the decision and Diane knew I didn't agree with it. You know, at the time, the Hans Haacke show was in the works and Ed Fry was doing that. There was a lot of attention to that in the office. But there was also a series of statements being written about what had happened for Studio International. And I knew what the museum was claiming was untrue. That is the one thing that I will say is that I can remember very well that Diane makes the claim in her letter that the piece was essentially sprung upon the museum, that, you know, [Buren –DC] was a little vague about what he was going to do and then he showed up with this thing.

And that simply isn't true. Everything was negotiated in absolutely precise detail. There were drawings. You know, I regret that I didn't take my files when I left the museum so that I could prove this. But in any case, I think that the fact that the museum was not telling the truth and that I—you know, that I disagreed with what they were doing and that I obviously knew what the truth was and they knew I knew what the truth was made everything more awkward for everyone.

And so then I—it was that spring that I did the Agnes Martin show. I was very focused on that. I had begun teaching at the School of Visual Arts, I think in 1970. So I was also—I was doing that while I was working at the Guggenheim, so I was pretty preoccupied with that. I guess I was also doing—I was writing because I had published my second full article in *ARTnews*. It was on Jack Tworkov.

And then I went away on vacation in the summer. And that is when I went to visit Agnes Martin. And it was when I came back that I was let go. And in the meantime, there had been the scandal of the cancellation of the Haacke show. And the pretext was that because Ed Fry was being fired that they would let one of the assistants go. And, of course, it made no sense that they would keep Linda Shearer and not me because Linda was Ed Fry's assistant. But it made it more convenient for them.

JOHANNA BURTON:  Right, right. And it sounds like you were probably ready to go on some level.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Yeah, I mean, the awkwardness was very unpleasant. But, of course, you know, it was my job. And so it was difficult as those kinds of things are.

JOHANNA BURTON:  So you spent—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Sorry, I will be right back.

JOHANNA BURTON:  I will just leave it on.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  I think my cold is sort of constantly dehydrating [me –DC].

JOHANNA BURTON:  And probably speaking so much doesn't help.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Yeah.

JOHANNA BURTON:  How did you get yourself invited for the summer?

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  To see Agnes Martin?

JOHANNA BURTON:  Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  When I [… –DC] had the idea to do the show and I went to the Elkon Gallery, which was her dealer, Robert Elkon. And the first time I went, I spoke with an assistant and she showed me things, mostly drawings. And she gave me Agnes' address, which was a post office box in Cuba, New Mexico. And eventually when I spoke to Elkon himself, he was very uncooperative. I think that he—probably reasonably enough now looking back on it—felt that the School of Visual Arts, the little gallery, the scrufty little gallery at the School of

Visual Arts, was not [an appropriate –DC] venue for Agnes Martin.

And actually he would have been right not to want her paintings there because they are so fragile. But I was determined to do this show. I didn't think about those sorts of things at the time. I mean, I didn't think about how incredibly valuable the paintings were. Of course, they weren't nearly as valuable at that time. And so I wrote a letter to Agnes Martin and said I was doing the show and I was having trouble locating her paintings and [asked if –DC] could she help me. And she called me at the Guggenheim and she was very nice on the phone. And she gave me the names of people who had her paintings.

And she said—you know, in this conversation, she said, "Come and see me. Come and see me in New Mexico." And I said, "Well, you know, I might do that because I will be going to visit my family in Idaho this summer. I could just drive to New Mexico," which I did. And so I suppose we continued to correspond a bit. I don't have any other correspondence with her, so I am not really sure. But, certainly at some point, she sent me a map of how to get to her place. And so I decided to go, which is not—which is a little unlike me because I have never been—I am very shy and it is very hard for me to imagine going to visit a famous artist whom I revere and—

I mean, I think—you know, I wanted to do it and then I was very friendly with Pat Steir at the time and she agreed to come with me, which made it easier. And also, you know, I think I saw it as a kind of adventure to drive to the Southwest where I had never been. But in any case, I think I was so enamored of her work and a bit, I guess, of her legend. I mean, I knew a bit about her, about her stay in New York and, you know, who she knew at the time. But more than that, her status among a group of younger artists.

So I don't know, it seemed like an opportunity so I decided to do it.

JOHANNA BURTON: How long did you stay with her?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Just overnight. It was just—yeah. I drove—yeah, I mean, it was a long way to drive for an overnight trip. I drove from North Idaho to Albuquerque where I picked up Pat. She had flown there. And then we drove to Cuba and made our way up onto this mesa and then got completely lost. And then somehow Agnes came and found us. We went to her compound, I guess you could call it. She had built an adobe house. She didn't yet have a studio. There was a kind of a log hut that had been built into a sort of hill that I think was the first structure she built for the first winter. She had her camper there.

And I remember she made us dinner in this very beautiful adobe house. And we talked. And then the next day, we went for a hike around the area on the mesa. It was incredibly beautiful and incredibly isolated. I had never seen that kind of isolation before or certainly anybody living in that kind of isolation. I grew up in a little town where people lived out in the woods and that sort of thing. But this was really miles from anybody else.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And, you know, with no electricity. To this day, I cannot remember where she would have gotten fresh food and how she could have kept food. I am sure she grew food for herself. Maybe she had a propane freezer or refrigerator or something like that. I don't know how she managed it. But she did. Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: So you came then back and did—you showed me some images. I can't remember where—what talk—you have very few images of the show at SVA.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, very bad ones.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, but they are sort of beautiful also because they do no justice at all to the works, but make them into these shapes. And they are on the wall, which is kind of nice. How many works were included in the show in the end?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, you know, I have just found out because I didn't remember. And actually it is still a little insecure. You know, I can't—I would have to reconstruct this. But I just recently decided that since I was working on this new piece on Agnes Martin as part of my memoir that I should see what the Visual Arts Gallery has. And, in fact, they have a file on the show.

JOHANNA BURTON: Oh, wow. That is great.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And they have all of the loan forms and so on. There is an odd discrepancy in the number of drawings for which there is a checklist. But then there are also loan forms. And there are more loan forms than there are mentions on the checklist, so that doesn't make sense to me. But there were—let's see—there were six paintings. Two of them were lent by Sam Wagstaff. The Whitney and MoMA both lent me paintings.

JOHANNA BURTON: [Inaudible.]

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And the Lannan Foundation and Vera List.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And [… –DC] something like 13 drawings.

JOHANNA BURTON: That is great.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Elkon lent most of the drawings, but Donald Judd lent a drawing. I am going to, you know, print all of this in the text that I am writing for the Dia book.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, okay, okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So it will all be there. And there is a really beautiful poster, which they had several copies, so they gave me one.

JOHANNA BURTON: That is great.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Oddly enough, it is actually a series of details of the Guggenheim painting, which they wouldn't lend me, but I had access to the photograph early on, I guess.

JOHANNA BURTON: No, it shows where you got it from. So was there much response to the show? I am always curious about—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, there was a well-known piece by Kasha Linville in *Artforum* that was written very largely, I think, because of the show, although it isn't a review of the show. It is a short article on Agnes Martin. And otherwise there were some short reviews of the show. It was well-received. Her work was well-regarded. And the response, the word-of-mouth response that gets back to you when you do this sort of thing was very, very good. So yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: So meanwhile, you were teaching at SVA. You have been for a year or so at that point.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: And is it on a part-time—it is one of these adjunct positions?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, I mean, pretty much I think all of their [teachers are adjuncts –DC].

JOHANNA BURTON: They all are.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, it was incredibly exploitative. But, you know, the thing is that—the nice thing was that I had a job and living in New York was inexpensive in those days. I taught a full load. I taught three courses each term.

JOHANNA BURTON: Wow. Oh, so you were basically full-time?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, I became—after I left the Guggenheim, I really became full-time. You know, I was still paid very little, but I—and it was odd because I was teaching art history courses often of my own invention. I remember teaching a course on the School of Fontainebleau, for example, just because I was interested for some reason in the School of Fontainebleau. I wanted to find out about it. I wouldn't have been able to do that in a university, in a university art department because I wasn't trained in any of this material. But I was able to research it on my own.

JOHANNA BURTON: This was your first teaching job, right, at SVA?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: So three courses a term—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, something like that.

JOHANNA BURTON: And were you teaching—can you remember some of the—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I was teaching—I always taught the survey, a required survey for like 400 students in this huge amphitheater space. It was a nightmare because it was required of all of the students, including the design students and they were totally uninterested. And, you know, it was the early '70s. People were not—it wasn't like art school these days. And SVA is a profit-making institution, so they accept people who can afford to come.

JOHANNA BURTON: Did you have graduate students, too?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No.

JOHANNA BURTON: These were all undergrads?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: These were undergrads. And I don't even remember all of the courses that I taught. The one thing I vividly remember was once taking to my survey class—taking Holly Woodlawn with me to class to talk to my students. I don't know about what exactly.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, that is right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But she had become a friend and it was part of the art scene, I guess. I had—there was a moment when I was—that I became really interested in the history of drag and transvestism and I had the idea that I was going to write about it and do a certain amount of research. So it might have been related to that, you know, thinking in a not-very-sophisticated way, I am sure, about gender issues.

JOHANNA BURTON: Well, not so unsophisticated.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, no. I mean, it was pretty daring to take Holly—crazy Holly to a class at SVA. I am sure it must have been memorable to a lot of those students.

JOHANNA BURTON: So SVA, I know at a certain point, became a real hotbed, though, of, you know, obviously kind of young people like yourself and Craig Owens and then students coming out of their later—like Gregg Bordowitz and Andrea Fraser. What was the faculty like when you first started teaching there? Did you find some like-minded people? When did Craig start teaching there?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It was later.

JOHANNA BURTON: It was later, right?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It was after we were in graduate school together, which was starting in the later '70s.

JOHANNA BURTON: So when you joined—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, we hadn't overlapped—

JOHANNA BURTON: At all?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: At all at SVA because I left SVA to go to graduate school.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, right, right. So it wasn't what it became. It was a bit more of a conservative—or not even conservative—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, you know, the thing about SVA was that it was an institution that always had an amazing faculty because there were all these artists in New York who wanted jobs. And so they could get anyone they wanted almost. And so the faculty was always pretty high power.

JOHANNA BURTON: So who was there when you were there? Do you remember?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: You know, I honestly don't remember because it was one of those situations where it was—I went in and taught my classes. You know, I could probably put it together. But I had no colleagues as such there. I didn't—

JOHANNA BURTON: I guess that is what I was wondering, if you found an intellectual community that way.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, no. And I wasn't—you know, frankly, during that period of time, I don't know. I suppose my intellectual world was, you know, groups of friends that I had cultivated through my work at the Guggenheim and so on. And that was also the moment when I was—it was right after Stonewall and I became more and more interested in the gay world. And, you know, I was reading feminism at the time and I joined a consciousness-raising group.

First I was in a men's group and then I was in a gay consciousness-raising group that I started with a group of my friends. So it was actually more—I treated teaching at SVA like the job that paid the rent. I could have been a carpenter. It wasn't—I mean, I think I was serious about teaching. I think I was, you know, developing skills as a teacher. And I was interested in the material that I was teaching to the extent that I was researching it and reading it and so on.

But it wasn't about a profession at all. And I never thought of myself—I was still thinking of myself—to whatever extent I had a professional identity or a sense of what I was doing professionally. I was a hippie in some sense, you know. I wanted to write art criticism. I was serious about writing. But I didn't do a lot of writing. I didn't do what you do, for example. I didn't get—I didn't really plunge wholeheartedly into it and do a lot of serious writing. I wrote a couple of articles. I became a reviewer for *ARTnews*.

I wrote a column also for Art International, the New York Letter—one of the New York Letters for a couple of years. One of my social circles was the *ARTnews* critics and the people around John Ashbery. I was friends with Garrett Henry and Carter Radcliff and those people. But I think that the teaching really paid the rent.

JOHANNA BURTON: That is interesting.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And also I was teaching art history and not contemporary art. I wasn't teaching what I was practicing the way I do now. That must have been done by people who had more clout than I did. I think that I was, you know, filling a need for them because a serious art historian who would teach a survey class could get a better job probably.

JOHANNA BURTON: All right, so before we talk about—going to graduate school, you sort of gestured toward this, but what was going on in terms of your increasing involvement in gay culture around this time, sort of immediately after Stonewall? It would be interesting to talk about—and we have kind of alluded to this a few times, but I will just also mark for the transcript that a lot of this material is being fleshed out in the memoir that you are working on now. We can talk about that more. But this kind of interesting intersection between what is becoming your career and what is also becoming a kind of subject position that you are starting to inhabit more fully is sort of happening right around this time.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right, yeah. Well, the first—apart from Max's, which was actually a very important part of my formation, I think. [In 1969, –DC] I moved to a loft in Chelsea on 23rd Street that had been Jack Tworkov's studio, so I was still at the Guggenheim during that period. And I pretty quickly started hanging out in the back room at Max's. I have just found an article written by—written in *The New York Times* for the arts and leisure section about Jackie Curtis from 1969.

It was about Jackie's first play called *Heaven Grand in Amber Orbit*. And I remember going to that play and meeting Jackie and Holly and the people from that play from the "Play-House of the Ridiculous" at Max's. [The "Play-House of the Ridiculous" was an important theatre company. –DC] But there is a quite nice profile by a woman named Rosalyn Regelson published in the Times in this period. She wrote a review of Chelsea Girls, so I was trying to figure out who she was. And I found this article that I remember reading from the time because it was a very sympathetic piece about a drag queen in *The New York Times*, in 1969. So it was pretty interesting.

And so I was hanging out pretty consistently—I would go pretty much every night to the back room of Max's with my friend, Paul [Issa -DC], who I had gone to college with. And I got to know Holly really well. Eventually when Jackie—Holly was living with Jackie and Jackie threw her out at some point. Holly came to stay with me for a period of time. That was right when *Trash* was being made. So she was living at my house when *Trash* was being shot, so I heard from her perspective about the shooting of that film.

She had a boyfriend at the time, the cute boy who appears in *Trash*. So the two of them were staying with me.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But I met Ondine and Taylor Mead and Viva. Viva was living at the Chelsea. Viva and Paul became very good friends and Viva would come over. Holly would come—I mean, you know, the people in those days would go from one person's house to another and shoot up drugs or whatever. And so that was my world, although I was also working at the Guggenheim.

One year, I was also taking courses at the Institute of Fine Arts at NYU because the Guggenheim had a policy where they would send their—if you could get into the institute, they would pay for you to go. So I did.

JOHANNA BURTON: So you actually applied for admission? You were accepted as a graduate student then?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: Oh, okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I don't remember applying for admission, but I must have—I mean, they must have accepted me if I was admitted.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I remember talking to Robert Rosenblum about being an advisor but he had too many advisees and turned me down. I remember studying with Gert Schiff who had gone to college with my undergraduate professor, Caecilia Davis. Gert Schiff was a really lovely gay man who taught at the institute. He was a [Henry] Fuseli specialist.

I took a course on the history of the city of Rome with Richard Krautheimer. And all of this—you know, I am living with Holly, who is shooting speed, and hanging out at Max's until four in the morning and working at the Guggenheim. You know, it was all very dissonant, frankly, and also—and then right at the end of my first year at the institute was when the Kent State [University, Kent, OH] massacre happened. And basically schools were cancelled. And that was the end of my—I just decided I am not cut out for this.

And I wasn't—I wasn't on an academic track. I wasn't interested in teaching. I thought I would be a writer. There was still—you know, in 1976 when I went to graduate school, I did so because I realized that I was being exploited at SVA financially—I wasn't making enough money—and that I could not sustain the belief that I could survive by writing art criticism. But up until that time, I actually thought that I could. I was naive enough to think that I didn't need an advanced degree. I didn't need a job in academia. You know, it was a kind of innocence mixed with denial, mixed with a kind of hippie attitude towards living. So I didn't—I wasn't really thinking about the future.

I was serious about wanting to write. I knew that. And yet, it wasn't easy for me because I didn't have any sort of real professional connections. I was writing my reviews at *ARTnews*. And that actually, I think, was really helpful in terms of writing against deadlines and thinking about—I was assigned—I could choose in some cases, but I was also assigned reviews. They were paragraph-long reviews, so you couldn't say anything.

But it meant that I would go to galleries, see shows, think about them, write something about them, get photographs from the galleries, do the whole professional thing that was involved at that time. It was all much easier then. I was serious about that. And at the same time, I was doing so many other things.

During the time that I lived in Chelsea and was hanging out at Max's and coming to having a more—a kind of gay identity that I could—where I could understand something about integrating a gay identity into a life in the art world and so on, although it was always fairly conflicted. It helped that I knew the circle around John Ashbery because that was a fairly—I mean, it wasn't an exclusively gay world at all, but there were a lot of fairly well-known gay people. I would go to parties at his house and so on.

But [in 1970 I –DC] began going to the Firehouse dances. The Firehouse was the Gay Activists Alliance Firehouse on Wooster Street, which was an old firehouse that they had acquired as a kind of club headquarters. And they started holding Saturday night dances. And that was—I wasn't really going to gay bars until I did that. I was cruising on the streets in Chelsea. I had acquired a number of gay friends from the art world. I had met in Chelsea Steven Varble who was an early performance artist. And he was very close friends with Fernando Torm who was in *Lives of Performers* [1972], Yvonne Rainer's first film.

JOHANNA BURTON: Oh, yes, yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: He is a Chilean—trained as a classical pianist and he worked eventually with John Kelly as well. So Fernando was a friend from that period. Even outside of the Max's world, I began to kind of know a kind of gay world in Chelsea. But it was really the Firehouse dances where I began to meet other gay people and develop a whole network of gay friends and start having boyfriends, and shortly after that that I moved to the village.

JOHANNA BURTON: Was the Firehouse mostly men or was it mixed?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It was mixed.

JOHANNA BURTON: It was mixed?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, it was pretty mixed. I mean, it certainly was mostly men. The most radical factions of the gay liberation world immediately had kind of separatist tendencies, you know. There was a lot of conflict between the lesbians involved in GLF and the men. But in the Gay Activists Alliance, it was much more a gay rights organization and it was a little less conflictual.

JOHANNA BURTON: So during this time, what made you decide that you wanted them to apply to graduate school? I mean, this is '66, right, '67?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, no, '70—[I went to the Gay Activists Alliance Firehouse in 1970, and graduate school in 1976. –DC]

JOHANNA BURTON:  I mean, sorry, '76.

MS. CRIMP: Yes, it was—I mean, well, I did—

JOHANNA BURTON:  You kind of realized you were being taken advantage of for one thing.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Yes, I knew that I couldn't support myself. And I thought well, I have to become a professional and get a teaching job. But before that [… –DC] there was a period of time, say, between 1970 and '76, during that whole period I was—there were so many things involved at the time. I was writing criticism. I was teaching at SVA—for those six years, I taught at SVA.

I became more and more involved also eventually in a downtown art world. I became friends with Helene Winer who was director of Artists Space. But I was also very much involved in the gay world and the early disco scene. And eventually the loft where I lived in Chelsea burned. I moved briefly to further west on 23rd Street. And then eventually I got an apartment on 10th Street just west of Hudson.

So for a couple of years—until 1974, I lived there, so between, say, '71 and '74, I lived there. And I eventually through someone that I met at a party at John Ashbery's, I met my first boyfriend, the first person I ever lived with. I met at a party at John's a woman named Marilyn Goldin who was a very glamorous lesbian that I recognized from a small part that she had in *The Conformist* [1970] [Bernardo] Bertolucci's film, which I had just seen.

And we became friends. She wrote some of the script for *Last Tango in Paris* [1972]. She was a scriptwriter. She wrote the script of the first film by André Téchiné. She lived mostly in Paris. She was a girlfriend of Susan Sontag's. She was very glamorous and I adored her. She was very brilliant. She eventually went back to Paris.

And then, a year later or so, someone called me and said I am a friend of Marilyn Goldin's and I was told of all of the people in New York, you were the first I had to see. And this person became the first person I lived with. He was also in *The Conformist*. He was a Cinecittà starlet. His name is Christian Belaygue. He is from Morocco, but by way of Paris. He played an extremely important part in my life because he was a cinephile—is a cinephile. And so there was a period of time for a couple of years, a year and a half, when I lived with Christian when we went to maybe five movies a day, almost every day.

My film education dates from that moment. I had discovered foreign art cinema when I was in college and it was a huge revelation to me, so I was already a fan of that. But we went to everything that was shown at Anthology. We went to midnight movies on 42nd Street. We went religiously to what became the Theater St. Mark's. But it was at that time called The Movie Musical. And we saw four musicals a week there because we saw always the double bills [they showed –DC].

He has total catholic [broad-ranging –DC] taste in films, so we saw everything. There are many, many things to say about [our –DC] time together. It was very—we were always broke and I was always looking for ways to make money. We wrote a project for a Moroccan cookbook together. That is one of my unknown pieces of work.

JOHANNA BURTON:  Did it get published?

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  No, it should have been published. We were working with an editor at Doubleday. It was an idea whose time had come. We finished the project. It is a great project actually. I learned to cook Moroccan food. But we gave it to [Diane Cleaver, a trade editor –DC] at Doubleday and a week before a cookbook editor at Doubleday had accepted a Moroccan cookbook, so, of course, they couldn't do it. And it turned out that Harper and Row had accepted one within six months or [so –DC].

But it was still a good enough project that an agent [accepted –DC] it, but couldn't sell it because there were two other Moroccan cookbooks coming out.

JOHANNA BURTON:  This is the nightmare everyone has about every book they produce.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Yes, exactly. [Laughs.]

JOHANNA BURTON:  Oh god. Do you still have the manuscript?

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  I do. Yes, I still cook from it actually.

JOHANNA BURTON:  That is fantastic.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  I will probably put pieces of it in my memoir.

JOHANNA BURTON:  You must.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  I wrote an introduction about Moroccan cuisine having never been to Morocco, having never eaten real Moroccan cuisine except what I had prepared from Christian's mother's recipes.

JOHANNA BURTON:  That is great. That is actually really great.

[END OF TRACK AAA_crimp09_3253.]

Okay, I think we are set for round 85. No, so yes, please—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Yes, so I thought I would say that before I met Christian Belaygue, which was in [1972 –DC], I had begun reading what we might call theory.

[… –DC] I don't know how I came to it. But I was reading the first collection of translations of Walter Benjamin's writing and I was reading Foucault also. I started reading some French structuralist and post-structuralist theory. I read early [Roland] Barthes, the *Elements of Semiology* [London: Cape, 1967] and the *Writing Degree Zero* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1970].

Somehow on my own, I found my way to some of his stuff and I guess I had some idea that it had some relevance to my own thinking about art, although I don't know how that would have—I don't know why—the first [Michel] Foucault book that I read was *Madness and Civilization* [New York: Pantheon, 1965] probably not long after it came out in the U.S. […. –DC]

But [I was reading theory –DC] before I met Christian. He was a high school dropout and a total autodidact but brilliant and read everything and knew everything, knew every composer and every—I mean, he really was a sophisticated person. In fact, I'll tell you a funny story, it's not really for this purpose—about his encounter with [Leonard] Bernstein at John Ashbery's party. [The story appears in my memoir, *Before Pictures* (Dancing Foxes Press/University of Chicago Press, 2016). –DC]

Anyway, so he also, being a kind of a French intellectual, knew this material very much firsthand and so I think that being—I was writing criticism at that moment, not theoretically informed criticism—that doesn't really happen I think until "Pictures"—but I was reading theory and somehow trying to puzzle it out.

I remember reading the first [Jacques] Lacan theory that was translated into English, which was "The Instance of the Letter" ["The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud," originally delivered as a talk on May 9, 1957 and later published in Lacan's 1966 book *Écrits.]*—I don't remember the title of that but it was the first thing by Lacan that was translated into English.

JOHANNA BURTON:  And this was the early '70s—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  This was early '70s, yeah, because I met Christian in ['72 –DC], the very beginning of 1972. I remember that. But there was—I don't think it really—it didn't really inform my work but it was something that I knew was important for just trained intellectuals generally.

And I was also reading feminism, early feminism. I was reading Kate Millet, Germaine Greer. I had this consciousness raising group and so I was interested in feminism […. –DC].

JOHANNA BURTON:  This was a feminist consciousness raising group or it was a gay consciousness—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  It was a gay one, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON:  Okay, so was it both men and women?

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  No, it was just men.

JOHANNA BURTON:  It was just male, okay, I was just curious.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Yes, it came out of people that I knew from the [GAA –DC] firehouse and this was when I was living in the Village and before I met Christian. He was in New York for a year-and-a-half and then I stayed in touch with him. I would visit him in Paris a lot after that.

But yes, so I guess it was—I think—I'm just trying to think what comes next. I think probably [it –DC] was that around 1974—this I've written about a bit in my memoir—but I think I began to feel like I was not doing enough professionally and not writing enough, not paying enough attention to the art scene and not moving professionally.

JOHANNA BURTON:  I just want to mark this for myself. You're what, 30 then in 1974?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: In 1974 I turned 30, yeah.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, so you were—okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I guess [I should also –DC] say—backing up—related to my being involved with Christian was that I met through Christian—after he had gone back to Paris, Guy Hocquenghem came to the U.S.

Guy was one of the founders of the French gay liberation movement and, [at a very young age –DC], an extremely important theoretician. He wrote *Homosexual Desire* [London: Allison and Busby, 1978], which was a kind of Deleuzian work in the early '70s, and Guy and I became very good friends. He stayed with me for several months at that time when I was living in the Village and then again later.

So I think I was also trying—[at this moment, which –DC] I've looked at—in part of the memoir, I wrote something about disco. I was I think struggling, trying to figure out what I was interested in doing as a writer and as an intellectual.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And it wasn't clear in those moments exactly what—how you would go about that professionally. I didn't really like reviewing. I have to say it wasn't very satisfying to me. I wasn't associated at that moment with any particular—I was not so enamored of the *ARTnews* crowd.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I had lost my job at *Art International* [magazine] because the editor was not pleased with the work, with an essay that I wrote about drawing that was essentially about Agnes Martin and it was an argument against—the notion that drawing gets you closer to the artist than any other art—the kind of expressionist view, classical expressionist view of drawing—

[Cross talk.]

