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Oral history interview with Jane Hammond, 2012 Apr. 3-May 24

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Jane Hammond on April 3 - May 24, 2012. The interview took place in Hammond's studio in New York City, and was conducted by Judith Olch Richards for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Jane Hammond reviewed the transcript in 2018. 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

JUDITH RICHARDS: This is Judith Richards interviewing Jane Hammond in New York City on Grand Street, in her home studio on April 3rd, 2012, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, disk one. So, it's a pleasure to be here.

JANE HAMMOND: Thank you. Me too.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Uh, I'd like to start by asking you to recall your family background, as far back as you want to go, and certainly the people you knew: your parents, your grandparents, and if it's relevant, earlier than that. Their names, where they were born, what they did in life. I mean, could include aunts and uncles, if that's relevant. And then, come to the point where you were born. I mean, we can do one side of your family first and then the other. And then, we'll get to the point where—exactly where and when you were born.

JANE HAMMOND: Okay. So, in my life, probably the most dominant person who made the biggest impression on me as a child was my maternal grandmother. And, um, her name was Edythe Jarvis, and Edythe is spelled E-d-y-t-h-e. It's an odd name. Nobody has it nowadays.

JUDITH RICHARDS: J-a-r-v-i-s?

JANE HAMMOND: Right. And she was a woman—my grandmother had my mother when she was 22.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, this is your maternal grandmother.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. And my mother had me when she was 20. So, when I was six years old, my grandmother was 48. It's almost like what define—what defines a mother in my generation. She was married to my grandfather, whose name was Walter Jarvis, who was 15 years her senior. He had worked on Wall Street, but he wasn't a very successful businessman. And by the time I was around, he was retired. [00:02:00] And my grandmother, Edythe Jarvis, came from a very wealthy family. Her father was the vice president of the American Tobacco Company. His name was James Dixon. And he lost his money—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Is that D-i-x?

JANE HAMMOND: D-i-x-o-n. And he lost his money in the Crash and committed suicide. And my grandmother always said it was on the front page of the *New York Times*. I don't know if she meant the front page front page or the business front page, but she always said that the *Times* came up to Connecticut to interview her and she covered for him and said it wasn't suicide, but they—

JUDITH RICHARDS: This is her father.

JANE HAMMOND: This is her father.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right. What town was that in Connecticut she was—

JANE HAMMOND: Fairfield. So, she was an only child of what today would have been divorced parents, but in those days, they stayed together and lived completely separately. And she grew up all over the world. They lived in a hotel in Athens for a year, they lived in the Plaza Hotel for several years. Her baby pictures, she was in Egypt.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What was your—what was your great-grandmother, James's wife's name?

JANE HAMMOND: Uh—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Edythe's mother.

JANE HAMMOND: —Edythe's mother was named Edythe, also. Nanny's mother. She was named Edythe, as well. I think her name was Edythe May Hall, and my grandmother's name was Edythe Dixon Jarvis. I could check on that. So, anyhow, she had, like, a sort of pampered upbringing in the sense that she—her babyhood pictures, she's on a camel with a nanny, with these perfectly curled curls. And, you know, they went on these tobacco-buying trips all over the world. So, like, this is a lamp from China [00:04:00] that James Dixon bought, you know, I don't know when. In the '20s or something like that. So, my grandmother was born in 1904. So, she had a—sort of a privileged and exotic childhood. And she spoke, um, German and French fluently. Her first language was German, because she was born in New York City, but they lived in Germany for a while, just when she happened to be learning languages. And then, they moved to New York and she went to a French private school called the Velton School. So, she learned French next.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Velton?

JANE HAMMOND: V-e-l-t-o-n. And then, she learned English, thirdly, though she had no accent or anything. But, I mean, she was someone who was, like—I remember once we bought film at the palace of Versailles, and the person that sold the film to us asked my grandmother if she was Belgian. And my grandmother was insulted, 'cause she took that as a denigration of her French. But, in other words—and she had—like, all her cookbooks were in French and German, and she was a really great cook. And she was sort of an inherently cosmopolitan person. And—and she was young for being a grandmother. And she was very stylish.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did she go to college?

JANE HAMMOND: She was—she was—yes. She went to Smith, but she was thrown out, so she didn't graduate from Smith. She claims she was thrown out because she had an overdue library book and her roommate hid it, and she got in trouble for that. But she was a very wild person in many ways, and she had a huge drinking problem. So, I think she was probably thrown out for more than the library book. Um, she was not a beauty or anything, but she—men liked her. And she sang for a short time in the—in the—at the [00:06:00] Met, not as an opera singer but, like, in the chorus or the choir or whatever you would call it when there were 50 people singing or something like that. And she was an opera buff for her whole life. She was a woman who would silence the entire house and listen to Wagner in German. And if you came in or spoke or opened the cabinet or whatever, she'd be mad at you for days, you know? She was, like, really into it. And, um, I don't know what else to say about her. She—she was a real character, and she was also an artist.

JUDITH RICHARDS: I was going to ask you—

JANE HAMMOND: And she painted—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —was—

JANE HAMMOND: —and the first person I ever saw making a painting was my grandmother. She didn't have, like, big pretensions about it. She didn't have a studio; she didn't call herself an artist. But she did paint, and she also was a creative person. She was a sensational cook. She was an interesting dresser. Her house was interesting, um, and she was the kind of person—like, she made potpourri or, like, when she arranged flowers, she had, like, 40 vases and, you know, nine kinds of clippers. And, you know, she'd apply matches to the dahlias. You know, like, she knew all that you would know about arranging flowers. And she had, like, a huge flower garden and a separate cutting garden so that you weren't cutting the flowers in the garden. And she was just this certain kind of, like—you might say aristocratic woman, you know, with the proclivities that I'm describing, only by the time she was my grandmother, they didn't really have any money anymore. But they had a big, beautiful house.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, after the crash and [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: She and—she always says that they lived in the Plaza Hotel and her parents lived on two different floors, and they fought all the time. And when they would make [00:8:00] up, her father would buy her mother a diamond bracelet—and that she put my mother and aunt through college by selling all this jewelry. My grandmother was somewhat given to hyperbole at times, so I don't know how much of this is completely true. But when my mother was a little girl, they had live-in servants. They had a couple, and they were chauffeured to private school.

JUDITH RICHARDS: This was still in Fairfield.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, and when you see their pictures—I mean, I'll show you. Like, my assistant broke this photograph the other day if I can lay my hands on it. This is like a digital—no, maybe I can't find this. Anyhow, it's a picture of my mother and aunt around the pool with the litter of puppies, and they're pulling this little wagon. And it just has a certain look to it of we're not worried about where our next meal is coming from, let's put it that way.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, um, what kind of paintings did your grandmother paint?

JANE HAMMOND: She made kind of loosely impressionistic paintings of outdoor scenes, sometimes with people in them, sometimes not.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did she have a collection of art?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, she has, like—my mother has an oil painting in her living room by an Italian artist called Montemezzo. And if you Google him, uh, he comes up and it's the same guy. It's sort of like a peasant woman with grain in her apron feeding a bunch of geese, you know? It looks very European and it's kind of dark, and—you know how Ruskin or someone said, like "A good painting, like a good fiddle, is brown," it's like that kind of painting, right? And, um, and she had other—there were paintings and things in—there was art in the house, but it's not art by anybody, you know, famous. It's probably mostly friends and things like that. And there were also just interesting [00:10:00] things around because of the fact that her father had done all this traveling. Like, she had a shawl that was, like, netting, and looped over each piece of the netting was a piece of hammered silver, you know, that they had gotten in Turkey. So, it was, like, crazy heavy but still flexible. It was like mail, like chainmail really. And I don't know, there were, like, other objects that—you know, opera glasses made out of abalone and, you know, things that you would see—like, when she died, at one point, there was an estate sale and, like, lots of people wanted the—you know, 'cause she had sort of good stuff. She had more good stuff than a good current life, 'cause she had the grandparents' stuff, you know? And she was an only child. So, when I was a kid—okay, so that's my grandfather and my grandmother. And then, my mother had a sister two years younger, and my mother's sister never married.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What was her name?

JANE HAMMOND: Also Edythe Jarvis. So—

JUDITH RICHARDS: She was Edythe the Third. [They laugh.]

JANE HAMMOND: I know. But, you know, girls, they don't use those numbers. It's just confu—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —they just live with confusion. So, when I was little, my aunt was, like, in college. I mean, she was, like—'cause my mother, you know, when I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What's your mother's name?

JANE HAMMOND: Nancy.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative], okay.

JANE HAMMOND: Nancy Jarvis Hammond, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Sorry, so you had said—when you were in college, and your aunt—

JANE HAMMOND: Well, when I was little, you know, my aunt was like—she just graduated from college, you know, 'cause she was two years younger than my mother. And my mother, like, they have this thing at Smith, it's called the Smith baby, you know? Like, I missed being the Smith baby by one, you know? But my mother also skipped as a kid, so she had me when she was 20, [00:12:00] and she graduated from Smith, which is—it has to do with, like, she skipped and she had an October birthday and I was born in June and blah-blah-blah. So, she was—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Tell me what the Smith baby is, then?

JANE HAMMOND: It's, like, in that class at Smith, the first person who has a baby, that baby's called the Smith baby. It's like a real '50s way of thinking, you know? Um, so—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And what did your aunt major in?

JANE HAMMOND: I don't know what my aunt majored in, but right after college she got a job with the University of Chicago working in Luxor. And she was living in Egypt when I was a kid. And my grandmother had spent a certain portion of her childhood in Egypt. And my aunt was coming home and going back and stuff like that. So, like, we had a lot of things from the Middle East. In other words, when I was a kid, like, we had these salad utensils. My aunt had brought them home from Beirut. I told my friend Babe Ruth had given them to us; do you know what I mean? I didn't really understand these things. But, like, I knew what tahini was when I was three, you know, because we had these—this kind of Egyptian thing was in our family. So, um, I'm going to come back

to this family, but then my father was the oldest of three children. His mother was a Scottish immigrant named Nellie MacKinnon and she was born on the Isle of Skye.

JUDITH RICHARDS: MacKinnon?

JANE HAMMOND: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. M-a-c-capital-K-i-n-n-o-n. She married my grandfather, whose name was Lewis Hammond. And they lived in Garden City, Long Island. And Nellie MacKinnon died when my father was 10. And she was a Christian Scientist and she died at home. So, my father, you know, remembers his mother dying in the living room. And my [00:14:00] father's father was a self-made millionaire. And by that, I meant a guy who made one million dollars, not a guy who made millions of dollars. But that was a big thing in the '50s and '60s. And he made it in the construction industry, in the coalfields of Pennsylvania, buying and selling construction equipment. And he had an eighth-grade education, and he came from St. Louis, and he was a son of a bitch.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Now, tell me again, who is he? He—

JANE HAMMOND: He's my father's father. His name was Lewis Hammond, and my father's name was Lewis Hammond.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, okay.

JANE HAMMOND: He was junior. So, my father was a kid that grew up without a mother and eventually got a classic wicked stepmother. And she and my grandfather beat them. So, he basically left home. Like, from very early childhood, he describes Long Island and New York City as a place that was more or less completely safe, where boys were allowed to roam all over the place, where they went in huge packs, which—sports created these packs. And they went on their bicycles, and they took the subway all over New York City and they took the trains all over Long Island. And they stayed out 'til dark and, you know, he, sort of, raised himself.

JUDITH RICHARDS: The family in New Jersey—his parents were living in New Jersey at this time.

JANE HAMMOND: No, Long Island.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh.

JANE HAMMOND: My father was from Long Island; my mother was from Connecticut.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, okay, the—your father—who was born in New Jersey? Who was in New Jersey?

JANE HAMMOND: Nobody.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: Uh—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Maybe you said Garden City.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, and Garden City's Long Island.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: It's in Nassau County.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay, yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So, um, the way this plays out in my life is we were not close at all to the Hammonds, because my father wasn't close to the Hammonds. And he had a tumultuous and difficult relationship with his father. Um, and [00:16:00] we were very close to my mother's family. And that really endured for the whole time. Now, my father was a star athlete. Um, he—we had, hanging in our den, a letter from the professional football team of New York City, which in those days was called—I forget, it was—if those are the Jets—but anyhow, this is 1949, and he's graduating from Amherst, where he was the quarterback on the football team. And they're asking him to come play professional football for the—for the team in New York City. So, in other words—and he was also the captain of the basketball team. He wrestled in the Navy; he was the captain of the baseball team. He was, like, a very, very, very gifted athlete. And I remember once going to this Amherst reunion with him, and the football coach, who's Carl Ostendarp's father, Jim Ostendarp, said to me, "Your father had the best eye-hand coordination of anyone I ever knew in my life." So, my mother, meanwhile, is the homecoming queen of her high school and the homecoming queen of Smith College. So, they were sort of this, uh, you know, BMOC kind of couple, right? She's very beautiful.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What's BMOC?

JANE HAMMOND: Big man on campus.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, yeah, yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Okay? And he's the athlete, and athletes are everything. This is, like, 1949, you know? This is, like, you know—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —this is this classic American culture where girls are supposed to be pretty and boys are supposed to be manly or, you know, whatever.

JUDITH RICHARDS: It's—so he—it sounds like he survived that abusive—

JANE HAMMOND: He did.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —home—

JANE HAMMOND: But, I mean, it had a, you know—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. I mean—

JANE HAMMOND: He was, like, a little emotionally shut down, but who wouldn't be?

JUDITH RICHARDS: But he was able to excel.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah, and—[00:18:00]

JUDITH RICHARDS: And get to college.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, and I think in the end, he was a pretty happy person, you know, in his adult life. I think he's an example of a person who had a happy adult life and a miserable childhood. And I think they do exist. So, now I'm going to discuss me, through this lens. Um, my parents got married right after college.

JUDITH RICHARDS: How did they meet, just Smith and Amherst?

JANE HAMMOND: They met in college. She was kind of the, you know, the hot girl at Smith and he—you know what I mean? It was inevitable that they were going to meet. And they were also both—I don't know what this means, but they were both the children of alcoholics. In other words, my father's father was a big alcoholic and my mother's mother was a big alcoholic. And I think part of the reason I was so close to my grandmother is my grandmother got sober sometime in her forties, when I was a little girl. So, I think she sort of redid her mothering a little bit with me, whereas she'd kind of screwed up with my mother and aunt. She was drunk when they came home from high school and, you know, stuff like that. I can remember her drunk, but it's, like, for most of my life, she was in AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] and she was kind of a card-carrying AA success story. Um, my parents got married in—in June, right after they graduated from college. And I was born the following June. Before I was—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You were born exactly what date?

JANE HAMMOND: June, 1950. June 27th, 1950. Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And, sorry, where were they living when they got married and you were born?

JANE HAMMOND: I don't exactly know the answer to that question. Before I was born, my parents separated and then divorced. [00:20:00] And so, I was born in Bridgeport, CT, because my mother was home living with her parents, and I was born there. My father was back on Long Island, working in the family construction business, construction equipment and business, for my grandfather.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, they weren't married very long.

JANE HAMMOND: No, they were not married very long, and I can't actually tell you how long they were married for. Um, so I spent a lot of my earliest years with my grandparents. And, um, and my mother had an on-again, off-again relationship with my father. But eventually they were completely splitsville, and she was wooed by another man. And she and the other man became a couple, and eventually they married. And the other man had a very bad drinking problem. So, in those days, as you know, information couldn't follow you around the way it can nowadays. So, what would happen would be: they would move to a town and he would get a job, and then

he'd be fired from the job. Like, in a month. So, we lived, according to my grandmother, in somewhere between 22 and 30 different towns.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Between what years? Your age, what—

JANE HAMMOND: Like, between, say, zero and four or something like that, and we're constantly moving.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And what was your mother—just staying home and taking care of you?

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. Also, going back and forth to my grandmother, getting together with her sister, going back to the house at Mine [00:22:00] Hill Road, which is where my grandparents lived, et cetera. There's not a real pattern to it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And Mine Hill Road was in—

JANE HAMMOND: Fairfield.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —Fairfield.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, other things that happened in those years where I lived with various friends of my mother's, when things between my mother and Wally were really bad and my grandmother was still drinking. So, there was a very well-to-do family named the Richardsons who had a big house on the water, and whose family was the Richardson-Merrell Drug Company, which owns Clearasil and Vicks and all that stuff. And I lived with the Richardsons for at least six or eight months of one year, and sometimes a little bit more here and there. They were a mess, and he drank heavily, and he beat her. And Wally beat my mother. So, it was very chaotic. Um, Wally and my mother stayed together for a long time, and eventually—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What was Wally—Wally's last name?

JANE HAMMOND: Osborne.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Osborne.

JANE HAMMOND: And I don't know what these jobs were that he had. I want—I want to say he bartended, but I don't really know. But, I mean, nobody ever spoke about him as a person who was an electrician or, like, had some skill. I've never really heard that. But eventually, they went out to Alaska. This is, like, what a lot of people did in the '50s, because it was, like, the way some people—a certain kind of person might move to Saudi Arabia now—it's like an adventurer who's, like, seeking pay and there were jobs out there and it was, like, a new beginning or whatever. So, Wally moved out to Alaska and my mother with him.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And you?

JANE HAMMOND: And I stayed back—with who, I don't really know.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Is this before you were in school?

JANE HAMMOND: Oh, yeah. And, um—and my aunt flew me out to be with them. So, they were, I think, maybe getting themselves organized, and then I was supposed to [00:24:00] come. The crazy sub-story there is that the plane crashed. Not a bad crash, but a crash where you got down in this position that the stewardess—

JUDITH RICHARDS: The plane crashed when you were going out there?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, the plane crash-landed on the other side of a river, like, in the airport. So, one of my earliest childhood memories is having eaten some peppermint Life Savers in that package that's navy blue. You know that old package? And then getting down in this crash position. And then, the menthol—if you've ever stood upside-down after eating menthol, the menthol rub—runs up your nose, and it's a very odd and largely unpleasant sensation. And somehow, that sensation had a big impression on me. So, when I was little, I used to get in this closet at my grandparents' house, and I would steal these fancy maraschino cherries that they had that are green that come in a jar. And I would chew them up and then I would stand on my head in the closet. So, I would recreate—[they laugh]—so anyhow, we went—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, there was a plane crash; you weren't hurt.

JANE HAMMOND: No, I wasn't hurt.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, it wasn't a—

JANE HAMMOND: I don't even remember being scared.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, it was like a rough landing kind of—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, where the plane was never again used. So—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: —fairly rough. But I don't know if anyone was hurt. We weren't hurt. I don't remember very much about Alaska at all. I remember having some bad experiences with Wally at Fairfield Beach after Alaska. But one of the headline stories in Alaska is that Wally killed someone.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Drunk.

JANE HAMMOND: As my grandmother said to me, "I'd like to tell you he was drunk. But he killed the guy with his bare [00:26:00] hands, and he was sober and it was the middle of the day." So, this is a guy we lived with, and he went—he was convicted of homicide and he went to jail for two years, which is like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Two years?

JANE HAMMOND: —it says something about Alaska, right? Wally goes to jail for homicide, and my mother—I think my mother—first of all, my mother has this idea she shouldn't work. I mean, it's some holdover, WASPy—you know, it's some ridiculous—she'd have been so much better off if she was, like, a more working-class person who would just go out and get a waitressing job, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Be more independent.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. So, she's already screwed up—like, she's already left my father. She left him. And now, she's got this second guy. So, she stays with him, and she stays out in Alaska while he's in jail. And she gets herself a teaching job at the University of Alaska, teaching astronomy, which if you knew my mother and her astronomy and mathematical skills—it's like a joke. I mean, I would never let her help me with my homework. It would be terrible. Teacher would say, "Jane, what happened to you last night," you know? [Laughs.] So, anyhow, we stay with him, he gets out of jail, and we go back to Connecticut. We live at Fairfield Beach, which is a summer community. We live in a summerhouse in the winter, probably because it's, like, next to free. And, of course, it's next to freezing, right? And I don't remember too much about that, but I do remember him throwing her down the stairs, and I do remember him doing this thing with me of putting me in a box and kicking it down the stairs. So, he was an abusive guy, and my mom stayed with him. Even—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did your grandmother know what was going on?

JANE HAMMOND: My grandmother knew what was going on, and I—and there were some [00:28:00] incidents where she would say, like, "I can't believe this has happened to you," you know, "you were so beautiful, you had the whole," you know, blah-blah-blah. But basically, I don't know, they were all sort of dysfunctional. I can't really explain it in any kind of really good way.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And your mother knew that he had done this to you?

JANE HAMMOND: Totally. Yeah, I—no, she didn't know that. You mean about with the box and stuff? No, she didn't know that. He told me not to tell her and I never did. Now, I would think that was so fucked up, but when you're a kid, these things—I don't know. And some bad things happened to me at the Richardsons, too, which I didn't report on to my mother. So, then, what eventually happens is nobody in our family ends this. What happens is Wally leaves my mother for another woman, a woman 15 years older than him who was kind of a drinking buddy. And then, my mother goes back to Connecticut to live with her parents, with me.

JUDITH RICHARDS: How old were you at that point?

JANE HAMMOND: I am, like, nearing first grade. And my father courts my mother. And my father and mother get married. So, this is her third marriage, now, and her second marriage to my father. And we move to Long Island.

JUDITH RICHARDS: It was good for you?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I think it was good for me. We move to Long Island and I start second grade. So, that's how old I am. And I have a red vinyl *Alice in Wonderland* briefcase. And there are many, many pictures of me starting school, I think because it was such a poignant thing for my mother. And, um, [00:30:00] my father was very dedicated to my mother and my father was very dedicated to me. And when I was with my grandparents and my mother wasn't around, he worked six days a week for his father, and on the seventh day he would come up and visit me. So, I mean, the only time I ever talked about this with my father, he gave me the distinct

impression, like, "I did this for you."

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, remarrying?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. I mean, but he had a commitment to taking care of his child. Who knows? All—it's a big nest of all kinds of motivations, you know? Like, if my father—mother was really in love with my father, why did she ever leave him in the fir—you know, I mean, I don't know. So, we lived on Long Island when I was little, and my mother was very snobbily anti-Long Island. She thought everybody in her group of people that she knew was into clothes and shopping and wanted to join a country club.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Your father was still working for his family?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, he did all his life—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm.

JANE HAMMOND: —one tiny exception. And she wanted to—and she didn't—wasn't interested in any of that. And she wanted to have property and privacy. This was a mania for my mother. Her idea of a good place to be is where you can't see anyone else and they can't see you. So, we lived in this little development in Glen Cove, where everybody could see what everyone else was doing, and she really didn't like that at all. So, even though she had just gotten married to my father and he was a salesman whose territory was Nassau and Suffolk County, she dragged him to Westport, where they bought a house, and where we moved at the [00:32:00] end of second grade. And my father, believe it or not, bought an airplane. He had been a pilot in the Navy. It sounds so extravagant, but you can actually buy airplanes that are cheaper than cars. Like, little airplanes, you know? And so, he had this little airplane, and it was silver. And he tried for a while to fly from Bridgeport Airport over to Long Island. And he would disappear into the sky and just be like a little glint, like someone had a pocket mirror, you know, that you couldn't see the plane at all, but you could see the glint. And, um, it didn't really work, because then when he got to Long Island, he didn't have a car, you know? It was, like—it didn't really work, and he only had the plane for a short period of time. But I've always seen it as, like, emblematic of the lengths he was willing to go to, to kind of please my mother. And she wanted to have dogs. She was a big dog person. In fact, I was born two months early 'cause she was in a dog show in Trenton, NJ on a really hot day, and she went into labor. [They laugh.] Um, so, we moved to Westport. And she shopped for a house for one day, bought the third house she saw, and it was a little house that looked like it had been made over from a barn, but it really wasn't made over from a barn. It was inhabited by the builder who had built it, and he wanted to convert a barn, but he couldn't find a barn. And it was on six acres of property, which later became eight acres. So, in fact, when the rain would fall on the porch, we would take our clothes off and go out there and take a shower at the end of where the rain collected, and no one could see you. So, my mother got her—her wish. And so, we moved to Westport, which, as you know, is a very nice place to live and grow up, and we had [00:34:00] this beautiful piece of land. Not what you'd call a fancy house but, you know, it was a nice house. And, as my mother always said, "Your father paid cash for the house with all the money he saved in the navy." Like, it just wasn't that hard in those days to—to do this kind of thing. And, um, we lived there my entire growing up, in that place. And it was a beautiful place, you know? It had, like, woods, swamps, a pond, streams, a hilly driveway that you could toboggan on. The swamp would freeze and you could skate around. I mean, it was, like, I—I was someone who played outdoors extensively from my childhood—and built forts and treehouses and that kind of thing. And, like, we had a place to really do that. And, um, and my aunt stayed in the picture a lot. And my grandparents—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, she had gone to Chicago, but she came back?

JANE HAMMOND: She went to Luxor. I mean, she—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, Lux—[inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: —didn't really spend any time in Chicago. It's just that—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —the University of Chicago has a big archaeological school, and they were running the Egyptian thing. And then, after that, she came back to Connecticut, and she taught bridge for a living. And when I was in about third grade, I was friends with a girl named Sally Johnson, and her mother was a divorcee, also named Sally Johnson, and she taught bridge for a living. So, there was a period of my life where I thought, like, this was like a very common career: teaching bridge, you know? So, anyhow, we spent a lot of time with my grandparents, particularly 'cause my father was trying to sell construction equipment on Suffolk County, so he would often spend one or two nights a week out at a motel instead of doing all that driving back and forth. [00:36:00] And then, we'd go to my grandparents. So, all these things I did with my grandmother as a child continued, you know? Like, when I was six, she made me memorize the Latin names of 100 flowers, you know? Or seven, whatever. We were back in Connecticut, you know? And then she would take me into the garden, and

we'd have like a quiz. But it was fun. I don't remember it as onerous. I remember it as magical, and she was a very charismatic person. Um, this—eventually, my parents had three other children. They had my sister when I was in third grade.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Her name?

