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Oral history interview with Yvonne Jacquette, 2010 October 19 and 21

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Yvonne Jacquette on 2010 October 19. The interview took place at Jacquette's home and studio in New York. NY, and was conducted by James McElhinney for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Elizabeth Murray Oral History of Women in the Visual Arts Project.

Yvonne Jacquette has reviewed the transcript. Her 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

JAMES MCELHINNEY: This is James McElhinney speaking with Yvonne Jacquette at her home and studio on West 29th Street in Manhattan on Tuesday the 19th of October, 2010.

Good morning.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Good morning.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Before I turned the equipment on we were talking about your new possible—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Project—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —commission.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: What can you tell us about it?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it's for a new subway station at 34th [Street] and 11th Avenue, which is a continuation of the Number 7 line. And there are six artists all competing to get this commission for three gigantic murals, which will be mosaics.

And so, I was asked rather late in the process so I had to really scramble to get my material done. I got it done yesterday just barely like in the nick of time, four panels, which covers the three large murals. One mural is about 27 feet long. One is about 42 feet long. One is about 91 feet long. However, it's part of a cone. So it's really a continual—continuous circumference.

And I came down to New York from Maine hurriedly, when I heard I could be part of this, and did a helicopter ride to get aerial views of Hudson Yards area, which is where this subway station will be. And there's going to be a lot of great development of that area.

So I took some of the things that are current now, such as the railroad yards from Penn Station, which looked very interesting from above. But they will be changed in the future into a platform over that, and high rises coming out of it.

So I also dealt with some imaginary high rises, some building under construction in that area, all of the wharfs along the river, Hudson River, boats, Circle Line, New Jersey—what is it called—ferry?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Ride the Weehawken ferry.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The Weehawken ferry.

And then I also included a lot of little vignettes in the shape of kind of an eye shape except sideways, so little pointed vignettes, mostly pointed—no, mostly vertical, of a lot of well-known buildings in that area or an area even going further east from there but recognizable.

So, Empire State Building, even Chrysler Building, post office, public library, and then a few

buildings—oh, there's a new green building nearby, a number of buildings that nobody will know where they are, but are interesting visually.

And then I put these in strong backgrounds. One is red, kind of a Tibetan red. One is green, which is kind of a strong bluish-green—sea green is what my assistant called it—and strong blue. And then all of these have borders, such as the kind of little border strips that are surrounding Tibetan thangkas, which I have worked on.

So, on the red one I have a green border. On the green one I have a red border. And on the blue—mostly blue one, I have a pale blue border because that cone was originally designed by the architect to be a skylight cone. However, it's not probably going to happen that way because of the usual changes that happened. And so, I tried to make a sense of light coming in as if there was a skylight there. Of course there will be some kind of artificial light.

It was a chance for me to composite a number of things, sort of jam shapes of one thing against another, especially when a kind of a realm of light came in, as if light shining on water, which is something I dealt with in my oil paintings, and some kind of juxtapositions that you wouldn't expect, such as a very long aerial view of the whole area from the air, from the water side, in the middle of the Hudson, looking in, all the way past the Chrysler Building.

And right below that I jammed in a shot of a foot walking—a pair of legs walking with some shadows from street signs or something, that came because I heard a poem of [Walt] Whitman's on the radio recently about feet. It was probably one of the last poems—and I've got to find that line. And so I used an image from Rudy Burckhardt's photography books of a walking figure.

So, other things that were happening were, on the backgrounds, not a solid, flat background such as if you painted these colors, but because I had to use colored pencil in the sense that whatever gets translated into mosaic, I couldn't have done it in pastel—although I would like to have—because you couldn't possibly squeeze the detail to the scale of drawings that I had to do to fit on panels they required. I only could use colored pencil to get the detail.

And it turns out the fabricator likes to work from drawings and colored pencil because then he can match them to the exact Prismacolor number 914 or whatever. Plus I gave him swatches, but he can go further if he wants.

If I happen to get the commission—and I think I'm highly qualified to get it, considering my concern for that area, because I used to go through that area a lot. I used to belong to a health club there. I used to ride my bike through there a lot. I go to the Circle Line parking area because that's where my car was until recently. And I really want this commission because I really want to see what happens with mosaic.

Anyway, next week they will have a jury and they'll interview all of us six people and they'll make a choice. If I get the vote, the fabricator has said that the size of these murals are so large that he can't even do them in his huge studio in Upstate New York and they will have to be done in Spilimbergo, Italy, by the Spilimbergo School of Mosaic, who he's personally connected to through family. And I would love to be able to go there and check colors and check things.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, I'm having a look at the book—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —that you're indicating across—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —us at the table.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: This is a new book my boyfriend just gave me, and it's a book of—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: *Spilimbergo: The Stones of the Tagliamento*.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right. This book is 101 towns of Italy and their crafts. So I just—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How interesting.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So that's why this made sense. He didn't know that when he gave me this book, that this would be important. Anyway—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And where is Spilimbergo?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's a little north of Venice.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I would have suspected, yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think there's a whole mosaic center around there.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Makes sense—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —because of the glass—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and because it's sort of not far from places like Ravenna.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Ravenna, right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And Venice, if you look at—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, of course.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —you know, the Basilica San Marco is a fabulous example of that.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Before we started the interview, we were talking about the mosaic floors of Venice.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The Cosmati floors.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, the Cosmati floors.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: My boyfriend is an architect and a painter, and he had designed floors based on Cosmati floors for a church in Indiana at the same time he designed their new quadrangle for the monastery there. So I was familiar with what those look like and actually saw a beautiful book at the fabricators recently of—an early book about the Cosmati patterns.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Could you share, perhaps, you know, the name of the—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Fabricator?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Of, you know, the venue in Indiana?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, Saint Meinrad's church and monastery. And I think it's southern Indiana.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. So—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So it was time—it was a timely gift, the book.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes, absolutely. That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Who's the fabricator?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: His name is Stephen Miotto, and he lives—officially lives in Carmel, New York. To get there, I take the Metro North train to Croton Falls—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: To Croton Falls.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —Croton Falls. And then he picks me up and it's maybe a 15-minute

drive to his studio.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Just south of Brewster.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes, that's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's just sort of on the—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —on the Route 22 corridor there—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —along the—yeah, the Connecticut border.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right.

So he did—he offered to do this, which is very terrific. He made a mosaic panel, a small mosaic panel, 26 [inches] wide by about 20 [inches] high. After I brought him the first panel that I had finished about two weeks ago, and he took a photograph of it—it's just a tiny little corner piece but it was one that had a number of the different colors that would be in that thing.

He photographed it, blew it up to the right scale, and then made the mosaic with a wooden backing, which I entered yesterday as part of my presentation. And that gave the—will give the jury a very good idea of, when translated into stones, what the drawings—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So it's a fragment of the whole—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's a fragment, that's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, you were saying that he liked receiving the original artwork in colored pencil.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Then he could match the color directly to the pencil.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: The contemporary—obviously Spilimbergo, they've got, I would imagine, you know, the technology of antiquity mixed with, you know, the modern.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So how does one color stones? Are the mined? Are they manufactured?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think they're manufactured. I think there may be some mined. Probably the more natural colors might come from the rivers nearby. And I think there's a number of ways they can make them—different kinds of glass, different kinds of finishes. I just saw the spread of boxes and boxes and boxes of all the different colors at his workshop in New York. And of course they'll be probably more.

A good friend of mine, Robert Kushner, had done a number of murals with him, mosaic murals, and was recommending me highly. And so, I went to see Robert's subway station at 77th [Street] and Lexington [Avenue], a mural on each side of the tracks, uptown and downtown, and saw the variety of shapes that can be used, not just the little square slices of —slivers of stone, but shapes that can be cut out like kind of long, thin leaves shapes that Robert used.

So I can see that if it's important to have a variety of the textures in terms of the shapes of the stones, then that's available.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You have on the wall behind you some photographs of—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right. Yeah, mosaics.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —these eyes. I just saw those. Remind me where they are.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think it's about Park—Park Place, down on the—is that the Broadway—not Broadway line—7th Avenue line, I think. It goes down near—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —the World Trade Center.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And these are by Andrew Ginzel and Kristen Jones. I'm a friend of Andrew's. And he told me about how he found a mosaic artist in Rome when he was—they were at the American Academy in Rome at the time he got the commission.

And something about the particular way that that mosaic artist worked by tilting the stones—they're not set in completely parallel to the background. They tilt and they catch light in different ways. So, for instance, you can see little spots of light here. That probably isn't their actual color I think, but it's the way that it's catching a little light right through there.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, I see.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: There. And these have the wonderful depth of color and chunky quality—of course, they're small. But he also did a floor—it's a big map—and that's very beautiful, too—with the same mosaic artist.

So then, this other one is Robert Kushner's—it's kind of halfway between the second and first floor. It's a kind of a circular art for the restaurant called Tabla, near Madison Square. And I was interested in how he dealt with convex surfaces, because several of these mosaics won't be really flat; they'll be slightly convex. And the one that's in a cone will be very convex.

And two of those mosaics for the MTA [Metropolitan Transportation Authority] will be above escalators. So, if someone is going down an escalator quite deep into the ground, they'll have a chance to look—as they're moving there will be a chance to look at the murals from top to bottom, let's say, or unless they turn around and look as they come back up.

So I thought that was an interesting situation for a viewer. The architecture plans look terrific, very interesting.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How long is the escalator or how deep?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I haven't looked exactly at what it is. It's about 45 seconds in duration, for one of them.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, dear, well, it's almost turning painting into a time-based medium.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's exciting.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's true. And when I was working with oil paintings a long time ago, I discovered by accident that if I made some of my oil strokes oily—very oily with lots of medium on top of maybe my under-painting that was matte—even though it would be oil, I would let it dry to a matte surface—and I juxtaposed the shiny against the matte, kind of interposed different strokes that the viewer had a chance to get a sense of glimmer as they walked by them—by it or up—they went up the stairs or whatever. Whatever they did, there would be a change in the way light would be received.

So, I think this is—could be similar when the mosaic—not so much that the mosaic would be a matte mosaic next to a shiny one—although maybe we'll think of that—but that the tilting of the stones could make a difference.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But that would have to be done at the time of installation. That would be a very sort of intuitive thing almost to see where, you know, the lights are and how to get the surface of the mosaic to speak to those lights.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, the mosaic will be made in Italy, set into a ground, in some case—probably because of the size, it will be set into a paper ground, because then it will be transported. And then it will be fabricated onto a more solid maybe cement ground before it gets hung above these escalators.

Also, since it's going to be slightly convex to kind of correspond to the angle of the escalator, they'll have to make something fairly solid. So I think this thing of tilting the stones may have to happen earlier. That's the question, you know.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Now that you've explained it that way—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I haven't got the job yet.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —it's clear. So, it would just simply catch, you know, the light at random —

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and animate the surface in that way.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It sounds very interesting.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, of course there will be some kind of artificial light to—at night especially, you know, to illuminate the surface.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, are you attracted to the idea of using what really is sort of an ancient medium?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah. I did some work at Skowhegan [School of Painting and Sculpture] in fresco, and after I learned it up there, first when Rudy [Burckhardt] was teaching, then I started to do it here in New York through a friend who had taught at Skowhegan many years, named George Schneeman. And he helped me figure out a way to make small panels like little trays, where I did most—I did some fresco.

And I did that for about a year. And then they started to have disastrous things—my dealer, by mistake, sent some off in the mail. Well, of course it got smashed. And it was very discouraging because I worked up a lot of preliminary drawings to do these things, and then that's the end of them. But I really love fresco and I love working in different mediums.

Part of my stylistic thing in the mosaic proposal comes out of kind of a flat-based drawing style, which I call white-line drawing, that developed all these years when I was doing under-paintings for my oil paintings, the night ones particularly.

And then I started making woodcuts. After photographing the under-paintings, I'd make woodcuts. And there's a woodcut behind you with that one that's sort of indigo blue. So the shapes of the drawing—in this case there's two bridges—the shapes of the drawing are just the simple drawing line left untouched.

And then of course I have—in these two bridges I have lots of lights for the lighting, which are cut in different ways. But basically it's using the ground and clearing out lines—no color other than the color of the ink. And the paper is a light—off-white, so that comes through as white.

So I did a number of the images in this flat style, although they're cut out on—they're in cut-out shapes. And then I also used a more conventional way of painting light in my drawings. And I had to make those two styles look okay together. That was quite a challenge, but I think I got it to work.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, I think a lot of the pictures for which you're so well known, the urban landscapes seen from above—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —have a kind of pattern quality that one might describe as mosaic-like anyway.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Could be. Could be.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Sort of layers of pattern—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —shifts of color.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I had never seen this before. I think it's—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's a fairly—well, about a year old.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And, so your under-paintings started like this.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's what they look like before I put their full color on.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, do you always paint the nocturnes over a dark imprimatura?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I can't use a white canvas, but then I usually do the drawing in charcoal, and then I paint up to the charcoal with a dark ground color. It usually comes from the color of the paper that I did the original pastel, which is my study medium.