JOHANNA BURTON: —holds again actually now.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yeah.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So I was talking about Sol LeWitt's drawing and a different attitude towards drawing.

JOHANNA BURTON: And that really drew the line enough to—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, he kind of—you know, I'm really sorry that this is a letter that I somehow don't have but he fired me and he kind of accused me like of being a Communist. I mean, it wasn't political in any traditional sense or narrow sense of politics.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But I think he was—this guy James Fitzsimmons who ran that magazine, I don't know, was an odd character. But anyway, he literally said that my services would not be useful anymore.

JOHANNA BURTON: Did they run the piece?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yeah, oh yeah, yeah.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And I'm actually—well, I returned to it in a way in "The End of Painting" piece because it is—it's a kind of a—I suppose it maybe is the beginning of a kind of polemical writing that I did when I was at *October*, taking firm position against the cliché that what's interesting about drawing is that it brings you closer to the artist's soul. I was interested in conceptual uses of drawing.

I was, I suppose, indebted to Sol LeWitt's ideas about drawing at that moment and I was very—I very much loved LeWitt's drawings. [… –DC] This piece was written in 1973. It was a review in part of the Agnes Martin show at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia. So that's 1973, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yeah.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So in 1974, I decided that I was kind of wasting my life. I was [living in –DC] the Village, which

was really a hotbed of the gay scene at that—it was the height of the liberation scene and sex was everywhere and it was a playground and I wasn't—and I was trying to write as a kind of freelancer without assignments, just trying to write speculatively.

One of the few things I wrote during that period was the piece on minimal painting for an Italian dealer, [Franco Toselli –DC], who was doing a show [in Milan, *Arte Come Arte*, –DC] and so I decided that I should move out of the Village and down to Tribeca and become part of—geographically part of the art scene.

I got a loft on Chambers Street, sublet from an artist, a beautiful loft on Chambers Street, west of Hudson, and it was a time when Tribeca was deserted [except for the –DC] artists lived there and there really—it was when Artist Space moved down to Franklin Street and there was a definably downtown art scene at that moment.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes. Was there like the meat processing stuff going on at that time?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: That's uptown in the Meatpacking District.

JOHANNA BURTON: But not in—what was the industry in Tribeca at that time? What were the—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, it had been—you know, the trade center was basically built over [Radio Row and Washington Market –DC].

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So north of the trade center there was—there were spice markets, for example, and you could smell that in the neighborhood, so there were various food industry markets.

JOHANNA BURTON: But it was foodie kind of and also it was tons of like just empty lots, right, as I can see from Joan Jonas—

[Cross talk.]

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, I mean, yeah, lots, but of course the emptiness that you see is [from the –DC] demolition when they were preparing Battery Park City.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So the empty lots where Joan Jonas performed *Delay, Delay*, for example, all of that was all demolished.

JOHANNA BURTON: [Recently –DC] razed, okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, recently razed, before I moved there that was—and they had done the landfill as well and then came the extreme recession and they stopped everything and so a lot of it was on hold for a period of time.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay but it was pretty, like, unpopulated.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Very unpopulated. There was no place to buy—there was a Greek diner. There was no place to buy—there was a little market on the corner of Reade and Hudson. So you could [shop –DC] a deli.

But there wasn't a supermarket. I shopped in the Village or other places. I think during that whole time—and that was true even after I moved here in 1976—I belonged to the [McBurmeg YMCA –DC], the Y in Chelsea, and I would do my grocery shopping after I went to the gym and bring it down here because there was no place in this neighborhood or that neighborhood to shop.

And I went to the Village all the time anyway. I hung out in the Village. I continued to hang out in the Village. So it was around that time I think between '74, '76 when I was trying to figure out what I was doing as an art writer and I got to be very close friends with Helene Winer and Helene had this project. I don't know if you know about this.

But Helene and I worked on this project for a long period of time called Art Information Distribution, which [consisted of –DC] slide sets, because—this is the interesting thing, contemporary art was only beginning to be taught at all in the academy, and particularly in art schools, people had need of slides of contemporary work but there was really no way to know how to acquire [them –DC].

There were no companies that were providing [them –DC]. You would get your slides from artists and from

galleries. So Helene, as a kind of entrepreneurial move, decided that she would—we would make slides of artists' work, of contemporary work, and sell the slides to universities or art schools in sets based on media.

And she got me to work with her to write some of the texts because it was also meant to be a kind of guide for teaching contemporary art. So it's like a textbook.

JOHANNA BURTON: Do you know I found one of these?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: A whole set?

JOHANNA BURTON: No, one whatever—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Binder.

JOHANNA BURTON: Binder.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: With the text?

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes and I didn't have the money at that time to buy it because it was actually pretty expensive.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Oh yes, really?

JOHANNA BURTON: And it was the one on feminist art that Janelle [Reiring] had written a text for.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: That's interesting, yeah.

JOHANNA BURTON: And the slides were completely—

[Cross talk.]

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I have a bunch of them here and the slides are completely faded.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, I was so excited.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: That's because they were duplicated cheaply.

JOHANNA BURTON: Cheaply, right, right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: They really were. I mean, people would have been furious.

JOHANNA BURTON: But this is the kind of stuff that actually Helene [Winer] and Janelle didn't bring up and I said, "You know, years ago I found this thing," and she was like, "Oh my god, Douglas and I," you know?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I think Doug Eklund [photography curator at the Metropolitan Museum –DC] has found this.

JOHANNA BURTON: The whole set?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I don't know if he has the whole set but he knows this story and I think he's maybe—yeah, I don't know whether he's talking about it or not.

JOHANNA BURTON: It's very interesting.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But I wrote the one on painting.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay, so painting.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And I wrote the introduction.

JOHANNA BURTON: How many were there?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, there was one about—there was one on film, artist film. There was one by Lizzie Borden. There was one on video by David Ross.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Is that right? I think—let me see which ones I have.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I don't have them all myself and I don't have almost any of the texts. Introduction to 1970s art, artist performance—

JOHANNA BURTON: Wait, wait, I have to record this, so hold on. So start over.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But the thing is—

JOHANNA BURTON: Introduction to 1970s art.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Introduction to 1970s art, which I wrote; artist performance, but who wrote this, I mean, I didn't write this but I don't know—actually I have to look at this. But there's not a—Lizzie Borden in Brooklyn, I don't know. I'll have to see.

JOHANNA BURTON: I don't know.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Artist films, but I don't know if these are—yes, Michael Harvey. You know Michael Harvey? He is an artist.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yeah.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And was Janelle's boyfriend at the time.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Painting I wrote, introduction to '70s art. So I don't have the sculpture one and I don't remember who wrote it. [Helene and I wrote it together. –DC] So there was sculpture, film, video I'm pretty sure, I think by David Ross but I'm not 100 percent sure, performance by Lizzie Borden, yeah. [Introduction to 1970s art, recent painting, recent sculpture, artists' films, artists' performance, recent radical films, women artists, artists' video. –DC]

JOHANNA BURTON: You have to let me copy some of those sometime.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, okay.

JOHANNA BURTON: No, I'd be really interested to see.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And I uncovered—I think you know this from my memoir—I also uncovered a full-scale, pretty full-scale proposal for a book on contemporary art since minimalism and there's a letter to an editor somewhere but it's not anybody who's familiar to me. I can't remember who I did it for.

JOHANNA BURTON: And you proposed it and was it accepted?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, I don't think I actually—it doesn't look like there is a kind of clean copy of it. So I'm not sure that I ever did. But I had—I think it might have been—now that I think about it, it might have been in relation to this project that I was doing with Helene.

I got the sense that I could actually write a history of a book on the last 10 years of art. I certainly didn't do it. But I guess I was trying to figure out what I was doing. It was at that point that I realized that I should go back to graduate school.

I knew a woman whose name is Sue Ginsberg who was an art critic at that time. I don't know what has become of her. But she went to the Graduate Center to study and I'm pretty sure it was she [who –DC] told me about this program where you could work on contemporary art, which was a new thing in the academy, and that Rosalind Krauss was teaching there.

And so I—it was City University so it was very inexpensive and a lot of the people who were in the program were people who had some kind of professional profiles already, so older, because I was [then –DC] 32 years old, but also you could—I think I was—you took full-time coursework but they were perfectly pleased to have people who were actually actively working in the art world.

So it was a very different ethos of graduate school than, let's say, the Institute [of Fine Arts at New York University –DC], which was the last thing that I had known. It seemed like something that I could do. So that's what I did.

JOHANNA BURTON: So then you applied, yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: Before we move totally on from this project that you did with Helene, I have two questions. One is how well did they do? Did you end up selling them to institutions with great success?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, not with great success. I don't think so. I don't remember making any money out of it, which was the whole purpose of it for us.

JOHANNA BURTON: Oh it was more—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes—it was also—it wasn't the whole purpose of it. We were also—for my part in terms of the writing of it, it was also about a particular stance on contemporary art.

What we chose, what artists—if you look at my painting essay, it's a very narrow range of painting from the early '70s that we would now call minimal painting, David Novros, Brice Marden, Robert Ryman, the idea of painting that I wrote about in the "Opaque Surfaces" essay [in *Arte Come Arte*, 1973] but also that I would continue to think about in a different way in "The End of Painting." ["The End of Painting" is an essay I published in *October* in 1981. –DC]

So it's not polemical in the way that "The End of Painting" is but it's a very specific anti-Greenbergian—I mean, it was still relevant at that moment to oppose [Clement] Greenberg. So it was kind of—it was not [Jules] Olitski and not [Larry] Poons.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yeah, I was just curious because there did seem to be—and still actually is—such a narrow sector of these kinds of resources available weirdly. So I figured that there might have actually been an impact.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I have had occasionally people say to me that they remembered teaching from this material and so some were definitely sold. We made boxes of slides. Helene was the person who was—I was writing and she was doing the more mechanical aspects of choosing the binders and putting them all together. I have no idea how many she sold and I don't remember realizing much money from it.

But it was right around the time that I [decided to go –DC] to graduate school. But it's something that Helene and I worked on for a period of time and I—getting all of those essays written and typed properly. Because we didn't have computers in those days, it was a big job.

JOHANNA BURTON: It's a lot, and how did you meet Helene exactly because I know before she started as the director, after moving from Pomona and landing in New York, she worked for the New York public—the funding for the arts or whatever.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: The New York State Council?

JOHANNA BURTON: New York State Council I think or something like that and then started at Artist Space in '75 I think is right. So she got here in '72 or '73. I'm guessing, but did you—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I don't honestly remember. I knew Janelle Reiring before I met Helene Winer.

JOHANNA BURTON: From Leo Castelli or [Ileana] Sonnabend or wherever she was?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Maybe, because I did know Louise Lawler, who was at Castelli and I think maybe they worked together.

JOHANNA BURTON: I think she was at Castelli too.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, and I knew Michael Harvey as well and I don't remember whether I knew Michael or Janelle first. I think—[it –DC] is really vague and I think I became [close –DC] friends with Helene when I moved downtown because she was a neighbor. All these people were neighbors at that time.

JOHANNA BURTON: So really all the artists and gallerists and stuff were living in that kind of pocket, or many of them?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Not the dealers but [… –DC].

[… –DC]

DOUGLAS CRIMP: The nonprofit scene. There were still a lot of people living in SoHo at that time too.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, sure, sure.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But the younger, less established people tended to be in Tribeca. It was relatively easy to find

an inexpensive loft space in Tribeca in that period, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: So how did—so you and Helene started working on this project first, the slide and text project.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: That's the first project that we did together.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, but you spent a lot of time together?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, we hung out together. I mean, Helene—I remember things like Helene always had dogs and she was an L.A. person so she had a car. Nobody I knew in New York had a car, but Helene insisted on having a car and she liked going to Coney Island which seemed kind of eccentric to me in a way but it was like going to Venice for her in L.A. So we did things like that together.

JOHANNA BURTON: And I mean maybe now we should back up because I was about to say—to talk about when you all drove up to Buffalo together, the two of you to do studio visits prior to "Pictures." Right, isn't that true that you all went—you went up to Hallwalls [Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center, Buffalo, NY].

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: But maybe to back up, maybe that's where the split for today will be, will literally be before "Pictures." But maybe you can also talk about starting graduate school. I think that's very important and who exactly was there and who your colleagues were at the time and it sounds like it felt very different from the Institute immediately, right off the bat.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Oh yes, of course it was conceptually a different institution because the person who founded the Graduate Center program in art history was Milton Brown, who was an Americanist.

And I think the way that he convinced the City University bureaucracy that it would be useful to have another art history program in New York, given that there was a very famous one at Columbia and another one at NYU, would be to do things that they didn't do, and among the things that they didn't do were American art, contemporary art and criticism, and those were the fields that it [the art history program at the Graduate Center at CUNY –DC] was founded on.

And so it really was not like other art history schools and as I said, people who had professional profiles went there. Linda Nochlin was appointed as a professor at the Graduate Center. As you probably know, much of the faculty of the Graduate Center is drawn from the colleges. Rosalind [Krauss –DC] was then appointed at Hunter [College, City Univeristy of New York] but taught at the Graduate Center and eventually her appointment was shifted to the Graduate Center.

Robert Pincus-Witten taught at Queens. These were all people that I knew. I think I maybe didn't know Linda.

JOHANNA BURTON: But everybody else.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But I knew Rosalind. I didn't know her well but I had met her in the art world. I had met Robert Pincus-Witten certainly. But I really went to the Graduate Center to study with Rosalind.

She was—I had known Annette Michelson's work. I was extremely interested in the founding of *October*. I was very drawn to that journal for all of the reasons of being interested in that kind of art and in that kind of theory.

And in fact, it was one of those strange things. I have two stories like this. One is once I was in this neighborhood, before living here, and I was walking along and I saw this building and I looked at it from that corner and I looked up and I thought I'd like to live there.

JOHANNA BURTON: This building?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It was literally here, [this corner, this floor –DC] where I'm living, and I also remember feeling when I first saw *October* I'd like to work for that magazine and it just—it's not as if I made it happen. It just [happened as if –DC] by magic. I moved to this apartment through Helene also. When I—just at the moment that I decided to go to graduate school, I lost my place on Chambers Street because the artist from whom I was subletting wanted the whole loft that he had because his wife wanted to have her own studio and it [was then becoming –DC] somewhat difficult to find an inexpensive place in the neighborhood.

The real estate situation was turning at just that moment and so I was looking for quite a long time and really not finding anything. Of course you tell your friends you're looking for a place and so this building, which is still a working office building, during the recession they couldn't rent office space so they opened it up to people to move in illegally and [put in fixtures –DC].

And so a number of artists moved into this building, including David Salle next door to me and Matt Mullican moved into this apartment.

JOHANNA BURTON: This one?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: This one and he—it was his first—he had been living with Mia Agee, James Agee's wife, who was a family friend. I knew him through Helene at that time and I think also Michael Harvey was also a very good friend of Mia Agee's. So Matt moved in here and then didn't know how to go about [… –DC] even how to get a telephone much less how to put in a shower.

I'm not sure how I did it either. I found people in the building who would do some plumbing for me. So I think he decided immediately that he'd made a mistake and that he needed a place that was already ready to live in and so he wanted to get rid of this lease that he had signed for this place [… –DC].

So Helene called me and said, "I think there's a place that you should look at," and so I came here. I should tell you that all of the walls were painted a really, really bright blue. It was so ugly. But you could see the potential of the place immediately. So we had a lawyer assign me the lease.

JOHANNA BURTON: We haven't said where we are either, that we're on Fulton.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, corner of Fulton and Nassau Street. It's the Bennett Building, which was originally built as a newspaper office building when Park Row was the center of the newspaper industry in New York.

JOHANNA BURTON: Oh okay, that's—yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So yes, so I decided to study with Rosalind Krauss and I went to the graduate school [… –DC]. Of course it's a very big thing to go back to graduate school. I'd been nearly 10 years out of college and I had a kind of a bit of a career and a kind of independent life.

But I was also really excited about studying I think, about being serious, about realizing that in a way, it's really hard to be an autodidact, to learn what you need to learn to be professional at what you do completely on your own.

And it's great to do it with a group of other people who become your colleagues and with teachers, and Rosalind of course was a brilliant teacher—also a very difficult teacher, someone who very much had her favorites and was really hard on a lot of people. But I was one of her favorites.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, so it was okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, yes, I mean it was okay but of course that's never also okay because being—I also was friendly with people who were not her favorites and that was difficult.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, no it's very hard.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And there's something about that kind of exclusivity that's very, very hard to be part of even if you're on the inside.

JOHANNA BURTON: And even sometimes more so.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: If you don't want to play those games, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: Absolutely. Was it a small—at that moment, very small kind of group of people comprising the department in terms of students as well, right?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It was. Yes, it was pretty small but I suppose seminars were [the usual size –DC]—I mean 15 people or something.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, but I mean quite intimate. You knew everybody.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: And who were—who came in with you that ended up being friends or were already friends?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, Craig Owens was the main one. Craig and I became Rosalind's favorites and the—

JOHANNA BURTON: Did you come in the same year?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: [… –DC] One way that I can tell you is that by the end of the spring term, Rosalind had asked

me to be the managing editor of *October* and when I took over *October*, they were putting out the fourth issue, or we were putting out the fourth issue. It was already together and I was just brought in to kind of like do the kind of mechanics of it.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And Craig had a piece in it on Robert Wilson and then the fifth issue was the first issue that I worked on from the beginning. [It –DC] came out of a seminar that Rosalind taught that Craig and I were on in photography, so the fifth, the special issue on photography, which was their first special issue. That was something that we all—the three of us really did in concert.

So yeah, so we were there from the beginning and I also started going to New York City Ballet with Craig, who was a huge fan of City Ballet. I had been a few times before but it was only through Craig that I really got involved in it.

I remember names of fellow students but certainly Craig was the most central one and then eventually Rosalyn Deutsche came and we became closer over the years.

She was never part of this sort of inner Rosalind Krauss circle but she was a friend of mine and I think—I mean, eventually Abigail Solomon-Godeau went but I don't think that Abigail and I were actually—I can't remember being in classes with her, whether I was or not.

I was very close friends with Abigail during that whole period, from the time that I met her from the day I arrived in New York. We had a falling out during the time of the AIDS issue, so 20 years into our friendship.

But then I do remember other people who were at the Graduate Center overlapping at times with me who became friends. Ann Reynolds is one. [… –DC] Benjamin [Buchloh] and I were—became close through *October* because I had met him when he was at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, right, of course.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I went there to teach [one summer –DC] and I knew Louise [Lawler] and actually I think maybe I'd met [Benjamin –DC] in New York at a party after an opening of a Michael Asher show. I think that maybe Buren introduced us. That's my sense. I have a very vague recollection of that.

But I got to know Benjamin's work and I commissioned him to do work for the magazine.

JOHANNA BURTON: I see, okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And that's how—and then eventually he became—he married Louise and we were very good friends.

JOHANNA BURTON: And when did he—he didn't go back to get his—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: But not until later.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Not until later, no.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I'm really confused about whether or not Abigail and I were there at the same time and of course it took me—I hate to say this but I stared graduate school in—don't tell any of my students this—I started graduate school in 1976 and I got my degree in 1994.

JOHANNA BURTON: Oh, I guess I didn't even know that.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yeah, I didn't—I published my dissertation before I turned it in and I had published it pretty much all in articles anyway. But I published it as a book before I turned it in.

JOHANNA BURTON: Was your dissertation *On the Museum's Ruins* [1993]?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: *On the Museum's Ruins*, yes, and I actually had—even though I wrote those essays as occasional pieces, they really are very much aligned with a proposal that I wrote, like kind of overnight, to apply for a CASVA grant and it became my dissertation proposal but it was intended initially to be an archeology of the museum. So it was going to be much more of a historical project. But nevertheless, it was about—

JOHANNA BURTON:  I see. That's interesting.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  And so I went through coursework at a regular pace and finished my exams and so on and then I was doing research for a period. Then I got very involved with *October* and that was very time consuming and I began writing more and more criticism and giving lectures and so I had a different kind of career as an editor.

And then eventually I got distracted by AIDS [… –DC]. I never stopped paying my continuation fees. The Graduate Center was not very strict about time to completion.

So there was a long period of time when I intended to do my dissertation but didn't work on it at all except insofar as I was continuing to write [the essays that effectively became –DC] a dissertation.

JOHANNA BURTON:  Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  But there was a kind of swerve into AIDS work starting in '87 and it wasn't really until I left *October* and began teaching that I realized that I absolutely had to have a Ph.D. if I was going to be in the academy.

JOHANNA BURTON:  Absolutely, you finished.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  And I finished [… –DC], I mean, I finished it as I said as a book first.

JOHANNA BURTON:  Right, of course.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  [It had been –DC] promised to MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge] for a long time.

JOHANNA BURTON:  That's actually interesting because I had never put that together that that was actually the dissertation even though it makes—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Well, if you look at my dissertation, it is a revised version of my book because I had an advisor who forced [all sorts of –DC] revisions after the book was published.

JOHANNA BURTON:  After the book was—I'm sorry, but who was your advisor?

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Rosemarie Bletter. I had a break with Rosalind and so I couldn't work with her anymore and I brought in Rosemarie Bletter who I didn't know and I had never studied with and she said that she would be the de jure advisor if Linda [Nochlin], who had left the Graduate Center, would be my de facto advisor.

But then she got more involved and she became a little—she disagreed on [what I had written –DC] on Schinkel and so she became kind of difficult.

JOHANNA BURTON:  Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  But anyway, it was fine. I mean, my committee had nothing to do with the people I studied with, except Linda, who was an outside reader.

JOHANNA BURTON:  I mean, it's interesting in terms of this relationship that comes together in terms of your own kind of work and criticism, your work as an art historian and then your work in kind of an expanding social sphere, how that made the dissertation deferred for a while but then actually come out at the time that it did and the way that it did.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Yeah, well also, I think that for example I never would have—if it were what I had originally totally set out to do and had done it more—within an academic compass rather than within the sphere of my critical practice and my editing of *October*, I would never have conceived it as a collaboration with Louise Lawler.

I mean, of course the dissertation doesn't have that collaborative part with Louise and it only made sense as a kind of—to me in terms of the practices that I was interested in and my interest in Louise's work and my sense that we were doing something kind of parallel and maybe even a kind of regret that I hadn't actually written about Louise's work as part of my—as part of the work of the book itself. But it was a different way to bring her in, which I'm actually really pleased with.

JOHANNA BURTON:  Yeah, no that's very interesting, collaboration in that sense. Did you ever write an essay dedicated only to her work?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No. No, the only thing I've done with Louise is the—

JOHANNA BURTON: The interview.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Is the interview, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, which—[inaudible]—I was wondering if I had ever missed—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, you know I've thought at times—it's just—there's so many artists that you think you know—so many projects that you would like to do. I have thought occasionally and then at the same time, there is now finally a decent, if not large, literature on Louise's work.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, not—I think there is not nearly what the work deserves. I mean, I think her work is—for me she is one the greatest artists of our time and I don't think she is given that [due –DC]. I mean, there are people who feel that way but her wider reputation and a literature on her work is not up to that level.

JOHANNA BURTON: Absolutely. So I mean maybe now is a good time to—unless we want to say anything else about graduate work, I guess I mean it would be interesting to know—I guess the next move is to move into kind of talking about *October* and the way that that operates. But should we stop it for now or do you want to continue or—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, you have to go to dinner, right?

JOHANNA BURTON: I may or I may not. This is probably a good time.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, I think so, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: So we are—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Because it's a good break time, I mean, it's a good point in the—yeah.

JOHANNA BURTON: We're literally, yeah, on the cusp of—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Of the "Pictures" show and *October*.

JOHANNA BURTON: Of the "Pictures" show.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Which was like the beginning of my career.

JOHANNA BURTON: Which is big, so all right, so we'll stop for now.

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JOHANNA BURTON: Okay, so this is Johanna Burton interviewing Douglas Crimp at his home in New York City on April 18?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: April 18, 2009, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is the second session. It's about a month-and-a-half after the first.

So Douglas, I think we'll just jump right back into where we left off, which was '76, '77, as you were sort of entering the part of your life when you became employed at *October* and also went to graduate school. So maybe let's just jump in there.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right. So yes, I think I realized at that time that I was—that I wouldn't be able to support myself in the way I had been, which was by doing essentially adjunct teaching at the school of visual arts and writing criticism. I had had the impression that one could actually make a living as a writer and I suppose there was a time when that was true.

But so the path that seemed open to me was graduate school and a real academic job and so because I had—I think the problem for me was that because I had developed something of an identity as a critic—I mean, I had a self-identity, I mean, thought of myself as a critic—I didn't any longer want to be an art historian in a classical sense.

And I learned at the time—I think I might have told you this—through Susan Ginsberg, Susan Ginsberg is

someone that I had known during that period and she had gone to the Graduate Center I think the year before, which might have been its first year. The art history program at the Graduate Center at CUNY began in the '70s and it was formed on the basis of a Ph.D. program that would offer subjects that were not offered at NYU and Columbia, for example.

[Telephone interruption, side conversation.]

Right, so the three subjects that they offered were American art, modern art and criticism and I was particularly interested in the fact that they offered criticism as a specialty, although in fact I was the only person I think who ever actually took my orals in criticism because there were no—and it turned out to be sort of history of art criticism, which—and I thought that—and to the extent that I took courses that were related to criticism, they were Rosalind Krauss' courses on the practice of criticism or on contemporary art and a critical response to it, or critical models, theoretical models for criticism and so on.

And then when it came time to take my orals and I declared this specialty of criticism, partly because I didn't want to be responsible for the whole history of modern art, which is not something I had paid attention to in my coursework, I mean, with any sense of the totality of it, and then I ended up having to take my orals on the history of criticism. So I basically had to learn the history of criticism on my own and to the extent that one prepares for oral exams.

In any case, it was because Rosalind Krauss was teaching there. At the time she was at Hunter College and then she was at the Graduate Center and so I enrolled at the Graduate Center in '76 and I actually moved to this apartment right at that time and I was getting some financial help from my family in order to do this.