JANE HAMMOND: Holly.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: They had my brother, Jim, two years after that. And they had my brother, Bruce, three years after that. So, I'm both from a large family and an only child, if that makes sense to you. The most complicated thing about all of this is that after my mother got to Westport, she decided never to speak of the past again. I don't know whether she said that to my aunt and my grandfather and my grandmother or whether they all felt so much shame about it, they were all on the same wavelength, without a conference. She never told me not to speak of it, but somehow, I knew not to speak of it, and we completely buried it. So, like, we had Eskimo mukluks in the attic. You know what they look like.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: And I brought them to school for show and tell. And I told this complicated story about how my father had been on this business trip up in Alaska and, you know, I just knew, [00:38:00] you know—or, like—what I'd like to segue to here is, like, if you think about the early years of my work, there's a lexicon of found information. I often would refer to them as facts. And then, I saw my project as someone who made fictions from facts. I took this lexicon of found information and I wove various fabrications out of it. Sometimes, mutually contradictory. "A" would mean one thing in this painting and another thing in this painting, and never of a holistic, integrated piece with one another. In other words, it's not, like, I'm an artist who has some kind of symbology where this stands for that and it always stands for that, and this person is this one's granduncle, or this red is always a subordinate color or whatever. My project was one where every time you do it, you do it for the first time. You do it like it's the only painting. You're not beholden at all to the painting you did before. And I do think there's something—like, when I was little, I—I don't know how old I was, but I was—I was walking and standing and I was sucking my thumb. And we had this babysitter, and the babysitter dropped me down the stairs. And the babysitters were sisters. They didn't tell my mother they dropped me down the stairs, probably 'cause they were afraid. So, over some time, not a long time—I don't know how long, six hours, one day, day and a half—my mother realized that something was wrong with me. She took me to the doctor and I had a broken arm. And she always jokingly says, "Cured you from sucking that thumb." And there are these pictures of me, [00:40:00] you know, where you can see, like, I can't get my thumb in my mouth, right? Now, just like, I don't know, 12 years ago, maybe a little longer than that, 16 years ago, my sister's daughter was, like, in the kitchen. My sister was right there. My sister turned around and she slipped down two stairs and broke her arm. So, my mother said, "Oh, that's like when you broke your arm when you were running around the Christmas tree." But my aunt wasn't there, and my aunt said, "Oh, that's like when you broke your arm when you were out in the snow with Granddaddy." And then, each person, like, has a different story of how it is that I broke my arm. The version that I know, about the O'Hara sisters, is from my grandmother. So, in other words, we had all these circulating stories because, you know, if you and I are going to lie to Craig about what we did when he comes back, we have to have a conference where we agree on the lie, right? So, we never had any conferences. So, we just had these, like, stories, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So, anyhow, I mean, I think this is probably the genesis of—I mean, if you think about it, I have this system. It's evolved over the years, but certainly, you know, we're talking about the early work. There is a lexicon of facts, and the lexicon itself is buried. It's never displayed, it's never exhibited. I don't get it out for people. I turn it over when they come over. And then, the conjugations of that lexicon are displayed, and they vary and change and they're different from each other. And, you know, this was a really important thing to me. Like, I have this system. It's a surrogate for style. And I really felt—I have all kinds of intellectual things I do believe in, you know, [00:42:00] like that most artistic style is too repetitive, that it's not actually that creative and exploratory to make the same kind of thing over and over again and know what you're going to do in the morning before you even do it. And, I mean, I see that—I feel that art should be an open-ended, discursive exploration. And exploration means you're continually going somewhere new. You don't know everything about where you're going. But it does jive with what happened in my family—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —in a certain kind of way.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. Going back to Westport and starting second grade there, right? Uh, through

elementary school—and you talked about learning the flower names and—uh, but through elementary school, what were your favorite subjects? Was there any inkling that you were interested in art? Or was it more the botanical or the outdoors? What were your main—

JANE HAMMOND: I loved—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —activities?

JANE HAMMOND: I loved school. Loved it. I was super eager to go to school. Frequently, my mother would say to me, "Why don't you stay home from school today? We could go to Elwood's." This was a truck stop that had really good crab burgers. "We could go to the beach. We could rent a rowboat. We could go over to the Richardsons' house and see if they want to go fishing off Cockenoe Island, you know? Like, my mother would make these, kind of, like, bad boy proposals, you know, like hookey kind of proposals. And I didn't want to do that. She would often say to me, "Stop doing your homework. That's enough homework." I was, like—I really liked school, and I think, to some degree, I really liked—I've always really liked books and learning and being a curious person. Nobody ever had to encourage me to do it. I also think I liked the routine of it. I can remember I really wanted to go [00:44:00] to Sunday school. I really wanted to go to Sunday school and get these attendance pins that I saw other kids had.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Do you think it's a—you said—you said routine, structure.

JANE HAMMOND: I think I was—yeah, after something like that—because we—I—it was so chaotic growing up, you know? And—and I remember my mother saying—first of all, my parents were young when I was a kid. They stayed out—on Saturday night, they'd stay out 'til four in the morning. On New Year's Eve, they'd come back after breakfast. And their friends were crazy. I mean, later on, they switched into being like PTA-going Westport parents. But when I was with them and they were first back together, they were still hanging out with the people my mother hung out with when she was with Wally. And they were all drunks. They were all dead by 48. And they had guns and they were, like—they would be, like, uh, "Let's shoot clay pigeons!" You know, that skeet-shooting? And then, my mother would be, like, "I don't want you out there with Jack. He's drunk. You shouldn't be with him with the gun when he's drunk." You know, I mean, it's, like, that was her idea of being a good mother: calling you back in when the people got really drunk with the guns, you know? Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: When—when—in elementary school, did you go someplace else every summer? Or did you spend it on—in that beautiful—

JANE HAMMOND: We—we spent—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —idyllic backyard?

JANE HAMMOND: —um, we spent many summers in Westport when I was young. Then, we entered a period of time where my parents were, in their words, broke. My father was on the outs with his father. He quit his job. He was sort of substitute teaching, trying to get a teacher's license. It didn't really work out, and about six years later, he went back to work for my grandfather. And in those years, we would rent our nice house in Westport to wealthy New Yorkers, who would come out and stay in it for the summer and we [00:46:00] would rent a little beach shack in Westport and net the difference. And it was actually really fun. And I would sleep on the porch.

JUDITH RICHARDS: This is when you have—and then you have—

JANE HAMMOND: I was in junior high.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —thr—so, you had three younger siblings then.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. Um, and we'd do all these adventurous things. I was telling Craig this story the other day of, like, one time my mother took me, Holly, Jimmy, and Bruce—Bruce was probably 10 months old, so the others were, like, four, you know? And we rode over across this bay to see these friends of hers. Now, really, a woman shouldn't have four children in a rowboat all by herself, you know, many of whom are under the—I'm the only one that can really swim.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you all have life preservers?

JANE HAMMOND: I doubt it, you know? Maybe we had, like, two or something like that. I mean, it wasn't, like, abusive or crazy.

JUDITH RICHARDS: All across the Long Island Sound?

JANE HAMMOND: No, no, it was just this, like, bay. But still, it's, like, I wouldn't do it with my sister's kids in a million years, you know? Like, if the weather turns and you're out there with three little kids, what are you going

to do? So, anyhow, where was I?

JUDITH RICHARDS: I was asking you about what you did in the summers.

JANE HAMMOND: Oh, school—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Talked about the exchange—

JANE HAMMOND: —school—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes, school.

JANE HAMMOND: —okay. So, I really liked school. And, um, one thing I've said in slide talks—when I went to Mount Holyoke, I wanted to be a doctor, and I always really liked science. And I always really liked, like, collecting things and, like, seeing—like, my grandmother would teach me, like, which plants were in which families, so then you would look for the connections between them in the family. You know, why is—in what way is cauliflower like cabbage or whatever. So, when I was, like, in junior high, I think it was—I forget how old I was, but let's say 12—I made a little book. And [00:48:00] I must have seen a surveyor. And I made a grid in our woods of—like, 50 feet by 50 feet with stakes and a string. And then, I classified everything inside the grid. Like, I tried to find as many different rocks as I could, and I tried to find insects under those rocks, and I tried to press and identify the leaves. And I tried to just kind of catalog, like, almost like an explorer would, like, this one square in our woods. Now—

JUDITH RICHARDS: That wasn't for school. That was something you just wanted to do.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. I don't know where I got the idea. But it's, like, it's not that beguiling, how I got the idea. But, um, but it's quite related to my art. But at the time and even 10 years later, I wouldn't have ascribed the word art to it, because until I was, like, a more educated person, I didn't know anything about contemporary art. So, I thought art was only, like, painting the way things looked. And I didn't have any interest, particularly, in doing that. I mean—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, in junior—in elementary—in junior high school—

JANE HAMMOND: In junior high school, I made one painting on a piece of barn wood with my grandmother's paints. I don't remember it as being a particularly riveting experience. And I didn't make another one that I'm aware of. And, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you go to museums at all?

JANE HAMMOND: No, we did nothing cultural at all. Nothing. Um, both my parents were not interested in art. And if they had any interest in art it was, like, in early American things, where you would be able to look at it really closely and see, actually, how they gathered the maple syrup or something like that. My grandmother was the only person that had the ability to say, "Ah! Look at that" blah-blah-blah. And when I was in junior high, [00:50:00] she took me to Europe, and we went to a lot of museums and looked at art.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: I remember it being somewhat boring, and I remember making up this song, like, "96 annunciations, 27 crucifixion––" but I think it also had some effect on me. But I just think—there was something—I think I sort of merged together some innate interest I had in exploration and collecting and taxonomies with some sense of general creativity that my grandmother had as a human being. Like, here's an example. My grandmother and I would gather Queen Anne's lace. We would take a razor blade and bifurcate the stem. We would take two glasses of water and make one, say, red and one blue, and we'd put each stem half in the glass of water.

JUDITH RICHARDS: The food coloring, you mean.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. And then, the next day, the flower would be dyed in sort of an interesting pattern. Those kinds of things we did like crazy. Or my grandfather and I, because he was retired—and my grandmother was really still drinking for quite a bit of my childhood, off and on. So, she didn't get up before two or three in the afternoon. So, I was really taken care of by my grandfather. He's the person who taught me how to write my name, how to brush my teeth. If you say to me, like, think about someone washing your hair, I think about my grandfather washing my hair. I can't even picture my mother doing any of those things with me. And my grandfather had a lot of inventive things that we would do. Like, he wanted to shoot rats. So, we would make these intricate trails in—all around the garage with corn, like you'd see in *Hansel and Gretel* or something, to get the rats routinized to arriving at a certain place. And then, on [00:52:00] night four, I would get the gun out and shoot 'em.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Wow.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I mean, I totally enjoyed being with him. And because he was reti—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Sounded like—it sounded like he didn't change what he would do just because you were a girl.

JANE HAMMOND: No, totally not. And he also hunted and fished. And he belonged to a hunting club in Redding, which was really the country in those days. And he had this old ratty car, and he had a field trial springer, which is like a springer spaniel that's trained for hunting, pheasant hunting. And he hunted with these two other men, who were also retired older guys. And I would come along, I mean, hundreds of times. Ditto fly-fishing. But they were very nice to me, and it was really fun. So, it's not like it was all bad or anything.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And your parents were happy that you were doing that, I presume?

JANE HAMMOND: I guess so. I mean, my mother—it's so different now—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Of course she had the three other kids, so she [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: She had three other kids, and she was, like—she had three k—once we had 19 springer spaniels. Always we had four. I mean, it was, like, kind of bedlam, you know? We had, like, this big property. It was sort of a mess. It wasn't groomed by any stretch of the imagination. We had all these dogs. Every time we went away, our house was covered with fleas. I mean, you just think this is all normal when you're a kid, you know? Um, and my mother was very beautiful. You know, deep into her 30s, men [00:54:00] were constantly coming over to our house. We were the last person on the milk route. The milkman would come in and he and my mother would smoke together. The electrician was constantly coming by to see if we needed anything. The plumb—do you know what I mean? Like—I mean, I don't really know what was going on. But, like, service people—it's always funny to me, because now everyone says, like, how hard it is to get a plumber, whatever. Like, they were, like, circling our house like honeybees when I was a kid.

JUDITH RICHARDS: The *Encyclopedia Britannica* salesman. [They laugh.] So, when you—you mentioned that you were interested in medicine. Uh, by the time you were in high school, was your main focus academically on science?

JANE HAMMOND: I mean, I don't remember that in high school it was all that specialized. But I took—I liked science a lot, and that seemed—I remember, in my Mount Holyoke interview, telling them I wanted to be a doctor. I don't know if that was really true or I thought you had to say something. But, I mean, that was the something that I made up, in any case, if that were the case, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And, um, and I liked science and I liked doing experiments. I still do.

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you were thinking of going to college, were you completely in charge of thinking about where you wanted to go and making the applications? Or did your parents or your grandmother—

JANE HAMMOND: Well, since my mother and grandmother went to Smith and my father went to Amherst, the fact that I went to Mount Holyoke leads you to the conclusion that I wasn't all that much in charge, right? I mean —

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's a girls' school.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Was that something that you wanted? A girls' college?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, it wasn't—I never remember thinking about that, really. My mother told me that I should apply to one college, 'cause she doesn't—wasn't going to spend all that money on those admission fees. We went to—we went on a—an abbreviated tour. I mean, not abbreviated. We went to, like, six places. I remember we went to Radcliffe, was extremely [00:56:00] windy and rainy. So, like, Radcliffe was off my list. I mean, that's kind of the way—

JUDITH RICHARDS: It always is.

JANE HAMMOND: I went out on a date the night before the SATs [Scholastic Aptitude Test]. It's just like—it was less—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: It wasn't—people weren't as organized about these things, or at least my parents weren't as organized. But I don't think—there weren't SAT prep classes or—

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Inaudible.]

JANE HAMMOND: —anything like that. It just was, like—and we didn't have the idea that it was going to be really hard for me to get into a good school. I was, like, 19th in my class of 728. I had—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well—

JANE HAMMOND: —really good grades.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —when you were in high school, did you have any streak of rebellion—rebellious actions that was—that would be—[laughs] [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: I fought like crazy with my mother in high school. I mean, like knock-down, drag out fights. Really bad fights. Um, screaming and throwing things and leaving the house for, you know, eight hours at a time. And this happened with none of my other siblings. So, I don't know whether I was angry at her from my child—but I am of—I have that in me, you know? Like, you can only push me so far kind of thing, do you know what I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you were growing up, was religion of any sort important?

JANE HAMMOND: No, and I—I don't think my father believed in God, and I think my mother is some kind of half-baked transcendentalist. In other words, like God is in nature and you go find him if you want him.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And when I came home and said to my mother that I had this idea now that I wanted to go to Sunday school on Sundays and I wanted to go to such-and-such a class and I wanted to be able to go to—the whole year so I could get the pin, like Betsy Delafield had. My mother sat me down and said, "Basically, people go to church because they want to see each other in their clothes, in their fancy clothes, and they [00:58:00] want to achieve status in the community, and they want to tell themselves that they're living a good life. And you do not need church to find God. And if you want to find God, you go out in a field and look for him yourself. You don't need any intermediary at all, and you don't need to wear any fancy clothes, and you don't need to have a pin." You know, that's just how—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —how my Mom—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know, that was her—that's her idea about religion. Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, you applied and got into Mount Holyoke.

JANE HAMMOND: Right.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And before we move onto college, though, were there any important, influential teachers in high school that—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —you want to talk about?

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yes, there was a—I was kind of a poet in high school. I was the editor of the literary magazine.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm, yes, I read about that.

JANE HAMMOND: And I read—wrote poetry. And, um, and I had an English teacher—I had a science teacher who I liked a lot and who encouraged this idea of, like, "Okay, here's the experiment. Well, what other experiments could you think of?" Or, like, "Let's try another experiment," you know? And I'd come after and we'd do some other version of what we were doing in school. That was really fun. And I had this teacher, Dick Leonard in Westport who had been a Jesuit priest. So, he was, like, super Catholic. And it's very funny, because I was in the AP English class and there were, like, 11 kids in the class. And there were only two kids in the class who weren't

Jewish: me and this red-haired girl who'd, like, come over from the Catholic school, so she wasn't kind of, like, in our group. And I got together with a bunch of friends from high school who sought me out, like, three years ago, and we all went out to lunch in Chelsea. And Larry Weinberg, who was the valedictorian of our class, corroborated my version of the [01:00:00] story, 'cause I was, like, "Can you help me remember if this is really what happened?" And what happened was Dick Leonard was, like, conscious of who was Jewish and who wasn't, although he never said anything. So, every time there'd be something about Catholicism, which—'cause we were reading James Joyce, it's never not about Catholicism, practically. He would say, "Jane, come explain to the class who Mary Magdalene is." You know, like this stuff—so, I'd go charging home to my mother, and the red-haired girl, who did know who Mary Magdalene was, was, like, smoking dope or she wasn't in class. So, I became, like, Miss Christianity. Well, like, I don't know a fucking thing, you—do you know what I mean? So, I'd come charging home to my mother. I'd be, like, "How come I don't know anything about Mary Magdalene?" She'd go, like, "We're not Catholic! We don't know about Mary Magdalene. You don't need to know about Mary"—so, it was—but I do remember, like, reading—there was something about reading *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* with Dick Leonard that helped me become an artist, because Joyce was so profoundly interesting to me, and the way it had this, like, loopy connectivity in the—in the writing, and the way it had such a profound interiority. I'd never read anything like that before. And I remember writing this, like, 50-page paper, you know, and being, like, just really super-engaged. It—it helped me develop being an artist, even though it wasn't, like, about visual arts.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: It was about, like, oh, there's this thing called consciousness. It's really big. You can be a plumber in there for the rest of your life. That's kind of what it did for me. And, um, he and my mother ended up bitter enemies, because he was a liberal and [01:02:00] he wanted to pay the teachers really well and tax the people. And my mother ended up on the town legisla—

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JANE HAMMOND: —ture and she was a Republican. And he would always say to her, "Your daughter was my best student," you know, just to kind of drive her crazy, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Was politics a big thing in your household when you were growing up?

JANE HAMMOND: It wasn't a big thing. But, like, both my parent—you wouldn't call my parents intellectuals.

JUDITH RICHARDS: I mean, that was the '60s, there was a lot going on.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, but both my—but my father was the kind of guy that would read, like, a three-volume book on Columbus, you know? Like, 1,200 pages. And, like, he'd be talking about Columbus for, like, a year, you know? So—or my mother—I went to France with my mother in 1985. It's, like, you know, she was astonished I didn't know who Madame De Sevigne was. And she'd be telling me about Madame—so, like, they had some aspects of a classical education. My mother can recite Tennyson poems, you know? Like, today she could, you know? They were conservative, my father more so than my mother. And it was Vietnam. I mean, I'm jumping—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —ahead, leaping—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Sure.

JANE HAMMOND: —ahead a little bit.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And we had lots and lots of fights about that. Eventually, I declared myself independent of my parents and got a scholarship at Mount Holyoke in my own name. That's how far I took it. Um, and at one point, I hadn't been home—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Before that, were they paying for your education?

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, but you know, the tuition—the first year I went to Mount Holyoke, the tuition was $3,500. I got a $1,000 scholarship, which my parents qualified for, so that tells you something about our economic level.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And I made $2,200 waitressing that summer.

JUDITH RICHARDS: I was going to ask you about summer jobs in—in high school and college.

JANE HAMMOND: I always had a summer job. Mostly, was like slinging food around, one way or the other—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Uh-huh [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —on Cape Cod, [00:02:00] in Westport, or on Nantucket, where my parents started renting. Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, tell me about—

JANE HAMMOND: —and I had jobs throughout high school. Like, I cut people's hair, which is weird, 'cause I'm not particularly good at it. Uh, I clipped dogs. I mostly cut boys' hairs, 'cause we had the dog clippers. I babysat. I did yardwork. I worked in a clothing store. I balanced the books in my aunt's real estate agency. I set hair for my mother and her friends.

JUDITH RICHARDS: You were very industrious. [They laugh.]

JANE HAMMOND: I don't know.

JUDITH RICHARDS: You wanted to—it's—including—

JANE HAMMOND: I've always been, like, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —get this income to be independent, because—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yeah. I've never been supported by a man. I think it would be constitutionally difficult for me.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, when you went—started Mount Holyoke, did you go with any friends? Did you know anyone?

JANE HAMMOND: I knew two girls at Mount Holyoke from my class in Westport, but I wasn't friends with them. However, I had a boyfriend in high school who was at Amherst. So, I had a great time there, 'cause by the time I got up there, I knew millions of people.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Because of the boyfriend.

JANE HAMMOND: I was greatly advantaged, 'cause I had this boyfriend at Amherst.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Was he older than you, then?

JANE HAMMOND: One year.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh.

JANE HAMMOND: Craig is the—Craig was the drummer in the band my boyfriend managed.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And Craig's last name?

JANE HAMMOND: McNeer.

JUDITH RICHARDS: M-c?

JANE HAMMOND: Capital N-e-e-r. And I'll tell you a funny story. Last month, the new director of the Mount Holyoke art museum came for a studio visit and to take me out to lunch. And he was with someone—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What's his name?

JANE HAMMOND: John Stomberg. S-t-o-m-b-e-r-g. We'd never met before, [00:04:00] and—and he had with him a young woman from the development office. God knows, she wasn't pitching me. But, you know, she was along for the experience. So, we have a studio visit, then we had gone out to lunch, and they say, "Hey, Craig, you want to come along?" So, you know, like, in theory, this is about me, right? But then, we start asking them, "So, what's going on at Mount Holyoke these days?" So, they say, "Well, we're having this big festival." That wasn't the word they used, but anyhow—symposium about Wendy Wasserstein. So, I said, "Did you know Craig McNeer is a character in *Uncommon Women*? That's her first play, and that's the—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —Mount Holyoke motto, "Uncommon women." That's where the title comes from. And Craig is

an offstage character called Pink Pants. So, we talk about that for a while, and then Craig was teasing me because, when we came home, he said, "You didn't even mention *Montpelier Pizzazz.*" *Montpelier Pizzazz* is an unpublished Wendy Wasserstein play, and Craig's from Montpelier. Craig is the Montpelier pizzazz. Now, we hadn't seen each other for, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: How do you spell pizzazz?

JANE HAMMOND: I think it's p-i-z-z-a-z-z.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, pizzazz. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: It's probably an Arab word, like, uh—

JUDITH RICHARDS: That was just a momentary blank.

JANE HAMMOND: —alakazam, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Something like that. I don't—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: But anyhow, um, so that was kind of funny.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, you went there and you—you had the boyfriend who was at Amherst, and, um, the couple people who you didn't know too well. So, how was your experience at—

JANE HAMMOND: My experience there was—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —you start as a pre-med, supposedly? [Laughs.]

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, supposedly, but who knows what they want to do—and that was a very tumultuous time, because it was the Vietnam thing, you know, where I wasn't the only—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You started when you were 18, so that was 1968?

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. I wasn't the only person on the outs with their parents over politics—but then, it was also feminism. [00:06:00] It's kind of like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And race.

JANE HAMMOND: —when I meet women that—and race. When I meet women that are three years older than me, and certainly four, their Mount Holyoke experience consisted of having sherry on Sunday afternoons, going to chapel. Their friends were engaged and wore diamond rings. They changed their last names. I mean, I'm generalizing, but you understand what I'm talking about, right?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And then, in my era, everything changed. Nobody wanted to get married. Nobody would've deigned to change their name. We dressed like complete slobs all the time. I mean—and I was totally on the outs with my parents for a great deal of the time. And I was sort of—I wasn't that afraid of it, because I—it didn't cost so much money to go to college that I couldn't have, like, scraped it up somehow or dropped out for a year and made two years of money, or—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you go back home every summer, or did you stay—

JANE HAMMOND: I went back home some summers and not others, and I can't even really kind of exactly remember. But—but I, um, you know, like, I would talk to them, like, maybe once a month or something like that. It wasn't—kids are very close to their parents now.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, I mean, I don't—I say it neutrally. I don't know if it's good or bad. You know, some part of me is jealous. But—but, um, I wasn't that close to them in those years, but lots of people weren't close to their par—it was just sort of—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: —like a more generational thing.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right. Do—

JANE HAMMOND: Like, one summer, I went across the country with my boyfriend. We went, like, out to British Columbia. I mean, we were gone for weeks and weeks and weeks. I don't ever think I called my parents at all. I don't think I asked their permission. I just went.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yep. [00:08:00]

JANE HAMMOND: You know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: When—when you were at Mount Holyoke, you ended up as a studio major. Like, tell me how that—

JANE HAMMOND: In a very circuitous way. I mean, I went—

JUDITH RICHARDS: How did that happen?

JANE HAMMOND: —from a falling out with the biology department to—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Because of what?

JANE HAMMOND: I don't know. I didn't like any of the biology teachers, and I—I just, you know, it didn't click for me, whatever it was. And it was—maybe it was two rigorous or too rigid or—I don't know what it was. Then I got into this creative writing thing where I thought I wanted to be a creative writing major. And I was writing poetry, then I got into art history, which I liked a lot. And I thought I wanted to be an art history major until I found out you were supposed to learn two languages, or I think it was two languages. Certainly, you had to master one other language. And although I—I think—I think you were supposed to know two languages, yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: For undergraduate?