So I have a dark ground around all the charcoal lines so I know where things are going to go in terms of placement, and then I erase the charcoal and it just leaves a thin little white line.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Interesting.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And so then I photograph it and translate that into a woodcut, maybe just coming into the center of it, not the whole thing usually.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So the lines are initially achieved as negative space—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —between big shapes.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Interesting.

Do you know—there was a technique that was used briefly by a lot of maritime painters and urban landscape—architectural landscape. It's called penschildern.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I've never heard of that.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It looks like printmaking. It looks like a kind of etching. You go to London—I saw it at the [National] Maritime Museum in Greenwich [London, England], which is not anyplace anybody goes to look at art. But there were these [Willem] van de Veldes, these big battle scenes of hundreds of warships with sails and cannons going off and waves and so forth.

And they were all done with these minute lines on what seemed like almost an ivory colored panel. They were all on panels. But I haven't quite—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Maybe that's similar.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, I think it must be, because I think how it's done is it's done by making basically a monochromatic painting in water-based medium and then going over it, refining it with a black line, and then with ink, a permanent ink, and then washing off the water-based paint—something to that effect. Or maybe it's even an oil-based line.

But I haven't—I just saw them and it just sort of intrigued me. It's a graphic—I think about people like [Richard] Artschwager and these graphic paintings, you know? These are very intriguing.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I started to use it into a fully more finished painting. Here's a catalogue from my last show. And this image I painted earlier as a fully developed oil painting. And my under-painting looked like this except the whole thing was all one solid color in the white line.

Then I took a quick snapshot of it one time, just—I don't know why. And I saw light on the snapshot making this path of what looks like light. Someone said it looks like moonlight.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Could be.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So, then I started to take other paintings of mine that had—I had the under-paintings still photographed, and I tried to develop some new way of seeing the white line painting not as a flat color with white line, but something new happening to it that made it feel more like a final painting.

So, some of this idea of this passage of light showed up in this mural project. I started to do something of that sort.

I don't know if there's another one in here—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Just for the recording, we should say that the title is *Pier A at Battery Park—*

YVONNE JACQUETTE: *III*.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —*III*—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —2007 oil on canvas—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —50 by 60 inches, which is not an unusual shape for you. I've seen a lot of work that's sort of on a vertical format.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Seeing now your interest in Buddhist art—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —there is a connection.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Sure.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But this is almost a square, and it's kind of an unusual format.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Here is a commission I did for people in New Orleans, and that's still more of a horizontal. I think it's because when I looked out at the view, it seemed what was the interesting things wouldn't have worked on a vertical.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So that's kind of the determining thing.

Then there's all these things I did in helicopters in Maine, which are just the points of light that I could get in a slide flying very low over places that had—like fast-food places or something, in Maine. You don't get a lot of light at night in the cities—so-called cities, towns.

And so I was just fooling around with this solid black ground. So I've had this beautiful black paper that you can get at New York Central. And I just would put my pastel over the top of the black paper and it would come—ring just as bright as if I'd worked on white.

You're talking about New York Central Art Supply over on 3rd Avenue?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Which—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Great paper resource.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Den van DenBendheisen [ph], who is a monitor in one of my drawing classes at the Art Students League, just had an article in the *Times* about their paper department.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And they have something like—they have published 3,000 varieties of paper available—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —but the head of the paper department said, "Actually, we don't put it all in the catalogue. We have more like 6,000 varieties of paper." [They laugh.] He says—floor after floor after floor above this—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —very cramped little store—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, that's true.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —you would never imagine just full of paper.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right.

Well, I started off on the project—I'll just get out of range here—and before I even knew what I was going to use, I had ordered this paper from New York Central. This side is very toothy, so it's really good for pastel.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And I have been using that kind of paper for pastel for a while. And I thought I would do the colored pencil on that paper, but my newest assistant misunderstood what I was asking for, for the first panel, and she did a lot of work with a colored pencil before I caught her and realized she had gone much too far in the—she had put much too dark values.

And so I said, "Well, let's back up. Maybe you can go back with some lighter colors on top, or maybe you can scrape it off with a razor." We couldn't fix it any way because the color just is caught by that sort of surface of—it's almost like sand down there.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It feels a little bit like about a 500-grit Garnet sandpaper—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —or carborundum paper.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's got—but the color is slightly—what would you call it? It's slightly greenish almost.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's pale-greenish.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Pale—yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Greenish-gray, very light value.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But this must be an applied surface of some kind.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, and I've been able to make a similar thing myself when I want to make a color that's different than that. I put golden pumice—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Pumice.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —pumice made by Golden in my acrylic paint, and I do a couple of coats of acrylic on that kind of paper. And then, when I go out to do a pastel, I've got a number of shades of different colors to pick once I've seen the view at night.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I remember when there was this interest back in the late '60s, early '70s, when I was first studying art. It was this interest in [Balthasar] Balthus was sort of the maverick, an obscure artist at that time. If you had a catalogue—if you had the [James Thrall] Soby catalogue [*Balthus*. The Museum of Modern Art: New York, 1956] from, you know, the MoMA show from the '50s, it was like a passport to an inner circle of, like, representational painters who knew about him—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and knew about this Italian named [Giorgio] Morandi, you know.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But at that moment in time, nobody was really interested in these painters. But I remember a bunch of people experimenting by putting pumice into their paint to sort of imitate—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, the surface and the texture?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Some of the Balthus surfaces are sort of fresco-like—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —dry surfaces.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I've never tried that in paint. Hmm.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I don't know if it's a very archivally sound—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Archival?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah. [They laugh.]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't know.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Probably not.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But what is pumice? It comes from—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Volcanoes.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Volcanoes, lava or something. Ground up lava?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: What it is, is—as I understand it, it's usually an airborne—or it could be a stone. It's a form of volcanic stone. It sometimes is airborne, sometimes is just—there used to be a soap called Lava soap—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —that was made with pumice. You could scrape the flesh off your hands.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. [They laugh.] You really get the dirt off that way.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, back a little bit to the commission. Oh, we should probably say for the record that the catalogue we were talking about was the catalogue from your most recent show, which was at DC Moore Gallery in—two-thousand-and—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Nine.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Nine.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: February 2009.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, here is the—here's the—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: There's the image—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —from which that—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: *Two Bridges*, 2007-'8, oil on canvas, representing the Brooklyn Bridge and the Manhattan Bridge in the distance.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —in the distance.

Back to the MTA Commission. I'm a little curious because in the subways here in New York, for a lot of people, perhaps some of the scholars who are listening to this in the future won't be subway riders and aren't aware of all of the art that's underground in New York.

I think about the Jack Beal murals over near Port Authority and, you know, the [Robert] Kushners like up on the—you know, the Lexington Avenue Line.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: There's a new Lichtenstein one—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —that's quite sensational.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. But where is it? I haven't seen it yet.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Forty-Second Street.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Forty-second?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's between—if you're moving from the Broadway Line to the 7th Avenue Line on the level above the trains—and there's kind of a passageway—it's up high above that passageway. So it doesn't have a very high—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's not—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's not very high but it's long. This is what it looks like.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, I see.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's got a futuristic train.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, this is interesting, a book MTA has—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: A book called En Route—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And it tells—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: *Art En Route*.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And it tells you all of the different commissions—who the artist was, where it is, in what subway. There's photographs of some of them.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Al Held here—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —my old teacher from Yale.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That Al Held was done by Stephen Miotto, the same fabricator.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: The same fabricator.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Did he also work with Beal, do you know?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't know. I haven't looked—I don't think the book tells you the fabricator, but there's a—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's too bad.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —there's a show up at Grand Central that has a lot of the proposals and smaller designs for these finished things, and it tells you who the fabricator was. And it sometimes has—if a fabricator made a little panel to demonstrate what the mosaic will look like, it will show you that, too.

So, of the number of subjects—number of projects they picked, maybe there's about 20 to 30 of a lot of different kinds of mediums—they're not necessarily just mosaic, but a lot of them are pretty interesting.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, highly amusing ones at 14th Street [and Eighth Avenue] of [Tom] Otterness—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —those crazy Otterness sculptures.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Sculptures, I know.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: A lot of fun.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, they're great.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, what do you know about, you know, the program? Is it part of the Percent for Art, or is it—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think so.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think the one I'm involved in is because it's a new station.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So I'm not sure about some of the old stations, whether it's just a budget that the MTA has for art.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I wonder if the money is coming from the state or from the city—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —because I know MTA is a state agency.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Okay.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: This has been one of the problems that I've observed with, you know, the union haggling and the various different negotiators every time there's a contract issue.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Okay, well—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I remember a couple of years ago there were—they threw the head of it in prison or something, or in jail overnight. [They laugh.] But it's nice to see that these things are continuing in spite of all of the other—all of the other troubles and all the other cutbacks—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —due to the economy being in a shambles.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: You know, as a matter of fact, I just remembered, I was told not to publicize this because the fare increase is up for discussion presently.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, by the time this is—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Out, right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —this is out, it will be irrelevant.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I know. Good.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It will take at least a few months for the transcription to be completed and for each of us to look at it, edit it—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Okay.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and return it, at which point in time then it needs to be entered into another form that would allow it to be posted online—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Okay.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —searchable on the—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So there's a—yeah, I think something time-sensitive like that is not going to be upset by this conversation.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Good.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Let's hope not.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Good. I forgot all about that.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But, yeah, the fare increases, everybody is upset because the service is—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —intermittent now and it's going to cost more money and—yeah. But at least they're still buying art, so we're all for that.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, how far is that line going to go? How far is the 7 train going to go? Is it going to go all the way to Chelsea?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's going to come across 42nd and end at this station, at 34th.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: However, it's—I mean, as far as I know, that's the end, although I know that they've been tunneling for it for quite a while along—at 25th Street along 11th Avenue, you can see a lot of machinery, and there's—obviously a lot of digging is going on under there. And too bad it won't come down further, but at least it will be a block away from the High Line, which is going to go up higher than it is right now.

So, for people coming to Chelsea to see galleries, it will be fairly convenient. They're coming from north of this station. And, otherwise, people have to get there by bus and so forth.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, the High Line is amazing. For people who aren't aware of it, it's the remnants of the old rail lines, isn't it? Or is it only—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it was—remnant, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —yeah, rail and road.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Now that's been transformed into a kind of park space—an elevated park space.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And the new Whitney will be probably established down near the south end of the High Line. I don't know if the old Whitney will still be there, but the new one looks pretty likely it's going to be there.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, that will be exciting.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That will help invigorate the whole Chelsea area a little bit further—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —which has always been somewhat challenged by a lack of restaurants and—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and community life, that which existed in SoHo or the Lower East Side—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right, that's true.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —or even midtown.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. But I guess there's probably going to be a lot of development around that south end in the old lofts and buildings, the low buildings. And then there's this new Standard Hotel, designed by James Polshek. And somebody is going to take me to the top floor soon to see what the view is like and see whether I could get a chance to work there.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I hope so.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I do too.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It sounds exciting.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I know. [Laughs.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It sounds great.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, how did you come to hear about the commission?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: They called me—I was on an island out—six miles out to sea in Maine this summer, in August, so happy to be away from everything. And they called and said, "They want you to do a proposal." And I said, "Oh, no, it's so great out here. I don't want to change anything."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Who—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I think my gallery—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, who were "they"?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: MTA called my gallery—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: MTA called your gallery.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: MTA called my gallery and my gallery called me. And at first I said, "No." And the next day I said, "Hmm, mosaic? Yes, let's check it out."

So then I had to go back to my studio on the mainland, get set up to get down to New York to

do the helicopter flights. And I had sublet my studio here, so I had to find places to stay while I was in New York to do the research.

And so I ended up in Jersey City for a couple of days and then on the Lower East Side for a couple of days. And finally, the last night before I had to get back to Maine, the person—my subletters, who were, coincidentally, working on three or four big commissions for public art—nothing of the subway but in other parts of the world—and they were strewing their drawings all across my big worktables, and I really wished I could work in there.

And they realized I had—I had to get something done, so they moved everything over, so they had that part of the table and I had this table so I could start some drawings. And then I went back to Maine and I had big tables there I could work on until I got back down—and I came down earlier than I had hoped, back here.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So you were on an island out in the middle of Penobscot Bay somewhere or—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. It's six miles from Stonington, which is off of Deer Isle.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Deer Isle.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: This island is called Isle au Haut.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, yeah, Isle au Haut.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Isle a Haut. Isle au Haut.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Isle au Haut, as they say up there.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, those Mainers, you know—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —the locals are quite—can be quite colorful.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: As a kid, I used to go up every year in August with my family to Mt. Desert, so I know Isle au Haut.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, so you're nearby, right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: The whole area is wonderful—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and a beautiful place.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But I never went to Isle au Haut, but—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's pretty wild.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's what I gather.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I mean—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's part of Acadia National Park.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It has, because people who had owned most of the island couldn't afford the taxes, so they gave it to Arcadia National Park. So it means a lot of it can't be developed. It's just wonderful woods and trails and different terrains.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's got a very high elevation, ergo the name.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Named by Samuel Champlain.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Champlain, right. And my boyfriend has had a house out there since '71, an old fisherman's house, right at the head of an inlet called Head Harbor. And so, I've been going out there with him every summer for part of the time.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's great. Can you share his name?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: His name is Evans Woollen. He's a very accomplished architect, and retired mostly from architecture recently but went out to Colorado to be in the mountains and decided to make a studio and paint full time, large abstract geometric paintings, very strong color. He had been a student of Albers, but for drawing.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: At Yale?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: At Yale, and also was a student of Louis Kahn and Philip Johnson. Had been hired by Philip Johnson after graduation to work in his office for a while, and then, after a couple of years, moved to Boston, and then found it hard to set up there and went back to Indiana, where he was originally from. So, he's been working in the Midwest a great deal, and very interesting things.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Where in Colorado was his—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's a little town called Lyons. It's north of Boulder.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And I have been going to work at a print shop called Sharks, Inc. Bud Shark is the printer.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I saw that online.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Sharks, Inc. website.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah, yeah.