I think I took out some loans—I did, I took out some loans as well. CUNY was inexpensive, and so my first year I think I really, really did just—I just went to graduate school and I got financial help from my family to support myself and my loans and then toward the end of my first year or so in the spring of '77, I had [been –DC] taking courses with Rosalind and I think she had already sort of—I mean, we'd become friends, let's say—I mean, more than—we were not just teacher and student but we were—we did things together and we had dinner together.

She considered me, I think, a younger colleague and so then she—and Annette Michelson asked me to become the managing editor of *October.* They had just made the arrangement with MIT to publish the magazine. At the time, the offices—they had done this through a relationship with the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, which was at that time publishing *Oppositions* through MIT and so they made a similar kind of deal with MIT and my office was actually at the institute.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, that's what I thought, and where was that? What was the actual—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It was on 40th Street just off of Fifth Avenue and it was the top floor of a building there. It was a kind of—there was a large open space which they used as a gallery which is where Gordon Matta-Clark did that famous piece where he shot the windows out and it was Peter Eisenman.

It was "the Whites" who I think sort of formed it, so Peter Eisenman and Charlie Gwathmey, Richard Meier, Michael Graves. Tony Vidler was one of the members of the institute, Ken Frampton, Mario Gandelsonas and Diana Agrest who are a couple, Argentine architects. Phillip Johnson was still alive and he was sort of—he wasn't involved with the institute but they were certainly all mentally at least involved with him, deferring to him in so many ways.

JOHANNA BURTON: So was the office space just there—I mean, was there actually some interaction at first?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, I mean, there was because the space—like my office was a kind of—there wasn't a closed door, for example, and Silvia Kolbowski worked there at the time; I don't know exactly in what capacity, but I think I met her at that time. Craig Owens was the editor of *Skyline* which was their little newspaper format [publication –DC].

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, it's kind of amazing.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, yes, so Craig was around. Craig was a fellow graduate student from the beginning.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And well, you know, he and I were very much Rosalind's prize students I guess and her friends.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So yeah, I would—I went there five days a week and in fact [that –DC]continued the whole

time that I was at *October*, my office was at the institute or I should say it was at the institute. The institute moved. They lost their space or they for some reason got another space and it was in—at Union Square and the Union Square space was actually—I think it's 19 Union Square West. It was the same building as Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

And finally then the institute went out of business and we were kind of left high and dry. But there was actually an architectural firm in that building that agreed to rent us a very small niche. So I continued to work on Union Square during that whole period through when I left which was 1989, '90.

JOHANNA BURTON: When did the institute close? This is something that I've been trying to figure out actually. It shouldn't be that hard, but—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: You know, I can't remember exactly. It would have been in the early to mid '80s I would say. [1984 –DC]

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, it just seemed like a really interesting place.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, it was. It was an odd place because frankly I think Peter Eisenman is difficult and capricious and he was the director of it. So but yeah, they did a lot of interesting things.

JOHANNA BURTON: I was reading a lot of Craig's stuff, the little things that would appear.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, they did—in addition they did *Oppositions* and then they did Oppositions Books as well, which was a series of mostly monographs and some of them were exhibition catalogs. They did interesting exhibitions especially at the space on 40th Street.

JOHANNA BURTON: Interesting.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: So 13 years total that you were there.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, that I was there, yeah. So that's a whole other story.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, which we'll get to in a moment.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: So as the managing editor of *October*, were you—you were obviously the first managing editor.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, there were three founding editors: Rosalind Krauss, Annette Michelson and Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe. They had a falling out with Jeremy very early on before I got there. They had done three issues that were not—they came out sporadically. They started in '76.

By the spring of '77 they were working on the fourth issue and that's when I came on. So that had already been determined but I began working on that issue and immediately after that, Rosalind had been teaching a course at the Graduate Center on photography, which was a new subject at the time in the academy, or in art history.

Craig and I were both in it and we ended up doing a special issue of *October*. The fifth issue of *October* was a special issue on photography and the three of us really put that together, with Annette as well. Annette actually wrote the introduction to it. So there was serious input from Annette because, for example, we published an essay by Hollis Frampton, who was a very close friend of Annette's.

But a lot of it really came out of Rosalind's course and I think—she was working on the subject at the time. Craig and I both basically published our seminar papers, my [Edgar] Degas essay ["Positive/Negative: A Note on Degas's Photographs," October, no. 5, Summer 1978] and his on Brassaï, *Photography en abyme,* were seminar papers for the course.

JOHANNA BURTON: That's interesting.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I mean, redone for *October*.

JOHANNA BURTON: And you sort of almost immediately became also an editorial board member, right, as well?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, there was no editorial board at *October* during that time.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay, yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, I was—but I mean my job was on the one hand I was really hired to do all of the nuts and bolts work, to lay out the magazine, to do all of the mechanics of producing it and the proofreading and so on. But from the very beginning I did very much actively work with them to make decisions and I made a lot of suggestions from the very beginning.

There was stuff—I mean, if you looked at early issues of *October* you could see like for example we published Daniel Buren's "Function of a Studio" [Fall 1979] and that—Buren was a friend of mine and they weren't particularly interested in his work. But it wasn't as if I had any—well, there were times when I had trouble convincing them to do what I wanted to do.

But there were also times when they were perfectly receptive. I mean, you know putting out a quarterly journal that you're constantly up against the necessity of [finding texts –DC] and especially if you're not really accepting things that come unsolicited. Basically that is the journal which to this day essentially solicits all the texts that they publish.

So you have to actually really be on top of it. You have to think what do we want to do next, who do we want to publish, what have we heard that's interesting, what can we get our hands on, what can we translate. Luckily we were doing a lot of translations of theory during that period of time.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, well maybe then this would be a good question to ask, which is during this early moment of *October* and your working there, what was the intellectual climate and the artistic climate because certainly this is—we're going to talk about "Pictures" in a moment and what was going on.

But this was a moment where ideas are coming for the first time from sort of poststructuralist—books that had not previously been translated, et cetera. So did you feel a real shift sort of happen at the moment that you were working there and did this affect the way that you thought about your own activity as a critic and an art historian?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes. I mean, it's hard to actually remember how all of this came about. I had certainly been reading some what we'd call poststructuralist theory. I don't know that I knew it as such right at that moment. I had been reading Foucault and Barthes for example and Lacan even on my own.

JOHANNA BURTON: In French?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No.

JOHANNA BURTON: In translation?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, I don't read French well enough to.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, me too.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But of course Annette—I mean, Annette was the one who—she spent a lot of her life in France and spoke perfect French and had French intellectual friends and as you may know, *October* was modeled after *Tel Quel* physically.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And in many other ways as well. So she was able through her French connections to get a lot of the French material that we published.

Although, let's say, like Buren and the [Jean-François] Lyotard text on Buren, that was more my connection. Rosalind, then, of course developed a lot of connections of her own. She became friends with Damisch and at a certain point quite early on, I think right at the beginning, Yve-Alain Bois moved here and she—[Yve-Alain and she –DC] had known each other in Paris. So that was another connection there.

JOHANNA BURTON: But it is fair to say this is a remarkable moment leading up to—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Oh yeah, absolutely. No, and in fact, I think Annette already had a relation to this material. If you look at her catalogue on Robert Morris, she was talking about [Jacques] Derrida, for example, and that's pre-*October,* I think, so because she had been there during a lot of that ferment in the '50s and '60s in Paris. So the work, the early work of Barthes, for example, she would have known.

So and then Rosalind of course picked up on it very quickly as well and in fact one of the reasons that they give for having left *Artforum* was I think it was around the time that John Coplans and Max Kozloff [took –DC] over the

magazine and [Rosalind and Annette –DC] had suggested that *Artforum* translate and publish Michel Foucault's *This is Not a Pipe* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983] and they basically, I guess, sort of said, "Nonsense."

JOHANNA BURTON: No thanks.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: "Why would we—it's of no interest to us," and to Rosalind and Annette, that was such a kind of telling moment that anybody would not be interested in publishing a Foucault text on art. This is probably before any of us knew about [Marcel] Broodthaers' interest in that text, for example, because Benjamin Buchloh came to the magazine through me later.

JOHANNA BURTON: I see, right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And in any case, so yeah, I mean, the—certainly I had had some former interest in it. I had a French boyfriend in '72, '73 who had studied with Barthes and of course who read that stuff just because it was part of his culture and then I became friendly with Guy Hocquenghem in '73 I think.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: He spent a long period in New York and he stayed with me actually. So we became extremely close friends. So I had a lot of connections to the material before I actually hooked up with—before I went back to graduate school.

And so in fact when *October* first came out, I remember thinking to myself, "This is the magazine I would like to work for, be associated with." I had met Rosalind before. I had not, I think, met Annette but I certainly had heard her speak. I knew her from her *Artforum* work and it was for me the kind of dream intellectual environment; little did I know what I was getting into.

JOHANNA BURTON: But the feeling was something was shifting, something very substantial was happening.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Oh [yes –DC], definitely.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And I was also at the time—I think we were all puzzling about sort of where this new theory that we were encountering, how it jived with the art that we were interested in and I don't think that—I don't think that reading that theory necessarily changed the art that we were focused on but it changed the way that we focused on it, how we thought about it.

JOHANNA BURTON: Absolutely.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I mean, I remember reading early [Ferdinand de] Saussure and Barthes's *Writing Degree Zero* and the early linguistic material and trying to think about how you might be able to apply that to Ryman, for example. I never did anything with it but it was an idea that somehow there were units of meaning, like faux meanings in a brushstroke.

It never went anywhere but that's—I had already been interested in [Robert] Ryman. It wasn't through linguistic theory that I came to Ryman. But it seemed like there might be some way of putting those two things together and eventually I think we did in various ways.

But also it was just a question of publishing that material alongside writings by Robert Morris or Hollis Frampton or Yvonne Rainer, the people that Rosalind and Annette particularly and I had already been interested in, or Daniel Buren and Jean-François Lyotard.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, well, it seemed like it was an opportunity to do exactly what you were pointing out earlier, which is to apply kind of intellectual discursive strategies to artists who were themselves producing at the same moment that you were thinking.

It's sort of applying backwards. I mean, it is a really—it's an interesting moment for theoretical kind of rigor and artistic production that come together in terms of contemporary thought in a way that hadn't been happening before, as I see it anyway. There's this picture that I have of you, which I'll forward to you, where you're sitting in I think it must be the summer of 1977 reading a book that's called *Structuralism*, an introduction to structuralism in Helene Winer's summer home on Long Island and I was interested in the fact that you were obviously even then—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I don't think she—she didn't really have a summer home on Long Island in the way that she does now.

JOHANNA BURTON: But she was renting—right, she was renting some—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right and I think it was in Long Beach. It was a kind of funky place.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, she said it was scrappy.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, I remember it being Long Beach. I'm not totally sure that's right.

JOHANNA BURTON: That sounds—yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: You know, Long Beach is sort of—

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, I know she said, "Like, you have no idea, like it was so scrappy and we would all go out."

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It was not the Hamptons.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, right, but it is interesting maybe to talk about then as you're sort of working at *October* in that place and thinking about curatorial strategies or thinking about actually having kind of artistic practices come together to allow for this sort of thing. Was this the first show you'd ever curated, "Pictures?"

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, I did the Agnes Martin show.

JOHANNA BURTON: Oh, of course.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: In '71.

JOHANNA BURTON: Of course, of younger—maybe of younger—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But no, it's not only the first, but it's the only. I mean, I have not—I wasn't—I mean, I haven't done curatorial work subsequently.

JOHANNA BURTON: So how did that happen? How did that come to pass, I guess is the question?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, Helene and I were very close during that period. I think we talked about this already.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, we did.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And we did this crazy Art Information Distribution slide project and Helene of course was the director of Artists Space and was showing a younger generation of artists that she—she had her feelers out in many different directions and had a very good eye for new sorts of work that was happening that was at that point there was a pretty strong distinction between what galleries were interested in and what alternative spaces were interested in, not only in terms of how established an artist was but even the kind of practice that an artist did I think.

So I think that performance art really was not something that was picked up by commercial galleries right away.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And so Helene was very attentive to this. I don't remember. I don't really know what the history. I'd have to look back and see what the history of a group show curated by an outside—I think maybe "Pictures" was the first actually.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, I think that's right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And Helene asked me to do it. I don't even remember really the circumstances exactly of whether she just proposed it to me and I said, "Okay," or—certainly it wasn't my idea. It was her idea.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right. Well, I know from her that she was shifting the structure so much at that institution at that time. She came in '75 I think from Pasadena, where she had sort of also been unpopular for her attention—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Pomona, no?

JOHANNA BURTON: Sorry, Pomona, where she was unpopular precisely for leaning towards these kinds of experimental practices like performance and other kinds of things popular with the artists and unpopular with

the institution.

I believe when she came to Artists Space in '75 they hired her because there hadn't been somebody who was actually paving the way or constructing the situation for these kind of—the theoretical or propositional sorts of shows and I think until then it had always been artists asking other artists, the sort of network kind of model.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I think so, yes, and Irving Sandler had been involved with that, right?

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, I think they sort of shifted gears and asked her to come in and restructure.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And be a real director.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, and I think as I remember her talking about you, she said that she thought of you as one of the more—one of the most engaged intellectuals in terms of really contemporary practice and theory coming together. So you were a natural choice.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It's funny because I don't think of myself as being—I mean, of course I was—I was trying. It was such a difficult period for me because I was playing around on the one hand, really, seriously playing around.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, experimenting.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And I also was—there was a side of me that really wanted to be an intellectual, a serious critic. So I was reading this sort of material and I was looking at art and trying to write. But I wasn't doing all that much, although I don't know what it was about me that Helene noticed but for example when we did that Art Information Distribution project, I was—she and I conceptualized it together but I was doing a lot of the writing certainly.

Helene was not really a writer and I think maybe what Helen might have wanted, I mean this is—I don't know this for sure but looking back on it I think what she might have wanted, because she wasn't herself a writer, she might have wanted someone to give some kind of discursive treatment to the kind of art that she was showing and that's I think what "Pictures" did in a way.

So she invited me to do the show. She pointed me toward artists that she thought were interesting. She did a lot. I was not someone who did studio visits. I mean, I went to galleries and that sort of stuff. I do remember one thing, though, that is I think crucial for what I did with the "Pictures," with the catalog of the "Pictures" show, is that I was very dissatisfied with the kind of—the sense of a kind of pluralistic—a kind of pluralism in the weak sense in that moment of the '70s.

It was a moment of, on the one hand, all of these experimental practices—performance art, video part, installation, all of that sort of stuff—and then on the other hand there was pattern painting and it was difficult to make sense of it and yet I felt like in some sense it was the responsibility of a critic to make some kind of sense, some sort of—to basically—I suppose it's like writing history.

You want to know. Because of the way that I had learned about the history of art and because of the way that I had learned to think about contemporary practice, like placing something in relation to a previous history and a present, I wanted to make some sort of sense of this and so that's basically why I wrote the text that I did.

I mean, I looked at this art. I found it interesting. I found it challenging. I didn't really know what to make of it except that it seemed accomplished on some level to me and to be doing something different from what had been done before. But I wanted to figure out sort of also at the same time what relation it [had –DC] to what came before.

So as I recall, like in the original catalog I talked about the kind of psychology that came with the reduced scale of Joel Shapiro's work at that time or the kind of construction of meaning through appropriated pictures in Baldessari's work.

So there was—I was attempting, not as much as I did with the second "Pictures" text, to give it a very, very specific lineage, but to give it some kind of historical place and also then to make some kind of argument about what this kind of work—that is an argument about what it was doing and what it was doing that was different from what we had been used to.

So I think it wasn't in the first text but the second text where I related it actually, say, to performance art or to theater, to what Michael Fried called theater, because the whole argument came against Fried came in when I—basically what happened was that the show got a lot of notice and it was pretty widely reviewed.

It was pretty widely talked about. It was then quite quickly even imitated. There were other kinds of shows that

were sort of versions of the "Pictures" show and so Rosalind Krauss said we should republish the "Pictures" essay. I don't know why. It certainly was out of print. Artists Space published so many [copies of the catalogue – DC].

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, there are still some in boxes, yeah.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right but you know, because she wanted to associate it with *October*, I think. I mean, Rosalind—I think it's important to realize that Rosalind and Annette were really not part of this Artists Space sort of world. They were involved [with –DC] an older generation of artists, a more established generation of artists and it wasn't so long since Rosalind had written "Sense and Sensibility," I think, right, or—yeah, which was about '72, '73. [I think "A View of Modernism" (*Artforum*, September 1972) is the essay in which Krauss moved away from Fried. "Sense and Sensibility" (1973) is an essay on minimal sculpture. –DC]

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, really only a couple of years.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So she kind of shifted from a kind of Fried-like position to a pro- minimalism position.

JOHANNA BURTON: What was the year she wrote the sort of screed against Greenberg in *Art in America*? '74 or something, right? I mean it was—yes. [1972, with the *Artforum* essay, "A View of Modernism." –DC]

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So yeah, she shifted quite quickly after she moved to New York and so I think that Rosalind had an interest in *October* as being a little more connected to the kind of work that I could bring to it as well, and Craig [Owens] became interested in that work as well at that time.

So [Craig –DC], in the allegory essays, wrote about the "Pictures" artists and actually a number of his essays [picked up on those artists –DC]. He continued to be interested in Sherrie Levine and the notion of appropriation and that sort of thing.

So but I don't exactly remember why—well, I think I can say why. When Rosalind asked me to put the "Pictures" essay in *October*, I think enough time had passed and it wasn't very long. It was because probably it was in '78 she—I mean certainly it was in late '77 or early '78 that she asked me because it was in the eighth issue of *October*. So that's I think spring of '79. I mean, I remember writing it like after Christmas in '78. It's what I write about in [the disco chapter of my –DC] memoir.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But I guess—I'd had—I wrote the "Pictures" essay, the original one, in the summer that I also began working for *October.* So those two aspects of my life, the Artists Space, Helene Winer and the Graduate Center, Rosalind Krauss aspects had come together at that moment. It must have been a very intense summer trying to put out this magazine and figure it out and figure out the relationship between Rosalind and Annette and all of that and also do the—write the—

JOHANNA BURTON: It's a lot.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I think the selection had been made probably by the end of the spring or something. But I did have to write the catalog. I remember visiting my family. I remember working on the, I think, the proofs of the catalog essay when I was visiting my mother at the time and that would have been probably August. Well, actually, I can tell you exactly because it's very—I mean, no, I blocked something here.

I went home to visit my family in late summer 1977. I did work on the proofs of the "Pictures" catalogue and I decided that I wanted to visit my aunt and uncle and cousins in Central Washington, where my father was from, and to go to the rodeo, which was always on Labor Day because as a child I had gone to the rodeo in Ellensburg, Washington, and my brother was going to go with me.

And he was starting a teaching job right then and he then became sort of anxious about starting as a high school teacher and so he decided that he wouldn't come with me. So then my mother said, "Well, I'll go with you," which was—I mean, my father as ill at the time.

My father had had open heart surgery and so then at the very last minute my father decided to go, quite unexpectedly, because he had been, as I said, ill and he was not only ill but very depressed and incommunicative at the end of his life and so he came.

So we drove to Ellensburg. It's like a four-and-a-half, five-hour drive or something from North Idaho and when we arrived and we had dinner with his brother and sister-in-law and sister and brother-in-law and various cousins and then my father had a massive heart attack that night and died.

I mean, he didn't die immediately but he was rushed to the hospital there. It's as if—I always felt that it was as if

my father basically determined his own death, like he went to say goodbye essentially to his brother and sister and then died and he was unconscious from the beginning of the—I mean, it was sort of all systems failed and a few days later he died.

So then I stayed longer, of course, through the period of the funeral and I had—I didn't have a very good relationship with my father. So this was all—I mean, psychically really strange for me because I think the death of the parent who you didn't have a resolved relationship with at all is really complicated. It's something that I wrote about later of course and with my somatic symptoms. But so yes, and then I came back to New York and within a couple of days was the opening of the "Pictures" exhibition. So all of that happened really like—

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, that's a lot, and it's interesting. There's always been something about that early version of that essay to me that is little remarked upon to my mind is that because people seem to—and I'm writing about this a little and will of course show it to you—but people sort of fixate on this idea of the mediated image as the media image, sort of this emptied out signifier.

But I feel like in that essay you actually do this sort of amazing thing within the rest of your life you return to in various ways about opening this space up in this kind of vulnerable way for the viewers' desire and kind of fantasy to make meaning in the space between the image and the body of the viewer.

And I always found it kind of very touching actually, that part of the catalog, and weirdly emotional. So it's a little strange for me to hear that—I mean, not that the writing changed but that there were these kind of quite affective sort of things going on around it. It's interesting.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, I think that probably—I know that I was grappling with psychoanalysis and linguistic theory at that moment and I was trying to think about—I don't know how to put it exactly, but images or art works in relation to a kind of psychology.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, it's very interesting. [Sigmund] Freud makes a big appearance in that early essay and it goes away in the second essay, although he's still there for people paying attention.

Along those lines, maybe we can talk a little bit too about what was going on in your own life in terms of the sort of shift to literally away from your peers and to—but also more specifically maybe this kind of—for me again, I return to it a lot in terms of question of desire, questions of kind of collective imagery and personal sort of fantasy or something.

But you do end the essay, and I know you talk about this elsewhere, but you do end the first essay by speculating or even arguing quite forcefully that the artists that are in the exhibition continue the—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: The project of modernism.

JOHANNA BURTON: The project of modernism. So maybe in that vein you can talk a little bit about that. I understand too that between those years, '77 and '79, sort of the argument around what's modernism and what postmodernism is, it's obviously quite debated and I wondered if you could talk about your own personal—I don't know, how you were thinking about those terms at that moment.

I understand that in the second essay you're taking—you're arguing with people who have kind of taken formally up what you've done in "Pictures," to not do formally, people like Richard Marshall—[Richard Marshall's "New Image Painting," an exhibition at the Whitney –DC]—and things like this. So if it's okay to maybe stop for a moment on modernism versus postmodernism there, it would be interesting for me.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, you know, it's actually confusing to me because it—in this new memoir chapter that I just wrote on disco, I began with the fact that there's a folder that has these projects.

And it's very clear that I was thinking in '75, '76, so pre-"Pictures," of the term postmodernism, that I was thinking basically about the shift represented by minimalism and conceptual art and so on as—well, what I was thinking clearly was, in some not very formulated way, I was thinking of modernism as in Greenbergian modernism.

And I was thinking of these—because I was less and less interested from the time I came to New York until this time, so for that 10-year span, in Greenbergian formalism and all of the work that I did starting in, let's say, '73 was an attempt to work out of and through and around the Greenbergian model of writing criticism.

So when I wrote the essay called "Opaque Painting" in '73, it's about trying to think about a kind of flatness that is a material flatness and not an optical flatness.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And so "postmodernist" was kind of obvious because it was something that was—I mean, it could have been anti-modernist I suppose because it was a kind of—it was against Greenberg's notion or a step away from that lineage.

And it seemed to me that when I think I was working with Helene on the Art Information [Distribution –DC] slide packets, because we were interested in artist film, video, performance art, conceptual art, all of those non-painting practices, but also the painting that I was writing about was again that kind of what I called opaque painting, material painting, Ryman, Brice Marden and so on.

I was already thinking of—this is kind of not Greenbergian thing, which I was calling in this project postmodernism.

I think then when I wrote the "Pictures" essay, because I had—because I had gotten involved with Rosalind and Annette, who were—who made me understand that one could actually talk about modernism differently from the Greenbergian model, that there was, let's say, an Adorno model of modernism or a constructivist model of modernism that could embrace theatricality or something like that.

DOUGLAS BURTON: Or surrealist.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, exactly, yeah, so there was a different approach to modernism if you approached it the way Annette did via Soviet constructivism, for example, through *October* or I guess it's *October.* So I think that then I began to think that the commitments that I had to have was toward—

JOHANNA BURTON: Modernism.

JOHANNA CRIMP: The modernism, I mean, and I think that—I don't know. There were phrases. I think there were ways that certain—if you're influenced by a particular critic, like I was reading Rosalind or Annette and there are phrases of Annette's that I sort of appropriate, like radical aspiration or something like that and it was very Annette and it's now kind of like seems—well, it's just youthful, that's all. So I think that's what happened.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, that makes a lot of sense and also what you said earlier about a kind of worry about pluralism or the relativism that was creeping in, which of course—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, and postmodernism began to be, although the term postmodernism erupted very quickly in relation to architecture.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, much earlier in architecture than anywhere else, right? Isn't that—?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, I think there are other—of course in dance.

JOHANNA BURTON: Of course.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But it's funny because we didn't think about postmodern dance at that time in relation to it. I mean, there are some literary uses of it. If you actually trace the lineage, you'd find it right back to the '50s or something like that.

JOHANNA BURTON: Back to the '50s, that's what I—yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But in terms of the kind of art criticism that we were engaged in, it really was right around the time—it emerged in relation to photography. I mean, there was a way in which for me postmodernism was about this critique of the [John] Szarkowski notion of Greenbergian modernism as applied to a medium that seemed really inappropriate to me at the time.

So that's—so then that gave me a different way of thinking about Sherrie Levine's practice, which if you think about the "Pictures" show, she wasn't doing appropriated photographs then. I mean, I wasn't—Cindy [Sherman]'s work—according to Helene, Cindy was not allowed to be in the "Pictures" show because she had already had a show Artists Space.

JOHANNA BURTON: The same is true of Dara Birnbaum I believe and we won't even talk about Richard Prince.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, Richard Prince we didn't know.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, but he—I'm just saying, all the stories that went around about why he—I mean, we can do, but—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, but I think that—I mean, I wasn't thinking—the fact that Philip Smith was in the show, for example, who is not included in the Met show, for example.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, nor in your second version of the essay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, exactly, and I think that I was—I was very taken by these pieces that he was making at the time and I was particularly taken by the juxtaposition of these pictures from different places, from—I mean, they were actually appropriated but they were also—they were very handmade.