JANE HAMMOND: No, to do graduate work—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —and you can't be an art historian without a—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Sure.

JANE HAMMOND: —graduate degree, really. And then, I got into taking some studio art, and I just fell down the rabbit hole. And—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Was that because of the teacher?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I think partially it was the teacher.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And what was that person's name?

JANE HAMMOND: That person's name was Leonard DeLonga. And I had a traveling show that Mount Holyoke organized for me. You've probably seen that catalogue—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —it's called *Paperwork*.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: So, when that show came to Mount Holyoke—that show started at Mount Holyoke, and then it went around—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, Dick Leonard and Leonard DeLonga.

JANE HAMMOND: It's funny, right?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Never thought of that before. When I—when I had my traveling show at Mount Holyoke, I went

back to Mount Holyoke for the opening of my show, which I think was 2003. We could look at the catalogue.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: I had not been back to [00:10:00] Mount Holyoke since I graduated.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, and I drove up—can't remember who I was with. I drove up to the art building. It had a giant banner on it that said, "Jane Hammond" and I started to cry. And then, I gave a talk, like you always do, you know, at a place that might be doing—

JUDITH RICHARDS: I think it was '06.

JANE HAMMOND: That sounds right.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And, um, and I've given millions of talks. And everyone always says, "Oh, you're such a good speaker, you're so articulate," whatever. And I—and my whole family was there. My father was still alive, my mother was there, my aunt was there. Um, both my brothers and my sister were there. None of them have ever been to any shows of mine, at the openings, and hardly—they come to any shows.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, they'd never been to a show in New York.

JANE HAMMOND: There's a few exceptions to that, but it's more true than not true. So, I got up there and the president of Mount Holyoke was there, and I could—I knew her by sight. And I got up to the podium and I started to cry. I was—and my sister said to me later—she said, "I saw you. I saw you losing it. I thought to myself, wow, I hope she can get it together." [Laughs.] You know, 'cause the whole auditorium was, like, filled, you know? And I said, you know, that I lived in this dorm for freshman year, and—or maybe it was sophomore year. And I took this sculpture class with Leonard DeLonga, and he took us over to his house and showed us his studio. [00:12:00] So, I knew where the windows were. I knew—so, when I would walk home from the library at 11 o'clock at night, I could see that the light was on in his studio. And he was really the first passionate person I met in my life. I said my father worked very, very, very hard. He worked crazy hard. But if he'd won the lottery, he would have quit that job. But Leonard DeLonga was working just 'cause he was, like, totally in love with this project. And I hadn't met any people like that before, you know? Really obsessed with something, who really worked, like, all the time. And I just really wanted to be around it. I wanted my life to be like that, you know? I wanted this big, you know, container that you could, like, pour everything into: your feelings, your biography, your knowledge, everything new you're going to learn, everything—anything that could happen to you could get processed in this big basket, you know? And—and so, somehow—you know, he wasn't a very good teacher. He didn't, in a way, teach us anything. And when I got to graduate school at Arizona State University, which was the only place that could have me, because I had taken so little art at Mount Holyoke, I couldn't get into Yale or RISD [Rhode Island School of Design] or any place good. I went out there, and there was a conversation about Jasper Johns among the other new graduate students, many of whom had graduated from schools like, you know, Western Pennsylvania University and U. Conn. and schools that, like, you know, my guidance counselor looked down on, right? And they were discussing Jasper [00:14:00] Johns, a man whose name I had never heard. So, I was very down on Leonard DeLonga and what he didn't teach us for a long time. I had never heard the word critique.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What did you—what did he teach you?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, we—

JUDITH RICHARDS: If he [ph] wasn't very—

JANE HAMMOND: —had very good facilities, for example. He taught sculpture. We had, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You mean sculpture in terms of the figure, or—

JANE HAMMOND: He didn't teach anything. In other words, we had bronze casting. Like, you would make something in microcrystalline wax, then you'd make the molds, then you'd fire the molds, then you'd fire up the bronze, then you'd cast the bronze, then you'd clean it, then you'd chase it. I mean, we all did this together, like a Viking—you know, like, tribe. Nobody ever said it's too big, it's too small, the foot doesn't go with the head. Have you ever looked at this artist, have—there was no criticism or guidance at all.

JUDITH RICHARDS: It was just techniques.

JANE HAMMOND: There wasn't even that much technique. I don't know what it was, you know? But somehow, it was exciting to be around this guy. His enthusiasm and his kind of love of you was contagious. And I was there all the time.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Were there other classes you took? Drawing, painting?

JANE HAMMOND: I never took drawing. I—at the end, I became a studio major. I didn't have any of the right requirements. But I had moved so far along in the sculpture class and with this ceramics program and I was there night and day. They sort of bent a few rules and made me—and gave me a studio major. But I didn't really have—it was like senior year. I didn't really have a major, 'cause I hadn't—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you take art history at all?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I did. I took a lot of art history.

JUDITH RICHARDS: But it was earlier, obviously. Not Jasper Johns.

JANE HAMMOND: I took a lot of art history. I had a great teacher for Impressionism. I had a wonderful medieval teacher. I took Renaissance. I mean, I took Japanese art history. [00:16:00] I had many good classes. I had a fantastic astronomy class. So good, I reread the textbook about five years after Mount Holyoke. But Leonard didn't actually teach us anything. But about five or six or 10 years after Mount Holyoke, I had gone to graduate school—I forget how many—like, I started teaching at the Maryland Institute in 1980, so—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You went straight from—

JANE HAMMOND: Okay, 10 years after Mount Holyoke, I'm teaching art. I'm living in New York. I have a studio, I'm making art. I'm teaching art at the Maryland Institute. I'm starting to think of myself as an artist. So, I write Leonard DeLonga a letter. "Thank you." And, you know, he was, like, a sort of a—what would be the right—he was, like, a very sought-after teacher. People would come from Amherst and Smith to take classes with him. He was, like, real popular. Charismatic.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: That's the word I want. So, I wasn't confident he would remember me. So, I wrote, "Dear Mr. DeLonga"—I wrote this on a typewriter. "My name is Jane Hammond. I graduated in 1972. I'm five-foot-eight, I have "dirty blonde" hair, I have br—"you know what I mean? Like, I described myself. "And I just want to thank you, because I feel like you gave me this path, and now I'm on this path, and I'm glad I'm on it. And I just want to thank you for giving me, like, some direction to my life." I can't remember exactly what I said. And then, he wrote me back and he said, "Dear Jane, of course I remember you. And my wife has Xeroxed your letter—my wife has enlarged your letter 100 times [00:18:00] and nailed it to the outside of our house," or, you know, something funny like that. And, um, you know, it's just, like, a really nice letter back. So, when I gave my talk at Mount Holyoke, I open with this story of how important he was to me, then how I thought he wasn't any good, then how I discovered the most important thing was, like, not this knowledge about which came first, Johns or Rauschenberg or whatever, but this—he had—he was an example of a passionate life that was formative to me at a certain time, and how I wrote him this thank you note, and then his letter back to me. So, you can see why I sort of dissolved, you know? So, I was able to pull myself back together. He—he was an important teacher. Would I be an artist today if I hadn't have—had him as a teacher? I think I probably would be. Um, but he was important for me.

JUDITH RICHARDS: When—you said when you graduated, the only—you—you immediately knew you wanted to go to graduate school.

JANE HAMMOND: I applied to graduate school very late in the game. I had really nobody to help me, because I wasn't friends with anyone else at Mount Holyoke who was applying to graduate school in art. If there was someone officially there who would help you, I didn't know it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: No, there wasn't.

JANE HAMMOND: It just wasn't such a careerist time, kind of.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: I didn't have any—I was on the outs with my parents, so it's, like, I had to find something that I could afford myself. And I had this boyfriend, on again, off again, who was—another boyfriend, not the rock and roll manager—who was from Oregon and who was going to grad school in Montana and, you know, like, so there was that kind of thing going on. So, somehow, I applied to ASU. I mean, I don't know where I got the idea. And I got in, and I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's in Tucson.

JANE HAMMOND: No, it's in Phoenix.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh.

JANE HAMMOND: It's in Tempe—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right, Tempe, yes.

JANE HAMMOND: And I got in and I got a free ride and a teaching fellowship. [00:20:00]

JUDITH RICHARDS: Assistantship?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. Now, I should—which I didn't apply for. So, I was so unsophisticated, I didn't realize that meant there was something wrong with the school, when they're, like, can give you more than you can even think of to ask for. But I just kind of looked at them—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, Mount Holyoke—and you were a good student, and you had—

JANE HAMMOND: I don't think they even knew what Mount Holyoke was. But anyhow, off I went to Arizona. And, uh—

JUDITH RICHARDS: To—with the purpose of continuing sculpture?

JANE HAMMOND: For the purp—I'd gotten into ceramics, and I was going to get a degree in ceramics.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Ceramics in terms of sculptural ceramics—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —or making pots and—

JANE HAMMOND: No, hand-built objects. So, I went out there—it's funny, I had a Volvo—I've only owned one car in my life. It was a '69 Volvo and, uh, I remember this moment of the drive. It's just flashing before me now. Roberta Flack was singing on the radio, and I was driving across Nevada at night. And I came across a heard of white mules. And they were, like, crossing the road, and they were in the headlights. You know how mules have those really big—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Ears.

JANE HAMMOND: It was really something. I got out there, and the first night I was there—I got out there, and, um, and my boyfriend came down and met me there. I don't know where he came from, if he came from Montana or Oregon. And I rented a duplex. It was olive green, cement block house. And the first night I was there, the man and woman in the other half of the house had a terrible fight. And he threw [00:22:00] her out of the picture window, which smashed with a great noise. And I called the police. And the police came, and he picked her up and held her in his arms, and she was covered in blood. And they both started yelling at me. [They laugh.] It's my one non-personal, uh, episode of domestic—it's the only domestic violence I've ever seen that wasn't in my own family. And it's like a textbook thing that you read about, but you think, "It couldn't possibly happen." But I actually did experience it. I don't remember whether the police stay—you know, I don't remember how it all ended up. And we left that place after, like, one month.

JUDITH RICHARDS: We? You were living with someone else then?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I was kind of living with my boyfriend then.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, so he wasn't in school someplace else.

JANE HAMMOND: I guess by then—I think he dropped out of his program to be with me in Arizona is what I think happened. And we stayed there two years, and we bought a house in Laveen.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Laveen?

JANE HAMMOND: L-a-v-e-e-n, which is just south of Phoenix. I've been back. It's now like a suburb of Phoenix. But it wasn't connected to Phoenix then.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, you graduate in '72. You were there fall '72 to [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: Ah, spring '74. I was there two years.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Two academic years.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And I lived, uh—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you get a master's degree in that period of time?

JANE HAMMOND: No, because I was too lazy to put up the show you had to put up to get a master's degree. So, I did a year of graduate work in ceramics and didn't come out with a master's. And the second year, I dropped [00:24:00] out. The second year—I had one good teacher. The teachers were terrible, and I didn't think much of the other students, either. And they gave me a TA and I was the first woman they'd ever given a TA to. Like, the first job I had, I had to unload a boxcar of hundred-pound bags of clay. I mean, it was, like, ridiculous. Most guys couldn't do it. But I had one good teacher, and her name was Barbarie Rothstein. I have no idea—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Barbarie?

JANE HAMMOND: Barbarie. B-a-r-b-a-r-i-e.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Barbarie Rothstein.

JANE HAMMOND: Yep. And—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What did she teach?

JANE HAMMOND: Sculpture. And she was smart and interesting. And she knew about Eva Hesse.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm.

JANE HAMMOND: And she showed these slides of Eva Hesse, and it was like I was totally intrigued. So, two things that happened was, one, I wanted to go to the University of Wisconsin in sculpture, because that's what she had done. And it sounded better than where I was. And I was sort of falling out of with ceramics, because the people—I don't know, they were just—they were all into funk art, and it was just, like—it's not like I was some big intellectual, but it was too anti-intellectual for me. And meanwhile, I was so disgraced that I didn't know who Jasper Johns was that I decided I was going to go to the library every night and read my way through *Artforum*. So, I was on, like, a different track with all these, you know, people that were—that were there. So, I was just, like, planning to get out of there from, like, week one.

JUDITH RICHARDS: But you bought a house, you said.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, for $23,000.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm.

JANE HAMMOND: And my second husband had some money. His family had some money. So, he put down the down payment. What would it have been, $5,000.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Wait, we didn't talk about your getting married the first time, did we?

JANE HAMMOND: No, [00:26:00] excuse me. He is my first husband. [They laugh.] Sorry.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, who was—who was your first husband?

JANE HAMMOND: My first husband was named Hoyt Corbett.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hoyt, H-o—

JANE HAMMOND: I met him—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —y-t?

JANE HAMMOND: H-o-y-t—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Corbett.

JANE HAMMOND: —C-o-r-b-e-t-t.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And, um, he was the youngest of a big family that used to be prominent in Portland, Oregon. So, we had a little money.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And where did you meet him?

JANE HAMMOND: He went to Amherst College. And I was very enthralled with the fact that he'd grown up working on a ranch, and, like, he knew all these kind of Western things, and he knew all about camping and the mountains. And, like, just everything I didn't know. And—and, uh, we spent several summers together in Oregon. Central Oregon. His family had a ranch there. And, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Is this while you were going to school in Arizona that you spent the summers there?

JANE HAMMOND: I guess so. Or it might have been the last summer at Mount Holyoke. I can't remember.

JUDITH RICHARDS: When did you get married?

JANE HAMMOND: I think '74.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, after you graduated Mount Holyoke and went to Arizona—

JANE HAMMOND: I think I was married from '72 to '74. You know, I don't actually know. I could check on it. It's embarrassing.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, you got married after you graduated.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And—

JANE HAMMOND: That's for sure.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, when I said you rented, you thought maybe it was your boyfriend from Montana. But, in fact, you were renting with Hoyt?

JANE HAMMOND: Uh, yeah, who was also my boyfriend—he was in graduate school in ceramics in Missoula, and he was also from Oregon. The—the points on the map in his life were Bend, OR, Portland, OR, and Missoula, MT, and Amherst College. And it—so, it was a little bit of a mish-mosh of those things.

JUDITH RICHARDS: But he went to be with you in Tempe. [00:28:00]

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. And, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Was it—just one more moment about this. Was—were your—was your family involved when you got married? Was it a—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, we—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —a family—

JANE HAMMOND: —had a wedding. We had a—like, a kind of normal wedding. Like, hippie wedding, you know, but kind of normal, at my parents' house. And, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And what was his—what were his aspirations?

JANE HAMMOND: He wanted to be a potter. And, um, he wasn't as ambitious as I was. And I think that was a fact that was known to both of us. I'm not completely sure. He had a little money. But, you know, I didn't even know that when I married him, because in those days, money was out among hippies. I mean, it's hard to imagine how much it was, but you're old enough to know, too, right?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right, absolutely.

JANE HAMMOND: And—and—and the way you lived, you didn't really need much money.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right, nobody thought about it.

JANE HAMMOND: So, you know, he had a trust fund. I don't know what—what it had in it. It didn't have a million dollars in it, but it might have had $400,000 in it, which was like $400,000 more than I had. I don't—I don't really know what it was. But, in other words, when we bought this house, I don't think we had a mortgage. I think he bought it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: Um, and as I say, it was $23,000. It was kind of a ratty house, but it had a separate studio in the back. It was zoned like—it was many more Native Americans than white people and, like, all kinds of different ways of living, you know? Like, pig farmers were in the back of us, cotton farmers were in the front. You could do anything. So, if you wanted to have, like, a salt kiln, no problem. So, that's what attracted us to it, 'cause we wanted to have a kiln and make all these fumes and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —you know, that kind of thing. So, we fenced [00:30:00] the place ourselves, and we got cattle.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Why did you get cattle?

JANE HAMMOND: I don't know. Our neighbor was, like, a cowboy from Texas, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: How many acres did you have?

JANE HAMMOND: —everybody had—three. Everybody had cattle. Nobody didn't have cattle.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What would you—why?

JANE HAMMOND: You'd make a little money on it, you know? You'd buy it and then you'd, like, fatten it up and take it into the—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So—

JANE HAMMOND: —auction. I mean, we didn't make any money, but that's 'cause our timing was bad. But, you know, that was, like, the—everyone said, you know, like, you got to have some animals, you know? You got this land, you got to fence it. And then, if you don't have animals, you've got to actually mow the grass. Like, in other words, if you have cows, you don't do anything to the field. If you don't have cows, the field is entropy-ing on you —

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know? So, it's—so—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, although it could be just sandy dirt, being in Arizona—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —but—

JANE HAMMOND: But anyhow, so we got all involved in Arizona life, you know? We—we had an—they—you do flood irrigation there. I mean, I could talk for an hour about flood irrigation. It's kind of funny. And we had all these interesting neighbors. And I decided one day to get—my husband went away for a weekend, and I decided it'd be really fun to get—I saw an add for mature orange trees for $10, and I drove over to the grove and it was a whole orange tree, and it was covered in oranges. So, I thought it'll be really funny if I, like, produce this tree in the backyard, just, like, shazam, right? So, I hired a guy with a backhoe, and he dug a big hole. That cost me $35. I bought the tree for $10, and they loaded it in the truck, because, really, they were trying to eradicate this citrus growth so they could build houses. They were trying to get rid of it. The truck went down to, like, the axles, like, on the ground. I drove home really slowly and the guy with the backhoe took the tree out and he dug this big hole and we put the tree in. And then, when Hoyt came back for the weekend, we had this giant orange tree in the backyard. [They laugh.]

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did it live?

JANE HAMMOND: No, it died. [00:32:00] You know, I mean, 'cause probably, the people didn't know how to rip it out of the ground, or—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —I didn't know how to plant it right or whatever. I think—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You had a lot of oranges one cycle of [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: I mean, that's the level of, like—I don't know, we were, like, do—we'd—we put three rooms on the house and we re-roofed it and we stuccoed it and, you know, we, like—and I made a big garden, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What was the work—were you working?

JANE HAMMOND: So, then, I—I fell in love with Eva Hesse, and I basically made Eva Hesse's work. Now, I always say when I teach, like, I think originality is tremendously overrated. I think copying is a very good way to learn. It's, like, how you learn how to eat, how to walk, how to speak. It's, like, everything important that you do from, like, zero to five is copying, right?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: But in the art schools, everybody thinks you're supposed to sit in this white cubicle by yourself and think of a really good idea. And then, when you think of something, people come through and they say, "Oh, you can't do that. Ree Morton did that. Oh, you can't do—" you—do you know what I mean?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: And the students are, like—they're in the corner of this room. They're afraid to do anything. So, I always say, I had this teacher. She gave this one lecture on Eva Hesse. It was really great. I called up this comp—I went to the library, got the Thomas's Index of manufactured goods, I figured out where there was latex rubber. I called up this company in Massachusetts. I bought, like, $500 worth of latex rubber, and I made work like hers, which cheesecloth and latex rubber. And I, like, made hundreds of pieces this way. And I would take all the furniture out of the house and put it in the yard. This was somewhat easy to do, because we had a very funky house and Arizona was a very benign climate. And then, I'd work in the bedroom, in the living room.

JUDITH RICHARDS: This was beyond the studio that you—or was—maybe—

JANE HAMMOND: The studio was his.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Your hus—okay.

JANE HAMMOND: And I'd make these things—I mean, they weren't—[00:34:00] I wasn't trying exactly to copy her work, but they were very Eva Hesse-like. They were serial, in nature, with simple compositions and sort of biomorphic shapes, and using the basic metaphor of the latex is like human skin or, you know, something like that. And then, there was—like, Honeywell was big out there and there was, like, a Honeywell place where you could go and buy stuff, like wires and computers, and—and so, I'd buy all this stuff and I'd, like, make it look like it was a—kind of a cross between Eva Hesse and some kind of machine. I didn't know whether it was any good or not, and I—it would be hard to go find pictures, but I probably could find pictures. But I was totally engaged with it. And then, I read all about her. So, I worked my way through a way of thinking. And at the end of it, I felt like I kind of understood it. I think that's a very good way to learn about art. It's really frowned on now, you know, because it's not original enough. But I think if you—if you take on the sort of—like, the—like, I don't want to say the zeitgeist, but like the personal-geist of some, you know, Sol LeWitt and then Eva Hesse. Or, like, I really went through this Barry Le Va phase, you know? And you, like, kind of get in that way of thinking and ideation, and you really kind of try it on. It helps you figure out who you are.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, traditionally, that's how painters learned.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, totally, uh—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. I think nowadays, it isn't so frowned upon to do that as an undergraduate, because everyone's so much—but as a graduate student, you're probably expected—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —be more original.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yeah. So, anyhow, I mean, I just worked at home for a year. And I made—I had this goal that I was sort of making [00:36:00] a portfolio, and I wanted to go to the University of Wisconsin, just 'cause I liked Barbarie. I mean, it was, like, as simple as that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And—and I applied, and I got in.

JUDITH RICHARDS: It's in Madison?

JANE HAMMOND: In Madison. And then, because I'd already had a teaching assistantship in Tempe, I got one in Madison. So, basically, I was, like—and then, when I got to Madison, I left my husband.

JUDITH RICHARDS: He didn't come with you, or—

JANE HAMMOND: He came with me, but I wasn't with him by the time he showed up. It's not—I'm not proud of it, but that's—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —what happened. So—so, I was completely self-supporting at that point. I had more money in Madison with a TA than I had for the first 10 years I lived in New York. I was going out to dinner, and I was collecting quilts.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What was the—your—so, you spent one year—how long did it take to get the MFA? Three year—

JANE HAMMOND: Three years.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Three years, '7—

JANE HAMMOND: You—you could have done it in two years.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —'74 to '77.

JANE HAMMOND: Right. You could—there were people who did it in two years. But I had to teach my way through it, 'cause I didn't have any money, and it slowed me down a little. And I don't think I was looking to get out in a hurry, either.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Did you really enjoy, immediately, like, the departments?

JANE HAMMOND: I loved Madison. It was, like, this very hip, kind of liberal town. It was, like, late enough in the game that, like, the—you know, nobody was being killed. Remember, you know, like, that—that was over, and it was, like, the wake of that. Paul Soglin was the mayor. He was a 33-year-old communist, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What was his last name?

JANE HAMMOND: I think his name was Soglin, S-o-g-l-i-n. The students owned the town. And the university was huge, you know? It was, like, 50,000 people. So, coming from Mount Holyoke, I thought that was very cool. And all my life, my mother had sort of [00:38:00] put down the Midwest as being this place where people ate meat and potatoes and it wasn't very interesting. And it was fabulous. And I—I had a better time in graduate school than I did in college. I just—I really liked the independence of it. I had a car, I had a job. I had a studio in an old Victorian house that was, like, a little bit off campus.

JUDITH RICHARDS: A studio plus living—

JANE HAMMOND: No, I had a—I had a house—I had an apartment, I guess, in the beginning. But the school gave you a studio. And my studio was very cool, you know? It was, like, very autonomous and it was this Victorian house. And nobody ever showed up on my floor, so I had—ended up having, like, four studios. And I don't know, it was just, like, a—I—I had a great time there.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What department were you in? What were you tea—

JANE HAMMOND: Art.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Was it—

JANE HAMMOND: And I was—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —in the sculpture—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I was in sculpture. I got an MFA in sculpture.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And you were teaching sculpture.

JANE HAMMOND: I was teaching three-dimensional design, believe it or not.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, that's what TAs teach.

JANE HAMMOND: But I just made it into a sculpture course.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. When you got there, what direction did your work take? I mean, you had, perhaps, finished with Eva Hesse?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I can't remember the first few things I made there. Um, Deborah Butterfield was teaching there, and she had her first teaching job there. We were both women with husbands who'd left our husbands behind. And I was assigned to her, to be her teaching assistant. So, um, we became good friends. We're good friends to this day. And we spent a huge amount of time together. And we would roam around Wisconsin, and we would, like look at—you know, we, like, we would collect quilts and we'd look at antiques and we'd look at, like—[00:40:00] like, folk arty kind of things. And we'd cook elaborate meals together, and—um, and there was a guy named Art Schade there. They were all Californians.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Schade?

JANE HAMMOND: S-c-h-a-d-e. They were all Californians. They were—both Debbie and Art were students of William Wiley. So, there was a sensibility there in Madison that was kind of non-New York. It was, uh, Chicago, Hairy Who, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Bay Area.

JANE HAMMOND: —and Bay Area, whatever. So, I never thought about it this way. But, you know, I spent all the time in Arizona kind of boning up on, like, you know, all the New York stuff. And then, I got to Madison and they were all looking towards California. It was probably good for me, in a certain way. But it was a whole other set of information. And, um, I made things—I made sculpture there, um—I've always made things where it's—I've never made art that sought unicity or essence or gestalt. I've always made multipartite things that sought interesting relationships with each other. I've never made anything pure. And almost everything I've ever made —

JUDITH RICHARDS: What do you mean by pure?

JANE HAMMOND: I mean, like a—a single shape made out of a single material that has a single meaning, or—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —um—[00:42:00]

JUDITH RICHARDS: Everything is hybrid.

JANE HAMMOND: Everything is hybrid and mix-y and relational that I've ever made.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What were the materials that you started working with when you got there?

JANE HAMMOND: Oh, I made a piece that was—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Or, maybe, over the three years?

JANE HAMMOND: I made, um, a set of doll furniture out of—I bought a lot of alligator pocketbooks and I cut up the alligator, and I made a set of doll furniture out of alliga—out of the alligator skin over, like, a metal armature. Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What brought you to doll furniture?