So I had—Bud Shark would invite his friends to have dinner with him at this nice little restaurant in Lyons to try to keep it open because the owners weren't getting enough return.

And so they kept going there once a week with friends, and so I was invited to meet Evans Woollen there. And I was told, oh, well, here's somebody you have something in common. He has a house in Maine. He's a mediator. He's a painter. What else could I ask for?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There's a whole tradition, actually, in Colorado that a lot people in New York may be unaware of, of abstract painting. One of their favorite sons, I guess, is a fellow named Vance Kirkland, who is rather locally important in the Denver area, and also Herbert Bayer was, who was very influential at one point.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There's a number of pieces in Denver. And, as you may know, that's to be the home of the new Clyfford Still—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Clyfford Still.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —museum.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Next to the Denver [Art] Museum.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right behind it, yeah—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Behind it, right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —in the so-called—well, yeah, right behind the Hamilton Wing, the

Daniel Libeskind edition to the Gio Ponti—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —building, which is—it's a wonderful complex, I think.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I haven't seen any of the drawings for the Still museum, but it's going to be just behind—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —the Liebeskind.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And there's a beautiful Michael Graves library—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yes, gorgeous.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right by there. Red stone—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Denver Public Library—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, yeah, it's wonderful.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —is an amazing—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's right across a little tiny piazza—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —from the Gio Ponti Building of the Denver Art Museum—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and is a beautiful building and a wonderful library, actually one of the great libraries in the country.

But there is kind of—it makes sense. I mean, people think about Colorado and they don't think about—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —abstract painting that much, from here, but actually it's—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But I have some friends who have moved out there in the last few years who are New York-based artists who want to have big studios—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yep

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —and are abstract artists and continue to commute back and forth.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Who are they? Can you share names?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, there's an artist who does a lot of installation named Wopo Holup. And her husband is Peter Brown. And because Wopo mostly does public art she doesn't have a gallery, but she has a website. And Peter—I'm not sure—his gallery closed a little while ago so I'm not sure what's in the future for him. But both are interesting.

And so, through them we've started to meet other artists in the area, some good photographers.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Strong history there. The Colorado Historical Society, which is also in the midst of building a new home, has some tens of thousands of glass plate negatives by William Henry Jackson and others. So it's a great repository.

People—I mean, I lived there for about five years. I—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: In Denver?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, in Denver, apropos to a teaching job I had there for a while. But I really hadn't expected to find quite, you know, the resources that were out there. It's quite—it's got quite a lot of good things to recommend it, including the weather and—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Especially the weather.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —the scenery and—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The sun—300 days of sun a year.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's right. That's right. Well, I was once asked how I liked the climate, and I said, I like it but I prefer four seasons in a year, not in a week.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. [They laugh.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It could snow in the morning—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, that's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and people would be out in their shorts by the afternoon.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes. It's true.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's a very changeable—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Especially in Boulder.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: In Boulder. Well, it's the edge—it's the Western edge of the Great Plains.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So it's a microclimate there—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's true.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and very interesting.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, he still has his—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: He has his house and studio.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —house and studio in Lyons. Oh, Okay.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The red buildings. And when I go out there, he moves everything out of his studio into the garage and says, "You use the studio." So, he's very generous. And so, I try not to go too much in the winter, which means that if he goes into the garage it's cold in there.

So I've been painting outside in the—from his meadow, looking down on this little town of Lyons, which was a big quarry center for red sandstone. So, there was a lot of red dirt showing through the green foliage. So I keep going back and doing more and more paintings there—small, so I can send them back and forth.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. Right. Are these on canvas—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —or on paper mostly?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: On canvas.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Canvas?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Canvas. I have done some pastels, but, no, I like just taking a 20 by 24

[inch] canvas—and I ended up getting a French easel so I can stand out there in the wind. There's a lot of wind coming up from the—below. From the town of Lyons there's a kind of wind tunnel that comes up toward his meadow, and so I've got to stand sideways or attach myself to a tree or something to get up there.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Those easels can be very tippy. You need to find a big rock to—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —stick in the box when the tray's out—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —so that it doesn't blow over.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes, that's true.

But there's some newfangled contraptions that are these pochade boxes that mount on the top of photographer's tripods that have sort of become the new—the replacement of the French easel—

[Cross talk.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But I think, you know, the old models seem to work just as well.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It seems pretty good.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Rudy used one for many years, so—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I was introduced to them at Skowhegan.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Of course.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Everybody had one, of course.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Not anymore.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No, no. Well, we were—in the critiques we would often be mocked for being too traditional, and so other people had French easels or mocked people with the French easels.

And in one critique, and artist we spoke about earlier, Frank Hyder, actually declared that he was going to call his work "Sunsets, Incorporated" and just be shameless about it altogether.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: [Laughs.] Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There was quite a division, quite a lot of quarreling over style back in those days.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, well, now it's like—it's not only style, it's medium, it's thought process. There's not very many people who are doing the landscape at Skowhegan.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I know he was on the governor [ph] and I'd go up every year to the lectures or to see the participants' work. And so, there was a great deal of painters entering who end up doing video, conceptual work, nature-based work—depends on what—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You mean like a la Andy Goldsworthy or—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, yeah, right. It's true. Or—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Richard Long or—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. For a while there was a lot of sculpture that was large, site-specific sculpture with old lumberyard finds or real lumber like—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, if you go to do that in Maine, you have to find some way to use duct tape.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah. Yes. Or hot glue, or both.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Or hot glue or both.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How do you see, you know, the dialogue about painting now? I mean, back in the '70s or '60s when you started painting these landscapes and interiors and stuff, there was quite a debate about style. I guess the Abstract Expressionists were not so tribal about it. They had friends who painted in a representational way—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and painting was painting, you know?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It was about space and it was about other things. But by the mid-'60s with Color Field painting coming into full swing, they were very polemical about abstraction and very much opposed to anybody who wanted to have an image in their work.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But now, I mean, how do you see that dialogue? How do you see that dialogue has evolved over the years? I mean, are the style wars still valid? Do people still quarrel about this that you're aware of?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: They probably do, but, for instance, my son Tom Burckhardt is a painter who is primarily abstract. He shifts from abstraction to representation, sometimes in the same work.

And I think a lot of that is actually happening at Skowhegan now, because I just hired an assistant last week who had been a student of his when he taught at Skowhegan. And he said, "Well, I mix all that up in the same painting." And, I mean, style is maybe not the crucial thing.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Style can be anything.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Look at Gerhard Richter—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —in a very sort of schizophrenic kind of—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So-called, yeah. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But, I mean, it's not, in fact. It makes sense.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

[Cross talk.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I mean, why exclude yourself from being able to explore ideas in any way?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I look at abstract art maybe more than I look at representational art. And I hold onto those images in my head of painters I like, abstractionists that I like.

So, probably I'm going to slowly veer in that direction, even whether I have representation—in fact, in a way, the mosaic project still has a lot of design elements that have to do with abstract patterns and abstract shapes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, your paintings, to me, as a painter, just seem like they're very

insistent about embodying a kind of intelligence more than achieving a certain effect, you know, like optical effect, realism, verisimilitude—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —sort of high illusionism. And a lot of younger painters today, there's a whole—a whole posse of them who are worshiping at the feet of [Alexandre] Cabanel or [William-Adolphe] Bouguereau—mysterious evolution but—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But your work seems like there are always ideas in it, and there's always a kind of—there's always a strong notion of order and space. It seems like that's more important than achieving just an optical effect.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, I think that's true.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And so that makes sense.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I mean, sometimes I want to be a little more gestural and I try to go in that direction. It seems a little more hard for my hand or my way of thinking because I kind of organize this composition—once I've done a pastel study, I insist on the composition being strong. And I won't start a painting until I've gotten it to be that way.

So, it might change from time to time about what the hand is doing, but probably going to have a lot more compositing of images. Although I had a period when I was in Hong Kong where I did a lot of compositing—in fact, even went back to collage to rearrange—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It would be a wonderful shortcut.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah. No shortcut. It takes a long time to make a good collage, I tell you. But—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No, no, no. But, I mean—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But, I mean—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —just if you're organizing an image—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and you have these graphic elements—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes, right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —that you've already struggled to create—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —you could—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And you just start throwing them around.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —move them around, yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, [Willem] de Kooning did that—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and a lot of other artists too. I think even Eric Fischl with his—some of his arrangements. There was a—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —show of drawings I saw, just tracing paper—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: With glassines.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, you're right, glassines.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Glassines, yeah. Right. That's true. Well, de Kooning has been an important person and style master, or energy kind of master because he was a close friend to Rudy and Rudy's friend Edwin Denby.

So I have about four de Koonings left from things that he gave—de Kooning gave Rudy when Rudy and Edwin would give him money—slip it under the door so he could pay his rent. And so, finally he was saying to those two guys, "Oh, why don't you come and pick out a drawing?"

And so, there's a number of early cubist kind of drawings—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Lovely.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And then the period of the women starting—so some of the women things. So some big paintings, which we sold to buy this loft and our house in Maine. But I have one little tiny painting that was influenced by the Pompeian frescos, these sort of red Pompeian frescos in the Met that—my favorite painting in the world. It's only about four inches high. It's gorgeous.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There's one of those in the collection at the Philadelphia Museum of Art that's absolutely wonderful, in Wally Lloyd's [ph] collection, that has those pinks and greens and—when I was a cheeky M.F.A. student at Yale, I studied with Lester Johnson and Al Held, and Lester knew de Kooning.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: They were friends on some level. And there had been a show at Acquavella [Galleries], and I was very impressed with it and so I was talking to Lester, and I asked him, you know, how available de Kooning would be, or how open he would be, to having a conversation with something like, well, me.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And he said, "I don't know. Just call him up. He's in the phone book."

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So I called information, the Springs, East Hampton, Long Island —"Okay, here's the number: de Kooning, you know, D-E capital K." They gave me the number and I called him up one Sunday afternoon, had like a three-hour conversation with him over the phone. It was amazing.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's fantastic.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But when he came to the topic of his friendship with Arshile Gorky and Robert—and John Graham—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: John Graham, Okay.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —he said that they—and I guess this must have also sometimes included Stuart Davis. They would sometimes go to the Met and they would go immediately to those Pompeian paintings. He said that for a while they were all trying to be Pompeian artists.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[END OF DISC.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh my god. Look at this. Totally surprising. I think if anybody saw this picture in a museum, they might not think it was a de Kooning.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's completely outside of the canonical image—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, except that the organization of those—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: There's a big version where there is an ochre ground rather than that pink ground. And with those rounded shapes—and there's sort of a hint of—the top shapes could make you think of windows. And they came from his studio, and came from—remember in the '40s and '50s they had these chairs called Hardoy chairs, the sling chairs?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: There's a couple of paintings that are very loose and gestural but they're really from sling chairs.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I see.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And nobody would know it anymore. Nobody has those chairs anymore. Anyway, that painting I look at a lot and—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's wonderful.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —then I go up to look at the Met's and look at the Pompeian frescos too.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Isn't it great what they've accomplished there with the Greco-Roman [Greek and Roman galleries]—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: There's this new mosaic.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yes.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Very interesting, from—it was in Israel, just found recently, all of these natural stone colors, beautifully drawn. How they got it off the floor in Israel to the Met—there's a nice little film showing how they did that. It's very interesting because it's about the kind of stuff that I need to know for my mosaic.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That is amazing. Yeah, I was there just the other week and saw it.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mosaic is an interesting medium and it has an interesting history—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It does.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and pretty durable.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: In some of the artists of antiquity, like Apelles, we only know because of—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —mosaics that copy his paintings, reproduction even then.

This is wonderful.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Isn't that beautiful?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Thank you for sharing that. Very small picture.

I ought to say to the recording that it's about three inches wide and—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Four-and-a-half high, I think.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —four-and-a-half high. And—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think it's gouache.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It looks like gouache on paper. It has a sort of dusty pink—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —ground and this kind of copper sulfate green rectangle at the top and a kind of gray one adjacent to it on the left with a pink bar between them. These are the two elements that you're talking about being like windows.