JOHANNA BURTON: The other artists, people like—well I guess it's not true. Helene mentioned to me that, as you just said, that she sort of—you guys would get in a car and go to Buffalo or you'd go to different places.

You met Robert [Longo] that way I guess, and Cindy [Sherman] and others. How did you meet some of the others, I mean, Troy [Brauntuch] wouldn't have been in Buffalo, right? He would have been—you just probably went to his studio and he was friends with Longo but Philip Smith was from kind of a different group altogether, wasn't he?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But I met them all through Helene.

JOHANNA BURTON: All through Helene?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, they were all—I mean, Helene gave me, as I recall, lists of artists to go and see.

JOHANNA BURTON: I see, and then you picked?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And then I picked. I picked in part—I mean, I had had conversations with Helene. I don't remember this really, really clearly but I'm pretty sure that I picked—I tried to make some kind of—I was already making an argument in my head. So I was making a coherence in my head.

So probably there would have been artists that I would have seen who were interesting but who—and I can't even name who they are—well, I could name one. David Salle, because he'd started making these paintings and I didn't like them, but because I already realized that there was a kind of problem with painting for me in this argument and—but I thought—I mean, I thought about Michael Hurson. I thought about Bob Moskowitz.

I did think about what became New Image Painting because I was interested in some sense even in this kind of return to figuration, but then I didn't want—I mean, I guess I was aware that the return to figuration had to be in relation to something like a critique of it. I mean, what I later realized was a kind of media culture.

But also because I was thinking about it in terms of a picture in terms of already something like an anti-medium specificity, kind of pictures made in these—in the ways like a mental picture can be made. I was thinking of picturing in the mind and so, like those curious—and I think maybe pictures telling stories also.

So I realized that like with the [Robert] Longo, like the sculpture that was drawn from [Rainer Werner] Fassbinder and then the Sherrie Levines that were sort of like these weird stories that were being told through these juxtapositions of these heads and Philip Smith was certainly doing that, like juxtaposing all these different kinds of images.

But I was also—through Troy's work and Jack Goldstein's work, I think I also became more and more interested in questions of mediation and distance. I was also interested in structuralist ideas of presence and absence and I mean, I wouldn't have said it at the time, but maybe something like the loss of the distance, that sort of thing, so various distancing devices in terms of mediation.

I mean, I don't know why painting can't be one of those distancing devices, but it seemed—I guess it was too—it had too much historical baggage for me.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, and with what you've been saying about kind of the weight of the medium, sort of that it was still held intact for some people in that way. I mean, you do talk about Bob Moskowitz as the one person in New Image Painting who is—in the second essay—who is sort of approximating that kind of operation it seems.

But it's really interesting to me that there in that first essay you do seem to be thinking about distance or kind of distanciating procedure as a space for agency for the viewer, but through the lack or through the loss of meaning there's also production of meaning as well.

I mean, also I guess one question for me has always been because you turned to it so forcefully in not so many years that at this moment in your career you're obviously thinking about modes of critique and deconstruction but you're not thinking specifically about the subject position or critique of representation in terms of sort of feminism or any of these things.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Even though feminism—it's odd because I wasn't. No, I wasn't thinking of it. I mean, partly

because I suppose the models of feminism that existed for me at the time were not, let's say, psychoanalytic film theory, which I didn't come to until later through Craig and others, but rather the kind of, I mean, the kind of—what do I want to call it—essentialist feminist practices of weaving, that kind of earlier moment.

And so when I mentioned pattern painting or something like that, there was a kind of—it was the way that, say, my sense of how feminism was talked about in relation to art was more the Lucy Lippard model than, let's say, the Mary Kelly model, which was simultaneous but I didn't know about it simultaneously.

But I had been reading feminism during that time and it was really important. I think I told you last time that I had this gay consciousness raising group and I had read Kate Millet and Germaine Greer and all of those early second wave feminist writers and it was really, really important in terms of my sense of myself as a gay person.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But I didn't actually—I didn't know how to really think about it in relation to art and in fact I was thinking about this recently, that I was thinking about the "Pictures Generation" show at the Met that's opening Monday and I mean I don't think there are any gay artists in that show. I can't think of any.

JOHANNA BURTON: Not on the list that I remember.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yeah and in fact that was—so there is kind of a split for me in this world and I mention it in an elliptical way at the very end of my disco essay where I talk about going to the Mudd club and hating that scene and one reason that I hated it was because it wasn't a simpatico scene for somebody who is gay.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, no, I'm sure.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It was actually a backlash against gay in some ways, the whole punk scene and new wave scene.

JOHANNA BURTON: It was aggressively heterosexual for the most part.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, very much so and so Philip Smith is gay.

JOHANNA BURTON: So what happened with Philip Smith then? What happened between the first—I didn't know he was gay. I have to say he's somebody who's on my list of do I want to go find and talk to him or will it be awful for him and awful for me. I don't know what happened. People often say, "What happened to this guy."

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, it's funny because when Jenelle Porter redid the "Pictures" show, I remember one of the reviews in *Artforum* said that the really undiscovered and interesting figure here is Philip Smith. I think that was Scott Rothkopf. But I think part of my attention and attraction to Philip was because he was gay, certainly, I mean, in the sense that he was an attractive or is an attractive—I don't know. I haven't seen him for years and years. But he was an attractive guy and there was a way that we clicked because of being gay, being gay men.

There was a sensibility thing that was—so I became friendly with him in a slightly different way than I did with anybody else. It's funny. I was just looking at a file the other day and I have like a letter from Jack Goldstein signed, "Love, Jack," and it's really like that sort of sense that Jack Goldstein, like I never was friends with him. I never understood him or something like that. It's clearly not true.

But I was—of course I was friends with Jack because I was friends with Helene and I mean I became friendly with all of these people because they all lived right here and we saw each other a certain amount. But I never, but I can't say that they—I didn't become close friends with any of them. They were younger than me. They were a different generation and a very different sensibility from mine.

That's one of the kind of curious things about the "Pictures" show is that it wasn't really—it still isn't I think in some sense, truly my sensibility. But the thing that I remember about Phillip right after the "Pictures" show is that when I broke my hip disco roller-skating in late '78, after I recovered sufficiently to be walking with a cane, because I was on crutches for like six weeks, I went to kind of reward myself, because I had been basically kind of confined to this apartment for that whole six weeks.

It was an icy, icy winter, I went to Florida, to Miami, to visit Philip, whose father lived in Miami and I think he had gone down there to live and work for a period of time and I mean I don't remember much about that trip. But I do remember going and staying with him and I remember that we went to a Cuban gay bar in Miami Beach that was like—I mean, I walked into this huge room.

I mean, I still have a picture of it, this huge dance club, like an old fashioned Latino dance club with gay men and lesbians dancing merengue and salsa and it was like I felt like I had died and gone to heaven or something. I mean, I had not known how much I was attracted to that culture and particularly that music and to see people

dancing—because I started dancing [in the fifth grade with –DC] ballroom dancing.

I learned steps and did couples dancing and I just immediately thought, "I want to do this," and I did and I started going to clubs in New York and then I would vacation in Puerto Rico. I got back in touch with this friend of mine and go to clubs and I particularly went to La Escuelita here and it was very easy because I had—when I was a student at Tulane I had this very close friend, Marimar Benitez, who was a graduate student in art history from Puerto Rico.

And the bar scene that we used to hang out at in New Orleans was sailors' bars along the river and she and I would often go to a Spanish sailors' bar and dance what was a dance called the pachenga. It's like one of those many different [Latin –DC] dance steps. But they're all based on a certain way of moving your hips basically.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, and she taught you?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And she taught me and so I was really able to pick up merengue and things like that very easily because it was sort of already in my body. But that's the thing I most remember about Phillip was going to that club with him.

And then I don't know. I mean, things—I don't remember what happened to my relationship with him. Maybe he wasn't here. Maybe he stayed in Florida for a period of time. But he—as the "Pictures" thing was then picked up and run with by various different people, he didn't remain a part of it and of course he wasn't part of the same scene. I mean, he was enough part of the downtown art scene that Helene knew his work. Helene may know more about him than I do.

JOHANNA BURTON: What made you take him out of the second version and—I mean, I'm just curious how that—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I think that by then I had become interested more in photography and so notions of appropriation and mediation and all that kind of stuff had already entered into our vocabulary and our thinking about this kind of stuff. I recognized kind of immediately how amazing the film stills were. Sherrie had begun doing the slide projections -

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, [at The Kitchen –DC], the profiles, the fashion—[Levine had a show at The Kitchen. –DC]

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, exactly. So I suppose that I was also—well I don't know. I mean, I can't really say entirely but I think there was a sense that all of these other people who were in that show continued to kind of like—there was a ferment around the show and then they just—there was an explosion of interest in that group and Philip wasn't a part of it and I don't—I don't actually know what he did immediately following those drawings or if he just continued to do them for a while.

JOHANNA BURTON: Well, that work operates really differently than the way the other—I also really like it. There's something—now it's funny to even use—but it's sort of campy and weird and very hand-produced and the others aren't. But I always wondered about that and I have no idea what he makes now or if he makes anything.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No. I actually had an e-mail from Doug Eklund saying that Philip was extremely upset that he wasn't in the "Pictures" show. So he's obviously had contact with hm.

JOHANNA BURTON: Every artist is mad at Douglas for something, I think.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I'm sure. [Laughs.]

JOHANNA BURTON: That's another topic I guess. But no, that's very interesting and part of why—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I keep getting, I should say, these e-mails from various friends of mine saying, "There's this whole thing about the "Pictures" show but you're not mentioned."

JOHANNA BURTON: You know, to me it's really problematic.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, I don't know exactly what's happened. I think—I looked on the website and I'm not mentioned.

JOHANNA BURTON: No, you're not. You're not.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, so, I think probably Doug wants to claim it or something. But he can. I mean, at the same time he's writing this whole text which does—

JOHANNA BURTON:  Of course it does, of course it does.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Of course it does, about the "Pictures" show.

JOHANNA BURTON:  I think I told you this, that he had asked—I think this is just—these things become monstrous and like you can't—you have no idea—he did ask me a year-and-a-half ago if I'd write an essay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Oh really? He did?

JOHANNA BURTON:  And Michael Lobel as well. He asked both of us and the Met wouldn't give him funding.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  The space?

JOHANNA BURTON:  It's a huge catalogue.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  It's a huge catalogue, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON:  It's huge and he wrote the entire text.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  I know. He wrote like 100-and-something pages.

JOHANNA BURTON:  And just to be fair, he did ask—he did want—he wanted me to precisely talk—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Because I mentioned you to him when I—

JOHANNA BURTON:  Well, then that's probably why he asked.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Well, I think he already knew—

JOHANNA BURTON:  Yes, a little bit. He did ask me and he did ask Michael and we both said yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  And he couldn't get money for you?

JOHANNA BURTON:  That's what he said. Seeing the catalog, I find it now sort of a bit suspicious but for whatever reason, I was—I wasn't uninvited in a mean way. I was just told it wasn't going to happen. In the end, I'm kind of okay about it because I'm doing my own analysis of this stuff.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Yes, exactly, it's his construction.

JOHANNA BURTON:  It's his construction and in a funny way I'm learning a lot from it. It's interesting because—this won't go in the transcript but Ann Ellegood and I are proposing—this is very much between us—but a different—you know her, Ann Ellegood. She was at the Hirshhorn.

Now she's going to the Hammer and we're proposing a show that we've been trying to get through for a couple of years at the Whitney and maybe at the Hammer, maybe other places, on appropriation but not doing this weird historical nugget thing, but talking about this nexus where appropriation became this, and it's very interesting, a lot of about sort of AIDS and gay representation and sort of queer coalition but also just feminism—kind of actually also thinking about the politics that were around this stuff.

So not having it cut off at 1984, like artists just stopped making work. So it's more about these extended careers and people like [David] Wojnarowicz or [Robert] Gober or, I mean other—Zoe Leonard, Gregg [Bordowitz], or people like that who should be included in the discussion.

But it's a very different project. But it's just funny hearing you talk about—in a funny way, it ignores the—and maybe it's okay but he extends the artist list enough that you would think he would have paid attention to things like queer artists and production.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  He's interested in a really narrow moment and I mean he's really—he really got caught up in that moment of Artists Space and Helene.

JOHANNA BURTON:  Yes, he did and also it's funny if you read the description, it seems to be the most kind of agreed upon and sort of basic definition of what these artists were doing instead of expanding it at all.

There's a lot of fear around this, Douglas. I mean, I do have to say it's really interesting. I feel like you proposed something that its whole purpose was to kind of open up and it's become so precious—people have made it so precious and so strange.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  It's a very odd experience for me.

JOHANNA BURTON:  It must be so strange.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  It has been a continuously odd experience.

JOHANNA BURTON:  I do hope you know people like—I mean, really—I of course really want you to like it but I think what I'm doing will please you in that it's not—I'm not trying to put it in resin. It's about doing what you precisely do in the introduction to *On the Museum's Ruins* where you look back and you go, "Wow, what couldn't we see at this moment and how do we keep re-seeing things."

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Right.

JOHANNA BURTON:  So anyway, Philip Smith, not in the—the Met show is really interesting for all of these reasons.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Are you going to go Monday morning to the press?

JOHANNA BURTON:  I'll go Monday to the—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Opening?

JOHANNA BURTON:  To the opening because I can't get away from my job. But Tim maybe will come. Are you going to be there in the morning?

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  I think I—I asked him if I could be invited to the press [opening –DC]. I never get invited to press [openings –DC] of anything.

JOHANNA BURTON:  Even ones for basically your own—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Well, I'm invited to the show, to the opening.

JOHANNA BURTON:  I know but you should be invited to the press—I mean—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Yes, but basically I asked if I could be invited. Of course they invited me. I wanted to see the show without hordes of people around and without basically being assaulted by friends and enemies. So no, I think I will go and see it.

JOHANNA BURTON:  Don't worry. We can cut all of this stuff out. I mean, one thing I should also say is Tim hasn't known whether this is something—I kind of wasn't sure what to say too. He wondered if you wanted to have any kind of a written response and I said, "You know what, I kind of doubt it."

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  I don't think so. I mean, I'll see the show.

JOHANNA BURTON:  But just know that that's—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Is Artforum doing something?

JOHANNA BURTON:  Yes, he's—I sort of kind of—we've talked about this a lot.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  I can imagine.

JOHANNA BURTON:  And my feeling was—and you know this with Tim, like basically anything you ever want, you just—but it's funny, I said to him, "I bet Douglas won't." I said, "I'll mention it," because he didn't want to seem overdetermined, like that that's—what's interesting about Tim is he thinks about you very much just in terms of your present work these days.

I mean, he knows everything you've done but he's I think much more interested in what you'd say about Cunningham than the "Pictures" show and I kind of like that in many ways. But I was thinking—at one point I had said I would like to write about it and I've decided I don't want to. I'm involved in a very different—and I think the critiques that could be levied against it aren't maybe that interesting to me.

I'm more interested in just proceeding with what I'm doing. So I may write something about Sherrie, who's going to do a project for the magazine soon and I'm just more interested in what she's doing now than going back to the same set of whatever.

But I think Howard Singerman is going to write—because he was around and he's very invested in it and I think Michael Lobel will also. So it just seems so over-determined and weirdly kind of potentially like a bad energy space, which I'm very interested in not being—like I'm really sort of trying to avoid the—[inaudible].

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, I don't know. I'm actually curious in seeing the whole configuration of work. I think it could be a really interesting show.

JOHANNA BURTON: Oh, I don't mean the show's bad energy. I mean just this kind of everybody trying to vie for their—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But I, you know, I think that it is really amazing that the Met is doing a big thematic contemporary show or historical thematic [show –DC], and they let a kind of associate curator do the first one. They've never done this for contemporary art I think.

JOHANNA BURTON: And I think they kind of treated him badly throughout is my feeling from what he's told me.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: That's my sense.

JOHANNA BURTON: I kind of actually weirdly feel for him in this situation. I don't even know if he knew what he was—I mean, I know he knew what he was getting into, but like so many people are exerting ownership. I mean, I told you. You got a lot of these Sherrie-things but I got panicked phone calls from Doug Eklund saying, like, "Sherrie," and I'm like, "I can't, what do you want me to do?"

DOUGLAS CRIMP: [Laughs.] Exactly, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: I mean, I think it's going to be hard. All right, so that—we'll go back and X those parts out if we want to.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Okay, maybe we should stop for a minute and I'm going to—you want more iced tea or do you want—

JOHANNA BURTON: Sure.

[END OF TRACK AAA_crimp09_3255.]

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay, so round 40, or wherever we are now. I think we've covered most of "Pictures." And maybe what we can do is turn to, let's say it's 1980 and you began talking a little bit about, in the distinction between the two essays, a sort of turn towards an attention to media. And in fact, we can pick up a little on politics in this regard where the "Photographic Activity of Post-Modernism" or something turns explicitly to the way photography and other kinds of—images are kind of deconstructing or thinking about a critique of representation. That there's a way in which you're moving towards those kinds of ideas.

When are you—what are you thinking about in terms of your own identity politics at this time? Are things starting to change in terms of what you described before as a sort of gap between the Mudd club folks and the firehouse folks, for instance?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: You know, I really think that I, during most of those *October* years, there was—I could tell you that there was a break in 1985, but before that—with the Dia conversations of when that happened. You know, I think that during this period I was very caught up in the world of *October* and the Graduate Center. In Rosalind Krauss's world, also with Craig, and I became very good friends with Craig during that period of time.

And one of the things that Craig and I did during that period was to go to the ballet constantly. He was a huge Balanchine fan and I became a huge Balanchine fan through him. We even went one summer with Helene [to Saratoga Springs for the NYCB summer –DC]. Craig had gone up—Craig had actually become the ballet critic for an Albany newspaper for the Saratoga City Ballet season. You know, the New York City Ballet has a summer season in Saratoga.

And Helene and I went up and stayed in Saratoga Springs and we all went to see City Ballet. But I think—you know, the thing is, in terms of my intellectual work at this time, the thing that was most central between '78, when we did the special issue of *October* on photography and for the next few years, and in my writing was the —what I described in the introduction to *On the Museum's Ruins*, which is this seismic shift in the art world about photography.

And that became—I can look back on it now and say, like everybody else, I became interested in photography. I was looking at photography for the first time, I mean looking at the history of photography. With the Degas essay, I was writing about photographs and thinking theoretically about photography, but also thinking very much—we were thinking very critically about the terms of the appropriation of photography by the museum, or by the world of collecting and so on, the revaluation of photography.

So for quite a while, between "Pictures" and—well, let's say, I suppose a big shift for me would have been—in my intellectual life, would have been the time that I got my second NEA Art Critics grant. I had gotten one really,

really early, in 1973, which I used to spend a summer in Fire Island.

JOHANNA BURTON: What kind of money are we talking about, like a few thousand dollars or—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: [Three thousand dollars for the first –DC] grant. But I think by the time of the second one, it was more like $15,000.

JOHANNA BURTON: Wow. So it was substantial.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So it was, at that time, as much as I was making from *October* and I went to Berlin for a year. So I spent a year in Berlin in 1985. I'd managed to take a leave from *October*. Joan Copjec did my job and I was ostensibly doing dissertation research because I had—I don't exactly even remember the details of it, but I'd finished—I had done my orals and started working on a dissertation in—well, let's see. I wrote the essay called "On the Museum's Ruins" as a seminar paper for a course at the Graduate Center. So that was the end, more or less, of my coursework and that was 1981.

So I think I probably took my orals at the end of, let's say, '81 or '82. It was right around that time because it was at that moment that I decided to do that as a topic for my dissertation. And so during that period of time I was actually doing some preliminary research on the history of the museum, and I was simultaneously—it was also, I think, at that moment that I began giving public—being invited to give talks in conferences and so on.

So for example, "The Photographic Activity of Post-Modernism" I wrote for a conference that Parachute organized in Montreal. And I wrote the "Museum's Old, the Library's New" subject for Parachute for a special issue they did on photography at that time. So that's [also 1981 –DC].

So a lot of what I was doing at the time in terms of my lecturing and writing was for commissions, like "Appropriating Appropriation" was done for *Image Scavengers.* All of this probably was more or less an outgrowth of "Pictures" in terms of my being a person that people wanted to participate in these sorts of these things. And then the kinds of stuff that I was publishing in *October*.

So I think that probably my life in the gay world was still kept relatively separate from my life in the art world and the *October* circle. I mean, of course there were friendship networks and all of that sort of thing that overlapped. Like Craig was one, Stephen Koch, who was a friend of Rosalind Krauss's, sort of became friendly with [me –DC] during that time. But then I was still going out dancing completely on my own and having a completely separate sexual life and club life and that sort of thing.

And I managed to kind of keep those things going pretty simultaneously. I still was going out dancing a lot and—but 1981 is also the year that AIDS was—the year that the epidemic was first announced on the 4th of July weekend. And I was actually—I went to Fire Island that weekend. I can remember reading that newspaper article. There was a report in the *Voice* the next week that said something like, this *New York Times* article, it was called "Gay Cancer Found in Gay Men," or "Strange Cancer Found in Gay Men" or something like that. And I remember—I don't remember who wrote it, but somebody wrote this article saying that the *New York Times* did this story to ruin the 4th of July weekend for all the gay men who were going to Fire Island. And I was one of those people. And of course it was the talk of the beach that weekend.

What I think people don't realize is that how people then dealt with this strange information in the first couple of years was really mixed. I was one of the people who completely refused to believe that there could be—I refused on scientific grounds to imagine that there could be a disease that would affect gay men, knowing—I just didn't have that theory of homosexuality that could allow me to think such a crazy thing.

But of course, in the back of our minds, there were always questions of what kinds of sexual practices or sexually transmitted diseases might be part of this and so there was an awareness, but there was a disavowal at the same time. But I also remember when I had friends who were involved in the very beginning with Gay Men's Health Crisis and I remember going to maybe their big second fundraiser. It was a circus. Like a real Ringling Brothers circus. And I do remember going to that.

So that was also happening right at this time in the early '80s. But I think I was—between my critical work, some teaching gigs, the production of *October*, that was really an absorbing life during that period of time. And right before—there was—I'm trying to think. I guess it was actually '86 was the first year of [the Dia –DC] conversations. And so I had come back from Berlin.

But before I went to Berlin I wrote the [Richard] Serra essay. I had been—it was through Richard that I was—and Richard was a—I had done an interview with Richard. Actually, when I—I think clear back in '73, when I was on Fire Island, Richard and Clara and I had gotten to know—I'd been very good friends with Richard, particularly with Clara, his wife. And I visited them in Nova Scotia several summers, including one summer that I taught at NSCAD [Nova Scotia College of Art and Design –DC], which is where I became friends with Benjamin [Buchloh]. I

mean, I'd known him before that.

So Richard wanted me to write for the Museum of Modern Art show and—I mean, this is a story actually. I don't know if you know this story, but—

JOHANNA BURTON: I don't know.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So I wrote this essay, the "Redefining Site Specificity" essay ["Serra's Public Sculpture: Redefining Site Specificity," in Krauss, Richard Serra, *Sculpture,* exhibition catalogue, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 27 Feb to 13 May 1986] and I turned it in literally a day before I left for Berlin for a year. I went to Berlin not knowing anybody there, not knowing exactly what I was going to do there. I was going ostensibly to improve my German and to do research on [the Altes Museum –DC], which became a part of my book.

And while I was in Berlin, I got this—I'm not sure I can remember all of this absolutely in the detail that it deserves. But I got the corrected proofs of the Serra essay and there were all of these insane changes to my essay, which was written in a very, very, as you know, polemical style. And a lot of my polemical statements they had changed to something like, "In my opinion" duh, duh, duh, duh. So it completely weakened the rhetorical force of the statement. And then there were all these things that were just—they didn't want in and they just crossed out and they changed it pretty drastically. And I just said—I got in touch with them and I said, "This is completely unacceptable, what you're doing."

And it turned out that Bill Rubin was infuriated by my essay, which he thought was by some insane Marxist. And he demanded—first he didn't want to publish it at all and then he demanded all of these changes. And I refused them. And then Rosalind Krauss got a little bit in the middle of it because she was the main writer for the catalogue and she did some negotiating and she really wanted to work out some sort of a compromise. And I didn't want to compromise at all, because as far as I was concerned, they'd completely ruined my essay. And their objections were—they were really crazy.

Like for example, I wanted to open the essay with a film still from the *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, from the film, and that was too political for them. Their notion of what constituted politics and what they could tolerate in terms of politics or what—I should say not they, but really Bill Rubin because he seemed to be really behind this.

And finally Richard Serra basically—I don't exactly—I don't remember—I must have gotten in touch with Richard and Clara at some point during this and Richard called Bill Rubin and said if you don't publish this essay as it is, I will withdraw from the show.

JOHANNA BURTON: Wow, that's kind of amazing.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, and you know, *Tilted Arc* [1981] had been—the whole trial had taken place and of course the polemical tone of my essay came very much from that trial. I had participated in the trial and it was a very emotional thing for me, incredibly. I mean the whole thing was, for all of us, very, very emotional. For Richard it was like a huge trauma.

And so they kind of had to cave and publish it. I still agreed to compromise to some extent, and one of the actual aspects of the compromise was that I was forced to include at the beginning of my essay a little paragraph, which they wrote, which said that the views in my essay do not in any way represent the views of the Museum of Modern Art.

JOHANNA BURTON: But that almost makes it worse, right?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I know. Of course it's insane.

JOHANNA BURTON: It's insane.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It's like that classic instance where Michael Asher asked them to do that piece of just listing all of the de-accessions and then Kirk Varnedoe felt he had to write a kind of introduction, which of course just played right into—

JOHANNA BURTON: It's terrible.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And in addition to that, Bill Rubin's preface to the catalogue is entirely an argument against my essay. It's really—it's pathological. And not only pathological but petty to the extent that Bill Rubin told the coordinating curator of the show that I was not to be invited to the dinner for the opening.

JOHANNA BURTON: And you weren't.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I wasn't.