JANE HAMMOND: I don't know.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Was there a dollhouse, also?

JANE HAMMOND: I don't remember the dollhouse. I remember making a mask out of a catcher's mitt, you know? Like using the catcher's mitt and then covering it with different kinds of leather. I made, um, a piece that was a ramp of steel, and it had a wasp's nest on it. And it was all covered in blue ballpoint pen ink. And I broke open all the pens and smeared the ink on it. I made—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What do you think connected those pieces?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, they were sort of hybrid objects. They were—they all—they had recognizable parts, but they were—I made—here's a simple example. I made a table with flowers growing out of it. I grew the flowers and trimmed off their branches so there were zinnias, but they were, like, this tall. Super leggy. What you wouldn't want if you were a gardener. And then, I dried them, and then I made this big table, which I painted with green tempera paint, but I sprayed it on, so it looked like felt. And then, the flowers grew directly out of the table. I don't really know what it was about. But it was sort of, like, both familiar and strange at the same time.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Each of them sounds like there was a—kind of a natural element.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, that's true.

JUDITH RICHARDS: The skin—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —natural element [00:44:00] coupled with the—[cross talk]—the steel, with the manmade—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. But I never had that thought about it. Mostly, things would just come to me and I would make—I made a piece out of Christmas trees, where I gathered up, like, about 60 Christmas trees and arranged them in different ways in the room. And I made quite a few videotapes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Had you worked with video before?

JANE HAMMOND: No.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you pick—

JANE HAMMOND: But they had a video seminar, and I decided to take it. And then, you just checked these cameras out, and then you—then you got them. So, like, the first videotape I made was I was naked in the corner of a room on a mattress. I had all these things going in this house, because nobody ever came to the house. So, I could have, like, my video in one room and I could, like, have chalk and messy—powdery stuff in another room, and—and so, from the back—the tape is, like, two minutes long. From the back, it looks like I'm masturbating, 'cause I'm, like, rocking back and forth. And then, at the very end, the camera comes around in the front and I'm actually building a fire in the bed by rubbing two sticks together. So, it ends with the fire coming. And, I don't know, I made videos with Debbie, where we found these Percheron horses. They're white horses with really long fur.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Percheron.

JANE HAMMOND: And, um, and we got this very soft black chalk and we drew pictures on the horses.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Were there artists who, either in history or working in New York, perhaps, at the time—that were particularly influential, interesting to you at—during that period of time?

JANE HAMMOND: I think I was, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: I mean—

JANE HAMMOND: I was taking in all this California information. They were all very interested in Bruce Nauman.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And then, there was this funky background to it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: And then, I was kind of, I think, [00:46:00] weaving this together with, like, Sol LeWitt and Barry Le Va. So, I think I was sort of trying to fuse something that had some strictness about it and some abstraction with something else that had some emotional valance for me.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: I can't really—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Were you aware of what was going on in New York at the time?

JANE HAMMOND: Not very.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Were—this—there any, uh, feminist artists, experiments and ideas—and, of course, you're talking about video—that was—

JANE HAMMOND: I don't remember—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —happening in Madison?

JANE HAMMOND: We—I think we were all reading the magazines and talking about things, but I don't remem—like the way I remember being, like, really interested in Eva Hesse, I don't remember that—like, then, we were all really interested in so-and-so.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay.

JANE HAMMOND: I remember this guy came out named Willoughby Sharp.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And he was a performance artist, and I thought he was an idiot. So, I did some videos that were, like, making fun of Willoughby Sharp. Like, they were pastiches of performance art, because you know how it was so indulgent and so simplistic in terms of what happened, and so repetitive, it was easy to make fun of.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What—at that point, did you imagine you might continue working in video? Was it—was that—did you feel—

JANE HAMMOND: I don't remember ever having that thought or not having that thought.

JUDITH RICHARDS: But it—they were experiments.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. It seemed like—I don't know, it's funny. I've talked to people I went to graduate school with, and they all act like I was really—like, they all act like, "Oh, I'm not surprised at all that you became successful," or—you know? But that's not how I remember—I mean, I got an email from—from [00:48:00] a guy I went to grad school with just recently saying, "I'm so proud of you and everything you've done, and you were always really sure of yourself and filled with confidence. And it was clear you were going somewhere," and—and it's, like, that's not how I remember it. I remember it that, like, lots of people were really good, and it was competitive in a very nice sense. And I certainly felt all the other people were my equals or more so, and we were constantly in each other's studios. It's kind of how I think graduate should be.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: And everyone was working 'til, like, one in the morning. And then, they'd be, like, "Did you see this piece that so-and-so did?" And then, you'd, like, run over and see it, and then you'd feel, like, you had to work really hard, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Was there one kind of predominant aesthetic in the graduate school, in the sculpture department at that point?

JANE HAMMOND: I think that there was a bias towards recognizable things and towards material experimentation. Um, there weren't that many people making complete abstraction.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. What did you end up doing for your graduate show? I mean, I presume you had one when—your MFA show.

JANE HAMMOND: I remember everything in my MFA show was green. But someone else pointed it out to me. And I—I remember that table with the flowers was in it. I don't remember everything else that was in it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: But there were the—there were these hybrid objects.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. I mean, I always felt like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: That you put together in a kind of intuitive way.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. I mean, there was some carpentry, and there was some welding, and there was some casting. But there was a lot of kind of, like, covering A with B, you know? Like, I'd—like, I made this piece. It was, like, all these fur collars. There were fantastic [00:50:00] thrift shops in Madison. I mean, my two cast iron frying pans; I paid 50 cents each for them in a thrift shop in Madison. I'm still cooking in them. But I bought—

JUDITH RICHARDS: We all wish those thrift shops were still around. [Laughs.]

JANE HAMMOND: I bought this collection of fur collars. Like, a lot of them from the '40s. They were very interesting shapes when you put [inaudible].

JUDITH RICHARDS: With the heads on them?

JANE HAMMOND: No, they didn't have the heads. They were just, like—like, maybe a thin band and then two big kind of—so, it was, like, here, yeah—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Collar, yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —yeah, yeah. And I covered them all with body putty, and then I painted them. And then, I had them just, like, as a group of shapes on the wall. This is where it would connect with Eva Hesse. It was, like, neither pure abstraction—but you couldn't easily ascribe a noun to it. It was thing-y, but what the thing was, you couldn't easily name. A lot of it fell into that kind of category.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you continue writing poetry or writing any journals or anything while you were doing this?

JANE HAMMOND: No, I don't remember.

JUDITH RICHARDS: There were no words attached to these pieces.

JANE HAMMOND: No, there weren't any words attached to them. Um, a lot of people were doing this intensely patterned stuff.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, that was the time in New York—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —that was going on.

JANE HAMMOND: But I—I couldn't—I would always think I wanted to do that. But after, like, three nights of drawing little dots, I just didn't want to do it anymore. I was, like, this is boring. So, I made a videotape with wolves that I discovered, oh, like, an hour and a half north of Madison, there was this wolf preserve. And I noticed that the wolves knew when the noonday signal would come. The, like, whoo—that whistle. So, when it would come, they would howl along with it. [00:52:00] And before it would come, an anticipation would start building and they would start pacing in their cages. So, I made—it was almost like a sexual anticipation and release. So, I made a tape that was just a documentation of that. And, I don't know, it's hard for me to completely characterize that work. I made a piece that I submitted to a show at the Art Institute of Chicago. The Chicago Art Institute used to have a show called Chicago and Vicinity. If you lived within 200 miles of Chicago, you could submit for the show. And my piece was a welded steel frame, and it was the—I went around and measured what the typical bedroom window was, like 40-by-30. So, it was, like, a frame on the wall, but it was that dimension. So, when you saw the frame on the wall, you thought window, but there were no window-like details to it. And then, there were two arms that came in from the sides. And I welded nails on those arms. And then, I took two coconuts—you know how they're very hairy, like—I took two coconuts and I drilled into them and drained them so the hole would sit over the nails. Can you pict—

JUDITH RICHARDS: The coconut would sit on the piece—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, and the coconuts were sort of, like, sexual. And then, I covered the whole thing in pancake makeup. So, it was, like, fleshy. And I even, like, powdered the coconuts.

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's a lot of makeup.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah. So, it was, like, fleshy and sexual and abstract.

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you talk about putting those round objects on those nails, it brings to mind several instances in your more recent work where you have heads on stakes, [00:54:00] on little—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —posts.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: I mean, not that they were coconut-looking or—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —make-up'd—[laughs]—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —made-up, but they were heads on stakes.

JANE HAMMOND: Or an object removed from a context and presented as a sculptural entity. That's something I've done a lot of.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. When—

JANE HAMMOND: You want more water [inaudible]?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Um, sure. Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: I think that amoun—

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JUDITH RICHARDS: This is Judith Richards, interviewing Jane Hammond on Grand Street in New York on April 3rd, 2012, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, disk two. Jane, you were just—

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I was going to say that I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —finishing—

JANE HAMMOND: I think at Mount Holyoke, I discovered sort of a tribal pleasure that you could experience being around art. But I think in Madison, I learned about being alone in the studio, and the powerful pull that making things had on me, and how I could just, like—hours could go by and, like, it would seem like a half an hour had gone by or something like that. And that I wasn't making a bronze piece with a classroom of people making a bronze piece. I was, like, making these things with objects and materials, and I was spending a huge amount of my time foraging the objects and materials that I thought I wanted, or wandering around, exploring and discovering things, and, like, junking and antiquing. And it's almost like being on the internet now or something like that. And just the thrill of, like, you're driving around in your car and you're, like, picking up all these Christmas trees. And then, you go get this chainsaw and you're, like, cutting up the Christmas trees. And, like, it's—I was reading things, and I did go to seminars, and I was kind of learning, you know, what post-Minimalism was and Donald Judd's criticism. And, you know, various things. But I was really discovering, like, having an idea and seeing it in your mind [00:02:00] and then getting the stuff and, like, putting it together, you know? And I think that, um, I still love that, you know? Like, the R&D part of the art is really a major thing for me, you know? And—and kind of roaming around and looking at things and figuring out, like, what would be good with what or what—you know. So, I—you know, I'm quite sure that when I left Madison—like, the piece I described with the coconuts, not only did it get into the show at the Chicago Art Institute, but it won one of three prizes or won the prize or something like that. And I got $500. And, like, none of my teachers even got into the show, you know? It was almost kind of embarrassing, because they had all applied. But, like, I don't think I brought that piece East with me.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What happened to all those works?

JANE HAMMOND: I think I just junked 'em. Or maybe I put 'em in my parents' barn, and then, eventually—

[Audio break.]

JUDITH RICHARDS: Um—

JANE HAMMOND: I mean, I worked hard on those—I've always made stuff that's very labor-intensive, too, you know, like, I look at a—like, an Ellsworth Kelly drawing and it's, like, I admire it, but it's really from another planet. I could never trust anything that came that quickly. I mean, maybe he makes 1,000 before he keeps one, I don't—I don't know. But it just, like—I don't have any instinct like that. Or maybe you could say I don't have any ability like that. I—I don't know, but it's, like, everything is complicated for me.

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you—

JANE HAMMOND: And complication feels real to me. Like, I remember once, this collector said [00:04:00], "Well, I like this drawing, but it's too filled with information." And I felt like saying, like, "Go out on the fucking street." [They laugh.] But I didn't.

JUDITH RICHARDS: He needed simplification.

JANE HAMMOND: Anyhow.

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you graduated, uh, how did you decide what to do next, and what did you do next?

JANE HAMMOND: Um, I had this boyfriend who was this teacher, Art Schade. I hooked up with him. And we got it in our minds to move to Nantucket for a year and build a house for my parents.

JUDITH RICHARDS: For your parents.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. My parents wanted a house in Nantucket and were somewhat unable to pull it off. I thought it would be a good way for us to make money fast, and I thought it would be a fun project.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did either of you have construction experience?

JANE HAMMOND: All of these ideas were wrong. He had some construct—he was a skilled sculptor, and I had put three rooms on our house in Arizona. And I bought this book called *Modern Carpentry*. I mean, I did it with my husband. But, like, I did the whole roof myself, and I was sort of the opinion that, like, most of this stuff was learnable, in the same way that you could make a soufflé if you'd never made a soufflé by just, like, taking the cookbook—you might not get it exactly right the first time, but you get it right the third time, you know? So, it's mostly sequencing and, you know, and there were plenty of people around in Arizona to help us, 'cause everyone was building houses, you know? And everybody in that kind of place knows how to do things with their hands. And so, I just thought we could do it. [00:06:00]

JUDITH RICHARDS: Now, this idea of going to Nantucket to build your parents a house—didn't sound like continuation of your career as an artist.

JANE HAMMOND: No, and it—and it also represented some kind of rapprochement with my parents. It's, like—and I don't really—I don't completely know how to unpack it, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you own property on Nantucket?

JANE HAMMOND: My mother had bought a half an acre on Nantucket for $18,000. And, uh, and we built the house for 24[000], something like that. They had 45[000] in it. I mean, it's, like, crazy little—and we built this house. It was 20-by-24. Two stories. Three bedrooms. So, it's, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Wow, those are small rooms.

JANE HAMMOND: Really small. But it's nice, actually. It's, like, a handmade house, you know? And, like, I had this friend, Alixe, who grow up—grew up on a plantation, this—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Sorry, Alixe?

JANE HAMMOND: Alix, A-l-i-x-e. And I knew her because her other and my grandmother were in AA together.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What was her last name?

JANE HAMMOND: Hugret. And she grew up on a plantation in the South called Dunleith. It's a famous plantation.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Dunleith.

JANE HAMMOND: Dunleith, I think it is. D-u-n-l-e-a-t-h [sic]. And anyhow, she had these Southern woods, like, cherry and walnut and some other woods. So, we used some wood, you know, that came from her family's land in Mississippi, and—and a friend of mine who was a sculptor in Madison, he came up and built the cabinets. And, you know, we did—we made everything. We made—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, each room was about 10-by-10. These bedrooms upstairs—

JANE HAMMOND: Well, the downstairs is just a kitchen, [00:08:00] living room that's open—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —and it's 20-by-24.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, 20-by-24.

JANE HAMMOND: And then, the upstairs is, like, really small sleeping quarters with bunkbeds. We built the

bunkbeds. You have to build everything in when it's that small or, like, you can't, you know—so, of course, as you can imagine, it turned into a bigger project. You know, my idea was, like, oh, we'll make $10,000, which I thought was a giant amount of money. But I hadn't talked to my parents—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Because your parents would buy it.

JANE HAMMOND: They were paying us $10,000 to build the house, was what I thought. I might have the number wrong, but it's the right order of magnitude. And I thought we could do it in three months.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And they would buy all the supplies.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. They were going to pay us for our labor. We were going to—we lived in the house from the first month on, which was, like, really a nightmare. But, um, but anyhow, we did it, you know? My mother owns the house today. And it's nice. And, in some ways, it's my—one of my bigger accomplishments, you know? I mean, it is, like—it's still there, you know? And it is a house. Um, and we—and so, in the end, I lived on the island for a year, and I didn't make much art. And it was quite lonely in the winter.

JUDITH RICHARDS: He didn't stay.

JANE HAMMOND: He got a job teaching at RISD, and eventually had an affair with a student at RISD and we split up. Um, and I spent huge amounts of time alone. I mean, I would go jogging in this cranberry bog in my own footprints from the day before. I remember once, I answered the phone, and I hadn't spoken in three or four days. [00:10:00] And when my voice came out of my body, I jumped. I mean, it was just like a funny time.

JUDITH RICHARDS: How far were you—you had a car.

JANE HAMMOND: I had a car. I was into running. I was running up to five miles a day.

JUDITH RICHARDS: You could've—you did drive into town to get supplies and—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: I could have spent more time in town, I could have socialized more, and I could've made art. But I didn't do any of those things. And by—I don't think I made any art at all in that year. I think that's true. And then, by the time that year was over, I—I got this bee in my bonnet that I was going to move to New York and become an artist, or, you know, apply myself in the direction of being an artist. Maybe whatever life—there were all these, kind of, ne'er-do-well hippies in Nantucket who had, like, a little money in their background or something like that, which I didn't have. So, I was, like, caretaking, waitressing, you know, all these things. And it's, like, I kind of had it with that droppy-out-y life, I guess. I don't know.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, you decide to come to New York for—where did you go? How did you find a place to live?

JANE HAMMOND: I got, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you have friends here?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I came with Art Schade. I thought we were still together. He knew we weren't but I didn't know it. You've heard these stories before, right? We got a sublet on Leonard Street from an artist named John Seery. And we lived there for three months, and I worked for my father, whose construction business was in the South Bronx. So, I would take the, uh, number six up there.

JUDITH RICHARDS: This is in 1978—

JANE HAMMOND: This is in—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —'79?

JANE HAMMOND: —like, '79.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And I started looking to find a loft, and I looked at, like, 60 places.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you have artist friends in the city, maybe from—

JANE HAMMOND: I had—[00:12:00]

JUDITH RICHARDS: —Madison or—

JANE HAMMOND: —I knew a few people. Other people from Madison were coming. They weren't, like, ahead of me and established, but we were all doing it together, and it made it easier. Like, I had a network of people that were here. And, um, and then Art knew a few older artists. Like, he was friends with a guy named Frank Owen, who showed at Leo Castelli, who lived in a loft. So, you know, people would say to us, "Well, you get the *Soho News* and the *Village Voice*. You get the *Village Voice* really early on Wednesday morning," you know? Like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know? So, I made a big project out of it, and I got this loft on Spring Street. It's at Spring and Worcester, basically. Spring—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Do you remember the address?

JANE HAMMOND: Uh, 148 Spring. And I lived there for 23 years. And I got a loft that was kind of big, because I thought I was living with him. So, I thought—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And it was a living/working space.

JANE HAMMOND: It was a live/work space where I thought we could both live, and I would work and he would get a studio out of the house. That was the arrangement we had made. But it was definitely—I mean, you wouldn't call it grandiose by any stretch. But it was bigger and better than what I would've gotten for myself if I'd known I was a single woman. And that turned out to be a good thing. So, I lived there for 23 years. For the first, like, two years, I had a lease. And then, after two or three years, my landlord would never give me a lease. And he would always threaten me that if I wanted a le—like, if I didn't have a lease, it would be—it went from 375 to 800 in one swoop, if you can imagine that. But he would always say, like, "All right, it's 800 now. Like, if you want a lease, it's going to be 1,200. But if you want to just stay here, it'll be, like, nine." [00:14:00] So—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And the same with all the other tenants in the building?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, there were only two tenants in the building. It's only a four-story building, and the first two were commercial. Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, he wanted to be flexible so he could kick you out and—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —do something else with the building.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. Or maybe he had some other devious, cockamamie thing, 'cause he was a very complicated person. But, like, that's what it seemed to me. So, I lived there 23 years, month-to-month. I mean, of the 23 years—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —21 years were month-to-month.

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you came to New York and got into that studio, did you start working? Did you set up a studio?

JANE HAMMOND: I started working—like, I had a lot of jobs, 'cause I had no money, and it got worse before it got better, 'cause he was raising the rent. And my income wasn't going up with his raises, 'cause SoHo was kind of catching on and, you know, blah-blah-blah. So, at one point, I had five part-time jobs. And I remember thinking, wow—and then, I'd lost the boyfriend, you know? So, I remember thinking I have this big place so I can make art. But I have to work five jobs to have the place, so I'm not making any art.

JUDITH RICHARDS: How many square feet was that?

JANE HAMMOND: Sixteen hundred, but that's a lot for—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Sure.

JANE HAMMOND: —uh, one person, you know? So, the fact that it was such a stellar SoHo location wasn't really obvious yet, you know, for another 10 years or something. So, I remember a few times thinking this doesn't make any sense. But I was quite eternally optimistic that it would get better. I mean, maybe stubbornly optimistic. I don't really know. But—so, back to your question. So, I had this idea [00:16:00] that you should keep

in practice. Kind of, like, let's pretend you weren't able to play any basketball, but you wanted to play basketball again. You would, like, skip rope and do sit-ups, so that when you could—do you know what I mean? So, I had this idea that, like—I was a little bit hooked. I was a sculptor, and I was a little bit hooked on things that schools give you, like bronze casting, welding. Do you want to blow some glass? You know, all these things—like, when you come here to do any one of those things, is really complicated and difficult and expensive. So, I had this urge to work and I didn't really know exactly what to do. So, I thought, "I'll make some drawings." I really basically didn't make any drawings in graduate school, and I didn't make any drawings at Mount Holyoke. And I got this oil stick, you know, that—and I got this paper that was made out of fiberglass.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Why?

JANE HAMMOND: I don't know, it's really ugly paper. I wouldn't—

JUDITH RICHARDS: It was on sale?

JANE HAMMOND: —look twice at it. Yeah, possibly. And I began to make these drawings. And I don't—I had an interest in bees, and I had a bunch of books on bees. And, you know, they—they have a language. They dance in a shape, and that's how they tell another bee where the—so, I made a series of drawings of bee dances. There weren't any bees in the drawings. They were schematic—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know, diagrams. But my idea was I should work every day, because I think on some level, I was afraid, from the Nantucket experience, that if I stopped working, I'd stop working. And I saw it maybe from my dad—like, an athlete would say it, see it. Like, you have to stay in shape.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. What about the fact, also, that you were living amid so many other artists, with galleries springing up and museums just—you were living in a—in an [00:18:00] art world. [Laughs.]

JANE HAMMOND: I was living, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: That would make you—

JANE HAMMOND: —you almost couldn't have lived any more dead center in the art world, and I came to pay attention to it. I wouldn't say I was some naïf who never paid any attention to it. But I can tell you that, like, for at least—for close to 10 years, I didn't feel ready to show. For at least maybe eight or six—eight years, I didn't feel ready to show. So, I wasn't trying to show. I was trying to make work that I liked, and that felt whatever to me, resolved, interesting. Something I could make a commitment to. And what happened to me was, doing these drawings segued me into painting. And then, once I segued into painting, I didn't want to go back to sculpture, because it was one—it felt to me one level more abstract and able to hold more information. And I'm sort of a more is more person. So, then I basically—it took a long time to make paintings and bring them to some state where I thought they were good.

JUDITH RICHARDS: At what point did you start teaching at MICA [Maryland Institute College of Art] in—

JANE HAMMOND: I started teaching—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —Baltimore?

JANE HAMMOND: I started teaching at MICA in 1980.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, that was only a year after you got to the scene.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, you had those five part-time jobs for one year, about.

JANE HAMMOND: No, because—maybe I had those five part-time jobs in one year. But, like, when I started at MICA, I only had one class.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I mean, there was, you know, a year when I taught three days a week at MICA, and then two days a week, I was a secretary uptown at a publishing company. And I had a night job one night a week. I was a cashier at the Spring Street Bar. Before I got the MICA job, I was a cashier at the Spring Street Bar, which was very close to my house. But you [00:20:00] didn't get home 'til about four in the morning, 'cause you had to count the money at the end of the night. And I had a job as the assistant first grade teacher at the Allen-

Stevenson School, which was on East 77th Street. Now, I couldn't even do that now, you know what I mean? Get up at 6:30, having gone to bed at 4:30. I couldn't do it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: No.

JANE HAMMOND: But you can do that when you're 30 or whatever you are. Anyhow, I worked all these different jobs, and then Art Schade and I were sort of friendly, and he told me there was a sculpture job in Baltimore. And so, I went down to Baltimore and I interviewed with this guy, Art Benson, who was the chairman of the sculpture department there.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And I had taught for three years in Madison, and I had taught for one year in Arizona. So, for someone who had never had a teaching job before, I was pretty qualified.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And he also, unbeknownst to me, had it up his—there was an art history class that was required, Contemporary Art. And they had already wangled it so it was taught by an artist, which is—fairly flawed idea. But I didn't have to masquerade as an art history teacher, and he wanted to keep that in his department. So, I walked in, having gone to Mount Holyoke, having majored in art history until the last gasp. And, um, having teaching experience. So, I got this sculpture teaching job, and in a year or two, I got the required course in art history, which—since it was a bitch load of work, nobody else—I mean, that was better job security than having the sculpture job, which—there's a line a block long in New York City of people that want jobs—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: —within a commuting distance of New York. So, I taught there for 10 years. [00:22:00]

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, you started out with one class, and then it gradually got to be—

JANE HAMMOND: It gradually got to full-time.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —enough to support yourself.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. There were a number of years when I supported myself there. It was never a great living, because it's not—it wasn't, in those days, a high-paying school. And I was—there is even a little bit of a disparity between Baltimore and New York. So, you know, I always had to teach in the summer, you know? I was always sort of struggling financially.

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you were there, how many nights did you spend there?

JANE HAMMOND: First one, then two, then as many as three.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And did you have a—a room?

JANE HAMMOND: There was an apartment that all the resident faculty used. And sometimes, you got a bedroom to yourself, and sometimes you had a roommate. And it was very funky. And it was in not a great part of town. And Baltimore is weird at night, at least it was then. It's, like, in January, it's dark at 4:30 and you're, like, the only person on the street. So, I would eat—and there was no cafeteria. So, I would eat out of the vending machines or bring food, or—it was, you know, it wasn't great. It's much nicer now.

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you were spending up to three nights there, did you then have those four days in New York, in your studio, to work?