And then underneath, there's some smaller forms of alternating colors—ochre, gray and kind of a blue, also copper sulfate. And then at the bottom there are these two round forms, and one is sort of a vermillion with these ochre elements attached to it.

And then the other one is sort of—almost looks like a bubble shape from a cartoon where you put dialogue. But it's, again, a gray with ochre—maybe the ochre was under it. It looks like it was scraped or something.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Possibly, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So very, very interesting—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —very beautiful sense of line.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He never lost that.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, it's true.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That was always—he was always—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's almost the thing that he came out with at the very end.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yes. Yes.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It still was kinesthetic and very felt.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Even as he was—even as he was—as some people say, he was sort of less aware of his surroundings. He had Alzheimer's, I guess, or—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But he still could go to the studio, and he knew what to do there.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. And he had it—he had it in his arm and his hand—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —and his body.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. It's a linear kind of a sensibility.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: People don't really—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: He's very much a linear artist.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —think about—yeah. Well, that's also weird about [Joseph Mallord William] Turner, you know, is he was such a brilliant topographical draftsman. People think about Turner in terms of effect, but they don't realize that the effect is hung on this very rigorous armature.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's true.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, who do you talk to these days? When you talk to young artists

about issues of painting, how do you feel their points of view have changed, let's say, from somebody you might have encountered at Moore [College of Art] or at Penn [Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts] or wherever? How do you think—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I have some young friends who came—they studied painting but they also were very involved in poetry and in—not as poets themselves but in reading poetry, working sometimes with poets and doing book studies and so forth, who might have started off doing small things and now are doing gigantic things. So, getting their strength developed as they got to be middle aged and could handle large scale with great effects.

And I talk to Sylvia Mangold some of the time. I have her first floor painting. I talk to Alex Katz because I see him in the summer. Wopo Holup, this artist that does site work, because she does incredible drawings as well as her public art, which have never been shown.

And my local friends in Maine are the younger generation, who came up to Maine maybe because of—well, originally but now are there maybe half the time or maybe a few part-time —full time, and who are, you know, struggling to make a living, mostly having to have teaching jobs back in either Philadelphia or some—I don't know—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Are you talking about people like Anda Dubinskis—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —Dino Pelleccia?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Dino Pelleccia. Those are my neighbors.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I see them a lot. I walk with Anda a lot. And then I've met a new young artist—younger—younger. She's not so young but she's interesting—abstract painter who has just set up a studio near Belfast, in Lincolnville, actually, and her name is Dudley Zopp.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Great name.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And I don't know where she studied, or I've forgotten where she studied, but she's just soldiering on with some abstract work, and maybe not showing it much yet, but she will, I'm sure. So there are people in Maine who are quite interesting.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Are you in touch at all with John Moore?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, absolutely, yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I know he's in Belfast.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, and we had shown together very early on, and we keep in touch.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, he was a teacher of mine. I interviewed him for another foundation. We did a podcast about a year and half, two years ago.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, no, he's a very intelligent—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So he's a great guy.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, very generous. Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, how has, you know, the conversation about figuration changed from—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think there's more—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —the late '60s or so?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, I think there's more acceptance of the uses of figuration by individual artists, according to their own particular interests, and not so much about style of painting but as what does this mean to use that particular image or that kind of image?

I mean, certainly Alex Katz has used figuration for a long time with great stylistic sensibility.

And style is important to him, but—and a few people I know have taken from him in a good way, but he's out there. I mean, at his age he's very vigorous in art.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So you're talking about people moving more into a narrative mode? I mean, Anda paints in a narrative mode.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's true. Someone said they wanted to do a show in Maine called the new narrative, so I guess there is that going on.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, there was—I remember in the early '70s when a lot of you were coming to great attention for representing kind of a return to figuration. Of course, there's that wonderful essay from *ARTnews* that Fairfield Porter wrote, basically saying that these people were always around, it's just that we're choosing to pay attention to them now.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Yeah, that's true.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And he must have been a presence in—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yes. I got some good crits from Fairfield.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I bet. I bet.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Tough ones, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I sort of proctored him around Yale for a day and had to take him to lunch and take him, you know, to studio crits with other students. And he was a very—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Individual—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —engaging—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, you know, you're talking about a maverick. I mean, a very interesting person.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. And he had a big influence on Rackstraw Downes—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I think so, yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —who was a good friend of mine, and who has gone to very strong detail but it's not the kind of detail of just one moment in time.

It's definitely about change in time of the subject matter he's looking at. If it's Texas or New York, it's his experience with it over a long period of time, over a couple of years sometimes. And he might repaint something 40 times until it feels like it's hanging together with what else is there and allowing for all the kind of things that happen with plein air complications.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, his work, too, seems to be about a kind of intelligence of landscape and not merely effect. People—someone who doesn't take the time to really read his work—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —could easily think that he was merely involved with some kind of optical—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh. Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —but, no, there's—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —much, much more there. And it was wonderful painting.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Have you been to Marfa?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, not yet.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Are you dying to go?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. [They laugh.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, why not?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I have enough places to go, like Colorado is one whole thing—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —Maine is another. I mean, painting in Isle au Haut is different than painting in Searsmont—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Of course.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —you know, and New York.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, the light changes a lot, doesn't it?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's true. That's true. And I think I've only touched on New York yet. I mean, there's lots more to go.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, and it keeps tearing itself down—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I know.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and rebuilding itself.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, wait a week or two—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's true. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and the landscape will change. This has been true since it began. You know, it burned—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's true. And that's what's great about it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It burned something like three or four times before the end of the American Revolution.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So it's a town that's constantly morphing.

Do you have a preference for any one of these places—Isle au Haut, Searsmont, Lyons, New York?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think New York maybe I feel like I can always go back and find something new easily. And I'm not so sure whether I'm refreshing my view of Lyons or whether I need to get into a plane over there or—because I've kind of done it four or five years of studies in Lyons and I need to move a little bit. But Colorado is full of possibilities.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I think in Fort Collins, which is just—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: North.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —north of you—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I think there's a ballooning scene.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And I once went up in a balloon in Virginia, actually. It's quite a

remarkable experience—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —because you would expect to be up in the air and it would be windy and—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —like imagining being on a sailboat in the middle of Penobscot Bay—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —completely the opposite because you're in the wind. Everything is very quiet except—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The hot air.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —you know, the burner, yeah—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —which roars away every now and then.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But Albuquerque is basically the center of hot air ballooning.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I've been there and seen those, those balloons.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You should go up in one.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, how would I have a place to put my pastels? I could hold a pad, but where would the box of pastels, that big—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You'd hire an assistant to stand there.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: To stand there and hold them? [Laughs.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And hold your pastels. Yvonne, I'll come hold your pastels. If you want to go on a balloon ride, I'll hold your pastels. It would be my honor.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, that would be good. Well, I see them—I can see them from Evans' house, the ones that go out from near Denver, and they seem to go up once a week at least.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But unlike helicopter and airplane, these things really loiter in the sky.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes. They stay there.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You can really hang out.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Stay there.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Now, that's interesting.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: If you have a good pilot, you can say, "I like this spot."

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Okay.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And they might rise a little or have to descend a little in order to maintain that, but they'd probably do it—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —as a sort of lower carbon emissions than a helicopter.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So you'd be green.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, that's true. Helicopter flying is not fun, and—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You do it a lot, I gather, from—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I did a lot in Maine for one or two summers because I wanted to be lower than I could be in the Cessna that I normally went up with.

And then, so I did it just recently here and realized you don't have to just stay over the rivers and stay inland from Manhattan. They didn't give me any problem about going a couple of blocks inland, even though the day that I wanted to go the first time I paid my money and I was all set to go and they said, "Well, sorry, [Joseph] Biden is here in the center of New York and we can't go anywhere near there, so we can't go up at all tonight."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh. Was that recently?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I know what night it was. It was because my wife and I had gone to see *God of Carnage* [by Yasmina Reza], you know, the play.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And a quarter after 8:00, the curtain hasn't risen.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Ah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And so everybody is wondering what's wrong, and then all of a sudden in come all of these serious-looking men in suits, followed by Joe Biden. And he was coming to see the play that night. So—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, they wouldn't let me go—I wanted to go up after 8:00 but they said, "Oh, no, we can't go up at all tonight because Biden is in the area."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Biden's on Broadway, watching *God of Carnage* with Jimmy Smits. That's funny.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, anyway, so I ended up having to go the next night. That night was beautiful clear weather. It would have been beautiful blue light on the whole river and buildings. It's what I wanted.

So I had to go the next night and of course it was cloudy, windy. I had to go in a different helicopter than they first promised me, where they had to take off the door. It's very uncomfortable to be in that wind inside the helicopter and try to just photograph. I wasn't even trying to draw—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —which I usually do.

And so I finally said, "I have to go and photograph through your window because I'm going to get away from the open door." But this light is very grim, this gray light. And suddenly a cloud lifted over in the west and a long shaft of sunlight came in across Manhattan buildings —

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Wow.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —across the Chrysler Building and the Empire State and all that. And so I thought, ooh, I have to get that on camera. Maybe I can work from that. So it was nothing I'd ever worked from before. It wasn't blue at all. It was just this funny yellow patch, this shaft coming right through the middle of the picture, and then kind of gray down below.

So that's what I worked with when I showed this to MTA. I think they were thinking, "Well, that's not her signature night view." But it's what I got.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, artists grow, they change, they evolve.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right—you hope.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I mean, the market wants you to stick in the niche that's going to make money.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I know.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But the heart will have what the heart will have.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. Well, DC Moore is pretty good about gently introducing new sides of my work, because I know it's a problem for them. But, you know, eventually it will take—people will get used to that.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: A little while ago we were talking about composites, the whole idea of composites. And maybe it's because we're living in a photographic era that I think people, before the invention of photographs, always assumed that whatever was in a painting employed imagination.

I think post-photography, people—especially people whose work evinces a high level of verisimilitude, like John Moore, let's say, or Rackstraw Downes, one automatically compares it to what one might achieve with a photograph, especially somebody like Rackstraw Downes, with the curving horizons, seems to have an optical—you know, he's—because of course we don't see straight lines.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. No. That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He's just simply observing what his eye beholds, truthfully.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, over time—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Over time.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —including all the changes of light.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, and that whole diligence. I mean, in a lot of ways, his work is about the process of being there.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And that's really—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —it's not just being there to make a picture that looks a certain way about style or technique but about being in the presence of what's happening in that terrain.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, and the historical and the psychological situation of what buildings in the thing, what's the precedent to why that's there, why it's related to the terrain. He's investigating all of that. You don't see that exactly but he's doing it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, people forget, I think, that landscape painting really got a kick-start in the 19th century, I mean, post-Romanticism and all of that, but partly steamboats and tourism, and partly science, that a lot of artists were going out with expeditions accompanying, you know, the military expeditions or, you know, the geological expeditions.

And they were not merely thinking about the picturesque or the sublime—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —or the poetic thing; were thinking about geology and—there's even a great quote—did you see the *Cézanne in Provence* show at the National Gallery [of Art] a couple of years ago?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't think so.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There was a quote in it on the wall that was attributed to [Paul] Cézanne, where he says, "When I look at Mont Saint-Victoire I want to understand the geology"—he says, "how the rocks were formed, how the"—you know?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And I think when I was in school nobody would have dared talk about that—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —because that would have been too narrative—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —that would have been too out of the cannon.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Sure.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But this idea of composite imagery is interesting, because I know, for instance, John—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: John Moore is definitely—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: John Moore is—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —he's painting things from way far away.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He's confabbing elements.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He went out to Coatesville—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and he did these paintings of these ruined factories. And he's making these imaginary landscapes based on, you know, composites like that painting by [Frederic] Church that's up at the Met of the various different ancient ruins in a landscape, or even *Heart of the Andes* [1859] is a fiction. It's not really—nothing—it doesn't look—there's no place you can stand and see that.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Well, take a look at this thing on the corner of my studio, this black-and-white image. Do you have any idea who did that?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I have to get close and see it.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: You might need you—my glasses.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, this is—this is very much map-like. It seems like a drawing or an engraving that is like an imagined aerial view of something—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —historical.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. This is George Catlin.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, of course. Okay.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And it's black and white, but I only saw the color recently. Before that, I saw this in a catalogue—an old Hirschel & Adler catalogue, tried to find where to see it. They didn't even know at that time. It was in his show that was in Washington—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: At the Renwick [Gallery]?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So, I like the black and white better just because I think the graphic side of it is fantastic because it is a composite of totally different textures of different

heights.

So, on the top of the picture you'll see—what do you call those? Rapids. The rapids above Niagara Falls. And he's made them so blousy and invigorated, as if they were seen from two feet off the ground—off the water, I mean.

And then you see the Niagara Falls in the bowl of the American side and Canadian side. And you can tell that those are falls. But the scale of those is completely different than the scale of those rapids above.