JOHANNA BURTON: Wow.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But then Richard got up and there were all these people toasting Richard and then Richard got up and said, "I would just like to say I'm very unhappy that Douglas Crimp was not invited to this dinner." Well, you know he's a tough cookie.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, but it sounds like he's loyal to you.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes and he's loyal to the politics of ideas. Yes, absolutely.

JOHANNA BURTON: He and Clara, right? That's her name? They've also been helping fund *October* for a really long time, right?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, absolutely. Yes. Which is really also very interesting because they were horrified when I was pushed out of *October*. And they were—I mean, in fact, Rosalind and—Richard got in a terrible fight with Rosalind. I think he threw a bunch of—no, he crumbled—he was at dinner and he just took all of the cookies that she served and crumbled them in front of her or something, in the middle of this intense argument because it was about the final essay that I published in *October*, which was "Mourning and Militancy" and Rosalind was horrified by that essay, by the sexual content of it. And that's what they fought about, evidently. And he loved that essay.

He's a big supporter of my work and I think I told you, he also then paid for the publication of *How Do I Look?* But then he kind of—but his loyalty ascended to both sides because he continued to support *October*. I thought he would probably withdraw his support, but he didn't.

JOHANNA BURTON: Really, it's so interesting that both of the big fights, first with *Artforum* and then with you, comes down to sexuality, always for her in some way. It's really fascinating. Or something was going on there that is complicated and I've never quite figured out. Maybe it's so easy to figure out that—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, I mean, I don't know. It's—yes. There was actually a piece that was written for the *Voice* after I was pushed out of *October* in which Tom Kalin brought up that instance of the Lynda Benglis thing and this really, really—the person who wrote the article for the *Voice*, I think it was Robert Atkins. I'm not absolutely sure. He kind of—he made it really difficult for me because it became a kind of theory versus politics divide. And of course—

JOHANNA BURTON: That's not. That is not accurate.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: That's not what I wanted at all and so then they were able to get all of these people to kind of write in support of them, who were horrified by the kind of anti-intellectualism of the attack on theory, which I totally understand.

JOHANNA BURTON: But was not your—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It wasn't the case and of course it was very hurtful to me the number of people who essentially sided with *October*, although—the *Voice* wouldn't publish the list of names. They wouldn't publish the letter. They had to take it out as an ad eventually.

JOHANNA BURTON: Is that—oh, I didn't realize it was an ad.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It appeared on a page with futon ads. Nobody would have seen it, but it was a letter about the article about me and it was signed by a [large –DC] number of people.

JOHANNA BURTON: No, I knew about—but I didn't realize it was taken out as an ad. But let's back up then because I think we're moving towards, of course, this kind of moment where questions around your involvement—this sort of split we've been talking about between parts of your life, obviously soon to come to an end. So in the mid-80s, obviously, you spoke about '81 and Fire Island and sort of what happened in terms of the speed with which you started thinking about turning towards what eventually would be named HIV and AIDS, in terms of your own work and how did that come to be?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, one thing that I would say is that during this entire period, starting immediately post-Stonewall, so going all the way back, I was—one aspect of my own intellectual interest was gay liberation literature and I read all of that stuff and it was very—I never really—I guess that it was—I mean probably the first time that I began actively to think about it in terms of my own intellectual work was when I did the Fassbinder issue of *October*, which was '82.

JOHANNA BURTON: I think that's right, yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  It was the year that Fassbinder died, coincidentally. He died just as the issue was going to press. So Annette wrote a little in memoriam piece that went into the issue, but actually I—that issue was my idea entirely and it was because I had seen *In a Year of Thirteen Moons* and was like—I mean I loved Fassbinder, when all the Fassbinder films were coming out and we were all—Fassbinder was like a kind of hook dating clear back to the time of the "Pictures" show when Robert Longo did *The American Soldier* [1977] piece.

But yeah, during that whole period from the late '70s forward it was a—it's already 10 years into Fassbinder's career, but that was the period when he really came to notice in this country. This movie just completely blew me away and I knew that I wanted to do something about it. I thought about doing a Fassbinder issue and proposed it and we put together a number of people to write for it and we were able to get the script of *In a Year of 13 Moons* to translate.

I remember getting a copy of the film from New Yorker Films and having Babette Mangolte make all of those film stills to go with the script. I mean, not stills, frame enlargements and at that moment I was involved briefly with a guy that I met at a party in Los Angeles who was an independent musician. I mean, a kind of [New Wave –DC] musician, and I had a long distance relationship with this guy whose name was Joseph Jacobs.

It was during the time that I was working on the Fassbinder issue that I was involved with him and it was a very—I don't know. It was just one of those kind of—since we hardly saw each other—but it was conducted through letters and so on and so it was very much a kind of imaginary affair, let's say. And so that piece that I wrote for the Fassbinder issue was dedicated to him and then there's this whole thing about the dedication, which was in the piece, and the piece is about Barthes and Fassbinder and it's very much about debates about the question, "Is he out in his work?" In other words, does his gayness—is it something that he is explicit about in his work? Or he or she, but I'm thinking really he.

And I'm critical of that—I'm sort of—my reflection on that question is to basically say that it's reification of sexuality. It's basically about thinking about—even as I am, obviously, in the process of being out in my work by talking about this issue and by dedicating—and by talking about these two homosexuals, Fassbinder and Barthes, and part of this is about the question of Fassbinder's making films in which the characters are actually gay, like *Fox and His Friends* [1975] or the idea that the women in *Petra von Kant* [*The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant,* 1972] are actually gay men in drag, you know, that sort of—I mean, that was something that was said about Fassbinder and Fassbinder actually made a [critical –DC] remark about. But it was also about Barthes had just died and there was a Sontag essay that I really, really hated that was basically seeing Barthes as—I mean, she was packaging Barthes as a humanist, basically. And basically saying that all of his work, finally, was really about the self.

It was my first piece where I was really dealing with sexual subjectivity and it was a kind of anomalous piece in my work because it wasn't about what I was otherwise doing at the time and it wasn't—I mean it's never—I've never anthologized it with my writing, and it's like the only thing that I had written at that time about film. Even though it was an essay that was incredibly personally—it was also a little bit sort of imitative of Barthes' later, the way he wrote, like *A Lover's Discourse* [: *Fragments*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1978]. This was all done through—this was also kind of an appropriation essay.

So it's pretty anomalous in a lot of ways but it was also really meaningful to me. It was really—I put a lot—and I think meaningful in part because I was thinking of it as a kind of gift to this guy that I had this attachment to.

So I think then really it wasn't until after I came back from Berlin that I—when I came back from Berlin, even before I went to Berlin, actually, people that I knew had died of AIDS, but when I came back one of my—somebody that I was very attached to and somebody that I'd slept with and somebody that was a close, close friend, a guy from Colombia, was diagnosed with AIDS. So it became much—there was a moment when it just became way, way closer to my life.

It was right around that time at the New Museum that Bill Olander did that Homovideo show and it coincided with the Hans Haacke show and then there were the Dia conversations. The first series, which was on publics or publicness or public, and I was on a panel with Barbara Kruger and Krzysztof Wodiczko following one with Tom Crow and Craig Owens and with Martha Rosler—[Martha opposed Tom Crow's contention that it was groups such as women who destroyed the public sphere. –DC].

JOHANNA BURTON:  Yes. I just looked at these again.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON:  This particular one recently, actually.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  And so I wrote this piece that—I mean it actually talked about the first panel, but it also talked about these two shows in conjunction at the new museum and kind of the notion of politics that existed in both

of them. So that was the first moment where I publicly talked about gay politics in an art world situation.

And it had a very dramatic impact, because the discussion afterwards—I mean there were some people—at first I think people were very sympathetic to it and it got a very good response. And then at the same time, there were—during the Q&A, there were some—it became quite difficult.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yeah.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I mean difficult in the sense that, you know, it was as if in a way I was accused both of talking from the position of a secure identity and talking from the position of a victim. And so it was sufficiently upsetting to me, the response to that, that I ended up constituting a reading group.

I mean I just basically decided that I was interested in pursuing more, you know, more as kind of a central part of my own thinking and learning work, on sexuality, including Foucault and psychoanalysis, the whole range of things. And so a whole group of us started an intellectual reading group on queer stuff.

JOHANNA BURTON: This is '86?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: This is '86.

JOHANNA BURTON: And who was in the group? What kind of folks?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It shifted over a period of time, but Martha Gever, Tom Kalin initially, Lee Quinby. I'm not sure if you know her. She is an Americanist who—a former student of Lee's had become a good friend of mine, a guy named Tim Landers who was involved—he wrote actually a really interesting early piece on AIDS videos for Martha Gever when she was running The Independent. And so Lee became a friend of mine as well. Lee is someone who—I think she's—I'm not sure where she is now, but she was up there in Geneva at Hobart and William Smith. She is an Americanist. And Amber Hollibaugh, and there were maybe only six of us.

JOHANNA BURTON: Mostly women? Or a lot of women?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, Tom and me and there was—I'm trying to—I think I'm leaving somebody out. Yes, there were a lot of women, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, it's interesting.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes. Maybe Tim initially was in it as well, Tim Landers. I think. Well, you know, I can show you, because—you know because we did this [book, *How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video –DC*]—this is why I left *October*. This cover design is by Tom Kalin, I'm sure. Do you know Tom Kalin?

JOHANNA BURTON: I know who he—I don't. I mean yeah.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Terri Cafaro, who had become an assistant of mine at *October*. She was a fellow graduate student at the Graduate Center.

JOHANNA BURTON: I feel like I know her name, but—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: She lives in the Philippines now. The last I was in touch with her she had a girlfriend who works for the government, and she got posted to the Philippines.

JOHANNA BURTON: So that's where she went.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I'm just wondering if our names appear in here, do they? They must. Oh wait. "The following group members: Terri Cafaro, Jean Carlomusto, Me, Martha Gever, Tom Kalin," and Jeff Nunokawa was part of it. "Other members who helped organize a conference were Amber Hollibaugh, Tim Landers, Eileen O'Neill." [… –DC]

But it was—so there were about six of us at a time. But it was a group that, yeah, shifted. So I guess it was shortly after that that I began to think about doing the AIDS issue of *October*. I mean it was in the summer of 1987. I guess by the spring of '87, I had decided to do some—do a couple of pieces about AIDS.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And then it ballooned from there, particularly after I met Gregg Bordowitz and got involved with ACT UP. And that was—ACT UP was formed in March of '87, and I think I started going in maybe June of '87.

JOHANNA BURTON: And you met Gregg through ACT UP?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I met him through, because he had—because *Testing the Limits*, which was a collective that did a video, called *Testing the Limits*, which was one of the first major AIDS activist video tapes, which was largely about ACT UP. There was a pilot for that video that was shown in a gallery that I saw.

I can't remember if it was in the "Homovideo" show, but there were AIDS videos. Like there was Stuart Marshall's *Bright Eyes*. There were a number of things that were already in that show that were about AIDS.

JOHANNA BURTON: And Gregg was doing these public broadcast television shows as well, right?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Not yet.

JOHANNA BURTON: Not yet, okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: He got hired by Gay Men's Health Crisis. I think Jean was there. Jean Carlomusto was there before him.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And then they—yeah, so they did—yeah, it was a cable access TV show. I think that probably, I don't know, maybe '88 or '89 or something like that.

JOHANNA BURTON: So you were good friends, right?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So he was—yeah, I mean I got to know Gregg—I mean we didn't really become friends right away. We began working together right away, because I commissioned him to do a text about *Testing the Limits*. And so he wrote this essay for the AIDS issue. And he—and we talked a lot about the issue, as I was putting it together.

The initial things that I commissioned were Leo Bersani to write what was meant to be a review of Simon Watney's book and became [the essay –DC] "Is the Rectum a Grave," and Martha Gever to write an essay on *Bright Eyes*.

JOHANNA BURTON: So the issue was not meant at first to be an AIDS issue.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It was not meant to be a special issue. It was going to be an issue that had this material and then it kind of—as soon as I [got involved with ACT UP –DC]—then I began trying to figure out more things to do. I don't know. I guess as soon as I really started thinking about it I realized that it was a big enough subject that it required more. And I knew from the beginning that—well, maybe not right from the beginning, but eventually I realized that I wanted to write myself.

JOHANNA BURTON: Was there resistance to the idea of bringing this material into the journal from—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, not that I recall. Here is my memory of the whole situation. By the time that I did the AIDS issue, I was really doing *October*, you know, a lot of it on my own. Annette and Rosalind had lost a lot of interest. And you know, they were still bringing text to the magazine and they were still—we were still having meetings and making decisions. But they were very hands-off, because they were just not—they just kind of weren't—it had been 10 years and it was—you know, it's a relentless thing to put out a quarterly journal, and they just got tired of it, I think. And I was more and more [involved myself –DC] and Joan Copjec was there and Terri Cafaro was—had then become my assistant.

I think Joan had been an assistant for a while and then she became an editor, but was doing something else. Maybe she was finishing her Ph.D.

So you know, certainly Leo Bersani had published in the magazine a lot and he was a friend of Rosalind's. So that was fine and—so initially it was not a problem. And then I think—you know, I said I really want to do a special issue—and they just said, okay. I mean, I don't think I told them what I wanted. Maybe I told them a couple of things that I knew about. I had learned about a text by Paula Treichler which was a very important text. That was actually reprinted from another journal.

And then I got involved in the movement and then I started commissioning all of this stuff that probably had I said, you know, I'm commissioning a text from a prostitute who's going to talk about AIDS and prostitutes' rights, they might have balked. You know, I was going to have a text by Scarlett Harlot and—but at that time they were really very, very hands-off and I was just off and running. I mean I got so involved in it that it became a real obsession. And at the same time, I was working with Benjamin Buchloh on the Broodthaers issue.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So it was a little like apples and oranges there, like—because that was its own very, very demanding thing to do, dealing with Maria Gillisen and dealing with Benjamin and, you know, it was a rather large special issue and a very difficult one. And I think it precedes the AIDS issue by one. So they were back to back.

So I was working on this simultaneously. I was also trying to write the essay, "How to Have Promiscuity in an Epidemic," [in *AIDS: Cultural Analysis / Cultural Activism*, 1987] [originally in *October*, volume 43 –DC] like while I —and so I was also, like absorbing all of the discourse about AIDS at that time.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I mean I had been, of course, reading a lot of stuff as it was coming out. I read Simon's book. I was looking at video. So it wasn't just when I started working on the issue. I had been absorbing stuff along the way. And we had looked at stuff also in my reading group, but still there was a lot to learn. And so the issue actually took a very long time, and it grew and grew and grew and then I actually wanted to split it and make it two special issues back-to-back.

And it was actually MIT who wouldn't allow me to do that. They said that people who subscribe—it's like, if you have subscribers and they expect—if you pull apart an issue and make it two issues, even if it's the same length, I guess somehow it seems like cheating or something like that. So in any case, it became huge and expensive to print and all that sort of [thing –DC]. But then of course it was incredibly successful. I mean it was like—I think it had to be reprinted and then—I mean my sense really of ultimately what happened is that this issue just got way too much attention; that suddenly, it jerked Rosalind and Annette back into consciousness about their magazine.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Suddenly, their magazine was getting all this attention, but it wasn't about them. It was about me.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I mean, from their point of view, it wasn't about me, it was about the subject; it was about AIDS. But I will say that I was—as much as I was identified with the "Pictures" generation, for doing the "Pictures" show, I was identified with a certain theoretical discourse on AIDS in the academy and in the art world. And it also had the same sort of polarizing effect in some ways. I mean, I was made a hero by some people; I was made a villain by some people.

But basically, there was just a huge amount of attention. And at first, I think Rosalind—I'm not sure about Annette, but I think Rosalind was very pleased by the attention that the journal was getting. It was she who suggested that we make a book of it, as I recall. But then, I just think over time, resentment built up because it was—not only was it me, the attention focused on me, but the attention was focused on a completely different sort of subject that Rosalind and Annette were ever really interested in.

I mean, suddenly it was about a kind of politically urgent epidemic that had to do with sexuality. And so for me it —as I look back on it, it became my shift, in a way, from criticism to cultural studies, or from art history to—I mean from one discipline to inter-disciplinarity.

Although in some ways, I think of *October* as having been fundamentally an inter-disciplinary journal during that whole time. This was—it was a different kind of inter-disciplinary.

JOHANNA BURTON: Definitely. And it called into crisis for them. I think the—I mean, I can't remember if it was '93 or maybe even later, but the visual studies seemed to be—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, it was actually '96.

JOHANNA BURTON: Ninety-six, but seemed to be dosed by these very questions. And certainly the diligence that people like Rosalind had in arguing that art history should maintain its sort of coherence.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: Seems to have to do with some of these questions as well.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, I mean I think it's probably somewhat in the background. I mean, it was very—you know, I suppose it was a time also when I was really going my own way, because I—once the AIDS issue came out and, you know, once I had gotten that involved in ACT UP, suddenly I had a different identity, in some way. I was being invited to give to conferences that had a completely different range of people.

And also, very often if I was invited to give a lecture, say at a museum or something like that, I would talk about AIDS. I mean, not necessarily because that's what I was expected to talk about, but it's what I talked about during that time. And so I think that was maybe a little disjunctive in some cases for some of the people that had invited me, but it also caused a stir.

JOHANNA BURTON: One quick question of clarification, which was, when it was first—I don't know what the print run of *October* is, actually.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It was around 3,000 at that time I think.

JOHANNA BURTON: So then it was reprinted again.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I think so. I think it was—I can't really recall that. I know that it was—that it sold out, and then it was reissued as a book.

JOHANNA BURTON: And what was different between the journal version and the book version?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Nothing.

JOHANNA BURTON: Nothing?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Nothing. Then it was repackaged with a cover; the cover was the only difference.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay, all right. But was there not a conference or a symposium that you all had done as well around this?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, that was this. [*How Do I Look? –DC*]

JOHANNA BURTON: So these weren't—they weren't linked in any way?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No.

JOHANNA BURTON: All right. Okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Except that this was meant to be an *October* issue.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, right. Okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, no, no, no. But also—but it did—maybe they did do—I think they maybe must have done another printing of it because I know that it put *October* in the black for the first time in its history.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So that it had to have really sold on the newsstands. And of course—I mean, I suppose there are some issues from back then that are still available, but—so it really—and it won awards. I mean it was a really big deal.

JOHANNA BURTON: It was a big deal. So wait. That was—what year was this then? Am I confusing this—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: This is not—came out in [1991 –DC]. Let's see. [the AIDS issue of *October*, Winter, 1987, Vol. 43.]

JOHANNA BURTON: You left in '90, right?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I left in '90.

JOHANNA BURTON: So you were working on this after you worked on it?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No. I mean, only—what, well. What happened was that—it should have been—let me look at the numbers.

JOHANNA BURTON: I'm just curious because I've never really—I've never known exactly how that worked. Sorry to be dumb. It's just that's '87 and this is '91. So I—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No this is—yes. So this is—so actually, let me get the ones in between and I'll see what—because I'm not even sure of this myself. So strange.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So the issue immediately following the AIDS issue is Leo Steinberg, Denis Hollier, and John Rajchman.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And then—so it becomes more like what one expected of *October*. Jonathan Crary, Thierry de Duve, Stefan Germer, who was the person who founded *Texte zur Kunst*, Joel Fineman, who died [young –DC] of cancer, Shoshana Felman, Ann Reynolds.

JOHANNA BURTON: Wait, so 43 is—issue 43.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Forty-three is the AIDS issue. Okay. So then a Kluge issue, I remember working on that with [Stuart Liebman, –DC] a former student of Annette's. So Rosalyn Deutsche's *Uneven Development* ["Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City," *October* 47 (1988)], which I also—and—Krzysztof Wodiczko. 48, Thierry de Duve—this actually became—sorry. Gerhard Richter's—Benjamin Buchloh on Gerhard Richter's *October 18th*.

So actually I mean—this is on—[inaudible]—okay. It's the longish period of time, you're right. I actually was—I mean I've collapsed this a little bit too.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Because—but it was—this is a piece which I know Rosalind objected to a lot, this Tania Modleski piece. I commissioned this review of Sontag's AIDS book by D.A. Miller, which is a brilliant piece.

I'm just going to tell you that one of the things that Rosalind mentioned when we had our huge fight was that I had done this illustration for Gertrud Koch's essay on pornography, which I took—this is actually Jeff Stryker who was a gay porn [star –DC]—

JOHANNA BURTON: Yeah, I know, yeah.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: The essay was about the fact that—I mean it was a very sophisticated argument about pornography, but it's about how male pleasure can be made visible in pornography through the cum shot and female pleasure [can –DC] not. So I decided that a cum shot was what was necessary, and this was—I mean I didn't know at the time.

There was a lot of things that came out in the fight. And I think it's probably also unfair, because people say things that they don't—whatever, that they don't—well they say what they mean, but they don't say what they would say if they were being more careful.

So this is the final issue, number 51. And number 52 was meant to be papers for the How Do I Look conference.

JOHANNA BURTON: Okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So during that period of time—so this is—so it's '87 to '89.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Basically, okay. So two years go by, although the AIDS issue actually came out in the spring of '88, it was really late.

JOHANNA BURTON: Oh, okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Because it just took forever to do. I mean that's also another reason I wanted to make it a double issue. So we had to really like—that's probably why this issue [number 44 –DC] has only three essays in it.

Anyway, so during this period of time, I was having my reading group. And at a certain point, we were—it was suggested to us that we apply for a particular grant that was I think not New York State Council of the Arts, but maybe New York Council on the Humanities or something.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I think maybe Ruby Rich had told us that there was grant money available and that as a reading group, if we felt like it, we should try to organize something, and we applied for this grant and we got this huge amount of money. Like really like a—as you always do when you apply for a grant and you inflate your budgets.

JOHANNA BURTON:  And you got it.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  And we got it. Yeah. So we were able to stage this really elaborate conference at Anthology Film Archives. It was a two-day conference over a weekend. We had six papers, and we invited a whole lot of people. We were able to fly people here from other places just to be in the audience.

So [in the audience were John Greyson and Isaac Julien, for example –DC]. It was a really, really stellar crowd of people. And it was the first thing that had ever been done on the subject of queer film and video. In fact, the very—the use of the term "queer" was very avant-garde at this moment. I mean it was just coming into usage among my friends in ACT UP, and I think Queer Nation is formed right around this time.

And it was, you know, big name people, Teresa de Lauretis, Judith Mayne, Kobena Mercer, Stuart Marshall, who was still alive at that time, Cindy Patton, Richard Fung.

So my sense is that by the time that Annette and Rosalind refused to publish two of the essays that were part of this package. They said that Cindy Patton's and Richard Fung's essays were not up to the standards of *October*, the theoretical sophistication or whatever. And I think—my sense is that Rosalind was looking for a pretext to start a fight with me.

I mean I think that something had happened, something probably about my commitments having changed in a way that she didn't want her magazine to be about. And she saw that in things like the cum shot illustration of the Gertrude Koch essay.

And she saw a kind of—I don't know what she saw. But it was a kind of constellation around sexuality and cultural studies, let's say. And it was also maybe a kind of competitive thing about my taking the magazine away from her, which of course I had no desire to do or intention of doing. But I mean you can sort of see that in all those other issues like that. It wasn't like that. It wasn't changing its direction. It was just there were some things in it that were different. And my interests really were changing. And probably I would have, had I stayed on at the magazine and had they receded somewhat, I probably would have changed the character of the magazine to some degree.

Once they forced me out, I think the magazine took a huge swerve back to a kind of high modernist criticism. And it was—it became I think less interdisciplinary. I mean it was really—it became much more of an art magazine or kind of a [high –DC] culture magazine.

JOHANNA BURTON:  So when the fight first began, they were asking you not to publish the papers, but to remove two of them?

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Yes, they said we—only four of these papers are publishable in *October*. And I said, "These are not my papers to give or not to give or to make decisions about. This is a collective project, and the collective project consists of six papers and responses," which is what this book is. And they really do rely on this hand and they said, "We'll publish four of these papers, but that's all." And I then basically, you know, it was like I called their bluff and I said, "I will leave the magazine if you don't publish those papers."

I mean there was a fight; there was a meeting that was a horrible fight. And so I didn't have any choice, I didn't think. I mean it seemed to me that they couldn't really give me—

of course, they couldn't really give me a real reason why these essays were not publishable. And it's not that we hadn't fought over texts in the magazine before; we'd had terrible fights. Not so much me, but Rosalind and Annette had many terrible fights.

There was an early on an exchange between Noel Carroll and Stephen Heath that we had terrible fights over it, but—or they did, I should say. Well, I was sort of on Rosalind's side about it too. And in any case, I could just see that something had shifted enormously for me in terms of my commitments in my work and I—working for Annette and Rosalind for 13 years was hard work. They are two very difficult people, I mean everybody knows that. And I had very, very conflicted relations with them.  They were not very nice to me at times. I mean there were times when they were also very nice to me.

They were very supportive of me in lots of ways, but they were also—well, they were just really difficult to deal with, in so many ways. And they were also not nice to each other, so I was always in the middle of, like their not being nice to each other. So that was really hard too.

But it was very traumatizing because I hadn't thought about not working for *October*. And so it was my job, and it was my identity, and it was my life, and I didn't know what I would do. And so one of my first thoughts was protecting myself in terms of just surviving, so I wanted some sort of a severance from them.

JOHANNA BURTON:  So in this meeting, when you said, I will leave. They said, "Okay then, you can leave."

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Well, I don't think that—no, I don't think they exactly said that. I mean I think it was—it was really hostile the whole thing, but it was also, like well we should cool down or—I don't know. And I think that Rosalind and Annette were not exactly on the same page. And I think that Annette had initially said something to me about, you know, "Well, of course we'll give you a fat severance of relief. We're not going to leave you high and dry". And then that became an issue too, and it was like over Rosalind's dead body that I would get a severance and then she started accusing me of stealing money from the magazine. I mean it became really crazy.

[… –DC]  It was totally like a nasty divorce. It was awful. But I was totally devastated by it, I mean emotionally, because I didn't know what I was going to do. And at first, I mean I was so attached, actually, at that moment partially because of, I think also going back to the AIDS issue, I had become very attached to a certain notion of publishing a magazine in relation to the kind of work that I wanted to do at that time. So actually, I immediately thought that I would start my own magazine. It was like the first thought that I had. And I was pretty serious about it. I mean, I talked to people about it.