JANE HAMMOND: In theory, yes. But in practice, what would happen was I was so exhausted, because I would teach—I was trying to do it as compactly as possible. My fantasy was I was on a bombing mission. Get in and get out.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I taught art history from 8:00 to 9:30. Then, I taught studio from 9:30 to 3:30. Then, I taught art history from, like, four to six, and then I taught a collage class in the eve—you know, like, there were days when I was teaching from eight in the morning 'til 10:30 at night. So, like, I was so tired when I got home—plus, the art history took a lot of [00:24:00] preparation. So, I was really tired. I took at least a day to recuperate when I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Were you ever thinking, "Maybe I'd be better off just staying in New York and doing part time jobs"? (Laughs.) Or was there a rewarding—did you enjoy teaching?

JANE HAMMOND: There were things about teaching I really enjoyed, and I put mys—I did much more work at it than I had to. I've had many people say to me, "Oh, you were the best teacher there." The president of MICA wrote me a letter in the last two years and said, "I just saw this video where someone talks about how you were the—" you know, because I don't know, I just—it's hard for me to do a bad job at something. I just have that little —

JUDITH RICHARDS: What—what—

JANE HAMMOND: —worker bee—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —kind of approach to teaching did you take, and was it based on some excellent teacher you had?

JANE HAMMOND: No, I didn't teach like Leonard DeLonga at all, even though he was—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, I didn't think so, no.

JANE HAMMOND: —inspirational to me. I basically had learned some art history. So, I took, like, basic ideas in art history, like, let's say, biomorphic abstraction, Surrealism, Cubism, and I would give a problem. Like, I would have them—I would have them make biomorphic abstraction in plaster over chicken wire. I would have them bring in an object, and I would explain to them that you have to choose the object only for its shape, not for any narrative or personal associations, not for its color, blah-blah-blah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: Then, I'd have them, you know, make a version of that object in plaster, and then we'd paint it. And then, I'd have them do some kind of, like, Surrealist, kind of, transformational kind of piece, you know? Take object X and make it a material Y, see how it changes the way you associate with it. Then, I'd have them do something in Cubism. We'd make it in cardboard and hot glue, would be very planar.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: Um, maybe I'd have them do something that was kind of language-based, like a Bruce Nauman-y kind of thing. I would just take ideas that I thought were fundamental to three or four or five different ways of thinking about art and try to get them [00:26:00] to kind of inhabit one of those ways.

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you were there, did you also have to get involved in any departmental issues?

JANE HAMMOND: I had to go to meetings and stuff. And one year, I was even the chairman of the art history department. But, I mean, that was only because—that was, like, a fluke, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you have any particularly memorable students? This is all teaching undergraduate, right?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. Um, I had some good students, yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So—so, as you were working—this was throughout the '80s.

JANE HAMMOND: I like teaching sculpture. To this day, if I had to teach something, I'd rather teach sculpture than painting. I think it's more fun. Um, go ahead.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Uh, so, we were talking about being so exhausted when you came back that it was hard to use the time that you had in New York.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, but, I mean, I still did—

JUDITH RICHARDS: But, nevertheless, you were drawing and you were painting. Um, so during the—you said you weren't ready to show until later in the '80s. But during that—those early years, um, can you describe the evolution of your work? I mean, I know you had worked in a—

JANE HAMMOND: I made these big—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —group show, first of all, first group show—um, I know—you talk about not being prepared. You had something in a group show in 1985. That was the inaugural exhibition at Cavin-Morris Gallery.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, Cavin-Morris. Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Cavin-Morris.

JANE HAMMOND: And those were those—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And what was that work? What did it look like?

JANE HAMMOND: That was the first body of work that I made that felt somewhat resolved. And with the—I had my first one-person show at the Nina Freudenheim Gallery in Buffalo, 1987, and I showed those paintings there. They were extremely large paintings. Basically, like, eight-feet-by-eight-feet. They were on Plywood stretchers in two pieces. They were—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You mean, like a diptych?

JANE HAMMOND: Like two four-by-eights fit together.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh.

JANE HAMMOND: 'Cause you can't get an eight-by—you know, it's really hard to move something—and [00:28:00] they were layers of information. Um, maybe they bore some resemblance to the Jungian Pollocks, or they bore some resemblance to Nancy Graves's paintings. You know how her paintings had layers of information, like, taken from maps of the moon or—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: Okay. But they were, like, if you put 27 Nancy Graves-es on top of each other. So, like, the—the paint became really thick. Most of the information was irretrievable. But I wanted you to feel that it wasn't just brush strokes, that it was, like—it was actual information. And they had, um, words in them, objects in them, things wired onto the surface. I would drill holes in the plywood, and wire mango pits on to the surface, and then paint them. Or I would make little sculptures of, like, a puppet with Mickey Mouse's face and these really long legs. And then, I would, like, hang it off the painting. Um, so they were very—textured doesn't get the job done. I mean, they were really haptic, really relief-y sculptural, physical things. And they took an enormous amount of time to do.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Were these kind of narratives in a sense that someone else could read and, in fact, perhaps you couldn't describe exactly what was going on? Were they—

JANE HAMMOND: I think it would be hard for someone else to read them. But, I mean, I think the basic metaphor I was working with was something like this is about the mind. This is about memory. This is about layers of information that lie inside anyone's mind and—that I can feel inside my own mind, [00:30:00] how X makes me think of Y, how Y lies underneath Z, how Z also can relate to A—that interconnectivity of things and the thinking we do about them.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Were there any—this is the first half of the '80s, right before—when you were working on these. Were there any important exhibitions in New York or artists whose work you were looking at that you think was influential at that time? Maybe not necessarily even contemporary artists who were working maybe in a similar way?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I think the thinking—and I don't know whether I got onto this in graduate school, or—I think I got onto it a little bit in graduate school. But I once had this group of ladies from Westchester in the studio, years and years and years ago. And one of them said to me, "Who are you related to?" And I said to her, sort of being a wise-ass, "I'm sort of a cross between Sol LeWitt and Frida Kahlo," meaning that—well, I hadn't gotten to the Frida Kahlo place for a few years, but—but I came to New York with a bias, where you were supposed to have some kind of strategy or system. It's just those—like, if you read, which I'm sure you have, Pincus-Witten's book on post-Minimalism. That's the bias I came with, or—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —Richard Serra's list of instructions about how one could make sculpture: to fold, to melt, to bend, to splice—that it wasn't enough just to, like, make optical decisions, that you had to have, like, sort of a conceptual scaffolding, which was a way that you made your work. And, like, the merely visual wasn't enough. [00:32:00] You had to have this scaffolding underneath it, kind of, like, strategies and procedures for making.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, so the—the bias of that era, which I think is post-Minimal-slash-Conceptual, is, like—I feel

like my art is, like, a big, luxuriant vine that has all different kinds of fruits hanging off of it. But it's growing on that trellis, you know what I mean? And that trellis is nearly obscured now. But that's where it got its start.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What was the reception to the show at Nina Freudenheim's, 1987?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I mean, Nina Freudenheim, bless her heart—I mean, I've always felt—

JUDITH RICHARDS: She has a great eye. She's [inaudible] amazing.

JANE HAMMOND: I've always felt extremely loyal to her, because it's, like, this work—I mean, it must have cost her a fortune just to bring it to Buffalo. It was so heavy and difficult, and—um, she didn't sell any of it. She sold a drawing to the Albright-Knox, and that was very impressive and exciting to me. But I don't believe she sold any paintings, and she probably knew ahead of time she wasn't going to sell any paintings, you know? I'm not really sure about that. But, I mean, she still calls me every once in a while. We have, you know, a relationship. Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Were there artists working around who you came to know, who you were close to?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, one of the things that happened was Susan Walp, who's a painter who shows at Tibor de Nagy—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Walp?

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. Susan Walp, she and I went to Mount Holyoke together, and she was a painter at Mount Holyoke, and she's still a painter now. And we drifted apart after Mount Holyoke. And I was walking down the street in SoHo one day, and I saw her on the street. And so, we became friends again. And she had been here [00:34:00] longer than me. And she was very good friends with a woman named Jane Rosen, who lived on Greene Street, really across the street from where I am now. And Susan was very good friends with a woman named Deborah Shaffer, who's a filmmaker, who was her roommate at Mount Holyoke, who also lives across the street right now. So, once I reconnected with Susan, I met all these people. Some of them were at—Susan and Deborah were both doing film editing. Susan was working six months as a film editor, then six months off. She was painting. That's how easy it was to make a living then compared to now. And Jane Rosen was from Long Island. Her father was a medical—a doctor and a medical professor at SUNY [State University of New York] Stonybrook. She went to NYU [New York University] and she got this loft across the street. She was a New Yorker, and she was totally comfortable here, and she'd been here for a long time. And she and I became very good friends, and she introduced me to lots of people. I mean, there's lots of people I know in the art world that I met through her. And she was very generous to me. And we became super good friends. For many of those years, I was single and she was single, and we were just, like—we were together every day. And so, like, I remember one of the first dealers I had to my studio was Barbara Gladstone. And she had—like, I had met Barbara Gladstone over at her house for Thanksgiving, you know? And—and Barbara said to me she'd like to come to the studio. And so, then I had her over—I think she came to the studio three or—three times, and Richard Flood came twice, you know? I—I had some relationships, and the fact that they were, quote, good relationships, I owed to Jane and—and maybe a few other people. But she's the—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What is—what did—did Jane end up being an art [00:36:00] consultant?

JANE HAMMOND: No, she's an artist.

JUDITH RICHARDS: An artist, okay.

JANE HAMMOND: She's a good artist, and she lives out in California now. And she's actually doing the best work she's ever done, right now. But anyhow, um, she—I met—you know, she was friends with Barbara Toll, she was friends with Suzy Slesin, who was then the design editor of the *New York Times*.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: I mean, it was just like—there was a whole group of people that I met, and then I met other people through those people. And I was networking, you know, with all the Madison people that were here, and we'd have each other to their studios.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Was—was there a particular art scene, a club that everyone would go to, or—

JANE HAMMOND: People went to Magoo's. Um, and that's how I met Judy Pfaff. Judy and Jane were old friends. And Judy—I can't remember the—what—what exact year this was, but, um, I kept feeling like I wasn't ready. And so, I would network and have some people over, but I wasn't really explicitly looking for a show, 'cause I always felt like my work wasn't there yet. And I really never equated having a show with making any money. Like, I was just old school enough that the issue for me was, like, could I make a little money so I could have more time to do more work? But I never thought I could make a living at this. I thought maybe I could get a better teaching

job or some—you know, something like that. I wanted to show for reasons of pride and professionalism or something like that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: Um, so, somewhere along the line, I meet Judy, and Judy comes over to my [00:38:00] studio. And Judy is a little older than me. But whereas I was sort of a late bloomer, Judy was an early bloomer. And so, I gave Judy this whole explanation of what I was doing and how I was going about it, like I really knew what I was doing. And, uh, and she said to me, "You're going about this all wrong. You're trying to get the gallery you want to end up at first. And you're being much too fussy and going about it in much too methodical and slow of a way." And she said, "I got in the Whitney Biennial because I was in this Podunk-y little show at the Limbo Lounge and Richard Armstrong went over there and saw my piece. So, like, you're trying to"—I mean, I'm probably giving a bigger sermon than she gave me. But whatever she said to me, it had intense meaning at the time—that I was trying to kind of plan out my next life. Like, you and I would talk about, like, what retirement home we're going into 10 years from now or something. And it's, like—she was, like, "Get your feet wet. Do something." And it was in that moment that I connected to the people at Exit Art. I just wrote a little thing about it for a book they're doing.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. And you had that show in 1989.

JANE HAMMOND: And when Jeanette and Colo came to my studio, I had 22 paintings in my studio. And I told them I wasn't ready to show.

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Laughs.] Excuse me.

JANE HAMMOND: And they just laughed at me. And Jeanette, did you know her?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: She was extremely self-confident—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —in a very warm, non-condescending way. [00:40:00] But she basically said to me, "You're ready. You just think you're not ready. I have an eye. I can see, I go around. Trust me, you're ready." And by the time she—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, but 1989, you were 39 years old.

JANE HAMMOND: I know. Somehow—I'm really lucky I met her when I met her. I'm really lucky I had Judy when I did, because Judy prepped me to be receptive to her. I didn't know what Exit Art was, really, you know? And, um, and she came over and she just said, like, "Trust me. Like, we're—we're doing this, you know? This is going to happen. We don't have to come back. We don't have to ask anyone else. We"—they didn't even huddle, the two of them. They had such good communication—Colo was, like, you know, and—and I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Thumbs up.

JANE HAMMOND: —when she left, I was having a show. And it was her idea.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And it—and that comprised those paintings that you were talking about, where the objects—the—

JANE HAMMOND: No, that—that was an—I had now segued into this other body of work, so we could—we should probably—it's 6:10, we should probably quit, right? But I'll tell you how that segue started. But, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You can—

JANE HAMMOND: —I had segued into this other body—

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Inaudible.]

JANE HAMMOND: Okay, so I had segued into this other body of work, and I had the 22 paintings in my studio. And the lucky thing was, Exit Art was big enough—I mean, I was writing this thing about Exit—I—I had this one little tiff with Jeanette when we were installing. I said to her, "I don't care what my show looks like. I just want people to see my work." So, it's, like, I wanted all 22 paintings in the [00:42:00] show. And she very nicely said to me, like, "You do what you and I do what I do. And, like, I'm not hanging a show that looks like dogshit. So, like, we're going to install your show." And it—she was very forceful, but I don't know. I just totally trusted her. I could

see when she finished making the argument that she was right and I was wrong. So, Colo—so, then, I was, like, "You—you do it," you know? And Colo hung the whole thing and he did a really great job. And it was a big show, because that was a big space when they were over there on Broadway.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: And it was really great, because I had a show and I didn't have—I didn't have a gallery. So, it was, like, open, what it was or what my sensibility was, or—I got six reviews. I mean, I've never gotten six reviews since, I don't think.

JUDITH RICHARDS: You've got a lot of reviews. [Laughs.]

JANE HAMMOND: Well, whatever. But, I mean—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —they—I was very lucky—1989 was an incredibly lucky year for me. I mean, I was 39. I'd worked all these jobs. I more than paid my dues, and it was very hard to commute to Baltimore for 10 years. But in 1989, I had a show at Exit Art. I got four grants. And in either '8—and also in '89—it might have turned to '90, but if it was, it was the winter of '90—Roberta Lieberman gave me a show in Chicago. And she said to me—it—we had lunch together in Honolulu, and she said to me, "I want to do a show with you in Chicago, and I'm going to do a show with you whether your show at Exit Art is a success or it isn't a success. And I want you to know that now." So, that meant a lot to me. And I delivered 14 paintings to her gallery on [00:44:00], like, a Thursday. The truck arrived, like, a Thursday late in the day. And between Friday night and Saturday morning, the gallery caught fire and burned to the ground. So, it was very sad, and I cried for several days, 'cause I'd been working really hard to make the show, and I just finished some of the paintings, and then I packed them all, and, you know, it was, like, shocking to me. It was on the *CBS Evening News*, 'cause it was a Louis Sullivan building. But I got paid for the entire show.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Because—through her insurance.

JANE HAMMOND: So, in—yes. She didn't get paid, but I got paid. That's how it works with consignment. So, in 1989, I got four grants and the fire money. Within, like, six months. I didn't even have a savings account. But it was $100,000.

JUDITH RICHARDS: You were just living check by check.

JANE HAMMOND: And I thought to myself I should try to live off my work. And it's reasonable to assume this will never happen to me again. I'm not going to get, like, five grants and two fires, or I'm not going to win the lottery. I mean, no one's ever going to hand me $100,000 again. So, if I'm ever going to quit teaching and try to work in my studio all the time as a full-time practicing artist, this is my moment. And I felt like if I don't take this moment now—because I couldn't make that much art and work in Baltimore.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: So, it was, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: This was early 1990.

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I was—things were starting to happen for me that I couldn't really—I couldn't put any wood on that fire, 'cause I wasn't around. So, I thought I'll take—I'll try [00:46:00] to save this money. I'll see if I can live on my work. I'll have this cushion. It's a pretty big, fat cushion is how it seemed to me then. And I thought this will never happen again. So, I quit.

JUDITH RICHARDS: This is a good place to stop. [They laugh.]

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

[END OF hammon12_2of6_sd.]

JUDITH RICHARDS: This is Judith Richards interviewing Jane Hammond in her home studio in SoHo, New York, on April 27th, 2012 for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution disk two. I mean, sorry, disk three. Jane, uh, I think we left off last time around the late '80s, after you've—had the show at Nina Freudenheim, and as you were just about to embark, perhaps, on a major body of work. I think you called them the *Untitleds*. I'm not sure which you used—you—

JANE HAMMOND: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JUDITH RICHARDS: —you created a system, pictographic system—

JANE HAMMOND: Right.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —with 276 images. Tell me how—what prompted you to develop that body of work, where it all began, and then we'll go through the entire period.

JANE HAMMOND: It began—it was a fusion of certain things that are, I think, to some degree, innate personal characteristics of mine. For example, I'm interested in information. I'm interested in language. And I'm inherently sort of a more is more person. And I think I'm a person that's drawn to sort of relational multipartite ideas as opposed to, say, essentialist unity-seeking ideas. Like, purity is just, like, something that—I almost don't get it, you know? And so, it was partially that, as a character trait, and it was partially a sense that the backdrop, the zeitgeist of my moment was an information age, an age of increasingly mediated information, and kind of a glut [00:02:00] of information, or certainly a surfeit of information. I don't want that to sound negative. I want it to sound kind of exciting. And, um, philosophically, I think there was an interest in semiotics and an interest in, um, different philosophies of language, and how meaning is constructed, and how signs in confluence with each other create meaning, et cetera. So, uh, you could call it a linguistic self-reflexivity or something like that was in the air, both pictorially and in language studies and literature, et cetera. Of course, Postmodernism is the concept that's brewing in this stew somewhere, too, where it's okay to mix styles or, you know, make something that's very complexly sort of heterodox or whatever. I also felt like I have sort of—as I explained in our first interview—a complicated personal upbringing in which there were many truths to any one situation, and many versions of any story. So, all those things kind of conspired to make me want to figure out some way of working that was quite open and quite, um, heterogenous, and allowed for internal contradiction, surprise, changes of mind. Um, I kind of just intellectually and personally did not want to worship at the altar of consistency, purity, and essence—and also felt that constitutionally, I would be sort of unable to do it. And, as I looked around me as a young artist, [00:04:00] I went to a lot more shows in those days than I do now, and I think painting was more kind of regnant. You know, things were less kind of performance, you know, all—all of the above. And it seemed to me like everyone had a style, and the style felt to me almost like a logo in advertising, something that you—the intention was for you to be able to kind of walk around SoHo and look through the glass window and know this was so-and-so's show, you know? And all the works were of a piece, and then three years later, they'd have a show and it would be changed enough that it looked like the new work of so-and-so, but unchanged enough that it still was instantly identifiable. And if you saw a painting six months later in, you know, Milwaukee, you'd know who it was. And I just felt like there was no essential Jane Hammond inside of me from which I could've made such consistent work, A. And B, it's, like, sometimes the way I say this is, like, I don't want to grow up to be the person that makes the Jane Hammonds. I felt like a lot of artists made—might have gone through a very authentic process to find their style, and that it fit them well. But, like, in year 15, I thought to myself, how can they get up and go to work every day and sort of know already what most of the parameters are. I mean, at least it seemed that way to me. So, I felt like the traditional idea of style looked boring to me. It looked overly repetitive, unexploratory, and unchallenging. And I wanted to do something that had as much inconsistency as—you know, I also have this belief that, like, I'm a different person to my mother than I am to my boyfriend, than I am to my sister's children, than I was [00:06:00] to my grandmother, than I am as a teacher, than I am as a professional. And it's, like, I didn't want to have to, like, slim that down. I wanted to embrace that complexity and say, "This is actually more interesting." And I also wanted to allow for being, you know, like, what happens if you get sick? And then your character's changed again. Or you go on a trip, or, you know, you have a tragic love affair or, you know, whatever. So, I just—I wanted to have something that was not about consistency but was about inclusiveness, complexity, and allowing yourself to wander and explore. I mean, explore sounds very kind of active, but I also think sometimes things just happen. And I didn't want to have to say, oh, I can't do that, because I'm doing this. So, I was looking for a way to have a very heterogeneous body of work, where the elements of it would still have some interconnectedness to all of themselves, to each other, even though they might be visually somewhat dissimilar, and where I could indulge, like, all of my interests, you know? My interest in science, my interest in autobiography, my interest in non-autobiography, my angry part, my funny part, my childish part, my stupid part, my smart part. I wanted to be all those people. And it seemed to me, like, if you can't do that in art, where can you do that, you know? And, at the time, I was working, like, five jobs, I was waitressing. I was kind of, like—I wasn't even trying to make a living as an artist. I wasn't even thinking about collectors or the market or anything like that. I was—my project was can I make something that I'm fully engaged with, [00:08:00] that doesn't feel boring to me.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, this was all kind of brewing in my mind. And I had certain kind of—I remember, when I learned about the periodic chart, you know, that all these elements were gathered together in one place, and they had a sort of systematic relationship to each other. And they were the building blocks of everything in the whole world, and everything in other worlds, too, on other planets, et cetera. But the elements were really—like gold is really different from lead, is really different from boron, you know? And so, I thought, well, maybe I can make something like this, where there's, like, parts and pieces, and they fit together and make other things. And

there's something lexical and grammatical about it, so that it's, like—it's saying something and it's also saying something about saying, and that you can feel the relationship between things, even though some of the things look really different. And, you know, I feel like you don't really know what your day is going to be like tomorrow. You have no idea. You could be on some crazy thing tomorrow that you couldn't see until you rounded the corner, you know? So, why should art be—why shouldn't it address that, you know? The complexity and surprise, the heuristic aspects of life? Why should it be, like, I don't know, in a way kind of dumbed down, you know? So, I—I just thought, okay, how can I do this? So, um, there were, like, a number of things. I started reading some books on language. I started, um—I was collecting information, you know, very actively, 'cause I—I think I [00:10:00] I mentioned I taught in Maryland for 10 years—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative], right, right.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I'd go to the library at night. And, um, I was reading poetry and I remember re—coming across this—I went to a reading where John Yau was reading, and he read this villanelle that had—the words kind of came apart.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Tell me the name again, of the poet?

JANE HAMMOND: It's a poetic form. It's called a villanelle. I think it's spelled V-I-L-L-A-N-E-L-L-E. And it's an elaborate sort of structure that has certain kind of repetitive elements. And so, he used—he had these things where, like, "the crow's wing was made of rubies," and then there were rubies in the shape of a crow. And—and I had been working on this little pastel in the studio where I had—I had made a number of things, and everything consisted of a big circle with a little circle. So, there was, like, a ring with a stone, and the planet Saturn with its rings and, like, a Mickey Mouse with the two ears. And I was just, like, doing all the things I could possibly do with those two marks to vector out into being different kinds of signs. And I was always sort of interested, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And these were all hand-drawn.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, they were hand-drawn, they were very kind of crude, in a certain way, but they were—they were just at the threshold of where you would say, oh, that looks like Saturn. And if you took one line away, you wouldn't have said that. But it was kind of an exploration of, like, when do these six lines become a horse? And how many lines can you take away before you remove the horse-ness, you know? So, it was, like, where abstraction meets semiotics and, you know, et cetera, like that. So, I was working on that drawing, and then I went to John's reading, and he had this villanelle. And it sort of clicked in my mind that I was going to [00:12:00] make something that was like a deck of cards. And then, there would be, like, different hands, different three-image hands, five-image hands, two-image hands, 40-image hands. And I was going to, like—like recombinant DNA, I was going to take a certain fixed number of parts and allow them to conjugate in sort of various and conceivably endless numbers of conjugations and permutations, but also re-conjugation, so you could see the same thing being deployed in different combinations. I mean, it's an inherently complicated idea, but that fits me better, you know? So, I started doing that. I started editing this huge pile of kind of information that I had saved. And deciding that I was—

JUDITH RICHARDS: By information, do you mean images?

JANE HAMMOND: Images—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Visual information?

JANE HAMMOND: They were mostly in the form of Xeroxes, and they mostly came from books, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Xeroxes of illustrations.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, and at this point, I'm also going to book fairs and starting to collect old books. So, it kind of was the Maryland Institute library for 10 years, and then it was, like, the New York Public Library in a very small way, and then just collecting old books, which tend to be illustrated with black and white, usually, like, etchings or engravings or something like that. And so, the draw—the illustrations have a very kind of, like, hieratic quality or, you know, it's different from 70 years later, where it would be color brushy illustration. I remember one summer, I got an NYU library pass, and I went to the NYU library, and I went through that—there's a French science magazine called *Nature*, and it was around in the 1890s. [00:14:00] It's just before photography goes into magazines. So, everything is, like, etchings. And I got lots of images from that. And so, basically, I had this gigantic pile of Xeroxes that had been collected over maybe about 10 years.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And you were particularly attracted to these 19th century ways of depicting reality, whereas you could have pulled out *National Geographic* and been looking at—or contemporary photogr—color photographic images of the same kind of—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, although the way I would say it is, like, I—it wasn't the 19th century-ness that I was attracted to. It was the black and white-ness, and the graphic simplicity of the images, I think. Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: It wasn't any kind of nostalgia or historical—

JANE HAMMOND: I don't think so, 'cause I also—well—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —sense about it?

JANE HAMMOND: If it was that, part of it was more unconscious to me. Um, there were things in there that were clearly images that you would have no trouble associating a word to, like, ah, that's a bone, okay? There were also things like found pieces of graffiti that I took Polaroids of in a bathroom. There were, um, lot—there was a fair amount of found language.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Now, we're talking about the development of these 276—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. I mean, even—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —images.