And then, on the right side, you'll see the land—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Here.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And it's as if there were hardly any trees on that land at that time. Maybe they had all been cut down for firewood.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, actually there are more trees between the Atlantic Ocean and the Trans-Appalachian Plains than there have been—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —prior to World War II, going back 300 years—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —because of course everything was cleared for wood for lumber—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And for building and for firewood.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and for building and for firewood—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and fuel—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and charcoal and a hundred—and paper and a hundred other things.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, that—I've never seen that image before. It's really—what it is, is it's like an isometric view of a map.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He's basically taken a map and given it a dimension—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —because the language of representation of the terrain on the right—which would be—that would be the American side? No. No, that would be the Canadian side. It really reads like a map.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And even the language of how to represent a tree or—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —a fence rail or—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —or a rail fence.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. So, when I first saw this, I wondered whether he had gotten up into a balloon. But this is pretty early. This was—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, balloons—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —1827.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —existed but I don't know—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't know if he's—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —in America, how much—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —they were in use. I know that they were in use in the Civil War—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's 1865.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —but they were helium—they were hydrogen balloons.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Okay.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So, considering the amount of work he was doing around this time—which is actually *Fortress of the Indian Chiefs*—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So, I understood that maybe he was doing a few hand-colored prints—this actually—the original thing is actually a hand-colored print. There's just one, though. It was in that show in Washington. And he may have been making things like that to sell at country fairs to finance his trips out—trips out West to do the portraits of the Indians.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, he was a portrait painter—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and he—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's mostly what he was.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He tells the story about going to Independence Hall about this time and seeing a delegation of Native Americans from somewhere in the West, and being inspired to paint them before they all disappeared. I mean, he was very enterprising, and perhaps one could see him as an anthropologist in the same sense that [John James] Audubon was an ornithologist, popularizing the science end of things while celebrating the art.

And Catlin is a fascinating character.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But what's interesting about Niagara Falls is that it wasn't really painted that much before the 1820s. I think there was a painting by Morse—Samuel [F.B.] Morse from 1826.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Okay.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But remember, the Niagara frontier was a bloody battlefield for three years during the War of 1812. It was where many of the major battles were fought between the British and the Canadians—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Canadians, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and the Americans. They're about to celebrate the bicentennial of the war in which they beat the Yanks next year. So that should be interesting.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But, yeah, when you think about it, most people, I imagine, would leap to the—you know, to the Church painting or to the later pictures, but there were quite a few—I think Rembrandt Peale was there in 1819. But part of it was that it was recent history of the war with Britain.

But Catlin, yeah, this is—I've never seen this image.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And it only exists in Xerox. I made the Xerox from a catalogue photograph of the hand-colored print but was in black and white.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Somebody must have it somewhere.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it was in that show—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —but not in this form because I've accentuated the graphicness by my Xeroxing, using the Xerox to get very black, because the actual thing doesn't have that strong a contrast between, say, the land and the water. I've—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You've pushed it.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I've pushed it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But that's what I like about it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No, it's wonderful.

Well, you've seen the Mappa Mundi—Fra Mauro's Mappa Mundi in, you know, Palazzo—you know, the Palazzo Ducale in Venice, that great big map there?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah. Yes. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: These are—I mean, thinking about maps as paintings is an interesting thing.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. There's a whole history there of engravings that were probably sold as if they were—the person was in a balloon, but probably just because they knew how to map.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But, interestingly, yeah, I don't think anybody visually experienced that, the bird's eye view, but they—once they understood the principles of reliable cartography—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —which is late Renaissance art—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —I guess, is that you could then add a dimensional quality. But I'm thinking of—in Italy I've seen several paintings of towns in the Veneto region, where in the town hall there will be a fresco or something of the region, seen from above.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Not a bird's eye view but God's eye view.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But this whole idea of the composite is interesting.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Maps, pictures—do you know—have you ever heard of Seth Eastman?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He was a rival of Catlin's. He was an Army officer who was hired by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft to paint Indians, but for the government. And Catlin was trying to get work from, you know, the government and failed.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And, actually, his last attempt ruined him financially. That's a whole other story. But Eastman actually was an honorary member of the National Academy of Design, and a pretty respectable painter. But he wrote the first manual of topographical drawing for the Military Academy at West Point that for over a hundred years had a drawing academy that Robert Weir—whose son was—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: J. Alden Weir?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That was one of his sons. His other son, John Ferguson Weir, was the head of the Street School of Art at Yale that now is the Yale School of Art. He was the first head of it in 1969. So, there's this whole hidden history of American art.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's quite interesting.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But Weir—J. Alden Weir had a daughter who married a Mormon, and now there's going to be a big Weir family show out at—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Salt Lake?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Brigham Young University, either later in the year or early next year or so.

It goes round and round.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It does.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How did you come to this whole idea of composites, and how do you connect it to other interests, like the thangka paintings and—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, that was a big part of it. Before I started making thangkas, I guess it—the major way it took for me to get interested is when I—I talked Rudy into going to Hong Kong with me to continue shooting for a film that I had suggested, that he was happy to work on, named *Night Fantasies* [1991], with music by Elliott Carter, who was a good friend of Rudy's, and I knew him too.

And two or three pianists had commissioned Elliott to write this piece called *Night Fantasies* [1980] and so I said, "Let's go to Hong Kong," because my son Tom said to me, "Oh, that's a good place for you, Mom. You know, you"—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: A lot of tall buildings, lot of tall hills.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: A lot of neon, because I'd done work in Japan before that.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So, we go off and we do what I had started to do in Japan, called hotel hopping, every four or five nights change to a hotel that had a different view. And I would be drawing away with pastel and Rudy would be out there shooting various things.

And when we were thinking about just the movie, he said to me, "Anything you want in this

movie you have to shoot. I'll help you with the exposure, but it's your holding the camera that's important—how you move the camera, how you choose, whatever." Okay.

So we're going to—we're using the camera at these different spots that I had drawn at, too. And every time I wanted to shoot at night, he said, "You have to flip this little lever so that when you look through the viewfinder, light is not going to escape into the camera, into the film, so it cuts down the amount of light you see. But anything strong color, like a neon sign or a bright incandescent light or something will show up right away and everything else is kind of black, because you're cutting down the amount of light."

And I kept looking at him—while I was shooting I kept saying, "Gee, this is kind of gorgeous," you know. "Gee, maybe this is better than what I've been drawing. When I'm drawing, I'm drawing in all the backgrounds of buildings and the neon as well. Hmm."

So, meanwhile, after a certain—a couple of weeks—we were there about five weeks—he said, "Okay, I think I've got enough. I'm going to go back to New York. If you want to stay and do some more drawing, you know, stay a couple weeks and then come back." So I did that. I kept going to other spots and did more drawings.

And then I got in a plane to come home and it hit me: What I saw through the camera as the shutter thing shut down was more dramatic than the way I had been drawing it. So, as soon as I got home, I Xeroxed all my color drawings, cut them up, collaged them, turned them—put elements upside down and then redrew them in pastel, enhancing certain things, especially the drama of the dark ground.

And so, that was a whole batch of work which then I painted from. That was a lot of compositing. I mean, I used stuff from where we had been in hotel number two, number five, and put in this, and was actually doing—making big collages too with this kind of heavy paper—that kind of paper, in black, and then making new elements in pastel to move around and turn them upside down and do all this stuff.

I was having a great time. I was seeing a lot of Michael Mazur at that time because we were doing—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —we were doing a lot of work for the Library of Congress, buying prints. Well, there's another person who—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —stylistically did whatever he wanted.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: He needed, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Wonderful painter, wonderful draftsman, great printmaker—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —did whatever—had no allegiance to any style.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. That's right. So we had lots of discussions, and he would come into New York once in a while and come and look in the studio, and we would talk about what I was trying to do. And I think even seeing some of the things he had done with some compositing things were a help to me.

So, I continued that a bit further after Hong Kong. And so, some of the work that happens in my shows has some of that, which I kind of disguised it some of the times. I kind of made it look as if what you're looking at is all perfectly plausible.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Beautiful.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I didn't have things turned upside down so much anymore. I was just making it, for color reasons, to do something.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Certain spatial transitions, though—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Having a look at your work, certain spatial shifts—I could almost think about relating it to filmmaking in terms of montage and editing.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I remember when I was at Yale, Al Held made me read *Film Form* [Harcourt Brace and Company, New York: 1949], [Sergei] Eisenstein's essays. There was one he especially said, "Well, don't read the whole book. Just read this one essay about a kabuki performance and about how these curtains were used to create a sense of moving through a landscape, sort of how it would—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, if anyone is interested, they can read the book.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But it seems like in terms of conventional representational depiction of space, something else is going on in your work.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So when you're doing all this collaging, obviously you're not thinking about the history of art, like, oh, cubism or any of that.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You're—like, what is you focus?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I'm trying to make—I'm trying to make color do something. I didn't start out thinking I was much of a colorist, but I got more and more interested in trying to become a better colorist and looking at a lot of other painters for—the ones who were really good colorists—and trying to make some kind of abstraction within the representation.

And so, I kind of sloughed off that for a while when I was—oh, after 9/11, I had a lot of trouble getting into high-rises where I could get multiple views such as I'd had in Hong Kong —

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —or in the World Trade Center. That was a big help with—about compositing things, because I got these different floors to work on in the two buildings of the World Trade Center for one whole year, or six months or so.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There were studios up there.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And there were a number of artists who had—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, the World Views, which was—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —that program they had for about 20 artists every six months could get —but the earliest group, which I was in the early group, with Rackstraw and other people.

Then we had a lot of keys—or the same key would open about five or six different places at different heights. So, I could go from the 24th floor to the 37th floor to the 45th floor in the various buildings.

And sometimes I could look at the same Cass Gilbert building from the 24th floor and then again at another building, and I'd see it from a different angle and different lighting 30 stories above. And I'd have them in the same picture. And you couldn't figure out, why is it bigger here and there, not there, and so forth.

So that was a marvelous situation, but the trouble was I was doing a gigantic conventional—more conventional painting of Chicago at the time. I didn't have a lot of time to work on this, so I was going and doing it as fast as I could on weekends, and then working on this gigantic thing, which I don't like that much. I don't want it anymore. I wasn't positive—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Where is it now?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Hmm. Actually, I think it got sold at auction. It was actually for the head of Fruit of the Loom, who went bankrupt for—he took Fruit of the Loom to bankruptcy. And so it was seized by the creditors and it ended up coming up for auction in Maine. And Bridget Moore went up and bought it, and she's still got it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, where in Maine? Portland?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: There was a big auction there.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And a couple of other things I'd done of Chicago ended up there. But they—one of them went to Skowhegan—no, went to Colby [College Museum of Art].

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, that's good.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So there's a painting—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, they're got a nice museum.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think it's a terrific museum.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, great museum.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It may be the most lively museum in Maine, consistently.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, what's the name of that auction house in Portland, this big—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Barridoff [Galleries Fine Art Auctions]?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Barridoff, that's right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Okay, that's where it came up.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And somebody told Bridget about the stuff that was coming up for auction, and she went up and suggested to Colby they buy one. And then another one went to University of Chicago—some museum in part of the university. I don't know. Anyway, they all went different places.

And I was doing a lot of compositing in my Chicago work, but not that giant one. That was just too big, you know. And I started introducing dragonflies, which you wouldn't think a dragonfly would be up in the aerial view, but it had become a personal symbol from coming into my barn in Maine, and they would sometimes knock themselves against the skylight and knock themselves out.

And then I would save them and look at them, and started making little drawings of them and then started incorporating them in big paintings. But I had to hide them a little bit so that you weren't so aware how big this thing is. So I kind of, by the lighting, I introduced them against something that was camouflaging it a little bit.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: They're tremendous critters, aren't they?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, fantastic, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, I've seen a few of these images. They're a little bit not unlike the

hummingbirds of Martin Heade. You know his hummingbird paintings?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: They're really very, very imaginative pictures.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He went to the Andes to look at hummingbirds, and Church kept sending him letters saying, paint the mountains, you know. [They laugh.] Then his orchids and hummingbirds and all this great Andean landscape was just sort of the background—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: For the hummingbirds, right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's interesting; a lot of these artists from the 19th century who are—oh, there we go.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Here's a nice little—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: A little—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —dragonfly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —note card or a—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Somebody just gave me that, and I was trying to use that in that mosaic project, but it didn't quite work.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's a very important symbol also in a lot of Japanese art.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's true, and turn-of-century French art.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yes.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's not so much in painting but it's a lot of little sculptures or jewelry pieces are beautiful things made probably having seen the Japanese things.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yes. I think the Le Japonisme or—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —or the Art Nouveau impulse—beautiful—oh, [James Abbott McNeill] Whistler I guess was using it on his butterfly.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yes. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But there seems to be more interest today in 19th century painting than 30, 40 years ago, like Heade or Church or—do you have any interest in any of that?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, I like Heade a lot.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You like Heade a lot?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You like Catlin. You've got Catlin here.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Who would you cross the street, you know, to look at among those painters?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Any Tibetan thangka.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Any Tibetan thangka.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Any Tibetan thangka.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But there's lots of incredible ones.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, but among, let's say, American artists or, you know, the European artists of the 19th century, who do you—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: van Gogh.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay, he's the one.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Colorist.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But the pattern mark and—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And I like [Edouard] Vuillard for the patterning.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Vuillard, yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And [Pierre] Bonnard for the color.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: What about [Albert] Marquet for hanging out of hotel windows?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yes, for sure.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That seemed to have been his MO too—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's true.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —except they weren't so high above the ground.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I know.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Or he might have been—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: They didn't make them that high then.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —or he might have stolen a march on you.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Well, he went to Morocco and places like that. And I think he influenced [Henri] Matisse to go to Morocco—or Matisse interested him. Of course, Matisse is incredible.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's amazing there are so few of his pictures available to see in museums. A lot of them are still in private collections, I guess.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, that's true.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But he worked fairly small and fairly quickly—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and made many, many, many, many pictures.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, and used hotels.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Used hotels.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And that's what I'm using a lot now, because I can't get permissions to get into apartments where I can control the lighting a little so when I work at night I'm not getting a lot of overly lit rooms that are reflecting in the glass.