But then it's, you know, starting a magazine is such a big deal and it's like—and then I just very, very, very luckily, somebody approached me about applying for a job in gay studies at Sarah Lawrence, and I did, and I got it. And so I had a job.

JOHANNA BURTON:  Because it was a very public split; like everybody knew about it, of course, as you—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Yes, and people took sides about it.

JOHANNA BURTON:  So it was known that you were hanging out there.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Well, I don't—yeah, I don't actually know whether the person who invited—I mean what had happened at Sarah Lawrence was that there was a big push by students to have queer studies, gay studies at that time. They had had a year at Sarah Lawrence where the college was torn apart over issues of race—all kinds of things. I mean, I think mostly faculty hiring. But the campus totally erupted, and it was evidently incredibly traumatizing. So then when the following year, the gay students organized and said we want gay studies—

JOHANNA BURTON:  They said okay, okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  They said okay, okay, and I was asked to apply for the job.

JOHANNA BURTON:  That's great. Okay. So you quickly sort of changed gears.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Yes, I mean I was also at that point teaching at Cooper Union, so I did have some income and some other work. And *October*, as I told you before, *October* always paid me so little that it wasn't like I was losing the salary of a university professor or something like that. But still I needed an income.

JOHANNA BURTON:  So was it an adjunct position or an assistant professor position?

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  No it was a—I don't even know how they—you know, Sarah Lawrence is one of those strange progressive places. I don't even think they rank their professors. They do have tenure, but also it was a part-time thing because they eventually split it between [two people, a man and a woman, me –DC]—and that's what I wanted because I wanted to stay on at Cooper and I wasn't really willing to commit to a full academic job.

JOHANNA BURTON:  And you—what were you teaching at Cooper? I didn't know you were teaching at Cooper.

MR CRIMP: Rosalind Deutche and I both taught [there –DC]. We split a course between semesters. And it was very funny because Hans Haacke got us hired. He wanted a kind of theory course for the art students. He wanted what we did for art students. And the art history department, which was under the academic wing of Cooper and run by Dore Ashton, they didn't want people like us teaching there.

So we actually were both "visiting sculptors." We were hired as visiting sculptors, but to teach theory. And so I did that for several years actually.

JOHANNA BURTON:  And you were done at SVA I assume?

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Yes, I left SVA in '75, I mean '76, when I went to graduate school.

JOHANNA BURTON:  Okay, so you didn't keep—because Craig kept teaching there for a long time, didn't he?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes I think Craig taught there later than me. I didn't overlap with Craig there. I didn't meet Craig until I went to the graduate school. But he did teach there, yeah.

JOHANNA BURTON: Because I think I remember that that's how folks like Andrea [Fraser] and Gregg [Bordowitz] got to know him, right?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, yes exactly. That's right.

JOHANNA BURTON: So how many years were you at Cooper then? When did that—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: You know, I should actually look at my CV. I'm really bad at this stuff. Should I? [Fall semesters, 1988-91 –DC]

JOHANNA BURTON: But we can also insert it later in the transcript.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, okay. I mean, it would have been you know, I was there when I was still at *October* and I continued there until—I think I continued there until I was invited to Rochester. So I was invited to Rochester in '92, in the fall semester of '92.

JOHANNA BURTON: So you were there a long time. Because I think I always think it's really interesting—I mean, I teach artists myself too, but people who are engaged not only in teaching art history and criticism to other, but also with engaging with artists.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: All of my work had been that before. I had taught at Rutgers, at the Mason Gross School of the Arts, at Princeton in the art department.

JOHANNA BURTON: At SVA.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: That was actually a course that Rosalind Krauss had started at Princeton, which was [a theory course –DC] for the artists.

JOHANNA BURTON: You said that, right, right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And I did that one semester. At Rutgers I taught while I was doing my AIDS activist work, because I taught my first AIDS video course there or AIDS art course. And so that was probably '88. And then I taught a couple of workshop courses at CalArts, and I taught at NSCAD [Nova Scotia College of Art and Design] one summer. So all of my teaching, until I went to Sarah Lawrence [College, Bronxville, NY], I had never taught a [regular –DC] art history course before.

And of course when I went to Sarah Lawrence, I didn't teach art history either. And then finally I was literally in an art history department when I went to [University of] Rochester [NY], but I was teaching in a visual and cultural studies [Ph.D. –DC] program, so—

JOHANNA BURTON: That's really interesting. How was the Sarah Lawrence experience? Was it kind of active, since people were—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, I mean it was very fun for me to teach gay studies because it was kind of at the moment of the birth of queer theory. It's like right when Eve Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990] came out: And I had to invent the class, and it was kind of—it was interdisciplinary. I mean, I showed films, I showed Warhol films. You know, it was a way for me to—and it was really fun because Sarah Lawrence was like, you know, it's all these kind of—like, you know I had Cher's niece [Galadrielle Allman] in my first class and she actually, she was the daughter of—what's his name? [Duane] Allman, one of the Allman Brothers, the one who died.

And she was his next of kin, because she was his daughter and the mother was not married to him, so this kid got a rock fortune and her mother was like white trash and she had to—I mean so it was really like—I had amazing students. I think I taught there—I overlapped at Sarah Lawrence, I think, with Rochester up until '94, so I taught there for four years. And I always taught the gay studies course and I loved my students. They were amazing. It was really hard work though, because they have a teaching method there where you have to do independent study with all of the students in your seminar.

JOHANNA BURTON: Once a week, right, or something?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, it's really intense and—

JOHANNA BURTON: I know people who teach there and it's—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It's like being a teacher and a therapist and a, you know, advisor and a mentor and you know —

JOHANNA BURTON: It sounds really tough.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It's really a lot of handholding. But the students were fascinating and—it was just such a progressive place for its time to be doing gay studies and there were a lot of people who posed as gay in my classes because it was so hip to be gay on that campus. [Laughs.]

JOHANNA BURTON: During those years I wonder—I mean maybe you were obviously still involved with activism and all of these questions, and so that sort of generational—these kids who are coming up, and 18 and 19 and sort of thinking about sexuality in a very different way even only a few years, sort of separating—you know, it's a curious question. I wonder how that fit in then to your own activism at that time or how you were thinking about —

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, you know, it was the most intense period of my doing intellectual work on AIDS. All the essays, which were a lot of them talks in *Melancholia and Moralism* [*Melancholia and Moralism: Essays on AIDS and Queer Politics*, 2002] were written during that period. So I was very—I mean, I think—when did I leave ACT UP? '91 or something like that, when ACT UP really basically fell apart. But I continued to write about queer and AIDS stuff during that whole period of time. I mean it's like [William Jefferson] Clinton became President in '92. So immediately Don't ask, Don't tell happened, and I wrote about that.

So I think it was—I wasn't even really thinking about art during that period of time. I was thinking about AIDS and queer activism and then—and queer theory was happening. I mean that was the moment of queer theory—like when Diana Fuss's first collection came out, when Judith Butler first published *Gender Trouble* [*Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990], when Eve Sedgwick published *Epistemology of the Closet*.

So there was a lot of—it's also at the same time right when I left *October*, I participated in the big cultural studies conference at Champaign-Urbana that resulted in the *Cultural Studies* book [New York: Routledge, 1992 –DC]. And that was like all the superstars of cultural studies from Australia, England and the United States. And I had never, in any way, identified with—I didn't even know the history of cultural studies as a formation from Birmingham at that point.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But the people at Champaign-Urbana, who organized that conference included Paula Treichler and her husband, Cary Nelson and Larry Goldberg, who does cultural studies rock stuff and he is now in Chapel Hill I think. Larry Goldberg, is that—yeah.

JOHANNA BURTON: I mean, you must be knowing him.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: This was the conference where Stuart Hall gave the keynote and—I mean, everybody was there. So they had done a reading group in cultural studies that that group organized it at Champaign-Urbana the year before. And when they invited me, I remember saying to Paula who invited me, I said, "But I don't even really know about cultural studies." And she said, "But we've been reading your work as a model of cultural studies," you know.

So that was really a huge shift for me, because I thought, I have to find out what this is that I am doing. And then, not so long after that I was invited to Rochester, and Janet Wolfe was the director of the program. And what had been [called the –DC] comparative arts program became a visual and cultural studies program.

JOHANNA BURTON: Well, it's remarkable that—I know we have talked at length about this elsewhere, but the community of people you found yourself in dialogue with in ACT UP for instance. Some were intellectuals, but as you say, most people were united simply by this kind of urgent—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: The urgency around their own lives and around the lives of people in their community and so the intellectual aspect of it that you then began working on, in terms of theorizing AIDS, was at once totally embedded into something like ACT UP but also sort of separate from it to a certain degree, right, in that—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, although there was—there were, among the people who went to ACT UP—like Diana Fuss went to ACT UP, you know, Jeff Nunokawa.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, but then so did stockbrokers.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: That whole group from Princeton would come. Tom Keenan, [Eduardo Cadava –DC], the whole Princeton crowd was always there. And then there was like a whole bunch of people from the Whitney program that were there, like Tom Kalin and Gregg [Bordowitz] and Ray Navarro. But yes, of course, there were people for whom Foucault was absolutely anathema. I mean there was a kind of a—

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, which is interesting.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: It's interesting, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: Because I know that I've heard you clarify before that people assume that everyone had a shared sort of discursive trajectory, and in fact what was interesting about it was that there were people with that but then there were other people who'd never heard of Foucault.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Oh, totally, yes. You know the ACT UP Oral History Project, which I have done an interview for, it was really interesting when Sarah Schulman came to interview me, I was really unprepared for the fact that she said, "You know, one of the things that interests us in this project is that ACT UP was a formation of all these people who came from completely different worlds."

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: "So what we want to talk about is what you did before ACT UP." So she had done all of this preparation on my art criticism career. And so that's one of the very conceptualizations behind the ACT UP Oral History Project is talking about the kind of different paths that led people to ACT UP.

JOHANNA BURTON: No, it's very interesting, and it's interesting then to think about how the path for you becomes unwittingly cultural studies.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, right.

JOHANNA BURTON: It's a way in which then you get pulled up into this kind of larger—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, it's like suddenly the *October* AIDS issue is a cultural studies object. And I didn't—that was not my way of conceptualizing it at the time at all.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes. That's very interesting. So around that time, then you said Rochester approached you, '93?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Ninety-[two –DC] they invited me to be a visitor for a semester. And then they continued to invite me to be a visitor for a semester. They were trying to get a [faculty –DC] line back and they were trying to use me in a way to get it back. Michael Ann Holly, who was the chair of the Art History Department and Janet Wolff who was the Director of the VCS Program, both immediately became friends, and they really wanted to keep me.

And I didn't want to move to Rochester of course. So this sort of one semester on, one semester off deal worked well, and I was continuing. At first it was Rochester, and then Sarah Lawrence in the spring. And then I was invited to be the Arts Chair Professor for one quarter at UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles] in the spring of '95. And so, I left Sarah Lawrence to do that.

And that's also—that happened to coincide with the time when I had been asked to apply for a job at UCLA, for a real job. The Arts Chair Professor is a one quarter revolving [position –DC]. And so, it worked out very well for me because I held the chair at the same time that I was being considered for [the job –DC] like so I could—I was, you know, they could see me and I could see them up close and—

JOHANNA BURTON: And which department was it?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Art history.

JOHANNA BURTON: It was art history.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes. It's where Miwon Kwon is [now –DC]. I think in fact they eventually downgraded the job to an assistant professorship, because it was either open or full when I—I think it was actually open when I applied for it. Tony Vidler was the chair there at that time. And then, when Miwon got the job I think it was at that time an assistant professorship. But they offered me the job, and so that's when I got the present arrangement that I have at Rochester.

JOHANNA BURTON: Oh I understand, okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So Rochester wanted to keep me and they said, "What do you want?" and I said, "I like what I have, which is one semester." And at the time, it had already been sort of upgraded to being a—I would teach three courses in my semester there and they would pay me the equivalent of more or less a full time salary. And it was a, what do you call it, [a revolving contract that renewed every year –DC], but it was for three years or something like that. And so I said, "I just want this, but I want it with tenure," and so they—

JOHANNA BURTON: And you got all of it. Well, this is the part of the story that I love so much, because it makes me so happy. I had learned last time, which is you still hadn't—you hadn't finished your—you hadn't officially—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, I hadn't finished my dissertation. I mean I finished my—well by then I had. When I [started –DC] at Rochester I had not.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right. But by the time—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I actually—I published the book version of it in '93 and I turned in the dissertation in '94.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right. I just, that part it's very—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I finally got my Ph.D. in 1994, but I had been at Rochester already for two years.

JOHANNA BURTON: For two years, yes. They wouldn't tenure you until you actually—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, I doubt it, but I didn't come up for tenure until—actually I applied for a job at NYU. They had the—the American studies had the [cultural –DC] studies job that Lisa Duggan got. And of course I was applying at a senior level, but I had just got my Ph.D. And there was a dean, Tony Judt, who is a famous historian who just—when I went to be interviewed by him, he just treated me like, why should anybody take you seriously?

JOHANNA BURTON: God!

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I mean that's—he didn't say that, but he almost did actually. It was sort of like, "Who are you to think that you could have a job at NYU on a senior level?" You know it was just totally—because you just got your Ph.D. last year. Who are you? My qualifications were not strictly academic qualifications.

JOHANNA BURTON: No, I mean this is something that I know persists. It's a very interesting thing. People do not—I was just talking to Julie about this too. Certain kinds of publishing just don't. Even though they can—it can be just as serious concerning content. It's a very interesting problem, I know.

So when you got to Rochester, what kind of classes did you [teach –DC]? I mean that there were just a few classes at first, but did you turn your attention slightly differently knowing you were in this department?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, [in –DC] my first year there—they wanted somebody to teach a course that they had on the books, which was an undergraduate contemporary art class. And that was really difficult for me, because I was going to do a course in post-modern theory and contemporary art, and I had undergraduates who never had had an art history class. And they were like biology majors, and they—I literally had a student who said to me halfway through the course, "You know, before I came to this class, the only artists I'd ever heard of were Andy Warhol and Leonardo da Vinci." And I was trying to teach feminist art theory. I mean it was just—it was really not working.

JOHANNA BURTON: Well, was this is the first time you had sort of turned—I am curious now about when you decided to turn your attention back to kind of art per se and allow for those two strands of your thinking to co-exist.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, I was still—in '92, all of my work was still about AIDS.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes. But so here you are asked to teach.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And my first course probably for grad—well, no, my first graduate student course was not about AIDS. It was later that I did that. My first graduate course was about sexuality and representation.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, okay.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So it was a little bit [like –DC] the material that I had been doing in queer theory and feminism at Sarah Lawrence.

JOHANNA BURTON: And you still, of course, felt the urgency around questions of—[AIDS –DC]

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes. But I had this, you know, past and profile in the art world. So of course it was—I could teach a contemporary art course, although it wasn't something—I mean it was hard because of the way—because I wasn't used to undergraduates, and I didn't—I was used to artists who knew—who may [have been –DC] undergraduates, but they knew about art.

I've only taught upper level undergraduates since then. I teach graduate students and upper level [undergrads –DC]—I've never taught an entry-level course at Rochester since then. I've been very privileged in the way that I teach. Basically I'm there to teach in the graduate program.

JOHANNA BURTON: Are you still—I mean I just sort of know the answer to these questions. But obviously it's super crucial still to be talking and teaching about AIDS today, and to have conversations when people—I mean I have been sort of stunned lately to notice that people actually really do think—and you've talked about this as well that it doesn't need to be talked about somehow or that it's kind of reached an impasse in terms of visibility. Do you teach classes that are—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I have not taught any AIDS class for a long time. And one reason is that very often when I do a book, like *On the Museum's Ruins*, I think, okay, that part of my work is now done and I have packaged it and I can move onto the next thing.

JOHANNA BURTON: People could find it and use it.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And with AIDS, I worked on AIDS at a period of time when I was involved in the movement and very involved in all of the issues, and it was very, very parochial in the sense that I was thinking about AIDS in relation to my experience, to gay men's experience, the New York experience and the ACT UP experience.

And I think that now to deal with AIDS at all responsibly, one has to deal—I mean there was always the question of the global epidemic, but that was not what my work was dealing with. And there was always the question of the effects on poor people and minority populations in this country. And I dealt with that a little but not primarily.

So I feel that I would actually have to deal with it so differently. I'd have to learn the material. And so I don't actually teach [it –DC]. And in fact, I did a course for a very long time that had a shifting subject, but its rubric was difference in representation. I think it was called *Representing Differences.* And it was—it could be a queer theory course, it could be a course that dealt with other kinds of difference, sexual difference, racial difference.

JOHANNA BURTON: So a broader scope.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes. And at a certain point, [… –DC] I taught an Yvonne Rainer course under that rubric, the first time I taught it. But one of my privileges is to be able to teach exactly what I am doing and what I am interested in.

JOHANNA BURTON: Well, maybe we can shift a little to current—I mean in a way what's interesting about the projects that you are completing now, which maybe you can speak a little bit about—suddenly there's just like all kind of craziness.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: There's just sirens and crazy.

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JOHANNA BURTON: This is Johanna Burton interviewing Douglas Crimp at his home in New York City on August 23, 2009, the third in a three-part series for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

So just to pick up where we left off last time, we were in around 1995 and just sort of getting to the moment where your return to Warhol, as you put it, was a sort of genesis or an encapsulation of a bunch of other things. So maybe we can just start there.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, I think—I'm trying to think how I initially came to working on Warhol's films. I think it was in the later '90s that I actually began it. The first thing that I wrote was "Getting the Warhol We Deserve" [in *Social Text*, number 59, 1999 –DC], and that came—so that wasn't initially—when I first wrote that, it had nothing to do with Warhol.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: When I first wrote it, it was in response to the *October* special issue [on visual studies with the –DC] questionnaire and so on, which was 1996.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And that, of course, given that Rochester is a program—the founding program of visual and cultural studies, that was like a kind of bomb that was dropped in our midst.

And so we all were thinking about it, and I didn't, I think, initially want to engage with it, and then the more I thought about it the more I did want to engage with it, partly I think because—eventually Michael Holly sort of barged into that issue but initially none of us at Rochester were invited to participate in the questionnaire, which, given that we were the founders of this—I mean, the founding program, the university program in the field, seemed a little peculiar.

So eventually I wrote this piece—a kind of defense of visual studies, and I wanted, I think from the beginning, to—I had become more and more interested—or returned my interest to contemporary art after having spent all of this time working on AIDS and then thinking of myself more as a cultural studies scholar. I think I reassumed something of an identity as an art critic, or began thinking about the kind of art practices that I had been engaged in, you know, from the time that I was an undergraduate.

So I wanted to argue against the kind of—the distinction that seemed to be being made between the discipline on the one end which involved an understanding of form, let's say, an ability to read contemporary art, and on the other hand the cultural studies interest in popular culture, questions of subjectivity and identity and so on.

And I wanted to somehow argue that those were not mutually exclusive. In other words, what I think I was trying at first to argue was that cultural studies would be an interesting way of approaching contemporary art practice—contemporary high art practice even. So that's what I began to do, and then as that evolved, as I gave it as lectures and so on, Hal Foster's book was published and there was the portion of it on Warhol in *The Return to the Real* [*The Return of the Real: Art and Theory at the End of the Century*, 1996]

And so I began to think about Warhol as a test case as someone who obviously himself was interested in popular culture, [someone for whom –DC] popular culture had very much informed his art practice, plus the fact that Warhol didn't—to really think about Warhol you had to think about a much wider range of enterprise than simply making paintings, for example.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And there was, of course, always this bifurcation in Warhol's studies of, you know, the good Warhol, the bad Warhol, the critical Warhol, the sell-out Warhol, all of that, which just seemed never to make sense to me. And so I then rewrote that essay and that's where I gave it the title "The Warhol We Deserve" and I began thinking about what a cultural studies approach to Warhol might look like.

And then I think that that dovetailed with something completely different, which was that throughout the period of time that I had been working on AIDS and had formed friendships with a lot of gay men who were 20 years or so younger than me, a lot of people—a lot of those people that I knew from that work—there were many occasions in which we would be talking about the period of gay life in New York immediately post-Stonewall, the period of gay liberation—you know, the scene, the bar scene, the public sex scene.

That was something that we were—that also informed a lot of our activist practices around safe sex and so on. And many people had said to me, as I would tell them stories about this period, you know, [… –DC] "You should write about that period, about New York in that period, about the gay scene and that period."

And it so happened that that suggestion came around the same time that a number of people said to me when I was telling them just stories about my life, they would say, "You should write your memoirs," which is nothing I had ever thought about but I certainly had come to tell a lot of stories about my life.

So the notion "memoir" was a little bit implanted in my [mind –DC] actually. And so, I began thinking about what I would write about if I were to write—if I were to use material from my own experience in my writing, particularly writing about my gay life. And somehow I think what I got to was that there was a very formative moment for me, which was in the late '60s and early '70s when I was hanging out at Max's [Max's Kansas City, an art bar –DC] and was around people from the Warhol scene.

And so I began thinking about that as something that I would—if I were to write any sort of memoir-like work, that would play a role in it. And then, I think—I think I also began to think that—and I think this was partly through the writing of "Getting the Warhol We Deserve," that—I think—[… –DC] you know, [it's –DC] such an over-determined project.

I felt that the notion that was being argued within Queer Theory from a kind of—during a turn to a conservative gay political position and a repudiation of the moment of liberation. I was interested in a way of making the

notion of queerness or a kind of queer culture, a queer world more available.

And so I began thinking about—and this is what I then—I sort of posited at the end of "Getting the Warhol We Deserve" was something about the queer culture of the 1960s in New York. And I mentioned a kind of nexus. I talked about Jack Smith in addition to Warhol—Jack Smith, *The Theater of the Ridiculous*, this whole group of people who were mutually informing each other's practices who were working together in each other's plays and films and so on.

And that was the moment when I began to think that what I really wanted to do—and this was the autobiographical dimension of it—was a kind of archeology of this moment in the 1960s which I did not experience, which formed the culture into which I then came by the late '60s.

So I was interested really in the moment, and I thought, you know, what do we have that you can actually look at that can tell us about that world? And of course Warhol's films, those people's films, were—Jack Smith's films were the artifacts which could—which I felt could give you not direct access because of course they're works of art and therefore they require interpretation.

They're not documents, although I think I was—and I mention this in "Getting the Warhol We Deserve"—I was influenced by someone who had been briefly a student of mine, Marc Siegel, who wrote a very early piece on Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures*, where he argues that it is, in a certain sense, a documentary—I mean, in a very complicated sense—a documentary about something which cannot be represented directly in any case, which is queer sexuality.

So I began—I thought, well, a project would be to write about films of that period, and I began in 1998 by writing about *Blow Job*. And as I continued to do that work, to work on more films over a period of a couple of years, I began to realize that Warhol was plenty of material. And so, rather than doing a kind of queer culture of the 1960s, I would do a [book on Warhol's films –DC].

And so, I've written now five or six essays on Warhol's films. And of course that, because it's extended now over quite a number of years, I suppose the whole shape of the project has changed and I'm interested in maybe a different set of questions such as a different form of relationality that comes through in the films and so on.

But, nevertheless, I think it is still grounded in the notion of trying to say what a queer culture looked like. There was a point where I—I think I mentioned this in maybe the second or third essay where I say—I think the second essay which is on *Screen Test #2*, the essay called "Mario Montez, for Shame," where I say I'm calling my project "queer before gay."

I'm not anymore calling my Warhol book that, but in some ways it does inform the genesis of that project, that I wanted to look at how a queer formation preceded a gay identity. You know, there are a lot of political motivations in that that are basically located in arguments that we were having during the AIDS crisis—I mean, during the time—during the ACT UP period, but they're still important for me.

At the same time I suppose, you know, as I've gotten more and more involved in Warhol's films, it's more—the films have taken a greater part of the—films as such have become more—but still, the purpose of the work is both to interpret—analyze and interpret, explain Warhol's films and at the same time to explain a kind of cultural formation through those films.

JOHANNA BURTON: Now, it's interesting what you're saying too in that—and maybe we can go back to this a bit—that depending on when you were writing these essays, or as they progressed, that for at least—and never sort of only this but many things at once—at one point, writing about Warhol was a way of picking an object that could address the visual culture, contemporary art of AIDS—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right, right.

JOHANNA BURTON: —at around the same time that you were also trying to think about certain debates going on with the queer and gay community and addressing the notion of your own subjectivity in relationship to telling your own sort of narrative story—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right, right.

JOHANNA BURTON: —as a kind of mode of theoretical production, I think, which you've now I think lately really, really emphasized that part. But I wonder if you could even go back and just really schematically talk about what was at stake for you very briefly in terms of the queer/gay debate at that moment, and also—and it's fairly obvious to a degree, but why you think or how you think you were kind of placed within the visual studies, visual culture debates at that moment.

I mean, you started by saying that nobody teaching at Rochester was asked to respond to that *October* questionnaire. Of course, you had been a part of *October* for a very long time and we've covered that terrain, but it must have been an interesting kind of thing to have to pick an object to write around that could address all of those things at once, and Warhol did that for you.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right.

JOHANNA BURTON: So I think it would be interesting to back up and talk just a little bit about how you placed yourself at that moment in relationship to those questions.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, certainly when I was—throughout the time that I was writing about AIDS—and that extends to—I think the essays in my book come up to '95, and then of course I continued thinking about them. And that was the period when there was—from the beginning of my writing about AIDS in 1987 when I was writing critically about Randy Shilts's *And the Band Played On* and Larry Kramer's [*The Normal Heart* –DC].

[… –DC]

DOUGLAS CRIMP: […–DC] There was a narrative that was put in place, and right from the beginning, […–DC] which was that, you know, AIDS was—

I mean, in its worst, in its most theological side, AIDS was a punishment for, what, irresponsibility, for homosexuality in the right-wing fundamentalist—but there was a gay version of that, which was that there was a time when gay men were irresponsible and immature and didn't care about anything but sex.