JANE HAMMOND: —bef—the 276 was, at a certain point, having 5,000 things. I hit upon this idea, you know, over time, but relatively quickly, that I was going to winnow those things down to some kind of lexical set, and that I was going to work within that set. So, then I went through, more or less, everything I had. And I decided that I would assign a number to everything as a way of organizing them, as a way of keeping them distinct from one another and not having to form [00:16:00] categories of, like, women or Chinese things or things lying down or whatever—and furthermore, as a way of divorcing them from any associations you might have with language. Like, I didn't want to describe them or name them in language, because I had this hunch that I was really going to be exploring, like, the elasticity of meaning and the conditionality of meaning and various ways of constructing meaning. And somehow, I just had this hunch that, like, if I could remove the language, I'd have more play. And, you know, I also have—I don't really speak any other languages very well, but I have some interest in how, like, in French, you would easily understand that broccoli and cauliflower are cousins, because there's words that all these vegetables in that family have in common. Like cabbage is *chou* and cauliflower's *choufleur*, and then brussels sprouts are *petite choux* or something like that, whereas in our language, you wouldn't know that broccoli and cauliflower are related until you learned it, later on. So, I had some idea about how—uh, you know, when you make a sort of language of things, different languages reveal different truths more easily and less easily. So, I went through all this information, I don't know over what time period, but it wasn't as long as a year, you know? It was shorter than that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Do you remember what the criteria were when you were doing this winnowing?

JANE HAMMOND: The criteria was quite intuitive. It was kind of, like, no, I have enough of this. Or this is more interesting than that as a shape. Or these are very interesting knots, because these knots are Mayan and they look like knots and they are knots, but they're actually writing, do you know? So, it was things—it was, like, [00:18:00] how interesting is the idea? How interesting is what it looks like? How interesting is the original hand in which it's rendered? Am I getting too many Chinese things? Um, how elastic and usable would this be? Like, I—I had—I had a lot of rope and string. Someone else pointed that out to me. I didn't even notice it. But I think it was as simple as, like, I wanted lots of kind of connective tissue. I think I had some idea that I wanted things which were around from different parts of the—that were—felt a little African or felt a little Greek or felt a little Japanese or whatever. Um, but they were intuitive responses. I never, like, kept a tally of how many men I had or how many women I had or, you know, anything like that. And I was the arbiter of this. And then, I assigned everything a number, and there was no relationship between the number and the thing, you know? It wasn't like the early numbers were the most important things or—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You don't attach any particular importance to certain numbers.

JANE HAMMOND: No, and I'm not—and many people have asked me that. I have no interest in numerology, you know? I mean, have I looked at some books on it? Yes, I have. But there's nothing sacred about four or, you know, unsacred about 13, or anything like that. At a certain point, I got tired of doing that job—and eager to go on to the next stage. I had a gut instinct that I was going to work recombinatively, and that over time, you would be able to apprehend some order in this project. So, when I chose 276, there's nothing magical about that number, per se. But I felt like if I had chosen 30 things, it would be too game-y and pat and obvious, and if I chose 6,000 things, you wouldn't be able to see any repetitions or have any interesting comparisons or contrasts or see any order [00:20:00] for, like, 500 y—I wouldn't live to—long enough to make it happen, you know? So, I felt like I was guessing at what was the right order of magnitude. But the number itself—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —um, isn't really that important. Could have been 277 or 212 or 304 or 189 or, you know, whatever. And also, the 276 is actually a lot more than 276, because some of the things in the 276 are, like, an entire scene, where a—five children are in five different baskets. And so, those things can be split into 10 things or they can be considered as one thing, so—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you know, as you were going through that, that you would also impose a color limit and a canvas size limit, at least temporarily?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I had this instinct that my idea was, like, very complicated and that other people wouldn't understand it, and that it might look too chaotic even to me. And so, I thought, against the background of the, you know, endless recombinations of 276 things, there should be some tightener-uppers, you know? Some things where, like, you could walk into the room and there'd be all these different kinds of things. But, like, there'd be some subliminal unity that you could pick up on before you asked the question of what do all these things have to do with one another? So, color seemed like an easy way to do that. So, in the beginning, I had only a few canvas sizes and shapes. And—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I think only two at one point, two sizes.

JANE HAMMOND: That's possible.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Canvases—

JANE HAMMOND: I can't real—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —could be—plus horizontal and vertical, so there'd be—

JANE HAMMOND: It's possible, but it was—it was only a few, let's put it that way. And—and then, [00:22:00] I had six colors, and they were unmixed colors, for the most part. I mean, I started breaking that rule fairly soon after I made it, you know? But—but it did create an effect or a reality in a moment, like, say the Exit Art show, where—which was February '89, and which was my first one-person show in New York City, where you walked in and you saw paintings with flat space and deep space, paintings with figures and no figures. Paintings with, like, only one or two colors and paintings with a lot of colors. Paintings that fell under the rubric of abstraction and paintings that fell under the rubric of figuration. But in the first moment, before you thought about all those things, it was color-istically very unified, you know? The orange here was the orange there, and a little bit of that orange was all around the room. Ditto the blue, ditto the black, et cetera. So, I just felt like I needed that. I don't know if I needed that for me or for other people. But I needed that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, it was kind of thrilling in the beginning, because once I said to myself, okay, here are the rules, girl, you have this information and you have these colors, and you can now make any kind of painting you want out of this information and these colors. And you do not need to be concerned with what the 14th painting, with its relationship to the 13th painting, or the second painting, or the next painting. You can work like you're, like, a classroom of 20 people, and you're all of them. And it was super exciting. It was kind of, like, wow, I've got this huge toolbox. What does this stuff do?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Does that mean that you were also working on [00:24:00] many paintings at once?

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, I was working on many paintings at once.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Don't recall if you said that you'd always done that.

JANE HAMMOND: I think I mostly have always done that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: But, like, when I made the work that Nina Freudenheim showed, I was really making pretty much one painting at a time, 'cause they were such complicated efforts. Sometimes, I'd have to make sculptural objects that would go later in the painting, et cetera. And, um, these paintings were, like, simple compared to those paintings. And some of them were very simple compared to the paintings that came later. A lot of them had a flat kind of sign-like space.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And a number of them were just two or three things together, you know? Like, there was one that was—one thing I had in my lexicon was some found children's drawings. And there was, um, there was this children's drawing of this funny kid with, like, a—it was a child's drawing of a child. And then, it had a phrase

from alchemy on top of it, what—so, it was a white painting with a black kid's drawing—probably a kid, like, four, five, no more than that. And then, it said, "Food of immortality" up at the top. And it was just like—to me, it was, like, very funny to kind of—your mind would, like kind of struggle with what's the relationship between this child or this drawing of this child and this phrase, you know? And, um, the—sometimes, I—most of the time, I had an intention of, like, what something did with something else. But sometimes, I just put two things together, because I was, like, curious to see, like, what kind of collision would occur.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: You know? And—and I believe enough in the medium of oil paint, in the power of scale, and in the, you know, unquantifiable mysteries of color that I don't think you could just do a little drawing [00:26:00] or a Xerox collage of the child's drawing with the phrase "food of immortality" and know exactly what you were going to get when you did a large red and white and black painting, you know? Because it's—it gets transformed.

JUDITH RICHARDS: You talked on—in some interviews about dreaming images, dreaming in the—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —this lexicon.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yes, and at first, that did not happen. And I was quite self-conscious about this. I called it a system, and I—I made the statement to myself that it was a system and it was a surrogate for style. And it—it exists against the backdrop of people, like, the Richard Serra of the instructions, Barry Le Va, I mean, there were lots of people in the late '70s, which was when I was in graduate school, who had a conceptual system behind their work. They didn't just do things 'cause they look good together or 'cause they felt like it. And there was, also, a bias against self-expression—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Very much.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know, and against autobiography. So, I was doing this and I think it was a way of making meaning and yet still having a kind of filter between me and the meaning, 'cause it was kind of, like, a meta project or something like that. And as it played on, let's—I'm talking about the years after Exit Art—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —and before the Ashbery show, like, maybe '92, '93, something—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —like that. As it played on, the work got more complicated and got more psychological.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Like, what do you mean by that?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, what I mean by that was I had all these ideas that I just told you about, and I—I did trust, also, that when I—when it occurred to me to put this with [00:28:00] that—I mean, I would never really shuffle through the things and say, oh, how 'bout 16 with 31? I would just be, like, constantly looking at this material, and then I'd be, like, walking down the street or in an unconscious moment I would see this combination, in my head. So, I always trusted that what your brain kind of sifted out and combined was, like, good. And I would make—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, while you had—

JANE HAMMOND: —I would make the painting based on this—let's call it a vision. It would be, like, something that I would see; it would come to me like popping a slide in a projector. And lots of times, it wouldn't be 'til the painting was pretty done, where I could see it myself that I thought, oh, this is about this, or this could be seen this way, or—you know, I'd have a greater understanding of what maybe some of my own content was. So, back to this question about the psychological. So, I was somewhat prejudiced against the psychological. And, um, and I made a series of paintings, and I—in those days, I was single, so sometimes what I'd do is, like, I'd go out at night, and then I'd come back home, you know, like, at 11 o'clock or something like that. And before I went to bed, I'd flick the lights on and walk in the studio. And I'd have this moment where I'd sort of see my work, like, with a little more distance than when you're actually working on it, you know? And I remember, I made this room painting, and this is really—I think—I had these rooms all along. Some of them were, like, set designs from the English theater, and some of them were, like, old engravings, where I took all the people and furniture out of the room, but I just kept the room. When I started making paintings in rooms, they got more complicated and they had—that is, there were more numbers in the title.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: And there were more people in [00:30:00] them. And I made this one painting, and it was a split room. So, it was, like, a bifurcated room, but there was a—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —door between the wall that joined the two parts. And it had a child in this sort of pre—it was like a thing they used to keep kids in. It's like a cross between a basket and a playpen. It had this child in this thing, and the child looked like maybe five years old or something like that. And then, the mother was kind of bound up in this bag. She was actually taken from an old magic trick. She was one of these, like, female assistants that gets, like, sawed in half, tied up, you know, whatever. And then, there were two men in the—in the picture. And one was wearing a dinosaur costume, and I forget—and you could see him inside of it. I forget what the other guy's doing. But in any case, I walked into the studio late at night after having been out, and I thought to myself, oh, this is like me at age four or five with mom incapacitated and daddy and Wally in her life. And I think we've all had this feeling where you have a dream and it seems really crazy to you, and you think how did I dream that up? And it stays. Like, not all dreams do, but sometimes you have a dream and, like, four days later you're still thinking about it. And then, all of a sudden, you're walking down the street and it clicks in your mind what the dream is a legend for, you know? And so, I just had that thought like that. And then, I was prejudiced against that thought, because of this bias I'm describing to you against autobiography. And so—and the psychological. So, I thought, oh, that's just an accident. So, I had a number of these experiences. That was the most salient, but I had a number of these experiences where I would paint something that I thought was about exploring the possibilities of the system, and [00:32:00] then I would come to it in an unsuspecting moment, kind of, where I was a little more open or disconnected or it was late at night, it was early in the morning, or I'd been out drinking with Judy or some—and then, I'd have this thought about it, uh—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Judy Pfaff?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, and—and it would, like—over time, it occurred to me that I had, like, wandered into some territory that was not where I had thought I wanted to go, some territory that I thought, two years before, was kind of uncool, kind of non-rigorous, kind of sloppy—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Now, however, how would you explain the inclusion in the 276 of images that looked like you? The little girl in the red dress, which I think is an image—

JANE HAMMOND: I didn't think—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —of you?

JANE HAMMOND: It isn't, actually. It's—it's an illustration from a science book. And it's funny, because the chapter doesn't have any—she's actually wearing roller skates in the book, and the chapter doesn't have anything to do with little girls or roller skates or—but she's a very sort of American '50s, you know—I didn't look all that different from that, but I never thought of her—until that painting, I never—when I chose her from the book, I didn't think of her as being me. I thought of her as being a small roller-skater, you know? Anyhow, over time, I came to have, at firsts, a quasi-acceptance, then a grudging acceptance, and then a kind of embrace of the fact that there was, creeping into this, aspects of—of what I thought, from my Madison years, was somewhat taboo, i.e., self-expression, narrative. You know, I'm old enough that Greenberg wasn't dead when I came into the art world. So, that was, like, really a bad word—um, and autobiography. And, [00:34:00] in fact, that painting that you bring up with the little girl in the red dress, that's one of the last numbered pre-Ashbery paintings, and I think it's one of the best.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm.

JANE HAMMOND: And I'm glad to say the Whitney owns it. And I remember, when I was doing that painting—

JUDITH RICHARDS: 'Cause she's—the one I'm thinking of, she's, like, on—

JANE HAMMOND: She's, like, on a diving board.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —she's holding paintbrushes.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, she is. And behind her is a sign—

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's 1992, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —and behind her is a sign, and it has on it the Chinese ideograms for woman and paintbrush. And on the diving board, I took a bunch of images from a Girl Scout handbook, and one of them is an image of

how to fry eggs on a rock. So, that's out on the diving board. And there were some drawings—I have a bunch of, um, beautiful old books from the BAE, that's the Bureau—it's what the Bureau of Indian Affairs used to be called in the beginning. It was like the Bureau of American Ethnology or something—I can't—I could look it up for you. I'm not sure. But anyhow, they're really cool books, 'cause they're, like, unbelievable taxonomies, you know? Like, one is, like, 500 pictures of fishhooks, and then there's, like, whistles. There's, like, the Sioux whistles versus the Seminole whistles versus the—it kind of shows you, like, everything a whistle can be. You know, what is the whistle-ness of a whistle, you know? So, they're very interesting. And—and there's—there's a tribe in the Northwest that stores certain fish oils in—in the onion bulb-y kind of shape of kelp. You know how kelp—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, so that it's hollow inside and they use them as vessels. So, there's, like, a—a kelp, a kind of lasso of kelp [00:36:00] in there, and there's an—there's a whole heterogeneity of things, but the first layer is as if some of those things are kind of a piece of fabric that's a kind of backdrop that's avowedly—you get to see the—you get to see it end. And so, it's, like, you know that's a constructed reality that she's in front of, sort of, like, someone taking your picture in front of a painting of a Conestoga wagon and pretending you're on the wagon, but it's obvious that you're not really on the wagon. And then, she's kind of breaking through that, and she's on this diving board. And it was about that time that I remember a stranger asking me on the plane what I did. And I remember saying that I was a painter. And I had sort of struggled with that sentence, actually, saying that. And so, I always see that painting—first of all, I have nicknames for almost all these paintings, because that painting, as you can imagine, with the numbers, has an extraordinarily long title. I mean, it's, like—these are the days when you hand-labeled slides. It was, like, a giant job to do my work. So, in order to have a discussion with you about—or anyone about what painting are you putting in this show, or is it—you know, you'd have to say—you'd have to have a nickname. So, I called that the breakthrough painting. So, I thought that that was a painting in which I was sort of saying, ta-da! Like, I'm a painter. I'm willing to call myself a painter. So, I think you're right, that that little girl is me, you know, and I'm kind of presenting myself in this world of painting.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: Um, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What would have called yourself before you could say you were a painter?

JANE HAMMOND: I guess I would have said I'm an artist. But, you know, for a long time, I was working all these jobs, and then I was teaching, and, you know, it just took me a long time to feel like [00:38:00] I could look you right in the face on an airplane and say, "I'm an artist." I mean, now I don't—it's nothing to say it. I've said it thousands of times. But it just took me a while to kind of—it sounded pretentious to me for a long time, or like I was, like, trying on some identity I didn't quite deserve yet or something.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: You know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Do you want to go back and talk about the Exit Art show, how it came to be? Or should we just keep talking about the development of the work?

JANE HAMMOND: The Exit Art show, it's not that hard for me to talk about it. I became friends—I was friends with Jane Rosen. I think I've—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —made that point to you, and—who lives—I live across the street from where she lived today, oddly enough. And, um, and Jane was very close friends with Judy Pfaff. So, I got to know Judy Pfaff through Jane. I mean, I've known Judy now for, like 25 years or so. And Judy—I'm sort of a late bloomer, but Judy was an early bloomer. So, when I met her—she's not that much older than me. Maybe she's six years older than me or five or something like that. But, like, she already had a career. And, um, and she came over to my studio, and I was telling her that I wasn't ready to show yet.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, you talked about this.

JANE HAMMOND: I told this.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes, yes.

JANE HAMMOND: And she said, "Get—get ready, get your feet wet," blah-blah-blah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And so, then, Ursula told Exit Art about me.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Ursula von Rydingsvard.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. And so, Jeanette called me. And I think I might have even said to Jeanette, "I'm not ready yet." And she said, "Well, let me come over anyhow," 'cause they had probably said to her, "She'll tell you she's not ready. Don't listen." And so, then I showed them the work. I had 22 paintings in the studio, all wrapped around the stepladder. It was like a house of cards crossed with a spiral. And they stayed a while. But, I mean, they offered me the show right then. And Judy had given me the lecture, you know, two weeks before. So, I was open to it, you know? [00:40:00] And it just happened. It just fell into place. And, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And you had a great response to that show.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah, I did. I had a really good response to that show. And, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You talked about last time—having the show and selling work and getting grants and being able to stop teaching.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I mean, I got—I told the story, I got four grants in one year—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —and there was a fire, too.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes, yes.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I mean, it was very abrupt, because before that—

JUDITH RICHARDS: That was in 1990?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, that was in 1990, and, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, right after the show in '89.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. My theory about grants is, like, people are loath to take chances, so when you really, really need the grant the most, you don't get it. And then, you get a little recognition and then you get the grant. And would have been so much better a couple years before, but that's just the way life works. So, anyhow, um—and I think I said that Roberta Lieberman, who was a dealer in Chicago, had offered me a show, and she specifically said to me—we were having lunch in Honolulu, 'cause we went out to this museum opening, and she said to me, "I want to show you, and I'm going to show you whether your show at Exit Art is a success"—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm, you said that.

JANE HAMMOND: —"or isn't a success."

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: So, that was, like—I appreciated that—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —very much.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Let me ask you about one other—besides the girl in the red dress, the grid floor that's so—that appears in so many of the works. Um, sometimes it looks like a—sort of a parquet floor, sometimes it looks like a checkerboard.

JANE HAMMOND: Right.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Um, was that just in—what function did that play? What attracted you to using that image?

JANE HAMMOND: I think what happened to me is I got this image—I—I had several images of a room, and there was very little information in the floor, or else there was some information in the floor I didn't like, so I got rid of it. And I thought that I would be able to make, like, [00:42:00] a monochromatic floor or, like, a very kind of painterly mono—you know, like not really monochrome but, like, family of blues kind of thing. But when the floor was pretty big, as—as it was when the whole room was—whole painting was one room, it flowed up on you. Like, it wouldn't kind of stay down. So, the checkerboard, initially, was, like, a—a simple way to make the floor stay down there and feel like a floor. And then, I just kind of—I liked it, and I kind of got into it. And—

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Inaudible.]

JANE HAMMOND: —to this day, I think I—you know, like Craig and I have this house in Vermont. We're kind of wrestling with whether to sell it or keep it or whatever. But, like, I always picture, if I was decorating it or redoing it, that I'd put a checkerboard floor in the—I just like them.

JUDITH RICHARDS: It reminds me a little bit—it connects to the periodic table, to the structuring, to the—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —ordering—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —the—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, it's a struct—and it—it shows off the spatiality of the floor, yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And also, to your story about, as a child, gridding off the backyard.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yes. Yes, it's a—it's an ordering process. I mean, I think I read somewhere that—I think in Man Ray's autobiography, he talks about a brief period where he teaches, and one assignment that he gives his painting class is: make a checkerboard, because it's like a—it's the simplest system for, like, how you can order this rectangle. Um, so anyhow, where am I?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, you were getting to the end of that body of work—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —which I think you've said was your first mature body of work.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, and it's—I'm feeling—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And how did it—how did it wind up, and [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: Oh, I know what I was going to say. Um, so, Roberta said she would show me, and then my friend—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Roberta Lieberman.

JANE HAMMOND: Roberta Lieberman, Chicago. And then, I was friends with a woman named Marilyn Lerner, and I had Marilyn over to the studio. [00:44:00] I didn't really know Jose Freire. I didn't have my eye on him or really—I can't tell you for sure if I'd never heard of him—that doesn't sound exactly right. I think I'd heard of him, but I—he—I didn't have him in my sights, let's say. But Marilyn came over, and Marilyn's a very nice person. And she just said to me, "I know Jose Freire is going to like this work. I'm—I really want to tell him about you." And I kind of trusted her. So, she did that, and he came over, and he offered me a show right then. So, that was—I think it was before Exit Art, or maybe he came over but he was very enthusiastic, and I said I'm having a show at Exit Art next month, and then he came back and offered—

JUDITH RICHARDS: I have, uh, that you had a show there—the first show there in '94, and you had the first show at Zolla Lieberman in 1990.

JANE HAMMOND: I had four shows with Jose.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But the first one, I think was '94. Well, I actually only found three, so maybe there's an earlier one I didn't—miss—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I think there is an earlier one.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay.

JANE HAMMOND: 'Cause I had—I started Ashbery in '93, and I think—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —that the first show I had with Jose was pre-Ashbery.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm.

JANE HAMMOND: I can find that in my bio for you. So, anyhow, I mean, it just—it kind of clicked. It wasn't really like the Exit Art show put me on the map. It was kind of like things—you—things were coming together and the Exit Art show was a part of that. But then, it was, like, a public part of it. So, then some other things kind of came out of those things. And through John Yau, I had met Robert Creeley.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Now, how did you meet—you talked about hearing John read his poetry.

JANE HAMMOND: I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: How did you meet him, and—

JANE HAMMOND: I met him because—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —there's—

JANE HAMMOND: —well—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —and you had a relationship that developed? Was that—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, we got married, but—

JUDITH RICHARDS: When—when did [inaudible]?

JANE HAMMOND: I met him—[00:46:00] I should know the years of my own second marriage, but I don't. Um, when I had the Exit Art show in 1989, John and I were a couple, but we were a new couple. Like, a very new couple. So, let's say we got together—I think we might have gotten together in '87 or '88, something like that. And John, as you know, was a poet. And he was a student of John Ashbery's. So, John Ashbery came to my show at Exit Art with David Kermani, who he was—who was his partner at the time.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And I met Trevor Winkfield through John Yau, who I'm still friends with today. And I remember Trevor said to me -—Nancy Graves and Judy Pfaff and Jane Rosen had a big party for me. They were all so relieved I finally had a show—and Ursula. And, um, I remember at the party, Trevor said to me, "Oh, God, I'm so relieved. I genuinely like your work so much. I was afraid I—I wouldn't like it." And he said to me, "And John Ashbery really likes it, too," something like that. And John Yau knew Robert Creeley. I, of course, knew who Robert Creeley was, 'cause I had studied poetry in college. But I don't believe I had met him. And then, when I had my show at Nina Freudenheim's, I don't know exactly how it worked, but Robert and Penelope, his wife, invited me to come over. And so, I began a relationship with them. And Bob Creeley was, like, an amazing guy. I mean—

JUDITH RICHARDS: He was—he taught up there in Buffalo.

JANE HAMMOND: He taught at SUNY Buffalo. It's some kind of very important poetry job, [00:48:00] that—it's like a chair or something like that. It's—and, um, he's one of the smartest, most interesting people I ever met in my life, and he had such an interesting way of speaking and thinking, and he was just, like, riveting, you know? And—and he asked me if I wanted to make a book with him, which I some—somehow, stupidly, I never did it. And I think I never did it because there was such a lean quality to his poetry that I felt that we were an artistic mismatch, even though I revered him greatly as a poet and an intellect. I didn't know what kind of work I would make that would work with his poetry. But anyhow, that lead me to the conclusion that he must have liked my work or respected me or something like that. So, when Exit Art said I could have a catalogue, I asked Bob Creeley to write the essay, and he did. So, that's kind of how that happened. And, um—so, then, I—I was—I wouldn't say I was established, but this big bugaboo of, like, are you going to show or not? Are you going to have a show? When is that going to happen in your life, you know? This concept that you have that, like, you're not born yet or you—you're not—you're an artist, but with a small A or, you know, something like that. You kind of get that out of the way. Like, it actually doesn't make making a work of art much easier, but you feel a little bit less bad about yourself, and you kind of feel like you've passed some—you have, like, one badge on your uniform or, you know, something like that. So, then, I began this relationship with Jose. It's funny; I had a long conversation with him on the street yesterday.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Was this—now, going back to John [00:50:00] Yau, did—you said you met around '87—

JANE HAMMOND: I think we met around '88—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —'88.

JANE HAMMOND: —and we got married pretty fast. And we were married for two years. And we lived together in

my loft on Spring Street. And John was very into writing about art and very into thinking and, you know, he—I learned things from John. He—he knew things that I didn't know. I'd never heard of Forrest Bess, for example, or, um, I'd never heard of Manuel Alvarez Bravo, or, uh, Clark Coolidge, or—you know, there were—there were things—it was—it was an exciting time for me. And, um, ultimately, the relationship didn't work out. But, you know, it—it was good while it was good, you know? And, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Do you think his focus on poetry affected your work?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I had been really interested in poetry in both high school—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —and college. Um, no, I think more that his approbation gave me greater confidence, because I respected him. And I respected him and thought he had a lot of interesting observations about art, which he sometimes talked about and sometimes didn't talk about, but they came out in his writing about art. And I could also see that all these other people respected him. And so, his approbation of my work was—was a confidence builder for me. Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What you—you were talking about Ashbery seeing the show and hearing [00:52:00] that he liked the work. Is that what lead directly to your approaching him in '73, I guess it was?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, it is. I mean, I—because Trevor had said that to me. It was so uninitiated. I mean, so unrequired for him to say that. I just took it as true. And so, um—and John had a little relationship with Sweden. I forget—so—so, in these early years, like, right after Exit Art or possibly even right before, Bill Goldston approached me, who was the head of ULAE.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And he came to my studio, and apparently, um, Klaus Kertess and Nancy Graves and Judy Pfaff had all told him about me. So, he hotfooted it over to my studio. I think this was even before Jose Freire.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes, '92.