So I started going to—well, I did the images for the *Two Bridges* [2008] from the Millennium Hotel, not looking at the World Trade Center side, but the other side—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —looking at Brooklyn. And then I did something in Philadelphia of Logan Circle and a cathedral—a dome with a cathedral. And then Beacon Hotel—I just had finished a painting. It's still rolled up in a roll down there.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, great.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And has the backside of the American Museum of Natural History in night light with the Rose [Center for Earth and Space], a little bit of the glow, of Polshek's glow.

Then I did get an apartment where the people were away half the week that would live in Long Island during the week and come back on weekends. So, during the week I could go to their apartment and do an image of the Bobst Library at NYU in the springtime, where the red stone—it's going to be incredible fun to paint that red stone of [Philip] Johnson's against some early spring foliage.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Wild green stuff.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, right. So that's in that role too that I haven't—I've only done the under-bank so far.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So this is all work that you start up in Maine and that—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, or I start here and take it to Maine.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You start here and you take—it's all portable.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I just roll it up in a roll and take it up.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How do you feel about the idea of art as landscape painting, as travelogue?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it's okay if it's good painting. You know, I've seen lots of gruesome paintings of places I'd love to go to, but they're not paintings.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I guess we should add to the list of artists—of artists who hang of hotel windows—I think we'd have to add Oscar Kokoschka to that list, his later work.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, did he do hotels too?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah. Well, he did these landscapes, remember, at the end of this life.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It would be an interesting exhibition.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It would.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: People—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: When I was at RISD I was very interested in his city views, you know.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yes.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: London—where else did he—where else did the—anyway, they're interesting. The brushwork is beautiful.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How did you become interested in the art of Tibet?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I became a Buddhist.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: When?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: About '71. And it was because I went to Japan to paint, to do my hotel hopping. Meanwhile, Rudy was taken to visit some Tibetan Buddhist prayer things around New York—

[END OF DISC.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, resuming, let me ask you a little bit about something we started speaking about last time, which was also addressed in the interview you did with Barbara Schikler 21 years ago, and that's the whole idea of sort of gendered seeing. And I know

there's been a lot of discussion—we all are aware of all of the discussions about race, gender, ethnicity.

How do you think any of that informs your own identity as an artist? Were you ever strongly identifying with yourself as a woman of Franco-American ancestry or—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't think so. [They laugh.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, I don't either. I just—I mean, I just guess what I'd like you to do, if you would be so kind, is to maybe speak a little bit to the dialogue around these things and how it's affected you over the years, especially the last two decades since your last interview.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: There was a period about, say, between '70 and '80, I think, that there seemed to be an enormous bursting of energy and flowering of women's art, which is like all women have been doing it but suddenly somehow it was getting shown and some of it was being taken to newer levels by all that acceptance. I'm not sure that's—it's not like that anymore, that kind of a feeling of surprise: Look what we've got here. There's some great new ways to look at things.

A lot of those women who had careers in galleries don't anymore because they're middle aged or older, or their gallery collapsed. They're looking to find a new gallery. That's not easy. It's kind of embarrassing at their age that they have to set out and do that again.

I'm totally lucky that I have had good response—first a short time at Fischbach Gallery but then a long period with Brooke Alexander and Carolyn Alexander, and then now with Bridget Moore and the people that work with her. So I haven't had the kind of difficulties that contemporaries of mine have.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Do you think it's just merely, you know, the conditions of the market, or do you think that there's some kind of—something that has to do—you alluded to the age issue, that it's easy to get somebody to show your work when you're young and beautiful—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and as a lot of artists were, you know, people like, I guess Hannah Wilke, for one, and others who show up and are knockouts—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and of course everybody wants to show them.

Or is it because the tastes have also changed? Or is it a perfect storm of all of those?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's a combination. But take someone like Lynda Benglis, who—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, yes.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —who was, like, sexy woman when she first came on, did a very daring thing by having her photograph in the *Artforum*—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, right, the gender-bending—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, we all remember that image.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. And yet it didn't let her—she didn't get stuck there.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: She's gone on and doing—she's had a big variety of kinds of work over her career and now she's my age or so and doing very strong work, very serious. And there's new kinds of things coming out all the time. And she's getting exhibited.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So, that's her—that's her perseverance a lot.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So who do you look to as a young artist in the previous generation, people like [Grace] Hartigan or [Helen] Frankenthaler or Joan Mitchell? Who are your—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, Joan Mitchell interested me a great deal with her work. I saw a lot of infinities to what her subject matter really was, although our styles weren't very similar, like that—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Do you mean landscape?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The landscape, yeah. And I thought it was interesting that Hartigan started out calling herself George Hartigan.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And she was smart, you know.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And of course Louise Nevelson would be in that—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —that posse.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, right. Right.

Personally, I knew Jane Freilicher for a long time, and still do, of course. And I thought her sticking to her way of painting has brought forth some very beautiful things. And it took her a long time to really get really strong form in her work. I mean, she was looking at things carefully, painting carefully, but she really has taken off with color.

And I once was in a group show with her where I saw that her painting totally stole the whole room, because even though it was small, the color was really ringing true, really beautiful. And I just saw—there's an announcement I just got of a very yellow painting of hers that's in a show going up at Tibor de Nagy [Gallery] any day, I think.

And it's just—wow, she just—she's eliminated a lot of stuff she doesn't need, but what she's done with her color is very beautiful. And she's way up there. She's 80, I think.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, do you think that the prospects have improved or not for women artists?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I think there are certainly more galleries. Whether they're stable and strong and will really promote the artists is a little bit questionable.

But I think there's more different kinds of work. It's easier to get to show now, whether you're a woman or a man, but particularly for women where it might be quite gender—now, you take something like Florine Stettheimer—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yes.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —she was—it was incredible that she could show those paintings, and yet she was in the right milieu and the work is very interesting. So, she went great guns the way she felt she needed to.

But I see—I see a lot of, like, students of mine or other younger artists, they have to hit really hard with something very unique to get shown. You can't just do a nice little landscape or you are not going to get shown. And if I'm teaching and a student brings in a very nice but ordinary landscape, I say, "Take this somewhere you don't know—somewhere else. You know, take it somewhere but take—start right here and then go into it."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, who do you—who do you feel are artists to watch, landscape painters—like women landscape painters? Like Altoon Sultan or—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —Marjorie Portnow or April Gornik or—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: All three of those. Let's see—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I mean, just if you—if you were going to—if you were going to be invited, like Robert Gober was invited to do the Burchfield ["Heat Waves in a Swamp: The Paintings of Charles Burchfield, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA, 2009] show—if you were going to be invited by, let's say, the Met or the Whitney to—or, you know, the Blanton in Austin, Texas, or anywhere, to be the guest curator for a show of contemporary women landscape painters, who would you put in the show?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Lois Dodd. Know her work?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Of course.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: She was at Swarthmore for a while, right? Or was—no—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Not Lois Dodd, no, that's—strike that. Harriet Shorr. That's—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, Harriett Shorr. Yeah. Yeah, Harriet has done some very interesting things but she's just lost her gallery. And she had a very hard time—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Who's she showing with?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: She was showing with a very far downtown gallery called Cheryl Pelavin, way off the beaten track. And I think Cheryl really gave her a great support, even though—and maybe sold some things, but even though she was way off in this odd place where people had to really want to see the work to go.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: They wouldn't just wander through like they would on 57th Street. But now she's had to close. So now Harriet, what is she going to do now? I don't know. And the work is getting stronger and stronger—big, very ambitious paintings, somewhat influenced by Alex Katz.

Susan Shatter just lost her gallery. She paints the landscapes in Maine—water—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —water landscapes in Maine.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: She's also at the Art Students League. I think she—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: She is?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: She also teaches there.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I think she teaches at the—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: At the National Academy [Museum and School]?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: National Academy School. She was head of the academy for a while.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. Of course.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But now she's teaching at the school.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Which is, I think, closed, undergoing some kind of renovation.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, they're doing a renovation—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —but I'm not sure the school is closing. I think that the museum is closing. The ground floor definitely is going to be a big renovation.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, that's a comeback story. I guess that's another conversation.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

Do you know the work of Emily Brown?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Of course.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, she's done those beautiful large sumi drawings.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Drawings, yeah. Emily is in Philadelphia.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: They were there, yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. She's a good friend. And she's doing collage now, this summer, hoping to show it next fall. And I guess she has Gallery Joe in Philadelphia—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, in Philadelphia.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —but no place in New York.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's often the case. I mean, there are some very strong regional scenes, and with a lot of these galleries going to [Art Basel] Miami or Toronto or other art fairs, makes them fairly competitive with, you know, the New York—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It used to be that you'd have to have a gallery here because all the collectors came here.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Now all the collectors are at the art fairs.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, that's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, it's a different paradigm.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Here's a woman who's very interesting and just kind of hit the New York gallery scene recently—Clytie Alexander, shows now at Betty Cuningham. Her work is very architectural in that she paints on aluminum panels that are suspended from the wall by two or three inches.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I've seen her work, yeah. It's interesting.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Her perforations and—so the work is painted on the backside, a color that hits the wall behind and shows through the perforations. And she's doing bigger and bigger ones now. She's having a hard time financially.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, it's a moment. You know, the blue chip art market has basically drawn 99 percent of the money out of the rest of the contemporary market, where they used to be a sort of multi-tiered, you know, market—I hate to call it a market but it is a market, I guess. But multi-tiered emerging artists sort of—artists on the rise, you know, the mid-career artists seem—I mean, there was—and some people sort of got to a level and just stayed there, and other people advanced, you know.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But now it seems like a lot of the collectors—there's a book I think I told you about—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I should know the name of that book.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: *The $12[Million] Stuffed Shark[: The Curious Economics of Contemporary Art]* by Don Thompson [London: Aurum Press Ltd., 2008], a Toronto—University of Toronto LSE-trained economist—which is very interesting because he details how certain very high-priced corners of the art market function, and function not only as media for investment but social climbing and reputation establishment and image branding,

not only for the artist but for the buyer. Somebody who is nobody from nowhere who earns a lot of money can very quickly establish themselves as someone of importance.

When I interviewed Louis Meisel, he shared a story about how he advised a wealthy man how to become important through becoming basically the patron of a movement that he dubbed photorealism.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So that's an interesting story.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I'll bet. Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But somehow that story seemed much more ingenious and exciting than what seems to be going on now, at least according to Thompson, who is—who doesn't really take a position. He doesn't judge it. He just merely explains it.

And for that reason it's interesting because I think people are—it's hard to find a person who doesn't feel one way about it or another—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and a lot of the dealers I interviewed previously over the years lamented loudly how art has become increasingly about money and less about art, or the art market, I should say, has become increasingly about money and less about art.