And AIDS, if it wasn't a punishment, it was, nevertheless, a wake-up call and we had to grow up. And of course growing up meant all kinds of repudiations of not just sexual culture that had been developed in the liberation period but a whole ethos—I mean, the whole ethos about how you form relationships with others, what kinds of relationships are possible among others.

And so, I suppose it felt like the whole culture that—well, the way I put it in my book in a way is that the very culture that gave me my happiness in life was under assault and being called wrong, essentially.

So there was a period of time right around then that a group of conservative gay writers published a number of books—Andrew Sullivan's [*Virtually Normal* –DC].

[… –DC]

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And Gabriel Rotello's [*Sexual Ecology: AIDS and the Destiny of Gay Men* –DC]. Anyway, so there were these mainstream books that were being published that had this narrative in them and that I found absolutely appalling, and many of my colleagues did as well.

It's what led to Michael Warner's writing *The Trouble with Normal* [*: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life.* New York: Free Press, 1999] as a trade book, to try to intervene in that debate. And of course, you know, nobody touched it; nobody reviewed it; nobody paid any attention to it. This was also, of course, a time when gay marriage and gays in the military became "*the*" gay issues.

So I was—you know, it was also a time when not only was there an attack on the culture of gay liberation but there was an attack on queer theory in the academy; a dismissive attitude toward queer theory, which of course didn't actually take it up directly because these people didn't understand it or read it or really care about it. They just wanted to repudiate it as theory, as elitist, and as arguing for like, in my case, promiscuity or whatever.

So that was one aspect of the whole thing that I was very much involved in, the debates over queer theory at that moment, and the turn toward the gay neoconservative movement, which now is completely the dominant gay movement. I mean, the gay movement is now a movement for gay marriage almost exclusively, so the critique of marriage is utterly [lost –DC], and much of the theoretical underpinnings of sexual liberation is lost.

So that was one of the things that informed my thinking and that I wanted to write about, and that I was writing about in my AIDS essays. And so that was one part of it, and then of course there [were –DC] the debates within the academy about the value of—about what became a kind of polarization between the discipline of art history on the one hand and visual and cultural studies on the other, which I had never, in my own work, really experienced.

Well, I shouldn't put it that way. The curious thing was that the people who came to be the most vociferous defenders of art history as a discipline were themselves, I think, initially involved in the critique of art history as it was conservatively formed in the academy. So *October* of course had offered initially a kind of critique of art history.

One of the standard texts in the field of visual studies had been one of the Dia conversations that Hal Foster had edited on the subject of visual studies. So there was something a little, you know, confusing, I guess, about this, but then I think it became clearer that partly it was a debate about modernism versus post-modernism and it turned back toward a kind of modernist position on the part of *October* critics to some degree.

But the way I saw it mostly was as a fending off of what—it wasn't so much for me visual studies but cultural studies, something really central to cultural studies, which was the turn toward the subject, which was—I mean, this was not cultural studies; this was post-modern theory basically, that turned toward subjectivity in feminism and in queer theory.

And that continued, within my teaching and within my program and within my thinking about contemporary art, and within all of my work, to be very, very central. Subjectivity—theories of subjectivity were so important to how I wanted to think about, well, everything I was working on.

And I think that there was—you know, there was a moment—there was a moment of a turn away from the subject [… –DC], a repudiation of feminism, a kind of turn toward—back toward a more fundamentalist Marxism.

And I think that that's very much part of what we are still in is this—maybe not an out and out rejection of feminism or issues of subjectivity but on the part of some people, yes, definitely so, and an equation of the interest in identity formations with niche cultures in consumer capitalism, which seems way too easy to me and not at all about what the discourse on the subject really was in post-structuralism and in feminism and so on.

So that was—I think that was probably what I was most interested in offering a kind of defense of at that time in terms of what I thought that visual and cultural studies was able to do. And certainly—I mean, you know, it's always—it doesn't make sense, really, to defend cultural studies in general because there's a lot of terrible cultural studies in the same way there's a lot of terrible art history.

But it seemed to me, at its best, that cultural studies had opened up ways of thinking about culture that politicized it in a way that I had always wanted to politicize it from the time that I was associated with *October*, actually.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But, you know, there is—of course we also argue over what constitutes a properly political position.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right, I mean, not to mention sort of just base confusions between definitions of what visual studies versus cultural studies—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right, right, exactly.

JOHANNA BURTON: —would become. I mean, it's a curious question that I think keeps having its problems.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Oh, absolutely. I mean, and I don't—you know, there are whole, like—there are whole practices of visual studies and programs in visual studies that I don't really feel connected to at all.

So I don't—you know, it isn't—I guess the—what I suppose I can say—it's really easier to talk about these things just in terms of how I live it in my daily life. I teach in a program of visual and cultural studies, and what that means for me—it's always evolving because—partly it evolves because of the nature of student interests, and it always matters to me what they're interested in.

But what it has meant is that I work in a program where people do generally interdisciplinary work, both my colleagues and my students, and there is quite a wide range of objects that they might want to study. And, you know, those objects can be anything from [… –DC] fashion to really hard-core contemporary—I mean, the sorts of issues that, you know, anyone studying with one of the *October* editors might also want to be doing, to people who work on film.

It's a very wide range of interests. And so, you know, we're left to sort of figure out also exactly how it is that one best approaches any kind of subject, because I don't think that any formulated idea of discipline or even of interdisciplinarity works for every object.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I suppose this even works for me very differently when I think about the two projects that have now become simultaneous for me, which is the Warhol book which I'm trying to complete and the memoir which I have more than begun. I suppose I've done what would be a third of it along the way without even, you know, planning to do that. But if it turns out—and I should explain the memoir project. After I got going—I don't

know, does it make sense to just leap into that?

JOHANNA BURTON:  Absolutely. This is perfect, yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  After I began working on Warhol's films, that became more of a monographic project. It was no longer about me. It wasn't about my experience. It was maybe a kind of archeology of this moment that I came into but I wasn't so much using my own experience to think about it.

But then—but the idea of memoir and the idea of the 1970s continued to interest me and I began to think about how I might do it. And I knew that I wasn't really interested in writing a memoir as such, but around this time, I began—I decided to teach a course on Yvonne Rainer.

I did that because I—you know, I have always been devoted to Yvonne's work and I had become more and more interested in dance, and I thought it would be a way of teaching some dance material that wouldn't be too much of a leap for the students in my program who hadn't, you know, registered any sort of particular interest in dance, but also to teach about film; so to teach an artist whose own work covered various practices, someone who was involved in all of the contemporary art moments that I had been interested in, in any case, and that a lot of my students were interested in.

And it happened that when I was preparing to do that course, that very summer Yvonne wrote her memoir. And as she was working on it, she gave it to me to read, partly just as a reader of it but also because I kept asking her questions as I was [preparing –DC] this course. And so I read, in fact, the memoir of a friend, and the form—and I love Yvonne's memoir. I think it's an extraordinary memoir, but it really is a memoir. I mean, it's about her childhood and her early career and her personal life, and of course her career life.

That was never exactly my interest, but I was interested in anecdotes about my life and so I was trying to think of how to make sense out of that, what kind of a memoir-like project could be drawn from that, and it occurred to me that I could give it a kind of armature by taking simply things that I did, particularly things in my art career, and sort of telling stories around those events, those events which actually had some sort of public dimension, like an exhibition that I did, an article that I wrote, and so on.

And then I got some requests to do some talks that gave me the opportunity to try this out. The first one was the Guggenheim asked me to give a lecture on Daniel Buren, having learned from Buren that I had been at the Guggenheim when [his work –DC] was excluded from the Guggenheim International [in 1971 –DC].

So I wrote the lecture and I—I think I knew from the very beginning that I was going to do some kind of slightly peculiar memoir-like way of approaching that event, and I did it by telling—you know, talking about Buren on the one hand and another little job that I had, which was working for Charles James, the fashion designer, which preceded that by a couple of years, but putting together these two utterly unlike and unlikely subjects, Daniel Buren, my first encounters with conceptual art, and [haute –DC] couture.

It was extremely fun to do and it, and it was a success as lecture. People liked it very much. So that strange interweaving of anecdotes about my life and critical questions, in that case [was largely directed at –DC] the animus towards design and the decorative.

So it became about critical issues that matter to me now but, in some sense, threaded through these other narratives—interweaving various seemingly incompatible narratives.

And then shortly after that, a second opportunity came up, which was to write about Agnes Martin. I had done an exhibition of Agnes Martin's work in 1971 and I had visited here in Cuba, New Mexico, and so I decided I would write about that visit to her and about her, but also to take up more contemporary questions about Agnes Martin.

[… –DC] I've just completed a second version of that, which—a more complete version of it for this book that Dia will publish on Agnes Martin where in the end I actually talk quite a lot about her film *Gabriel*, which was made in 1976, which is—you know, I only saw it recently and I certainly—it wasn't part of my experience with Agnes Martin at all, but I get to it through this other story about visiting Agnes Martin, and I get to—it's a kind of crazy quilt of different aspects of critical interest in Martin—discussing her work but also telling the story about doing this little exhibition of her work.

I've done a couple of [other chapters –DC] as well, so that project is sort of going along at the same time, and I think of it more as a critical project. Well, no, it's a mixture. It's a very—I suppose the reason I brought this story up right now is because I think that it's an unusual mode of working, and I suppose—

You know, if I were now to say how I would defend visual and cultural studies—but I don't necessarily think that that's the right name for what I'm doing, but I would say, well, it's allowed me to think about how you approach

a critical project really differently and, in a way that, you know, doesn't make sense in terms of disciplinary methodologies and so on.

And it's not actually something that you could teach. I mean, I would never ask one of my students to do something like this. It's not a methodology that I could sell, but I think that once you realize that, in a way, we all invent our way into everything we do. Of course we have tools that we've learned that are crucial to us. I mean, I know how to look at Agnes Martin's film *Gabriel* and look at it in relation to other films that were made during—I mean, I mentioned Michael Snow's *La Région Centrale* in the discussion and so on.

I suppose you could say that in some ways there are some fairly traditional art historical or film studies, kinds of methodologies that I have brought to bear on this, but then there are other things that—you know, you wouldn't necessarily think that, well, I'm telling this story about visiting Agnes Martin in 1971 and I know that Jill Johnston also wrote a piece about a visit to Agnes Martin in Cuba, New Mexico in 1973 and it might be interesting to look at that memoir in relation to my own and what does it mean that, [someone –DC] identified with lesbian feminism from that early moment also wrote about Agnes Martin from that vantage point?

So you know, I can bring that in as well, and that isn't necessarily something that you would automatically think of in relation to a conventional art historical discourse. And I think that—well, this piece is very complicated and it's still rather fraught for me because the piece, part of it entails a reading of a photograph, a very famous photograph that Hans Namuth took of Agnes Martin and her colleagues on the roof of her Coenties Slip building, so Ellsworth Kelly and—

So in that photograph is Delphine Seyrig, and I read something [into –DC] the gazes of these two women at each other. So it's meant to be, in some sense, suggestive about the perplexity of Agnes Martin's identity as a woman, and as a woman who—and I think this is—in the end I realize the part that most fascinates me—a woman who basically found her happiness—if you could call it that, her peace with herself by living completely alone, with a sort of solitude that is almost unimaginable to most people.

And, you know, that's something that was an active decision of hers to do and I saw how she did that. I think that that—I think it matters to the kind of paintings that she made, [the –DC] necessity of living a life of, you know, real solitude.

JOHANNA BURTON: Well, it's also interesting—and maybe you can talk about a couple of the other sort of objects around which you orient yourself in terms of the memoir because you brought up Jill Johnston's sexuality in relation to Agnes Martin and earlier the kind of move—related move from an emphasis on subject positions—and I'm thinking about that in cultural theory to what you've been calling your recent interest in various modes of relationality, alternative or oppositional or non-normative—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right.

JOHANNA BURTON: —to use a problematic term. I think that that's really interesting in relationship to how your own stories—you called it a sort of crazy quilt but they're also mutually informing stories of you coming to your own position as someone who writes about art, and also, as we've discussed at length in this interview, your own sexual orientation, your own sorts of desires and how those things crisscross each other—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right.

JOHANNA BURTON: —and actually, in an interesting way, take you to certain objects. Agnes Martin is actually a really interesting case of that—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: —but also somebody like [Alvin] Baltrop, who you haven't mentioned here—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right.

JOHANNA BURTON: —yet, but hopefully you can maybe just quickly talk about the other objects because I think there's something very interesting about your refusing to say that one mode, whether the kind of memoir mode or the mode of criticism, is primary or important or how these things actually work, but it does seem like it would be an interesting way to get you to expand a little bit more on this notion of relationality that you're getting to, which also takes you back to Warhol and I think to dance as well—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right.

JOHANNA BURTON: —where you were starting to go. So maybe if you can just say what the other sort of case studies in the memoir are as a way of—I mean, I think it would be very curious for people listening to know where you end up with the memoir even though you haven't ended up—since you're not even done with it yet.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, I did make this arbitrary decision that this would be a memoir of the first 10 years that I was in New York, so '67 to '77. And the cutoff date of course is the "Pictures" exhibition, so I'm calling it *Before Pictures*. I probably will also write a little bit about the "Pictures" show, I suppose, or maybe I could write *Before Pictures*, *Pictures.* and *After Pictures*.

JOHANNA BURTON: A three-part—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I mean, one thing I think I could say before I get to the other objects that I have addressed so far, and maybe even say some that I think I might, is that if there is an overall subject to the book, or the project, is that in this period, the first 10 years that I was in New York, as I was finding my way in the art world—so all of this material that I—all of the things that I did prior to the "Pictures" show are less well known than the "Pictures" show, so it's [my juvenilia –DC].

And so I was finding my way [as a critic –DC] at the same time I was finding my way in the queer world. And, you know, there's the significant event, which is given way too much significance, I suppose, which is Stonewall in 1969, but the founding of the gay liberation movements, the Gay Liberation Front and the suddenly quite massive expansion of gay culture in New York—bar culture, bathhouse culture, dance culture, all of that.

Like, there was—you know, the time that I'm writing [about in –DC] this memoir is the time of the greatest expansion and excitement around that in my life, certainly. And so those two things happened simultaneously for me, my finding my way in the art world and my finding my way in the queer world, and then the subject of the memoir becomes, like, how you negotiate those two things because it wasn't obvious, and in fact it was quite conflictual.

And so, to go back for a moment to the Agnes Martin, I mean, one of the things that I'm suggesting in that chapter, is something about the complexity for a figure like Martin of negotiating those two terrains as well, without absolutely explicitly talking about that. I really talk about it through my own experience more than hers.

But certainly, you know, what I do talk about are these aspects of my life and my identity at that time that were not easily lived together, and in fact often were lived really quite separately. I had a lot of gay friends in those days who were not involved in the art world or the intellectual world, and I had a lot of art world friends who were not gay and not involved in the gay world.

I mean, it wasn't as if I was—I mean, I certainly wasn't in the closet and I certainly wasn't, you know, having to pretend in one world, but nevertheless it wasn't—I mean, the art world was not that accepting of the [gay –DC] artists and gay people generally. Sexuality was still a fraught subject at that time, of course.

JOHANNA BURTON: And it still is.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Sure, sure. Yes, sure.

JOHANNA BURTON: I mean, I wonder, too, when you're talking about this—because you're writing from today's perspective, I mean, of course it's a memoir that takes its particular point of view from how you operate today, still kind of along those—with those questions in mind but with—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right, yes. Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: —as the different—I wonder if that ends up being something that gets addressed explicitly or not.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, I don't know that I'm so much—I don't know what it would mean to be explicit or implicit. I mean, I think that my whole approach in this memoir tends to be a little bit on the side of the implicit. I mean, I'm not writing anything polemical at all.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But at the same time, for example—because you mentioned the question of relationality and it's something which is very much on my mind now because I find myself living in a world where it seems to me that there has been a shift back to the most conventional forms of sanctioned relationality. I come from a generation where a lot of heterosexual couples did not marry, for example, as a political statement and because they were in fact critical of the institution [of marriage –DC].

And that just doesn't seem to be the case for people, gay or straight, anymore. The conventions of how people form relations—I mean, just, you know—there was an obituary last week for Richard Poirier, who was a gay, famous intellectual. I didn't know him but one of my close friends was a very close friend of his.

But in any case, the obituary ended by saying Richard Proier never married. And, you know, *The New York Times*

responsibly would have actually talked about the fact that he couldn't have married because he was gay [… –DC], but the assumption is that people do marry, you know.

Somebody who wrote a letter said *The Times* didn't say he never robbed a bank, although, as far as I know, he never did. You know, it's insane.

[Cross talk.]

DOUGLAS CRIMP: But the thing is we would have expected that from *The New York Times* 15, 20 years ago. There was a period when *The Times* couldn't have gotten away with it but they somehow have returned to it and I think that that, you know, in a way is symptomatic of the times—not *The New York Times* but the times—

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: —that we're living in. So I think—so that's very much on my mind because it very much—you know, there was this period in my life when the ethos was, you know, invent new forms of affectional relations. And, you know, you can be any and all things—I mean, you don't have to—you don't have to have a "significant other." You can have, as I would say, many significant people in your life. Some of them might be sexual; some of them might not. Some of them might have been sexual; some of them might become sexual; some of them might be—

And that had become a norm for me and it was something that I liked, and so many of the people that I knew led lives like that, which made it of course much easier for me to live a life like that. If you're the only person living that life, then you can't live that life, actually. You know, I mean, it's not as if marriage is an institution—

I mean, there was also an article in *The Times* last week about the fact that this extremely right-wing lawyer is arguing a case before the Supreme Court in favor of gay marriage and [what –DC] a crazy contradiction that is, and I just thought, this is not—you know, it's a conservative institution. Why is that strange?

But the point is that of course marriage—the more you institutionalize a norm like marriage, the more other possibilities become more difficult for people. It isn't like, you know, we should allow marriage and everything else because actually marriage trumps everything else. I mean, that's its function.

So of course, you know, this is virtually an obsession of mine at this point in my life, more so than it probably was in the '70s because I didn't feel quite as outside of the norm, at least in the world that I was living in at that time.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: —even among my straight friends.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: You know, they were repudiating marriage too.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes, it seems like a very politically motivated project to go back actually in memoir form and ask for a relationship to be made between two increasingly conservative institutions—art history and also relationality or however one wants to think about it. So one sort of has to think about it as being a kind of commentary, or at least what I've heard so far.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, I mean, like the piece that I wrote on disco that you read.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: There's a whole section of it where I talk about my disco partner, and it is really—you know, I kind of—I spend a lot of time on talking about how I had this relationship with this guy, which was about dancing. And you know, I was very faithful to it; he was very faithful to me, and it wasn't as if we didn't have a sexual relationship. We sort of did but it was very casual and it wasn't what it was about. It was about the fact that we liked dancing together.

JOHANNA BURTON: But the parameters of sexuality there become a lot looser to—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes. Yes, indeed.

JOHANNA BURTON: —which is a very sort of beautiful, for me, part of it.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yeah.

JOHANNA BURTON:  But that said, quickly, if you can also sketch in the other chapters that you've been working on, and if you'd like to kind of—just a couple you might be thinking about—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Well, the only other one I've done is the—it's called "Action Around the Edges," at this point anyway, and it's one where I—in fact, it was another occasion which allowed me to write it—I was doing a visiting professorship in Manchester, in England, and there was an institution there that asked me when I was coming to give lectures at the university, if I would also give a lecture at this—it's a kind of city center, not really museum but an institution that holds lectures and shows films and it's really about the city.

And I had been thinking about—initially I was going to do was to write about Joan Jonas because I had done an essay on Joan Jonas in '76. And specifically I was interested in—the object that I thought I would look at was her film *Song Delay*, which as a film that was made in the vacant lots of Tribeca after they were cleared—after the Washington market was torn down but before Battery Park got built. It was in the recession in the '70s.

And that work for me was emblematic of this moment when artists began to really use the city as a place to, like, rethink art practices, and performance art basically gets invented in that moment. And Joan and—you know, the piece was called *Delay Delay* and it was done in '72, and then the film was made in '73 from the same material and in the same place.

So I thought, well, I have this object that I—so I began writing about—the idea in that piece was to write about how artists and gay men were using the de-industrializing city. And of course I was thinking from the very beginning about the abandoned piers along the Hudson River where there was a huge gay sex scene.

And I knew that—when I began writing this, I knew that Gordon Matta-Clark had given an interview about *Day's End,* in which he talked about gay people using those piers as well. So I began by looking there. And it happened—I was very lucky that when I was working on this essay, the Gordon Matta-Clark show was at the Whitney.

And so, I was able to study Matta-Clark's work pretty well and to see the film of *Day's End* [(*Pier 52*), 1975]. And I also was very lucky that I knew about this African-American photographer, Alvin Baltrop, simply because through friends I knew just very slightly—I had been introduced to Randall Wilcox, who is the trustee of the estate. And so I got in touch with Randall to look at Baltrop's photographs.

And, you know, there was this amazing moment when I saw the photographs of gay men cruising in Gordon Matta-Clark's *Day's End* which became like the perfect image of these two scenes, which both did and did not come together because of course those men were there after the art world had been kicked out of *Day's End* and [the pier was –DC] locked up again and people forgot about it but gay men were still using those piers.

But that was a piece which was about these various uses of the city and about my own—what I begin with is just a point where I think I'm moving from the gay world to the art world by moving from the West Village to Tribeca, of literally moving apartments. So that whole period in my life where I'm sort of trying to find my way as a critic and I'm discovering performance art and I've moved to the downtown area but I'm still going to the Village every night.

It's the way that I was negotiating city spaces and also negotiating my dual identities. I mean, the great—you know, lucky thing about that piece was finding the Baltrop photographs, but it also had—I mean, it resonates in all kinds of ways and of course now it's informing this exhibition that I'm doing as well.

JOHANNA BURTON:  Yes, I wanted to move to that as well. There were two things I wanted to ask, which was, again, if you wanted to say anything about further objects that will be—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  That I'll be looking at?

[Cross talk.]

JOHANNA BURTON: —circle in the memoir, and if not, also just again to kind of press on the contemporary—the lack of those kinds of spaces, obviously today but also the kind of conservatism around discussions like the one that you're—I mean, I was at the CLAGS version ["Action around the Edges" was given as the 16th annual David R. Kessler Lecture at the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, CUNY –DC], where of course everybody was really excited that this was a group of self-identified queer people, but I wasn't at the MoMA lecture where you were on the panel with somebody like—it was Steven Eisenman, right?

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Not Steven Eisenman—

JOHANNA BURTON:  Peter Eisenman.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: —Peter Eisenman, yes, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON:  The only reason I bring this up was the recounting of the tale was you covered some of this territory about how the de-industrialized city had opened up kind of social spaces of various alternative communities, et cetera—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Right.

JOHANNA BURTON: —and that it was very much—became a huge site of contestation in terms of a kind of conservative—he really wanted to shut this discussion down. And I'm just curious if you could say something about that only because I think it's really very interesting that, as you say, we have moved back to a place where a discussion like this, even though it is properly historical on the one hand, becomes—and ostensibly we're in this sort of open moment in terms of if you look at certain kinds of rites according to people, but in point of fact it's more conservative than it's been in a long time.

I wondered if you could say something about the reception of your comments about kind of de-industrialized—the de-industrialized city so that then we can talk about the exhibition that you're working on—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Right.

JOHANNA BURTON: —because I do think that there are stakes in it that are very high in terms of returning to these sites.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Well, the thing is I had written this piece, this chapter of the memoir—

JOHANNA BURTON:  Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: —and the Museum of Modern Art invited me to be on a panel in conjunction with the Richard Serra exhibition. And it was—and the idea, just kind of amazingly, was we'd like the people on the panel to talk about the kind of city in which Richard Serra was able to do the kind of experimental work that he did. And so the idea was not even necessarily to talk about Serra—

JOHANNA BURTON:  Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: —but really to talk about—you know, the practices in New York City in that period. And I had just written this piece so I was able to extract a portion of the piece, and I actually then did write about Richard Serra's film *Frame.* And of course, you know, part of the piece has to do with Joan Jonas's*Choreomania* [1971], [for which Serra made the wall in which she performed in –DC] that piece on.

So it actually worked out very well and—I mean, I can't really—the thing is, I think my talk was very well received at MoMA. Peter Eisenman had a very negative reaction to it but, you know, I don't really know why. The fight was a sort of misunderstanding in part because I was talking about—I mentioned the fact that across the street from me, from the back entrance of my building, ever since I moved here, was a little sex shop—a gay sex shop. And it was one that had upstairs booths where people could have sex.

And it's gone now. And it was closed just right at the time that I was doing this. And I had heard that—they tore down that little building and then they tore down a much bigger building, you know, on the other side of another building that's right across the street from me. In that L-shaped lot they were proposing to build a 21-story hotel.

And, you know, I've lived in this neighborhood since 1976 and for years and years and years it hardly changed at all. Very few people lived here. And so basically I was just sort of saying that [… –DC]—I realized that having a sex shop on your street is a kind of symbol for that neighborhood that I would like to live in, not because I use the sex shop but because it meant that it wasn't—you know, a neighborhood that's being gentrified doesn't have sex shops in it—

JOHANNA BURTON:  Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: —and particularly after Giuliani, you know? So it just was a kind of symbolic thing, and he took it to mean, I think, something about my own claim of a kind of avant-garde, bad-boy sexual practice or something—

JOHANNA BURTON:  Oh, that's funny.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: —and I think—you know, so he was sort of chastising me for saying, you know, it's time to grow up or something—

JOHANNA BURTON:  Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: —like you're not as avant-garde as you think you are and now, anyway, people find pornography on the Internet. It was just—it was a misunderstanding. But I think, actually, his reaction was so extreme and it became—it was so competitive and strange and the people in the audience were horrified by his behavior, basically.