JANE HAMMOND: And he—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Or—

JANE HAMMOND: —invited me, right then and there—I had a lot of drawings. I—I had been making prints at the Maryland Institute, where I was teaching. And first, I didn't want to make a print, but I was invited to make a print on a grant called Painters Make Prints. And I started to turn that down. And I had a very complicated relationship with the dean there, who was basically my lifeline to having the job. And the word came to me that, like, "If you turn this down, she's going to be very pissed off." So, I thought, all right, I'll do it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, you—I think you talked about this, and you went in—

JANE HAMMOND: I kind of fell in love with printmaking.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So, then I hired this woman, Shelley, who was my assistant, and I made two more batches—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Do you remember what Shelley's last name is?

JANE HAMMOND: Monder, M-O-N-D-E-R. And I made two more batches of prints with Shelley in the—in the interstices between the school year and the beginning of summer school; there was three weeks when no one was in the print shop. And Shelley and I got in there, [00:54:00] and it's—it's funny, because I remember I paid her $10 an hour, which is—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Which is a good amount then.

JANE HAMMOND: It was—yeah, it was decent then. And I remember the first week I wrote her a check for $900. So, it's, like, that's how much we were working.

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's 90 hours.

JANE HAMMOND: You know, we were, like, living in there, you know? So, um, so, the way those prints worked, I made this kind—Shelley had said to me something like, "I only want to make one plate or two plates" or

something. "I only want to print two plates." So, I—I worked out this way where, like, I printed some of the plates upside-down and some of them alone and some of them in tandem. And—and then, I made these chine-collé sheets that were, like, mother sheets that were behind the print. And I hand-painted those. So, it was a way of making each print different, sort of like the John Cage "prepared piano" or something like that, you know? You were subverting the perfect assembly line of printmaking to—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —make these more unique things. So, when Bill Goldston came to the studio, I had a pile of, like, 40 of these kind of semi-drawings that I was going to make into prints. And then, I had some ones that I'd worked on a little more. I—I wasn't really calling them drawings, because they were very free and open, and they were, like, half of a print in my mind, you know? I was intending to print more on them, but I had a giant stack of them. And because the paper was all wet and wrinkly, they were, like—it was like this high, you know? And Bill was, like, all over them. I think he bought 12 before I could even figure out whether they were for sale or not. I mean, he was just, like, a well-oiled machine in those days, and he had Jasper and Terry and Rauschenberg and all these—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Terry Winters.

JANE HAMMOND: —so—yes—so, I just kind of, like, stepped in shit with him, really. And I didn't even know who he was. [00:56:00] So, when he said, "You should come out to ULAE and work," I mean, this is like the most important print shop, right? And I said to him, "You know, that's very nice, and thank you very much. But I don't really need to do that, because I have an arrangement with the Maryland Institute where I can go down there"—I mean, that's how naïve I was. I was basically saying, oh, I don't need ULAE, 'cause I can, like, rent this print—you know? But he just kind of, like, really pursued me and, you know, sent a car out and, you know, all of this. And, of course, I was really fortunate to go there, and particularly to go there first, and particularly to go there in those days. I mean, it was really—it—they were unbelievably supportive. And—and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What was the process of working there, and did you end up with one particular printer who you used? What was their effect on your work?

JANE HAMMOND: I used a lot of different printers, but not all of them. And to some degree, it would depend on what kind of print you were doing. But I—in the beginning, it was, like, come out here and just experiment, explore, do whatever you want. It wasn't, like—nowadays, it feels more, like, when you go somewhere, you're going to make a print, you know? And it's actually helpful if you know a lot about what the print's going to be before you even get there. But that wasn't the way Bill approached it. He was, like, "This is lithography, this is how it works. This is how you can make this kind of mark or this kind of mark, or that—you might want to try—let's just try some things." You know, so, like, the first day, I made, like, 14 plates. I mean, it was just, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you come with—with a group of images?

JANE HAMMOND: I bet I did, but I remember doing things like—I remember that I came with soap bubbles, and I mixed, um, touché in with the soap and blew some bubbles and then, like, made marks of how the bubble, like, burst on the surface.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative], [00:58:00] and this is all lithography.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. The first print I made was lithography. It had a little silkscreen in it, and it had collage in it, 'cause one thing I didn't like in printmaking was—and I still don't really like it—a print that's made all in one methodology, like, say, lithography or silkscreen, where the surface is, like, completely homogenous. I just don't like that. So, I had some little sub-parts that were printed on other papers, and we cut them out and, you know, collaged them on top. And it was quite an abstract print, but it was sort of, like, there was this deer with antlers, and then there was this little collaged inset, and it was, like, a coconut with two sticks on top. And it was a visual rhyme with the deer with the antlers.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And Bill was very, very supportive to my career. I mean, he brought—he brought lots of collectors to the studio. I mean, I remember, like, in the very beginning, he said, "Come down tomorrow afternoon." And then, I went down, and then he introduced me to this couple, the Fearers, and they bought a piece of mine.

JUDITH RICHARDS: How do you spell their name?

JANE HAMMOND: I think their name is F-e-a-r-e-r.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And their daughter, Jane, is married to Morley Safer. So, the parents have passed away. They were elderly in those days, but they were very elegant, nice people. And in—and they took us to lunch, and then, in that afternoon, they bought a Johns drawing and a Jane Hammond drawing. So, I mean, I was just, like, open-mouthed that that could even, like, happen.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: That was, uh—was the first print *Presto*?

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Was it—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —1991, 10-color—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: I have 10-color screenprint and litho.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, that sounds right.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, that's—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —very ambitious.

JANE HAMMOND: That sounds totally right. Um, [01:00:00] and all the printers there were just, like, utterly, you know, fantastic. I mean, not just, like, fantastically skilled, because I don't even know if I needed the greatest skill. But open, receptive, I mean, just, like, happy you were there, eager to work for—it's, like, kind of a dream come true, because being a painter is, like, a completely solitary thing. There's almost no way anyone else can even help you, except maybe they can make the stretcher for you. But they can't make the painting for you. So, it's, like—I mean, at least, I've never really had that much help with my paintings. So, print—to have all these—to have, like, four people working—you know, it's just, like—it's, like, gasoline and a match. So much happens so fast, it's kind of thrilling, you know? And I never really played on a team, except like in gym class or something. But I was never on, like, the field hockey team or something. But, like, I think it's something akin to, like, you know, like, you're a guy and you're on a basketball team, you know? Like, the feeling of, like, everyone in this room wants to make your print good. They have no vested interest in it not being good, do you know what I mean? So, it's really fun. It's exciting.

JUDITH RICHARDS: That—you've consistently gone—printmaking has been a part of your [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: It has, yeah. I really like it. I think it's 'cause I have a graphic sensibility, I have a layered sensibility. I—I really like paper a lot, um, and I like process a lot.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What part—what relationship does it have in terms of furthering the development of your ideas, compared to the paintings, the works on paper, uh—

JANE HAMMOND: Well—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —the photography?

JANE HAMMOND: I mean—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Do you—is it a separate—

JANE HAMMOND: Leaping across big [01:02:00] periods of time—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —like, the *Dazzle* paintings that I'm making now—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Which we'll talk about later.

JANE HAMMOND: —I couldn't make them—

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JANE HAMMOND: —if I didn't know how to make prints, because they're made in a lot of steps that have to be basically registered to each other. And if I didn't understand how to work in transparent layers of Mylar on top of each other and separate information and then bring it together in a predictable way—I mean, the way I conceived of these paintings, I had the tools to make that conception because of printmaking.

JUDITH RICHARDS: At the beginning, did you always look forward to making a print? Wait 'til you were invited? Seek out the opportunity when you felt—

JANE HAMMOND: I never sought out the opportunity to make a print, because Bill kind of surprised me, and then Bill was like a 40-man band. And then—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Evidently, your prints sold well, otherwise he would—

JANE HAMMOND: I guess they did, yeah. I guess they did, and they got into some collections. And, you know, there was—there was good feedback, you know, whatever.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And then Pace wrote me a letter—uh, I remember Kristen Hemming wrote me a letter and said, "We'd like to work with you." And I remember I had the letter on my counter for quite a while, 'cause I felt very guilty, because I had this relationship with ULAE, like I was cheating on them or something like that. But then—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —someone else pointed out to me that, like, all their artists were printing with other people, too. Kiki, Terry, Ted, et cetera, they—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And so, I went to work with Pace, and then Bud—I forget how it happened with Bud—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Bud Shark.

JANE HAMMOND: —yeah, Bud approached me. So, I never have actually approached anyone else, because I—myself, because I always feel like I already have to—I can't handle anymore, kind of, you know? Um, but it's been good for me to print with different people, 'cause different people have different strengths and different attitudes. So, it's kind of worked out, I think, in a way.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: But, um—[00:02:00]

JUDITH RICHARDS: I want—

JANE HAMMOND: I—I don't—I—it's hard for me to see what printmaking has done for my painting and painting has done for my printmaking. And it's just all art to me. I—I hardly make those distinctions, really.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: You know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, going—going back to the Ashbery project, uh, why don't you—at that point, you asked him—why don't you talk about that?

JANE HAMMOND: So, I—I—I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And why did—

JANE HAMMOND: —the background—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —why do you think that happened at that time?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, sometimes what happens to you, I think, is, like, you do something on a whim. But it isn't really a whim. Like, you get up one morning, you have an idea. You've never had the idea before, and you act on the idea. But you see, in hindsight, there was, like, a background to this idea and, like, a whole constellation of forces that kind of made you have that little comic boon—book—you know, bubble that morning. So, the short answer is I got up one morning and thought—you know, so from 1989 to 1993, I have only paintings with these titles, which is *Untitled* with the numbers.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: So, every painting has basically the same kind of title, and there's no words in the title to speak of. So, there's no—really, what you would traditionally call titling, whether Clement Greenberg said to Pollock, "Call it *Pasiphae*" or Pollock thought of it himself, and it came before or it came after, that's still titling, you know, in a way that I didn't have. So, I had met Ashbery. I had a good feeling about it. And, um, so, then the second thing that happened was I had a show in Sweden, in 1989, with the dealer that Bill Goldston introduced me to, with whom he was doing a lot of business on—and John Ashbery told me—John [00:04:00] Ashbery invited his Swedish translator—can you imagine translating John Ashbery? I can't even—I—talk about a gargantuan task. Anyhow, there was this guy, Ragnar Strömberg, and he came to my opening in Stockholm. And so, I asked John—

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Inaudible] sorry. What was his name again?

JANE HAMMOND: Ragnar Strömberg. He's a Swedish poet and John's translator. So—and we—I'm telling this story slightly out of order. So, Bjorn Wetterling, the dealer, did a catalogue, and I asked John Ashbery to write the essay. And I was emboldened to do that by, like, what Trevor had said and blah-blah-blah. So, apropos of doing the essay, John came over to the studio and we had really kind of, like, a formal, real studio visit, where he saw the works that were going to be in the show, et cetera. And he wrote a beautiful little essay, in which he likened me to Robinson Crusoe, you know? A person on an island who, like, builds everything they need in their life out of what happens to be on that island, like, a lexicon. And so, that made me feel, like, a little bit more comfortable with John, that we'd had that—a—we'd actually done a piece of work together. So, the titling thing, I just got up one morning and I thought I should have titles now, and I should have found titles. Why don't I ask John if he'll make up some titles for me? And I think another piece of info that I'm leaving out is I think I had read a poem in the New Yorker that was an Ashbery poem that was, like, a bricolage of, like, these units, these kind of lapidary units of language. Like, you could feel that he had gotten this from Daffy Duck and this from Tony [00:06:00] Bennet and this from *The New York Times*. And, like, he was weaving them together. But they still had invisible quotation marks around them, which I think is one of the amazing things of John's poetry, how he can make the thing feel collaged and not collaged and found and felt, and it can be—like, really like it—you're zigzagging around. But, like, it's a flowing road, too, you know? So, I think that poem lead me to believe, like, he could make up these little things for me. And there was another poem that had, like—that was, like, a little bit of a list. So, I called him up—this was the day in which ev—you called people, you know? And I said, "You know, John, I wanted to ask you this thing. I—I had this idea this morning, and you know how I don't have titles and how I work from found images. And I was thinking that I would have found titles. And I was going to ask you if you would make up a list of titles for my paintings, and then I would make the paintings from your titles." Now, I think this is an idea that would appeal to John Ashbery, to—you know what I mean? It has—it's like a game or, you know, something like that. But he certainly didn't act at all interested in it in that conversation. I totally understand this feeling. This is one reason I don't like to answer the phone these days, because it's, like, the other person has this very specific thing worked out in their mind or they wouldn't be calling you. And then, you're, like, totally surprised, and you don't really know—you don't have a moment to think about it, you know? So, I could sense that he was, like, noncommittal and possibly disinterested. So, I said, "John, you know what? Let's do—[00:08:00] why don't you think about it, and just know that I'm really interested in this idea and I really like it, and you would be my first and at this point really my only choice. And if you think you'd like to do it, why don't you call me back?" So, I was trying to get him off the hook in a gracious way. So, then, a week later, he called me and I was, like, astonished. I mean, I was really thinking that I had been rejected. But it—I wasn't feeling that terrible about it. But, you know—and he said, "I have your titles. Do you have a fax?" And I said, "Oh, yeah! I do!" I said, "Wow, I didn't even know you were going to do them. I—I wasn't—I thought you maybe didn't like the idea or something." And he said, "Oh, I've thought about nothing but." Which, I mean—knowing John, he probably made all 44 titles in an hour and a half. But, you know, it was very nice. And so, I remember standing there and looking down at the fax machine and the piece of paper coming out of the fax machine. And I was reading the titles upside-down, like, as they came out of the machine. And I remember thinking I bet I can't do this. [They laugh.] And then I remember thinking, "Well, if I can't do it, no one knows I—no one knows I'm embarking on this project but John Ashbery." You know what I mean? I was sort of kind of trying to rationalize—and then, I had the piece of paper and I looked at it, and he made up 44 titles. And, um, they're really all good, not surprisingly. And I looked at them, and they're not a simple visual. It's nothing like, you know, "The Rainbow Rises over the Moon Dog," where you would know what you would paint, you know? And so, I remember looking at it and thinking maybe I can [00:10:00] cherry-pick this and get 10 paintings. And that seemed like a relief to me, you know? But I don't think anything came into my mind, like, immediately. And I just—but I'll always

remember those things, like, coming out of that machine, you know? Like these kind of ideas, emanating out of this—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, you never imagined he would be offended that you didn't use every title? It was never—

JANE HAMMOND: Well, in the end, I did make every title. But I wasn't worried about his offense, really. And, um, and I told him that when I sold the paintings, I would pay him $500 for each title, which, over time, ended up being overly generous. [Laughs.] But I was so grateful at the time that I did do it for several years. Um, and then I got into this thing of, like, well, if I make four of this, am I supposed to pay him each time? And I wasn't making—it was—it—I think I kind of, like—so, after a while, I kind of stopped paying him. I can't remember if I told him I wasn't going to pay any—but it didn't really matter. I don't think he—he cared. So, anyhow, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did—did it come naturally to you to say that you'd pay him? Or was it something that someone else said to you?

JANE HAMMOND: It—it was my idea, because he's a very powerful and important poet, and it didn't seem to me, like—it seemed to me like it was cool to be doing a collaboration with John Ashbery, and that John Ashbery should get something for it. And the nature of poetry is that sometimes a poet can think it up fast. It's my problem that oil paintings take a long time, do—do you know what I'm saying?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Sure.

JANE HAMMOND: It's, like—so, I felt that he should get some of the fruits—of that [00:12:00] should go back to him. So, anyhow—and they did. Um, he didn't really say anything. But, you know, cashed the checks, let's put it that way. But, I mean, he never said, "Oh, yeah, great, thanks," or—you know, he was just, like, "Oh, you don't have to do that," or whatever. So anyhow, um, as it was kind of with the imagery before that, I wouldn't really, like, stare at the titles and think, okay, now I have to come up with something. But I would just kind of look at the titles and it wasn't that hard to kind of have 10 or 20 of them in your head, you know, to remember them. They were short and memorable. And then, just over time, something would pop in my mind, like, oh, I could do this for that or this could be this. And I didn't want to try and explain or illustrate the title. And, as I said, he gave me titles that would have been hard to illustrate. But I wanted the painting and the title together to be a synergistic entity. And the title to kind of, like, possibly give me the raison d'être of the painting or give you another way of looking at the painting—you would look at it differently than if it was titled something else. I didn't want to just, like, slap the title on the—you know, I wanted the—like, analogy would be, like, a cultured pearl in a grain of sand. I wanted the title to be the cause of the painting.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: Um, so many—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Which was—could be hugely challenging itself.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, there were some titles that I had no idea about for a long, long time. And then, others came to me, and I just thought, well, as long as one comes to me—I mean, it takes a month or two to make the painting. So, it's, like, I just have to trust that another one will come to me when I finish the painting. I don't have to have, like, 44 ideas in my head [00:14:00] today. So, one day, I looked—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You know, you—you have that conversation and you're—you're talking about that conversation in your head. Is that something that comes smoothly, that—that—and easily, that you tell yourself those things? Or is this a kind of an abbreviation of a long struggle where you were feeling like you had to have all those for—

JANE HAMMOND: Both, both. I mean, sometimes it's, like, I'm talking to myself and it's pretty easy. And then—there's really easy moments, and then there's really difficult moments, too. Mostly, getting ideas has been pretty easy for me. But they're not all great, you know? Like, you have to separate what's worth doing from what isn't worth doing. And even if you have a clear idea for a painting and you can see it in your mind's eye, it doesn't make it all that easy to make the painting. And then, it ends up changed. It's never the photograph you have in your head in the beginning, you know? It slides into being something else.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: Usually what it slides into being is better than the photograph you had in the beginning. But I can't get started in—9 times out of 10 without the photograph in my head. Like, I don't just go in there and, like, put paint on the canvas. I don't say there's anything wrong with it, but it's not the way I work.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Were you surprised by the impact of those titles on your work? Or—

or—how—did it go as you expected?

JANE HAMMOND: I didn't really have so many expectations about how it would go. But I think that—I think—I'm, like, a person who really likes research and assembling info. So, like, when—if he would give me something that would have a suggestion of nursery rhymes or a suggestion of cartography or a suggestion of advertisement or a suggestion [00:16:00] of something else, then, like, I could—I could bring things to bear on that and think, okay. I mean, I just really like that, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You were—with those titles came works on paper as well as paintings, or were those titles just on paintings?

JANE HAMMOND: Those titles were just for paintings, and I've only done—I made one print from one of the Ashbery titles. But basically, I didn't really do the Ashbery project in any other media.

JUDITH RICHARDS: There were—there was a—there's a number of pieces in kind—you said you use the same title for many—*Sore Models*.

JANE HAMMOND: There's five of them.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you, at the beginning, have five ideas?

JANE HAMMOND: No. I had one idea. I had—it was the first idea I got. One day, I looked at the title list, and I saw *Sore Models*, and I thought I'm going to do a painting in the shape of two feet. Now, there are these tantric paintings that are, like, the feet of the Buddha. So, I think that's where that idea came from—crossed with, probably, the concept of sore feet. I mean, you know, it can be as simple as something like that. So, I had my stretcher maker make two large foot-shape canvases.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And this was the departure, to make shaped canvases.

JANE HAMMOND: Well, this is the funny thing. I was so concentrated on could I make a painting that had a genuine relationship to that title that I made my first shaped painting, my first two distinct parts painting, and my first painting that had some other material in it besides just oil paint, 'cause it had—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —copper and silver leaf in it. And I didn't even think about any of those things, 'cause I was so fixated on the title. So, somebody else came over and said—or some—Jose or someone said, "I hear you're making shaped paintings." And I was, like, oh, yeah, maybe I—you know [00:18:00] what I mean? I didn't even—like, in some ways, I'm not really a painter. Like, I wasn't, like, trained as a painter and I didn't sit around in art school and have all these conversations about, like, should it be a rectangle or should it be—so, it didn't seem like a big deal to me. It seemed like, well, a square is a shape and a foot's a shape, you know? I wasn't so steeped in those orthodoxies of, like what a big deal—what a big decision that was. So, I made this painting, and it was two pink feet. And then, Judy came over and they were—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And—and before this, you had expanded your color range. Or was it on the occasion—

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I guess, yeah, it got expanded. Just over time, there was, like, more mixing. So, I know why you're asking that, 'cause the pink was, like, not—yeah. That's—it's kind of, like—to me, it seems like entropy naturally seeps into any system. And so, over time, the colors became more complicated. I added other colors, then I added the shapes, you know? The—the rules were there, but they were there in a less stringent way—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —all the time. I kind of think of this system as like a trellis that a vine grows on. And in the beginning, the trellis allows the vine to grow, and over time, the vine kind of eclipses the trellis, so you might not even know it was there.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I—I made the pink painting, and the two halves were very similar. And the grounds were the same. You know, they were both pink, both equally pink. And I think I was worried about making a pair of things as one painting, so I was really emphasizing sameness, like, as if to say, "See? They belong together."

And then Judy came over, and she walked in the studio and she looked at it and she [00:20:00] said, "What's that book? Like, right brain, left brain? What is that book?" And—and when she said that, I kind of thought, oh, a pair—a pair could be, like, a male and female cardinal. A pair could be, like—and you know what I mean? Like, they don't have to be the same 'cause they're a pair. So, then the idea for the second *Sore Models* came just from that comment Judy said about right and left, kind of like that—and there wasn't any more to the discussion than that, you know? Um, so then I thought, okay, I'm going to make a pair that's a pair in a different way. So, then there was a red one and a blue one.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And they were more opposites than the first pair.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And one of the images that's in that second pair is two versions of a diagram for making a homemade battery, where, in a glass of salt water, you immerse a strip of copper and a strip of zinc, and then you get this circuitry between the two dissimilar things. And I saw that as sort of a metaphor for the painting, that the things were different. And, in fact, one was under-painted with silver leaf, in one case, and the other was copper in the other—but that there was this circuitry between them. They could be a pair, although they were more different from each other.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And then, I got the idea—I mean, it's interesting, because, see, like, I never felt like I had to do things in a series. But I also felt like if I got another idea a year later, if I thought, oh, you know what would be a better *Sore Models* than that? Or another *Sore Models* or a different approach—I could go back to it. So, at some point, I thought I would do hands. And so, I did [00:22:00] a tracing of my own hands, though, like, first I did these more generic hands. I think that that was number three. And I did them in canvas, and it was very complicated, 'cause, like, I don't know if you saw, but, like, if you cut the canvas here, when you get down here, you don't have enough canvas to wrap around the side.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, I actually had to get an upholsterer to do the canvas part, and kind of sew the linings of the fingers. And Jeff Syman—who's my stretcher-maker and he is still my stretcher-maker today—found this woman upstate, and he built the stretcher and he got her to kind of upholster it. And so—and so, then the ne—the last one I made, I made on a wooden stretcher, because I—I traced my own hands, and you had to have a more complicated shape. And it was going to be impossible to get the upholsterer—I'd have—would—had to have gotten a dressmaker from, like, you know, Dior or something. It's almost, like, ridiculous. And then—and then, that painting, because it was on the wood—I had a hard surface that's easier to glue against. It became quite collage-y.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes, I—when I read the list of ingred—of ingredients—

JANE HAMMOND: [Inaudible.]

JUDITH RICHARDS: —of materials—

JANE HAMMOND: —picture of me in it. And by then, there were these places in SoHo that were making—was before digital printing, but there were things, like Veloxes and there were these various things that you could—there were all these copy centers around, and you could—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —go to the copy center, and you'd see some other person walking out with something. You'd say, "What's that?" And they'd say, "Oh, that's a Velox." And I'd be, like, "I want one of those," you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I don't know. I made—I forget what I made first. I made *Sore Models*, and we—we put this in chronological—

JUDITH RICHARDS: I have that as '93.

JANE HAMMOND: I made a book this summer—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, that must be—

JANE HAMMOND: —which I don't have a copy of, but I made it with a young woman, and we made it on blurb, and I made the whole Ashbery collaboration in the order in which I made the paintings. We should get one of those.

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's great. That's—since, you know, that's something that you—

JANE HAMMOND: I think it's kind of interesting, because you see the *Sore Models*, and then you don't see it for a long time—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —and then you see it again, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: I could try to get you one of them.

JUDITH RICHARDS: It's, um—some of the titles were very simple. *Wonderful You*.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And—and others, uh, *A Parliament of Refrigerator Magnets*—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —which was so Jane Hammond. [Laughs.]

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, in fact, that's—there's only two titles where, when I looked at the list, I thought John was thinking of me. And *A Parliament of Refrigerator Magnets* was one, because, at my place in Spring Street, I had a side-by-side refrigerator-freezer, and I had millions of refrigerator magnets. And then, when you—when people see that, then they start getting you refrigerator magnets, you know what I mean?

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Laughs.] Oh, yes.

JANE HAMMOND: So, it's just like I had—so—and I had clippings and photographs and, like, you really couldn't even see the icebox. And, um, it's funny, 'cause when Craig and I first got together, his niece—I thought this was such a sweet gift. She made for me a set of refrigerator magnets from the Ashbery paintings.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Wow!