I didn't mean to talk so much. I'm not Charlie Rose.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: What's the first name of Thompson?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Don Thompson.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Don. And it's million—*The $12 million*—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: *The $12 Stuffed Shark.*

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —*Stuffed Shark*.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Somebody reading this is going to think I'm getting—I'm doing all this product placement. We're talking about art supply stores and paint manufacturers and books.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, I know.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But they're just part of the discussion.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, artists are going to talk about those things, you know.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But do you feel that women—for instance, can you name a woman who is a blue chip artist, equal to Jeff Koons, Damien Hirst—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Equal to—oh, god. All right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —the late Andy Warhol.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Well, it was Agnes Martin—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —but she got too old to keep going.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: She wasn't able to live any longer, so—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right. But, yeah, there's not many others.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Do you think we're going to see the late Louise Bourgeois becoming—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah, I think so.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, posthumous is the road to blue chip for women?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes, and some men too.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And some men too.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, that's what—Rudy's photography has gotten pretty good play after he died.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He's very well-known, obviously—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —but also for his early films and—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah, and he was influential with students about film.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, do you have any insights into how a woman should conduct herself, let's say a younger artist coming up? What kinds of things should she be mindful of in terms of how gender plays in this business, in this world, in this milieu?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think that must be the most personal question, how much a woman's gender orientation is usable in her art. And some—it's not so much.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, in your case, I mean, it's not—it's not immediately obvious—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —what the gender of the artist would be. It's about form. It's about space. It's about masterful composition. It's about orchestrating all of these elements. It's not about, as some people—Judy Chicago, Kiki Smith, [Marina] Abromović—you know, sort of dealing directly in their work with—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —gendered imagery—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —genitalia and so forth.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But, you know, one wouldn't necessarily know, having a look at your work, that it's being made by a woman—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —any more than one would look at Martin Puryear's work and know it was by an African-American.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. True.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So how do you feel about, you know, the women or anyone—anyone who has sort of a gender-ethic niche apart from the sort of the DWEM, the dead white European male genre?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I've seen, like, Amy Sillman and a woman who just had a beautiful painting in the *Times*, made especially for—I think it was the New Museum—Nicole Eisenman.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Nicole Eisenman, yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That painting really rocked me off my socks, you know. I hadn't seen that—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: She's a maverick. She's a real maverick.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, I wasn't so excited by her work before, but now—Dana Schutz, maybe some of that work is terrific and some of it isn't.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So how do you weigh in on a person like Lisa Yuskavage?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Hmm. Well, she's got an angle that I see is—it's going to be hard to keep that really alive for a long time unless it changes somewhat.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You mean the pin-up—ironic sort of—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —rehash of pin-ups?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right. Yeah, the painting style is good—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —but, well, I'm interested in paintings that I want to look at for a long time—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —if I owned it, let's say.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Not editorials in color.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: In paint. So you feel that—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I sort of worry that she's going to have to struggle to make it very old-masterish to get a broader way, which might mean the sexual imagery may change. Maybe she's going to put babies in there or something. I don't know.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Nuns.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Nuns? Has she—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Nuns and babies. I don't know.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I'm just—I mean, you know, some people have sort of compared her to John Currin—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —with the same era at Yale—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —School of Art. But one wonders, you know, about the imagery—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —in the narrative. We spoke about narrative last time.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The new narrative, right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, what about somebody like Jenny Saville or Paula Rego or some of, you know, the Brits?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: They're interesting. They're interesting. But I don't—I don't think they're going to—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Cecily Brown—right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, Cecily Brown—terrific paint.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't see that they're getting the promotion that their fellow Brits—men—are getting.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I guess Jenny Saville has become sort of—has edged in onto the fringes of, you know, the blue chips.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Blue chips.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I think her prices are up there now.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Okay.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Or an American artist like Susanna Coffey?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah. It's not easy for her by any means—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But she's a good painter.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: She's a good painter but she's not getting high prices.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But she'll keep going.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No, she's very—she's a—I mean, I know her a little bit. She's a very bright, very—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —dedicated artist.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Terrific persistence.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, a lot of discipline.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And she'll take it as far as she can, and it will veer a little bit, but—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, she's a person who I know will grow—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and will keep changing and evolving.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. I think you're right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And so, I mean, she already has—I mean, she came to that style, the self-portraits, after being very involved and very committed to a kind of abstract style of painting.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, I never knew those.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, not many people do. But when she was living in Chicago—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: A long time, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and I first knew her, that was how she was painting. They were, you know, outstanding pictures but, I mean, it was a different thing altogether.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Do you think a woman abstract painter has any better chance of getting toward blue chip than a representational painter?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's an interesting question. I just found out that Will Barnet, who is about to turn a hundred—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —his family name is Goldberg.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Interesting.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And that he was in fact—that he is in fact Jewish, and in fact the name was sort of like a Hollywood casting choice, I guess, to decide to create an image that was not ethnic.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Hmm. But now people are not bothering to change their name by most —

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No.

[Cross talk.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Actors.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, painters. Tom Nozkowski.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's a hard name to spell.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, the old joke is that, you know, the casting agent in Hollywood is talking to this young athlete. He says, "Listen, babe." He says, "Nobody is ever going to remember Schwarzenegger." [They laugh.]

So, I think you're right. I think it's a generational thing, that back in the 1920s when he showed up in New York to study at the Art Students League, it was like—it was different. There was a lot of anti-Semitism and it was a different world.

But, I mean, how much of a discussion about gender or ethnicity or race do you think belongs in a serious work of art?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Some. Some.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: If you care about it.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right. It sort of pushes the work into an area that's very particular because it's a real thing if the person is, you know, evolving that as part of their life. Like, I wonder about Mimi Gross.

Mimi Gross had a lot of talent—has a lot of talent, has done interesting things, hasn't had much help with dealers—I mean, Salander-O'Reilly [Gallery].

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oops.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes, right. Right. Red Grooms wasn't very good to her for a long time, in acknowledging her part in their work.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It was really a partnership.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It was—extremely strong partnership. And you can see why it broke up the marriage.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And she came from very strong parents who were also involved in the art—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. That's right. In fact, there's a big show of Chaim Gross' work going up at his house now, more or less, this week or next week or something. And that work is very ethnic, you know. And yet, he came about in this period of the '20s where [Abraham] Walkowitz and a number of other Jewish artists—[Jack] Levine, the—not Levine but—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Robert] Arneson?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, the brothers.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Soyer.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The Soyers.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The Soyers. They—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Moses and Raphael Soyer.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: They were doing pretty well, you know. And there was a kind of respect for what they were doing. That was Depression-era, so there was a certain quality of the work that has to do with coming through that. And Chaim was very much in the top of his field for—I remember *Life* magazine having a Chaim Gross on the cover when I was little, and thinking, wow, you know.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I think a lot of artists like Jacques Lipchitz and, I guess later, somebody like Reuben Nakian.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But [Arshile] Gorky, interestingly enough, there was a connection between Will Barnet and Gorky when Barnet came to New York—when Will came to New York. One of the first artists he met and established a relationship was, as he put it, "some guy who was pretending to be a Russian."

YVONNE JACQUETTE: [Laughs.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He was an Armenian pretending to be a Russian.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, I guess maybe it was a period when people were pretending to be something other than they were.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. John Graham, was he supposed to be kind of a count or something?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, well, it's like the Balthus—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —legend too.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You know, was he really the son of [Rainer Maria] Rilke? Was he really a Polish nobleman? Was he—you know, and I think he probably—some people would probably quarrel with this, but one wonders if there wasn't a certain amount of what we now call personal image branding occurring in all of that.

But then it gets back to identity, right? And so, how much of an artist's gender should be their artistic identity? Do you think it's up to each individual?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I do.

Did you happen to see this—I guess you call it a blog—on the Web, a review of the Abstract Expressionist show at the—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: MoMA?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: MoMA, by—what's her name? A good friend of Mimi's, and a good—the writer who brought the [Jack] Tworkov papers out—Mira Schor.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, okay.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Very interesting, long discussion about the branding that the MoMA is contributing to, and how—it let a few little peanuts slip out. I haven't seen it yet so I don't know. I mean, there probably is one Tworkov in there.

And then there's probably a [Bradley Walker] Tomlin there. But how they had sort of selected some of these major artists to be the ones that were going to remain blue chip right

to the end of their lives, and are being shown as if this is really it; these are the greatest ones.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And others who sort of were—you were talking about that before, people like Tomlin, people like James Brooks—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —people like [William] Baziotes—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —people like—although he wasn't really here, but they stick him in with them, you know, like [Mark] Tobey—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: They're sort of lumped in.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Richard Pousette-Dart.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: All these sort of—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You know, the greater—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —New York School.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, that's true.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So—[Milton] Resnick, people like that.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's interesting that they're now coming again to light because—of course everybody knows [Jackson] Pollock, [Barnett] Newman, [Willem] de Kooning—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —the biggies. Ad Reinhardt is another one who is sort of off the radar a little bit.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But I'm sure this show will inspire a lot of interest in that whole era.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But I haven't been to see the show yet, but I'm wondering how much, in the catalogue, they actually address the issue of how much hype went in to trying to promote AbEx as sort of art of the free world during the Cold War.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah, the [U.S. Department of] State—absolutely.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Rockefeller's State Department.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yep.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: MoMA was sort of the—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —on point with all of that.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Sure.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And actually, when I interviewed Barbara Rose, she spoke about how rapidly [Francisco] Franco saw that this was going against nationalism. It actually started during World War II—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and Soviet Communism, and immediately got behind it. And it was very hard for artists in Spain at that time to be working in a representational way, whereas the opposite was obviously true in, you know, the Soviet bloc. Interesting period of history.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, but all of that didn't come to light until the mid-1980s, I think. So, who knew, you know? Who knew? Who knew?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: What about the Constructivists?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, yeah. They—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Did they get much acclaim or rewards—and I think—when they first made those paintings in the teens, or not? They kind of—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I don't think so. I think they identified with a revolution early on, but as it became institutionalized and as Stalin took over, they all went away.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There was no more interest in that—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —because Stalin was a Philistine and a thug.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Weren't there some good women in there?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yes.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: [Natalia] Goncharova

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And there's somebody who was in the "Bauhaus [1919-1933: Workshops for Modernity," 2009] show I think with a weaving, and it was beautiful. I forget her name, but, you know, like she might have been influencing all the guys in that period and we hardly know her.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, when you were teaching, did you adopt a different tone in addressing your female students as opposed to the male students? Did you take them aside and offer them advice or—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Maybe a bit.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Maybe a bit. But in that—two other artists at the Academy that happened to go the days that I was going, which was a Thursday—Kathy [Katherine] Bradford and a woman who's a sculptor that lives up right near Martin Puryear whose father was a well-known British sculptor—Gillian Jagger. We three were there that day, and we decided to organize—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: At the Academy—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: At the Pennsylvania Academy [of Fine Arts].

JAMES MCELHINNEY: At the Pennsylvania Academy.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. We decided to do critiques with the three of us running them because we happened to be there that day. But it was sort of an idea of let's show both the men and the women here what it's like to hear this dialogue among these women.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And so they were very successful. I mean, people who on other days weren't even there would come to hear the critiques. The students, they got a lot out of it. You know, we enjoyed it tremendously because it was putting us on our toes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, is Kathy still—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: She's there still.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: In Maine she had a house outside of Brunswick.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: She's in Maine for the summer, yeah, and she's here—she has a studio in Brooklyn, showing quite a bit now. She's with [Ed] Thorp [Gallery] now, and having some shows in other places, smaller work.

It's going to be a terrific auction at the Earth School down in—on the other side of Tompkins Square. It's one of those chapter—charter schools—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Charter schools.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —where quite a lot of the parents are artists. And so—and they're losing their money from the city for classes like art classes or gym or music or something.

So they went around and asked their friends, plus their own—using their own work—asked them for a work of art, a small work of art, and then you can buy a ticket for $250 to go to the auction and you'll be guaranteed—you can choose from this big pile of interesting art—most of it's interesting.

And if you happen to be lucky—I guess it's a draw. If you're lucky to get one or two or three third place, you've got the whole thing to select. And Kathy has given a very good painting of hers for that.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, she's a fine painter.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: She's an interesting painter.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, she really is. Yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: She is.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I knew her years ago in Maine when I had a teaching job—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —right out of school anyway. But she was just starting at that time—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Well, she—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —the late '70s.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right, because she was bringing up her twins first.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. And that's quite—I mean, she's quite a—she's—it was a real achievement, I think—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —because she is kind of a single mom and—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. And she was pointed in a different direction by her parents about marrying a wealthy Maine important male. So she married a politician, who I've never heard of since—Peter Bradford.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, who was the head of the nuclear—like the NRC [Nuclear Regulatory Commission] or something.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He was—yeah. Interesting.

But, no, I've noted her progress over the years—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and she's done very, very well.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. She was at graduate school when my son was in undergraduate at SUNY Purchase, and that's how I first met her, although I knew that she was in Maine. So —

JAMES MCELHINNEY: A real non-traditional student, I mean, really—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —entering into a painting career.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So this an interesting—actually, her story would be an interesting person—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —for a younger artist, a woman artist—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —you know, to look at.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: This is a possible—because I guess at a certain—a certain generation assumed that if you were going to follow the conventional path, as she did as a young woman, and get married and have a family, that—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That was it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —you'd have to wait until you were an empty nester—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —in order to have any dreams. But—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. She went through what she needed to do.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Like Alice Neel.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, gosh.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.] I mean—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Boy, what a powerhouse there she was.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I mean, speak about a life of adventure—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —not all of it fun, I'm sure.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You must have met her when you were teaching at Moore or elsewhere.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I didn't meet—I never met her more than a minute or two when she had a show up at the Whitney, but Rudy certainly knew her real well.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, she was close to Dianne Vanderlip, who I guess—was she teaching—was she at Moore when you were at Moore?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Maybe, but I didn't know.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: She ran the gallery there for a while.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, maybe so.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The Moore—when I first was asked to teach there, it was all guys.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No, it's all women.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The teachers were all guys.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, the men were all—yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The men were all the teachers—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: All the teachers.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: All the women—all the students were women.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: After we turn the tape off I'll have to tell you a few stories.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: [Laughs.] Right.