And so I thought maybe what happened was that I pushed a particular button, which was Gordon Matta-Clark—

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: —you know, because I talked about Gordon Matta-Clark. I didn't talk specifically about *Window Blowout* [1976] but you know he did *Window Blowout* in Peter Eisenman's institution and they, like, you know, threw him—I mean, they were—their reaction as very bad. And in this moment when Gordon Matta-Clark is being lauded as—

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: —the kind of model of what an experimental artist might look like—

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: —and he's been taken up also by architects, including, I think, Tony Vidler has written about Gordon Matta-Clark and they were colleagues at the institute. So I think that probably it's—I would imagine—they behaved very badly and I suspect that that looks bad now. And so I think it was sort of like, you know, we can't always all be bad boys, is I think what he was saying.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right. I see.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And, you know, I think it is an important thing because actually I don't think it's about being bad boys. I think it's about using the city.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: You know, I think it's about a sense of a city that I can make in a way, that isn't entirely taken away from me, and given proper uses, which means that I can't, we can't, people can't make public space, essentially, right? [… –DC]

JOHANNA BURTON: And this is why I brought the—I didn't have the details of the story but it did seem like there is this kind of—there was a categorical animosity that came out around this idea of who lays claim to certain kinds of space—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right.

JOHANNA BURTON: —and how one equates that space—especially desire of any kind is explicitly or implicitly at play. So I mean, maybe that's a good way to segue into your project that you're right in the middle of in terms of exactly the subject of the city and going back to spaces that may actually offer a kind of open terrain, both literally and figuratively. So however far you want to go into explaining that.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yeah, I mean, I think—because it's so much a project in formation it's a little hard to—

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I mean, I can just say that, you know, we are—Lynne Cooke and I are doing an exhibition at the Reina Sofia which is scheduled for the summer of 2010. We're calling it "Mixed Use, Manhattan: Photography and Related Practices 1970s to the Present."

I think what would be relevant to say about—I mean, certainly a lot of—well, several things. One is it is very interesting to me—we made the decision that this would not be a melancholic or nostalgic project, that this would not be about, you know, oh, the 1970s was a time of—a wonderful time of artistic innovation and the—a city that was usable and now it's all been taken away from us and it's—you know.

But rather, I think, in a way, the thesis of the show is that artists are—you can see in the way artists use cities, the city as a function of use, and that people are endlessly inventive about use, but it's artists who, in a way, show us that in their various—I mean, it's not that they're like the avant-garde but they make that—they make the use of the city palpable in works of art.

So we've wanted very much to include the way artists continue—but of course the difference is now that there is much—I think there's much more of a self-conscious referencing of that moment in the 1970s, which people are

interested in as a moment of inventiveness, and I suppose a certain sense of freedom.

Certainly, when it was cheaper to live in the city, things were easier for artists. You didn't have to, like, have a fulltime job in order to support your practice and so on. But then the funny thing is that as I've been—you know, when you make an exhibition that's thematic and you come up with a kind of an idea and a category—which in this case was artists using the city, the city of New York.

And then you begin to look at work and you find work, and that work then refines your category, and then you find more work and, you know, eventually the two—the works of art and the category in which you're putting all of these works of art keep sort of—it's a moving target.

It's very interesting, though, that I think it's a way of—I'm finding with this particular subject that we're able to bring work together that's quite unexpected. It comes from very different conceptual premises, comes from very different movements and moments. We're bringing it together under this rubric that makes a different kind of sense.

So you know, one would normally not think of Cindy Sherman's *Film Stills* and, I don't know, the Bechers' water tower photographs, or Peter Hujar's photographs as sharing much aesthetically but they do share this thing about using the city.

But in compiling the list of artists and looking at work, it's just really interesting that there is a cluster of works between, say, '76 and '80 that's like a big explosion of this kind of work, that somehow something opened up and people began wanting to photograph the city, wanting to walk in the city, wanting to perform in the city, wanting to have sex in the city.

Then by the mid-'80s there's almost—there's sort of nothing, and then again in the '90s it picks up and people began to look back at this other moment and they begin to reference it and invent new ways. But it's as if, in the mid-'80s—I don't know; art practice was about something different. It was about gallery art in a very, very big way, of course.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And of course it was also about institutional critique so it went sort of inside the institution—

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: —in order to critique the institution. So I think—I don't know. I mean, that has been quite fascinating actually, that there are—there was a moment when it was really—when something happened—something really important happened.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And a lot of different sorts of people used the city in very, very different ways, and you feel it.

JOHANNA BURTON: How did you two come to this topic together? Was it just something you were both thinking about and happened to have a conversation about?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: No, it was—I mean, it's kind of strange because I had done the memoir chapter, which is so appropriate to this that probably a version of it will end up in the catalogue. But Lynne had never read that and—I mean, I think I had spoken to her a bit about it and she knew, of course, the Baltrop photographs—

JOHANNA BURTON: Yeah.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: —but really what she initially was thinking about—she became really interested in showing Peter Hujar. And I think—you know, she talked to me about Peter Hujar a couple of times, just about which photographs I found the most interesting. I know she talked to Zoe Leonard about him as well, and Zoe is a big admirer of Peter Hujar's and I knew him slightly [… –DC].

And of course, also, Lynne had just done the big retrospective of Zoe's work and remains very committed to […–DC] Zoe's work. And so when she talked to me, she basically said, would you be interested in doing a show that would involve Peter Hujar, the David Wojnarowicz *Rimbaud in New York* [1978—79] series, some of Zoe Leonard's projects.

And I said immediately, you know, I'll only do it if you'll do it with me because I just don't—I don't know how to be a curator, basically. And so she agreed. And that was pretty much what I started with, and we didn't have a—we didn't have a title. The working title for a period of time was actually a phrase from that memoir, [from a passage –DC] about Peter Hujar, which was—it was like when I was talking about the photographs, those cruising

photographs—

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: And then I sort of went into my own voice and it was like, you know, talking about walking in the city and meeting somebody in the city and saying, you know, could we get together for a moment? Could this city be ours for a moment?

So I took that phrase, "could this city be ours"—I think we dispensed with it partly because it doesn't—you know, it's about the question of translation as this is going to be in Spain—because the idea for me was, could this city be ours; like, could we possess the city? I mean, could we make it ours but also, is this thing that we see now our city? I mean, are these images that we see from the past—could this be the city that we recognize now?

But, I then—we toyed around with various ideas, and I—one of the things that I was—I was reading Jane Jacobs and I thought, mixed use, it's—well, one of the problems now is that, you know, when you—there were these neighborhoods that were mixed-use neighborhoods that were industrial and residential, and I lived in a mixed-use neighborhood and mixed-use is what I like about the city. It makes the urban urban, in Jacob's theory.

But then, you know, I'm also thinking about how we use the city, how users use the city, how artists use the city, so we ended up with mixed use.

JOHANNA BURTON: Mixed use.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So yeah, I mean, it's—and, you know, we have found, I think, some—then indeed starting, as I said, again, sort of in the '90s and then up through the present there are actually quite a number of projects that work very well with the earlier material and that show a kind of continued way of thinking about the city.

JOHANNA BURTON: We've talked a lot about some of those artists that are your generation, essentially, from the '70s but you'll include even earlier, but what is your relationship to some of this work by younger artists or artists from the '90s and on? Do you feel like it has a different—does it strike a different chord or do you feel like there is a kind of—there's that kind of lapse during the mid-'80s, you said, and then some folks start picking back up on a similar kind of energy.

I wonder if it reflects differently on the kind of political and social context that it's in or if there is a kind of strange symmetry between them. I mean, it's interesting in terms of there actually being a historical—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right.

JOHANNA BURTON: —hiccough in the middle—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right, right.

JOHANNA BURTON: —and how one addresses that or how one sort of thinks of that.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, I mean, certainly one of the differences that I see is what I've already mentioned, which is that the more recent artists actually know about this earlier—

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: —you know, so they're—and I don't think actually—like you could say that there is another sort of important modernist moment where the city plays an enormous role that is surrealism, but I don't think that, like, those '70s artists in New York were referencing surrealism, for example.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So that's a difference.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So you know, the fact is that there are artists now who really are thinking about how those artists—

JOHANNA BURTON: Were operating.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: Well, and also, I'm seeing younger artists, many of them actually you met—for instance, Zoe Leonard or someone like that—through AIDS activism—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Oh, yes, absolutely.

JOHANNA BURTON: —rather than through artistic practice.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, right.

JOHANNA BURTON: So there's something actually really interesting about how those trajectories come together as well.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right. Yes. No, I'm finding now that I'm actually reconnecting with artists of that generation.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I mean, but this is relatively new for me because these are people who are 20 years younger than me, and it's not a scene that I know nearly as well because I was sort of apart from it for a very long time.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So I'm actually reconnecting with—you know, I mean, it's not as if I didn't know Tom Burr or Moyra Davey, but I'm now having a way to know it better—

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: —and to appreciate it more, to understand what they're doing better.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: So in that sense it's a real—it's really—that's part of where the real fun comes for me is reconnecting to a newer generation of artists through something that I—you know, I have a stake in, basically.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right. And it ends up being interesting what you like, like the memoir—historical practice or historical project that's also a very much contemporary—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right, right. Exactly.

JOHANNA BURTON: —project.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Exactly.

JOHANNA BURTON: Well, I mean, I guess we got to the fact that you're in the middle of, literally as we speak, finishing the Warhol book—working on the Warhol book, finishing the memoir, working on the Reina Sofia show—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right.

JOHANNA BURTON: —and then three days ago, back to Rochester.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right.

JOHANNA BURTON: What will you teach this semester?

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I am teaching a course that I taught at NYU last spring as a visitor, which is on dance film, although at Rochester I'm doing it a little bit differently. It's called "Art dance and film," or "Dance art and film," and so I will actually start—at NYU I pretty much concentrated on Cunningham and Judson and beyond, and I'm actually going to start with the Ballets Russes in Rochester and probably also do Graham and [Balanchine –DC].

So it will be a little bit more—it will cover more historical territory and it will be more, you know, sort of artists' collaboration with—I mean, the perfect piece, I have to say, was—I saw this little show at the Whitney two days ago, of the Lucinda Childs' [*Dance*, 1979 –DC], which is—you know, it's Sol LeWitt making a film and listening to Childs making—and of course they have this film of the dance with the film in it.

But, yeah, I mean, dance film has become a recent interest—kind of a quirky interest of mine, sort of new—it's something—it's interesting because the other course that I'm teaching is an architecture and a photography course that I do, and so I actually said to one of my—I think the visual resources librarian, that—I said, "I'm covering all of the mediums with my two courses."

But I do have this tendency to try to put, like, these two different—like dance and film together. So it's not really just about how you film dance but how film and dance mutually inform each other, or how architecture and photography mutually inform each other.

JOHANNA BURTON:  Well, we may have reached the end of the—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Yes, I mean—

JOHANNA BURTON:  Is there—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  I think maybe I should say a little bit about my [writing on dance –DC].

JOHANNA BURTON:  I would love that. I just wasn't sure if you wanted—

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON:  So actually we're taking a quick break.

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JOHANNA BURTON:  All right. So I think we are going to turn to more explicitly to some of your recent work on dance. And I will just let you take it from here in that regard.

DOUGLAS CRIMP:  I mentioned before that I taught a course on Yvonne Rainer. And I did that because I guess I wanted to do work on dance, I mean, to think about dance a little bit more. I have been interested in dance, seeing a lot of dance since the late '70s, when as a colleague of Craig Owens, I started going to city ballet and became a big Balanchine fan and went really, really often and really got to know the repertoire very well.

And then I came back to seeing a lot of dance again probably in the '90s, I guess. I have been seeing a lot of dance lately and reading about it. And so when I did the course on Yvonne, it was partly just in order to kind of indulge—you know, to do—I mean, the nice thing about my program is that I can do classes that are, you know—we invent our curriculum as we go along. And in doing that, in reading the literature on Rainer, I was a little bit surprised at how thin it is. Now, of course, that I have gotten more involved in reading about dance, I have found that compared to a lot of other [choreographers –DC], it is not so thin.

There has not been a lot of sophisticated work on dance. Dance studies in the academy is a relatively new discipline. There aren't that many people involved in it. But anyway, I learned that—or I realized in teaching this course that there was something curious about the literature on Rainer and that had to do with not noticing how important music had been to both her films and her dance work.

And particularly, there is this moment in *Film about a Woman Who* [1974], where there is this very dramatic Bel Canto opera music. And nobody who wrote about that film, which is her probably her most written-about film and her most famous film, had mentioned it. And it is the most famous sequence of her most famous film. And, you know, at a certain point this dramatic finale of the first act of *Sonnambula* comes in and nobody mentions that. It just seems so extraordinary to me.

So then I began thinking more and more about how music had functioned in Rainer's work, so I ended up writing an essay on it. Initially I had been invited to a conference in Vienna on narrative and I just thought that this would be an occasion to write something about that. And eventually I continued working on it. It was right at the moment when Yvonne was doing the piece, which is called *AG Indexical, with a little help from H.M* [2007], which is Agon—Stravinsky's Agon, Balanchine's Agon, an Indexical version with a little help from Henry Mancini.

So I was able to—I saw a run-through of that, a rehearsal of it when she was making it. And I added the little coda at the end of this piece. And it was a very good example of when she was—I mean, first of all, it is about a musical substitution, but also it is about her love for this canonical modernist ballet that is the result of the great collaboration between Balanchine and Stravinsky. So clearly, it is about music.

And it was incredibly satisfying to write that piece. I really loved writing it. You know, there haven't been that many experiences in my life when writing an essay was just sort of pleasurable all the way through. It didn't have all these moments of, you know, how am I going to figure this out and how is this going to work with this and how am I going to get from here to there, the kind of struggle of writing an essay. It was just like, you know, each day I would sit down and write parts of it and it would be fun, you know.

And I think that that was a measure of just how much pleasure dance had given me through the years. So you know, I mean, and it also gave me, I guess, a little bit of the guts to take on this field, which was really an amateur—I mean, I had an amateur relationship to it. I mean, literally an amateur. I loved it.

And so then a little bit later, Lynne Cooke had arranged what was initially to have been a series of eight [Merce] Cunningham Events at Dia:Beacon over two years. And I went to the first one. I had been invited to go to a rehearsal or maybe I guess I had been invited to go to both performances and I only went to one. And I immediately regretted because of the nature of the event that I didn't go to both because the nature was that

you can only see a portion of it. If you go twice, you can see more of it.

And I had had this experience with Cunningham. You know, my first real dance experience was that I had friends who were going to see his Brooklyn Academy of Music season in 1970. And I went and I was just completely wowed by it and continued to go see everything that was on that season and then continued to see him for a couple of years after that as well. He did [then –DC] have Brooklyn Academy seasons year after year.

And so then when I saw the second Dia:Beacon Event, I did see—I did go for both days. And it was—and I really—there was something—I was really moved by those events and really fell in love with them actually. So it was shortly after that that I proposed to Tim [Griffin] that I do an article on them for *Artforum*. And it was a real gamble for me, I have to say. I mean, I didn't—it is very difficult to write about dance, to describe movement. And, of course, Cunningham does not make this task easier. He makes it much more challenging.

But I got really obsessed with those Events. And, you know, as you know, I wrote about the first four for *Artforum*. And the next two—so Events three and four, I did manage to go to the dress rehearsals and each performance of them. So I saw—I think I saw the third one four times and the fourth one maybe three times. So I was able to see more of them and to take notes and to—

And then at the same time during that whole period of time, I really—astonishingly, you can read the Cunningham literature in a fairly brief period of time because there just is not nearly—and given that it is a 50-year career of one of the greatest choreographers ever, it is astonishing how little scholarship there is. And so I sort of took a leap and wrote the piece for *Artforum*, which—this was last summer. And from the time of the fourth event, which was in early July—early July?—I mean, I had been working on the piece before the final—before the fourth one. And then like straight through July, I guess I kind of really worked on it really—I mean, it was—I remember thinking at the time it was like going into a trance when I wrote that piece. I was so—you know, it was so hard, but also so pleasurable.

I mean, it was just—it was just really, you know, grappling with a new kind of subject. But I really loved doing it. And I actually loved what I did. You know, it isn't always that you can say that. But I still had a lot of trepidation about it. And then, you know, very early on, I sent it to Yvonne and she really liked it a lot and was very kind about it. And then I sent it to David Vaughan who had been with Cunningham since the '50s and he, you know, really praised it. So then I felt like, you know, I had done a good job.

And I then—I guess during this period of time, I also began going to see the Dance on Camera Festivals at Lincoln Center each January. So I think maybe I have seen three in a row now. And I became—I mean, I also began—when I began teaching—when I taught the class on Yvonne Rainer, I learned that my library in Rochester had quite a good collection of dance on video. And so I began exploring the collection. And I became interested in how that—what the relation between dance and the filming of dance was.

So between the Dance on Camera Festival and looking at the material in my [library's –DC] collection and showing it to my students when I did the Rainer course, eventually I also did the film series at Dia:Beacon called Lives of Performers after Yvonne's first film. And that had a lot of dance material in it as well. And so I became sort of interested in dance film as a genre. And then when I was invited to teach performance studies at NYU, I proposed it as a course, which, of course, makes sense for that program.

And so in doing that, of course, I have learned a lot about it. And now I actually am interested in [writing about it –DC]. I am doing a chapter of my Warhol book on *Paul Swan*, which is a portrait of a dancer. But I am also planning—there are a couple of dance films that I have seen that I would like to write about, particularly one by Tricia Brown, the only film that she made of dance and it is called *Shot Offstage*. It is an extraordinary film. So there are a number of them. I think Babette Mangolte's film of Lucinda Childs' *Calico Mingling* [1968] and possibly the Lucinda Childs' [*Dance* –DC] if I can get a hold of a film with the piece.

I mean, there are a number of things that I think that probably I wouldn't do more than an essay about dance film that would kind of cover—but, you know, it makes me think that maybe I will go on to write more about dance.

JOHANNA BURTON: Yes. I mean, and the names that you have talked about just reflecting on what you said about the sort of scant literature or good critical writing and sort of thinking then about why that is or how that operates, the names you have mentioned like Babette Mangolte or Lucinda Childs and Joan Jonas and Trisha and Yvonne. During the time period when you began really in earnest to be a critic, they were part of the art community.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Oh, absolutely.

JOHANNA BURTON: And I wondered if there was a way in which you could think about how those things have been sort of edged away from each other or there is a kind of a lack of—I don't even know what the word is that

I am looking for—but that dance is no longer sort of thought of even historically enough as having been part of a really kind of vivid, experimental, contemporary art scene.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Right, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: And I wonder if you see that changing now that you have—or if your interest in going back to some of these figures is mirrored in any way—I don't know enough about the contemporary art scene now. Do you see younger people also kind of moving back towards performance—and not just performance in dance and such, but this question about mediation that you are bringing up, how the camera sort of operates within that schematic? And if not, I am just curious then about your own sort of how you navigate those two things.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, I think—you know, I think that maybe what happened after the Judson period, after the Cunningham period and the Judson period, was particularly in like the '80s with the kind of huge explosion of the market that people became I suppose somewhat overspecialized. Like keeping up with the amount of painting that was going on in the '80s was already a job, you know.

But there were, I mean, you know, don't forget that, say, Karole Armitage was married to David Salle and they were collaborating. And a lot of her—so there were relations still that continued from the '70s, although that is sort of still late '70s, I suppose. But, I mean, there was a period of time when, I guess, I was not as involved in dance. I do think that—I mean, certainly, you know, there is this exhibition that Jenelle Porter is doing at the ICA that is opening this next month called "Dance for Camera." And it is about art world people being interested in dance, I think, and filming the art—or collaborations between dancers and filmmakers.

And so there is enough material. She is doing some historical material, but she is also doing quite a lot of contemporary art. And, I am beginning to see more downtown dance now. And I do think it is a—I mean, I think it is a separate scene from the art scene, but I think there are really strong connections and I think those connections could really easily be forged again. And I think more—I mean, there certainly is a dance audience that is really about dance. And then there is the art scene. They certainly aren't each other's audiences the way they were in the '60s. That is not likely ever to happen again because that was about a very small scene. But I can imagine more—you know, more dancers, more choreographers being interested in forging connections with artists. I mean, I know that, for example, Karole Armitage asked Vera Lutter to do a scenography for one of her works. So it is still—that notion, which is really—you know, it comes from Diaghilev really that relation between artists and choreographers and musicians.

But the central [figure –DC] of it is Cunningham. And that model, the Cunningham model, has been quite—you know, it is always lurking there. I mean, people know about it. And then there are figures who are very, very major figures in the dance world like Trisha Brown who really—you know, she just had a big show of her drawings recently in a gallery. But you know, she has always been connected with the art world. And I think the art world has always been very central to her audience.

So I mean, I don't really—I can't speak for people in their 20s or even 30s, but I think that it is still—those connections—I was talking recently with Donald Moffett about this because I had gone to his studio and I had—I am doing an interview with him this summer for his exhibition. And I had told him that I had tickets to American Ballet Theatre that night and I had to be back [in time for it –DC]. His studio is in Staten Island. I had to be back in town. And he told me how much he regretted not going to see dance recently. There was a period of time when he first came to New York when he did because he was working at Lincoln Center.

But yes, I think that people get—the problem is that people get so tied up in their own worlds and there is all this—there is too much culture in New York in a way, so you have to be selective.

JOHANNA BURTON: But I guess—I mean, I guess my question—or it is something I have always wanted to ask you about because I think even at its moment when it was the most integrated in the late '60s and '70s, these worlds, there was a failure of courage or maybe something else about writing about actual dance works. And I am curious as somebody who is now really in the middle of figuring out exactly what it means to write about dance—I haven't done it myself—what it is that makes for either a lack of writing or writing that isn't sufficient, what it is about dance itself.

I mean, there is probably the clichés about it is movement, it is like unquantifiable in some way. But it is not enough of an answer. I wonder what it is that—I mean, the history, as you say, of Cunningham or somebody, the fact that there isn't an abundance of really rich critical writing is notable, I think.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Well, there is not—I mean, I think probably that—I mean, even if you look historically, you know, even newspapers didn't have dance critics.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: They assigned music critics to look at dance, to review dance. And so there isn't really a tradition of a kind of discourse on dance, even at the level of just reviewing. And I think that that may be true. I don't really know that much about this history. But I suspect that dance history was very often part of a sort of theater history or something like that or even music history. So it isn't—it isn't a field in the way that art history is a field.

There has always been, I think, a literature of music, a literature of painting, a literature—but not so much of dance. There is of theater. And I don't really know why. The theater is text based and I think that is probably why. Music is score based. Dance is ephemeral. It is very, very hard to write about something that, you know, is here in one moment and is gone the same moment. So you have to develop the skill of how to even look at dance and then I think maybe dance has been seen a little bit too much also as not as serious, as more of a kind of entertainment.

And it has always been, you know, dance blends into musical comedy or burlesque. So I think that it has been tainted with being a kind of popular cultural medium or a kind of old-fashioned elite culture like ballet, you know? Certainly there was a time when Balanchine in the great period of Balanchine's work [… –DC], certainly in the '50s and '60s when the art world went to see Balanchine and when Denby, who was a part of the art world, Edwin Denby was, you know, connected with a lot of people in the art world, was the great dance critic.

But no one really followed—I mean, he was writing for newspapers, of course. He wasn't a scholar of dance. So it is a little—it is a little hard to say. I don't exactly know. I don't know enough about—this is my own ignorance. I don't know the history well enough. But I do know that like with Cunningham, for example, there is one University Press published book on Merce Cunningham, *one*.

JOHANNA BURTON: Oh my god.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: You know, compare that—Cunningham is a figure that is comparable to whom? [Pablo] Picasso? [Laughs.]

JOHANNA BURTON: I was going to say [Robert] Rauschenberg or somebody obvious like that—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, exactly.

JOHANNA BURTON: In a way, it makes—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Or even [John] Cage as a musician. There is a lot more—there is certainly a lot more musicological work on Cage than there is dance [scholarship –DC] on Cunningham.

JOHANNA BURTON: But that is where that interesting question about the sort of permeability of disciplinarity. It is interesting. I mean, somebody like Yvonne, who you have written about at length and who—I think she is much more of a figure within discourses of kind of avant-garde art histories and avant-garde art history than—even though, of course, she—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Or the fact that Carrie Lambert wrote her dissertation and her book [on Yvonne Rainer –DC] and she is an art historian.

JOHANNA BURTON: Exactly.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: And I find that very interesting not because—you know, as somebody who went through the performance studies Ph.D. program, but left myself, that I actually wasn't able in that discipline to address the very things that now I actually feel like I can within art history, which is to say how performance-based disciplines can be taken on with a kind of wider historical and social lens. I actually think there is a kind of way in which—I mean, Carrie's book is a good example of that, I think.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Yes, exactly, yes, yes.

JOHANNA BURTON: So in terms of dance for you, what is the next step? What are you planning on writing next? I mean, now that Cunningham has died, which is a kind of major—are you going to turn to his work in another—as another case study at all? Or do you feel like—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I haven't thought about it, I mean, other than the fact that I am writing this piece on [Warhol's –DC] *Paul Swan* right now and that I would like to do a piece on dance film, which would be very much about Cunningham. And, in fact, I might actually—there might be more. There might be an article or an essay on Cunningham's dance films because he did—he choreographed for camera more than anybody else historically. It was an interesting phenomenon for him to think about how you translated dance to a film of a dance.

And so he worked with Charlie Atlas for all those years and did a whole series of experiments that I think David Vaughan has written a bit about them. But I think that they are really, really ripe for serious analysis. So that would be—so probably that is an obvious place for me to go because I am really interested in that material and it is accessible.

And then there are these—like Babette's films, which I also really admire a lot and have not—like *Watermotor* [1978] and *Calico Mingling*, I think haven't really been talked about that much. So I think that that—you know, dance film, there is a certain amount of—and, of course, it is something to hang onto. I mean, you can play back a dance film, which you can't do in a dance.

JOHANNA BURTON: Right. Well, maybe we have—have we come to the end of—

DOUGLAS CRIMP: I think we have kind of covered—

JOHANNA BURTON: Well, I just want to go on record as saying what a pleasure this has been. So thank you so much.

DOUGLAS CRIMP: Thank you. I hope it is not too much, too many words.

JOHANNA BURTON: It's not too much. It is not.

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]