But I got my first start as teaching, and when Neil Welliver heard I was teaching there he said, "Oh, well, you should come to Penn then." So, you know, it led to something.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, it was just across the river, so—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How long did you teach there? From—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, at Moore it was only, I think, a year or maybe two. I can't remember exactly. It wasn't much.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So it was the late '60s, early '70s?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah. And then I was at Penn for about seven years.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: As a critic or as a—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: As a critic.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: As a critic—and usually maybe one semester a year, not the whole time.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But you weren't teaching a class there; you were just—or you were?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No, just—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, it was all set up as critiques, individuals—graduate school critiques.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: All in, you know, the Furnace Building and—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and little, like, rabbit warren of—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: We were talking about Frank and Dino [Pelleccia]—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and they had that tower studio.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You had to climb those impossible—anybody who had a problem with heights would never be able to get down from there.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I know. Right. That's true.

Then I did three years at Parsons, and it was interesting teaching but there was a terrible drama going on in the school where one teacher was trying to turn all the students into very severe abstractionists and was condemning anybody who used any representation. And so—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, one of those.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: One of those, yeah. And they finally realized that he had gotten his job by false credentials. He had said he had been at Princeton before he was hired, and then later, when they found out he was causing all this trouble, they went back and said, "Yes, well, what was he doing at Princeton?" He was doing exactly the same thing, trying to proselytize one little angle of the kind of work he did, and causing a lot of chaos with students.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Gosh, it's like the manager of a sports team is hired on the strength of the job that he just lost at another.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. That's it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Very funny.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, we won't name any names there.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But I'm sure it wouldn't be too hard to figure out who—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I think I know who you mean.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it led me to printmaking, because when I mentioned to Brooke Alexander I was kind of—this job was really a headache, he said, "Well, why do you teach? Why don't you just make prints, you know?" And I'd just started doing a little printmaking with him, and he pushed it, you know, really got me connected to some good printers and—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, did you like teaching? Did it seem to give you anything—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —that you could use in the studio?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think so.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think so. I'd go in there with no confidence about what I could do as a teacher, and then I might meet one student a day, if I were doing critiques all day, that made me feel like, oh, I did suggest something to them that might be really useful to them.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, was this an M.F.A. program you were teaching?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, at Penn, not at Parsons. Oh, God, the M.F.A. at Parsons was really out to lunch as far as I was concerned, but it's probably all changed now.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, yeah, absolutely.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I think a lot of the people who were there when you would have been there—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —are gone.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Again, we can turn the tape machine off and swap stories.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But I—so you left teaching when?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, about—let's see. Hmm, I left it for about five or six years, and so the dates—yeah, it could have been somewhere in the '70s. I did a lot of printmaking, did a fair amount of traveling to do my work—Japan—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Hong Kong, you said.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —Hong Kong, right, Minneapolis, San Francisco. And then at some point I guess Neil Welliver sort of begged me to come back and do a little bit of critiques again. And at that point, you know, there were a lot of other good teachers there, people I knew well and so forth. So I did that. And Rudy was doing it all along. He was there about 17 years.

And then I think I—then there was not so much for a year or so, and then—I forget his name, the guy that had helped to start the Vermont Studio Center with Gregg—Jon Gregg. Another guy—I've forgotten his name, but a very nice person—he invited me, Irving Petlin, Sidney Goodman, and maybe one sculptor who might have been Joel Fisher, to start the graduate program at Pennsylvania Academy.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: At PAFA, right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: At PAFA, right. And so, there was only very few students for the first couple years, which was wonderful. You could really spend time with them.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's grown a great, great deal.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, my god, it's really—it's mushroomed because they want to pay the bills for the renovation and everything.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, it's got a marvelous new—newly renovated museum—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and of course the—I guess that used to be the Arco [Chemical Co.] building or—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —Atlantic Ridgefield—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Something.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Maybe not. Anyway, but it was some kind of an office building—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —there at Race [Street] and Broad [Street] in Philadelphia.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And I was there a few years ago and just astonished by it.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, the dean there I know. He's a friend—Jeff Carr. He's a really wonderful guy.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it's a big job now.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Big job, and I think it's not getting any smaller.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, I can't imagine.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, have you ever thought about, like, returning to teaching? Do you still speak at schools? Do you go and—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I'll go if I'm asked. But it's only here and there that happens, and it's usually a short period. You know, in all these years of having assistants, it's kind of being a teacher. And most of my assistants have been women, and some of them have lasted a long time with me, like the last one who just left to go to graduate school was with me for five years. And so—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So it's an apprenticeship, in effect.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's what it really was. And I feel like I can do something there because it's one person and there's a lot of interchange. Of course, she's working for me and getting paid. On the other hand, it's beyond that.

Now I have a new one, who I stole from Bob Kushner. I mean, I inadvertently needed one desperately for this MTA project, and the first person that had been planned for me didn't work out very well, and so I asked Bob, "Do you have someone I can borrow for a short time?" And he said, "Oh, yes, she's very good."

And we hit it off very well. And it turns out she has a day a week I can take her to use her. So now I think that's going to be an ongoing thing for—I hope for quite a while.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, is she paid? Is it a kind of—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I pay her pretty well because there's a good period of time where I'm away, like in the summer—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: There are some times when I go to Colorado for a month or two. So, when she's here, it's definitely one day a week. Maybe a few more times—there will be a few more days if she has the time. But she's in graduate school, too, in Maryland where she doesn't have to be there—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: All the time.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, just occasionally.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: We're coming to the end of the card here. And I guess we should try to organize some kind of coda. Is there anything that—if you want to define what your legacy

is, in an aphoristic nutshell, what would it be?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Using some kind of beginning point of subject matter to find surprises. That's what—I want to surprise myself, and I began to feel again I was doing it after a period where it wasn't so adventurous as it was in Hong Kong and now with this MTA thing. I feel like I'm surprising myself. And so, I'm feeling very positive about what might happen.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So you wake up in the morning and you're never quite sure what's going to be waiting there.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. It's true. I mean, even though I have these pretty set methods, processes, I feel like I can turn them upside down a little.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Isn't that what allows you to do that, though?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I mean, if you were a pianist and you woke up every morning and the keyboard looked differently—I mean, you'd have to spend half the day figuring out a new language.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But you've worked out your language. It seems like it's—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I have some language and I—but I want to extend it if I can, or add side effects to it—not effects but side dialogues to it, or something you know. And it probably means big scale because—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Or tiny scale, like that wonderful drawing on the—it's sort of a surprise.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, that little tiny thing? Yeah. [Laughs.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That little tiny drawing on the index card. You could do a whole show of just like—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's just a thumbnail.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I know, but, like, that great quote that if they can put the Grand Canyon on a postage stamp, why not?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, right. Right. Yeah, right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, surprises; you're looking for surprises.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Some of it comes from the formal chances I might take.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And some of it comes from exploration of light that I haven't used much, or—I don't know how representational it will stay, but probably somewhat.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, do you think your work is gendered at all? I mean, do you think that a young woman might have a look at your work and make a connection to it that a male artist would not?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Probably.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But you couldn't quantify it—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —couldn't try to—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I mean, I kind of can tell—people that come up to me and say, "Oh, I've been following your work for years," there's some males but I think it's more likely women.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Really?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's interesting; it just occurred to me while we were speaking that there are no skies.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I don't like the horizon.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, but of course if you go back to the archetypes, to Joseph Campbell, who said the sky is male, the Earth is female—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, I see. Hmm. I didn't read much of Joseph Campbell.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, I mean, I'm just saying that—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —that for a while in the '80s he was on everyone's lips because there was that great show he did with Bill Moyers.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But how certain things are gendered in themselves—the sky is male, the Earth is female, you know? That just popped into my head. I don't know if it's worth—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't know if that's true. [Laughs.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, I know it's an archetype, but I don't know—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Archetypes are neither true nor false. They're just what they are, you know.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I remember in art school, and afterwards, this is something people would talk about, you know—men do this, women do that. And that goes back to what you were talking about in the previous interview of that boy children were doing things that girl children were supposed to do, and girl children were doing things that boy children were supposed to do.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And so they—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, a question that seems parallel to that is, how much work in the future will be spiritually oriented, compared to some that isn't particularly? And I'm not talking about commercially.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I'm just talking about—and I'm not talking about iconography. But somehow, if you think of abstract painters in the '70s, '80s, '90s, the ones who seem the most developed spiritually—and I guess that's hard to define—interest me the most.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Who?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: [Robert] Mangold is one.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mangold?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Stout—Myron Stout. Well, I thought Calvert Coqqeshall was. He's so little known, but I have a painting that I think is a very interesting painting. Well, de Kooning—de Kooning, definitely. [Mark] Rothko in certain periods.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, absolutely with the room at the Phillips [Collection] and with the

Rothko Chapel. I mean—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, I think the Rothko Chapel is terrible.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No, but I'm just saying that people hold these up as being sort of—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yes. Yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —meditative zones.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But you didn't choose your gender—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —but you did choose your spiritual path.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —through Buddhism and, you know, the discipline of—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —meditation and training the spirit in that way.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Like Pat Steir is someone who—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yes.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —who is using that. Or a show I haven't seen yet, but Arlene Shechet. Do you know her work? She's a sculptor.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I don't. Where is the show?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Let's see, I wrote it down.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, we can look it up afterwards.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How do you spell her name?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: S-H [sic] -E-C-H-E-T, I believe.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: E-C-H-E-T.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: The transcriber thanks you in advance.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Okay. [They laugh.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It won't be me.

So you see that spiritual choices are choices that guide a person towards a certain kind of spiritual discipline are as important as gender, as important as ethnicity?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: To me.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: To you.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So, it would be interesting to see if the list of blue chips that, say, your guy—Thompson?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmation.]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: How many blue chip guys are high—would be high on my scale—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —of developed artists.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I think a number of these artists would be the first to tell you they're pranksters and having fun earning a lot of money in the process.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah. Well, that doesn't—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's absolutely—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That doesn't mean anything.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But whether they're concerned privately—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I mean, I thought it was wonderful to learn that Jeff Koons is crazy about [Gustave] Courbet and is collecting Courbet paintings with the money he's making.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But—well, he's a guy who employs a lot of people—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —so it's not just about self-importance and earning a lot of money.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's also about—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The whole—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —giving work to artists too.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He employs about—I don't know, several score of people—

[Cross talk.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So there's a lot of people in his employ. So he's like the tribal chieftain.

I met Sting once at a concert and he certainly struck me as being a tribal chieftain. Everybody had bottled water and bowls of fruit—no drugs, no groupie/roadie types, you know, just all healthy—good, healthy stuff. And he was the—he was, you know, the chief of the tribe. Everybody had to behave and work hard.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: [Laughs.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Good stuff. Good stuff.

What would you hope for, you know, the future of art—painting?

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't know—survival, number one. Ability to change into something that's not too caught up in conceptualizations that seem actually trivial. I don't know if that's kind of going around it in about—in a roundabout way.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, you're talking about a lot of the verbiage that has attended art in the last few decades—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and a lot of the trying to tie artistic creation to linguistic theory and—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and the mailaise of the practice of philosophy being mired in

semiotics and linguistics and all this stuff. You think it's a tar pit that artists ought to stay out of.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I would. [They laugh.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Tar pits aren't good places to go for a walk.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But then somebody might argue that it's not a tar pit; it's a valid mode of discourse.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, what else are they going to teach in art school?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, as we said earlier, it's a lot cheaper than having, you know, to acquire easels, benches and hire models. All you need is—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: A book.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —a book or not even that.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You could have your laptop—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and Wi-Fi and connect. But you would hope that artists would still want to paint and analogue materials, make it a physical thing.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Physical thing I think is—be grounded in the body, I think. And if it's grounded only in their heads, then I would worry about it. So—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So things really are not going to change until people stop eating by putting the food in their mouths and chewing it.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, they've got to. [Laughs.] They've got to put it in their mouths and chew it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, there are other ways to eat, but I guess they're not as—not as—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Much fun?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —rewarding or surprising.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. I mean, I'm very uneducated about all the stuff that's going on in schools about very complicated conceptualizations.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Theory.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Theory, yeah. What does that do for a person? Just excite them to think off into a direction that's going to lead to putting it down on paper in a way that's exciting? Maybe. That's fine. They must be doing that somehow, sometime. They must be—I don't know if it's happening at Yale or any other place—maybe Columbia [University]. But—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There are all sorts of conversations within the cloister of academia—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —about the various merits of not only theory but what different schools of theory one subscribes to.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, okay. Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You know, deconstructionism or—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —structuralism—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —or post-structuralism, or whatever. And to me—and not that anybody cares, but they strike me like so many religious orders, arguing about differences between sects—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —of one faith or another.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. And we don't need religion; we need the spiritual side, I think.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's where you find surprises.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And that's where you find epiphanies and—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. And it might take me a long time to look at a certain artist's work to decide whether—is that really very spiritual or not? It's not always obvious. You might need to see a period of work over time.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So you talked about walking outside in Maine at night with candles on your hat—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and painting the moon—

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and waking up the next day and seeing what you did in the cold light of day, and having no idea that that's what you had made.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's what it's about.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: For me.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, you seem to suggest that.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: [Laughs.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's a good story.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, well, it was Red's [Grooms'] instinct to get us doing this.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Thank you.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, that was a good ending.

[END OF DISC.]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]