JANE HAMMOND: Isn't that—the problem is that we now have stainless steel icebox—so, they don't—they only stick on the side.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh!

JANE HAMMOND: But this is a detail of *RSVP*, this is a detail of *Wonderful You*, this is a detail of *Midwife to Gargoyles*.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Who made these?

JANE HAMMOND: Sarah McNeer, Craig's niece. Isn't that great?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, yeah. Fantastic.

JANE HAMMOND: So, anyhow—

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Inaudible] she used pieces of reproductions of these paintings.

JANE HAMMOND: I guess she made color Xeroxes, wouldn't you think? Or something—this is—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —15 years ago. [00:26:00] So, anyhow, where was I? Oh, and the second one—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You said, yeah, that [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: Meanwhile, John Yau and I had gotten divorced. And I guess by the time I asked John Ashbury to make the titles, John Yau and I were no longer together. So, there was another title, and it was *Do Husbands*

Matter? Question mark. [They laugh.] And so, I had the same reaction you just had. Like, I laughed and I thought, well, this is, like, John kind of obliquely referring—John Ashbery referring to the breakup of me and John. But the rest of the titles—I mean, *Tom Tiddler's Ground*, I—I had no idea what that meant. Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And you were doing those for that whole time that—the rest of the decade—

JANE HAMMOND: I did it for eight years.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —'93 to 2001.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah. Like, I remember *The Hagiography of This Moment*, I had to look up hagiography, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Let's see, that's—saw that. Ah, 1993. That was [inaudible]?

JANE HAMMOND: That was, like, the second or third one.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: I think it was the third painting.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And, um, and that was a funny painting, because there was a text in that painting, a—like, one of the really bad things I did when I was a child—I think many—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Now, is that you?

JANE HAMMOND: That is me.

JUDITH RICHARDS: The girl with the blue dress and the red wings?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, that is an image of me.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Uh-huh [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And, um, and when I was in junior high, I had this friend named Sally Johnson, whose mother taught bridge. And she was a divorcee. And Sally and her two sisters had a French nanny who was about 103, so—and the mother was in New York constantly. That was probably where the best bridge lessons were or something, I don't know. So, like, it was complete freedom over there, you know? Like, you could have really, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Laughs.] Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —you could do anything, you know? You could smoke—

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Laughs.] Because this—

JANE HAMMOND: —you—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —103-year-old—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. [00:28:00]

JUDITH RICHARDS: —wouldn't know what was going on.

JANE HAMMOND: I mean, it's just, like—so, and then Sally's mother started dating. And I think, unconsciously, Sally was threatened and angry. I don't know. But anyhow, her mother was dating this man, and while they were, like, in the living room together, Sally and I took the goldfish out of the goldfish tank and we fried them in butter in a cast iron pan in the kitchen.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh my God. That's like that commercial. Have you seen the commercial—

JANE HAMMOND: I haven't seen the commercial, but it's bad!

JUDITH RICHARDS: —where the guy eats the girl's goldfish. It's—it's—I can't even remember what it's for, but anyway—

JANE HAMMOND: I know; it's appalling.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: If I had a child and they did that, I'd be, like—I'd be appalled. And it's not like I can blame it on Sally. We both did it, you know? We used, like, a lot of butter and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And served it?

JANE HAMMOND: No, we didn't serve it. I don't remember—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, it wasn't that you were confronting them with this. It was just doing it.

JANE HAMMOND: We brought it out. We—we—we left it there. We brought it out. We had it—like, her mother saw it. I don't remember any of the detail—I remember the butter and the fish and the pan. I don't remember how we brought it into the living room or if we left it in the kitchen.

JUDITH RICHARDS: How old were you?

JANE HAMMOND: You know, I think we were in junior high. And we weren't, you know, six.

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Laughs.] Well, you wouldn't be using the stove fully if you were six.

JANE HAMMOND: So, anyhow, that's the story in that painting.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Uh-huh [affirmative]. So, as the—as the, um, time went by, uh, the paintings are always—have—were in that series quite large.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, they were all big. And they were quite complicated.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And, um, and his titles were so, um, like, richly associative and evocative for me. I mean, like, *Midwife to Gargoyles*, it [00:30:00] kind of—it kind of suggested to me, like, the medieval world and something about babies and nurseries and toys and birth.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: You know? So, like, I worked on all these conflations of, you know, like there's a little episode where it's chains, but it's, like, a baby toy of chains. Like, you can imagine how a baby could have, like, three plastic rings chained together—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —like a rattle or something like that. But then, it was also, like, medieval dungeon kind of chains. And there were—there were just a lot of ways that you could put these things back and forth together in a—in a very rich way. And with that painting in particular, um, I had three or four images that were important, particularly important. There was, like—there was this kind of cage and there were these kind of baby shoes. And there was this baby carriage, and then there were some chains or something like that. And then, I set myself the goal—well—oh, I know what happened. I was reading about gargoyles and I was nearly finished with the first painting when I discovered that the word gargoyle doesn't really have anything to do with, like, a monster or projecting off a building. It—it's related to the word gargle and gurgle, and it has to do with being a downspout—and water.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Huh.

JANE HAMMOND: So, then, I was like you. I was, like, ah! It caused me to see it in a different way. And so, I made a second painting that was watery, you know? And I started out by making a ground of, like, very watery acrylic paint and letting it run down the surface.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Is this from 19—I found the ref—1996, *Midwife of*—

JANE HAMMOND: You'll have to—

JUDITH RICHARDS: *—to Gargoyles.*

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So—so, it had downspouts and gutters and flowing water. And it was an—a second version of it. And one of the books that I really loved reading in my life was *The Alexandria Quartet*, in which you see an episode in the first book, and then you see the same episode from the point of view of another character in the second book. So, I took four elements from the first painting and I made them appear in the second painting, as well. But they were playing different roles and they were a different scale. So, it was a kind of *Alexandria Quartet*-like—you know, in one thing, there was a big cage and a woman was inside of it, and in another thing, the cage was really little and it was like a toy.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm. Right after—around that time, '97, you did a major piece—canvas shaped like the state of Connecticut.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Seems like an important work.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Um, maybe—

JANE HAMMOND: That painting was about my grandmother.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And the title of that was *Keeping the Orphan*.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: And when I saw the phrase keeping the orphan, I just thought of my grandmother keeping me and, you know, this period when my mom was kind of absent. And so I decided I was going to make—I mean, it just kind of all came to me at once, that I was going to make a big painting in the shape of Connecticut—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —that it was going to have a layer to it that it—that was a map, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Which was—was that the first time maps played a big part in [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: You know, it might have been the first time—

JUDITH RICHARDS: I mean, a map wasn't—that kind of map wasn't one of your 276 images.

JANE HAMMOND: Uh, that's an interesting question. I don't think there's a—there might be a map or two, but the [00:34:00] idea of maps didn't come to me for a while.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: That painting was—um, I remember it took Jeff and I a while to figure out how to make the canvas. And then, he—I remember he brought me a little sample of Connecticut. And he was always saying to me, "Don't be afraid to ask me these things, 'cause I just make rectangles all day long. So, I really like to make these other things," you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: And this is very large, too.

JANE HAMMOND: It's really big, yeah. So, the idea was, like, there was a—you know how, like, you could see, like, a product map of America, it would have, like, corn in Iowa and oil wells in Texas and lobsters in Maine? Okay, so the idea was sort of like there was a background that was a map, and then there were things in different places. And then, there were some relationships between those things and some text in relationship to those things. But it was all about my grandmother—of course, through the lens of my experience with her. So, there was this layer where it really was Connecticut. In other words, New Haven was where New Haven is. And if you look at it closely, you can see the parts appearing that are the map parts. And then, there was sort of a ground to it also, that was binding the thing together that wasn't a map. It was like a painting. And paintings, of course, and maps are—have a lot in common, because you—your basic task is, like, what goes where, you know? And then, there were images that related to things that my grandmother and I did together when I was a child. And my grandmother had a rich imagination, and we did a lot of things together, not to mention that I chose the elements in this lexicon in the first place. So, it was, like, easy to kind of figure that out. So, for

example, we did this thing where we collected Queen Anne's lace and we slit the stems—did I say this already? I might've. We slit the stems—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Ah, yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —in half with a razor blade, and we put the— [cross talk] yeah, so, I had this image of a chrysanthemum, and so in that painting, I used the chrysanthemum, but I painted it half red and half blue, and then it's split at the bottom and in two glasses of water. So, that would be a good example of how you can take a found image, which is a chrysanthemum—I believe it's originally from an old seed catalog. And then, you can, in one instance, use it to refer to your grandmother. It doesn't refer to my grandmother in many other works of art in which it appears.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: You know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you have any hesitation about doing something that was so autobiographical?

JANE HAMMOND: By this time, no. But, you know, I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: It took—

JANE HAMMOND: —it was—

JUDITH RICHARDS: It was slow.

JANE HAMMOND: —I had to kind of overcome it, um, because, as I say, I was—the world that—that I came of age in was, like, freighted with biases against that, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But at that point in time, the '90s, um, all of that—women's work and all—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —the '70s and '80s—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —that helped combine—that would—there was much more legitimacy—

JANE HAMMOND: Right.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —in approaching work that [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: That's true, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —biography.

JANE HAMMOND: —also, see, I felt like I had this commitment to heterogeneity, and not all my work was autobiographical, you know? So, that—I had that kind of working for me, too. So, um, yeah, everything in there is about—I mean, I never just randomly put images in something. In other words, there was a lens for every painting. And the lens in that painting was my experiences with my grandmother. So, like, there's a fountain pen in there, but my grandmother was, like, a big fountain pen person, you know? Or there was, like, a canoe in there, and underneath it is some lines from *Hiawatha*, because I used to canoe with my grandmother, and she would recite [00:38:00] *Hiawatha.* So, it was all—you know, everything in there has to do with her. I should get an Ashbery catalogue, so I'd have that. Yeah, so what else is there? There's a sphinx in here, and my grandmother spent part of her childhood in Egypt. I think I mentioned that—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm, yes you did.

JANE HAMMOND: —the other day. And there's a rosebush. I mean, it's a rose plant. It doesn't have any roses. It's just like what you plant when you're planting roses. And there's a lot of images from cooking and knitting, and there's a lot of very kind of girly things in the painting, 'cause that's the—but every single thing in here is, like, I could tell you what each thing has to do with my grandmother. And then, there's this dollhouse kind of popping out of the painting that has all this crocheting on it. I mean—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —I don't know, it's hard—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you—how did you find the response was to that painting? Critics and collectors and—

JANE HAMMOND: I can't remember in what show—

JUDITH RICHARDS: I mean, they might have felt that it was an easier painting for them to enter, because it was a—took a more direct, autobiographical approach, that may or may not have—

JANE HAMMOND: Like, here's—yeah—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —been a happy, uh, result to you.

JANE HAMMOND: I can't actually be—to be honest with you, I can't remember what other people thought about this painting.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Is that in a private collection or in—

JANE HAMMOND: I think it was in my show—yeah, yeah. Yeah, it is. It's in a very nice private collection. And then, these initials here, those are my grandmother's initials and dates. Here's something I like. There's a rose, there's a blooming rose in another place, and there's a little label around it, and it says, "How to tell peace from Dolly Parton". Now, if you saw that sentence [00:40:00] just written somewhere, it wouldn't make much sense. But both peace and Dolly Parton are roses, so, like, in that context, it actually does make sense. And I really like that kind of thing, where the context completely is very, very, very granular, and then something that seems nonsensical actually isn't.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Um, you also did a series called, uh, for—with the title *The Soapstone Factory*.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What resonated, particularly, about that? Why—why do you think that one ended up to be, what, five paintings?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. Well, first of all, I might have told this story to you already, that Leonard DeLonga was this teacher I had at Mount Holyoke, and he was—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —very important to me. And—and in the very beginning of sculpture with Leonard DeLonga at Mount Holyoke, we carved soapstone.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh!

JANE HAMMOND: And soapstone is a really—it's, like, kind of carving 101. It's a really soft stone, and it carves really easily compared to, say, alabaster or something like that. So, to me, *The Soapstone Factory* immediately connoted two things in my mind. One was sculpture. And then, the other was—factory connoted to me, like, the idea of make—of manufacture. So, the idea that came into my mind was a painting of a sculptor's studio.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm.

JANE HAMMOND: And I just think—I didn't even maybe fully know it at the time, but, like, that is a really rich idea, because you can make a finished work of art of things in process. So, like, not everything in the painting has to be finished. You can have detritus around, you can have tools around, you could have mistakes around. [00:42:00] You could make a colorful painting of monochromatic sculpture. Um, and then the factory thing was, like, you could contemplate the idea of manufacture and repetition and assembly line versus the idea of handmade and artisanal and unique. So, I'm trying to find the very first *Soapstone* painting. Oh, I can't find it 'cause it's here on the cover. So, I have these windows, and in—

JUDITH RICHARDS: The first thing you notice is, uh, is the intense red background and, again, the checkered floor.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And the—and then the array of—of, uh, figurative sculpture on pedestals of makeshift stands.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yes. And then—and then, you notice, like, all this kind of, like, little chips and pieces of the leftover stone.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And also, it looked to me when I saw that, that the interior was in some foreign country.

JANE HAMMOND: Or from some other time.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes, yes.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah, I agree with that. And, um, so I was going to say, with regard to the factory quality, you can see in the back I have a Buddha in every window, but every time he's with something else. Like, he's with the snail here, he's with the banana here, he's with a rose here, you know? So, I just went to Europe and, you know, like, there's a lot of sculpture where there's so-and-so with his attributes. You know, 40 members of the guild, and then the fisherman is holding a plate of fish and a net, and the carpenter is holding a ladder and a saw. Or, you—you know, so it's kind of like the Buddha is representing many different guilds, whatever. And then, the other thing that was [00:44:00] kind of fun about this was to drain the color out of all these things and make them—like, this is not a real ballerina. This is a sculpture of a ballerina. So, it was, like, there were these levels of artifice within artifice.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And then, there were levels of, um, what would be solid—like, a stone sculpture of an hourglass is almost kind of funny, because there's nothing to move or change, right? So, it has, like, a different—I don't want to say a pun, but it has a different—it's, like, ironic in marble, and it isn't in paint. Does that make sense?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Or, like, this giant marble feather, you know? Something like that. So, it was really kind of a ball doing—I mean, I just—like, it felt like, wow, this is really big. I could do so many things with this.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Does—do—do you get a sense that humor enters into your work at times in a slide?

JANE HAMMOND: Millions of—millions of people have told me that. Now, I never—I never think of them as funny. I—I think of this—I'm looking for something, and it's, like—like, frisson is a—is sometimes the word I use. In other words, it has some valance. I don't know if it's edgy, funny, angry. I just know that it's—it has positive valance. And then, sometimes, I think it's fun—sometimes, I think things are really funny and other people don't. And then, sometimes they think it's funny and I don't think it's funny. I'm—I don't know. I really think in the—in the long run, you—you make art for yourself, because you're the only person you really have to run it by, do you know [00:46:00] what I mean? And then, hopefully—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, it just wouldn't work if you weren't making it for yourself.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. Like, this is a little kind of Magritte reference. Um, but, you know, I did—I just put the fish and the woman together. I didn't really—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative], we're—

JANE HAMMOND: I didn't have an image—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —still looking *The Soapstone Factory*, the first one—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —which is from 1998.

JANE HAMMOND: Or, like, this elephant is wearing bells around his feet.

JUDITH RICHARDS: His ankles.

JANE HAMMOND: His ankles. But, of course, they can't ring because it's marble. But, of course, it isn't really marble 'cause it's paint, you know? So, it's just kind of—you can unpack it. It's like a nest of Russian dolls or something.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, so that title really proved to be rich.

JANE HAMMOND: That title proved to be so great.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Evocative.

JANE HAMMOND: So, then once I did that, what was number—I think this—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Number five—

JANE HAMMOND: I made this one—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —there's a blue grid floor.

JANE HAMMOND: I made this one, which is like a carnival game. That was sort of the idea, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Which number is that?

JANE HAMMOND: I think this is two. Let me check and see if that is—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, the title isn't—I thought the title was in the opposite page.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, but—but the title is really *The Soapstone Factory*, not *The Soapstone Factory Number Two*, if you know what I mean.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm.

JANE HAMMOND: I wanted to have—my idea for this catalogue was to have—all right, this is number three. My idea for this catalogue was to have this page be what John did.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh.

JANE HAMMOND: You know what I'm saying? And that's the title that John wrote, *The Soapstone Factory*.

JUDITH RICHARDS: I see.

JANE HAMMOND: So, the title of this painting is *The Soapstone Factory Number Two.* So, I guess I've leapt ahead to number three. But one of the things that's cool about number three—so, the idea of number three was, like, the sculptures are less elaborate, and they are the armatures for some kind of ring-toss game that's going on in a more carnival-like place. And then, there's these strings of silhouettes in the back, and they're [00:48:00] sort of shot like they've been—like someone's—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —gone at them with a gun or something. And then, this floor is a paper collage using marble paper. So, it's, like, kind of reading a little bit like a marble floor. That was really fun to do.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Almost—almost life-size, in a sense.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. I don't know where *Soapstone Factor Number Two* is. Maybe we didn't put it in this catalogue.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And I think the next one—perhaps the next one is completely more mundane. Uh, *Bread and Butter Machine*.

JANE HAMMOND: *Bread and Butter Machine*, I just had an idea to make—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, it's another machine, so—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. I had an idea to make a plate-shaped painting.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And, um, I don't completely know where that comes from. John Ashbery had a—a small collection in his kitchen of French china plates that were rebuses.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: And, of course, the world is filled with ceramic art, you know, that have kind of paintings—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —in this part of the dish. And I was kind of punning on the idea that painting is my bread and butter, 'cause in the—by now, I'm, like, making my living entirely by—by my painting. So, there were these objects around the periphery that were sort of, like, lexicon samples, including myself and a box of dominos and a water lily and a blue rabbit and a phrenology head.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, yes. [They laugh.]

JANE HAMMOND: And then, there's a little kind of still life in the center, which purports to be a sort of painting machine.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: And, uh—

JUDITH RICHARDS: As you were doing these, [00:50:00] were you aware that John was seeing the paintings? John Ashbery?

JANE HAMMOND: I remember I had a show at Luhring Augustine in 1997, and John came to the show. I remember, I arranged for him—I invited him over for dinner, and then I asked them to keep the gallery open late. And I remember he arrived and he had—he had a martini in a—he was wearing chinos and he had a jar in his pocket, and it had a martini in it. And he drank the martini in the gallery. [Laughs.] I was—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Out of the jar?

JANE HAMMOND: No, I think they got him a glass. But I'd just never seen anyone have a martini in a jar in their pocket. I was really—

JUDITH RICHARDS: How did you know it was a martini?

JANE HAMMOND: It became evident. I don't remember the moment where it was evident. I guess he really wanted a martini, and he was afraid he wouldn't get it at my house, which was, I think, a relatively safe assumption, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Laughs.] Creature of habit. He had to have—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —his martini.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. But this was really a challenge for Jeff to make, because this plate, this surface—this surface and this surface are all at different levels.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh.

JANE HAMMOND: And then, this—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Can't tell in the reproduction.

JANE HAMMOND: No, you can't. And this surface comes out at an angle. So, the plate—the plate is, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, like a real plate.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yes. Totally like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: The outer rim, a wide outer rim that comes out.

JANE HAMMOND: When it's—when it's on the wall, it's on the wall like this.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: You know? And this rim is coming way out, and these units are even, like, faceted, this one from this one from this one.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Wow, talk about a challenge for a frame-maker.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. And I—I'm not certain—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Was it—was it an instance where it was almost an upholstered surface?

JANE HAMMOND: No, it was a wooden surface that I just gessoed and painted in the [00:52:00] normal way. And I can't exactly—I think what I did was I made a cardboard model, small, and said, "Can you make it like this?"

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: I can't—I can't exactly remember how I would've given Jeff the instruction. But either—I would have either made a cardboard model, which I did a lot of times, or I would have given him a plate that we copied. But I don't remember that there was such a plate.

JUDITH RICHARDS: You only did one such shaped thing.

JANE HAMMOND: I actually made a second dish-shaped painting, and that dish-shaped painting was called *Man Overboard*.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What year was that? It's also the—John Ashbery—also John Ashbery title?

JANE HAMMOND: Yep, and one of John's titles was *Man Overboard*. I'm not positive that *Man Overboard* is in this catalogue. First of all, this catalogue is not every Ashbery painting. It's every Ashbery painting that was done by the time this show got organized. But what happened to poor *Man Overboard* is in this traveling show—let's see, it was in this show, because that was the problem.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Which show is that?

JANE HAMMOND: And the show went to the—it was the show called *Jane Hammond; The John Ashbery Collaboration*.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, yes, it started [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: It started—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Cleveland?

JANE HAMMOND: —in Cleveland. And it went, um, to a bunch of places.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: And when it—when it went to Texas, which was the last venue, it went to Texas from the Madison Art Center, which is not noted here in this catalogue, because I think that venue came last, and it didn't make the catalogue. [00:54:00] Whoever packed it in Madison screwed right through—screwed the painting into the crate and screwed entirely through the painting. It was—it blew my mind. I remember I was in the De Mon—they had it over at the de Menil, because the Blaffer didn't have its own restoration thing. So, they sent it over to the de Menil, and I—and I had to walk into the room and look at it, and there were all these, like, de Menil—

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JUDITH RICHARDS: This is Judith Richards, interviewing Jane Hammond in New York City, in her loft, on April 27th, 2012, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, disc four.

JANE HAMMOND: So, anyhow, poor *Man Overboard* bit the dust. That's the long and short of that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: You mean that screw was just the fatal blow. [Cross talk.]

JANE HAMMOND: There were, like, five or six screws. I don't know how you could screw a painting to a crate—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Five or six—

JANE HAMMOND: —and never come around the front and make sure you didn't go through. But anyhow, there were all these screws, and the painting—I believe the painting belonged to someone else. So, that makes it eminently more complicated, because I can't decide whether I can—like, if it—I owned the painting, I would have, like, ground all the paint off the center and painted a new center, you know what I mean? But then, that wouldn't have been the painting that the other person bought. So, it was, like, a big, complicated mess. But anyhow, I made 62 paintings, so I lost one. It's not the end of the world.

JUDITH RICHARDS: I was—I was reading different numbers. The factual—

JANE HAMMOND: You know what? I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —number is 62 from the 44 titles?

JANE HAMMOND: No, I said—I say 62—

JUDITH RICHARDS: I've read many different numbers.

JANE HAMMOND: And I said 62 1,000 times, and Craig pointed out to me, when we made the blurb book this summer, it's 64. I just, like, internalized the wrong number.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Huh. Okay, so now you know, definitively—

JANE HAMMOND: I think so. I'm going to get you this blurb book, or [inaudible].

JUDITH RICHARDS: What brought you to realize that you were at the end? I mean, I know you used all the titles, but you used some titles more than once. Were you eager to see the end of that and anxious to make your own titles?

JANE HAMMOND: I was actually not eager to see the end of it, because it was really working out well for me. It was making it easier to make the painting, because out of the whole world of possibilities of what to paint, I had, like, a kind of lens for each painting. I had a scaffolding. I had a place to start. And I feel that it made the paintings easier to make.

JUDITH RICHARDS: At the end—this is 2001 [00:02:00]—had those 276 images evolved, changed, expanded in any way?

JANE HAMMOND: This is 2001, but I think the collaboration maybe went on to 2003 or some—I'm not sure.

JUDITH RICHARDS: I think it was '01.

JANE HAMMOND: Okay, okay.

JUDITH RICHARDS: At the least the title of the CCAC show—I mean, the Cleveland Center for Contemporary Arts show was *John Ashbery Collaboration, 1993 - 2001*.

JANE HAMMOND: Right, but that—that show—I wasn't through with the Ashbery collaboration. I was deep into it, but there were more Ashbery paintings after that. I don't know, Judith. I could look that up, when it ended.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, you've—when—when you get the transcript—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —you can do that.

JANE HAMMOND: So, what was I saying?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Um, we talked about the—at the end, in 2001, how you felt about—

JANE HAMMOND: Oh, how I knew I was finished.

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Inaudible] yeah, and if you—if those—if that body of images, of the 276 had changed by then from when you initially created it.

JANE HAMMOND: Uh, I don't know that the body of images had changed all that much. The paintings had gotten more sophisticated and more complex than they were some years before.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, and I also wanted to ask you about the addition of the maps.

JANE HAMMOND: Okay, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Wherever that fits in.

JANE HAMMOND: I think I was feeling, as time went along, that the Ashbery thing was really working out, you know? Like, it was bigger and better than I'd even though it was going to be. After I made, like, 35 paintings and I was, like, avoiding some titles I thought I didn't like—but, at the same time, every time I finished, I could sort of, like, smile upon one more title, you know? So, it just kept kind of breaking for me. And I thought, well, there would be something really just kind of, like, beautiful about doing all the titles. So, then I got this bee in my bonnet that I was going to do [00:04:00] all the titles. I—I don't know why I did—I only did more of one than another if I genuinely had another idea. Like, I thought, oh, gosh, I want to put water in the gargoyle painting. Or I thought, well, I've made two monochromatic rooms with white sculpture, what about if I made a—a monochrome—a dull-colored room with colored sculpture. Um, so—or, uh, a certain point, I went through acupuncture, and so then I made another *Sore Models* painting that was, like, an ear, and it was all organized according to principles of acupuncture. So, I didn't want—and John said to me at one point, "I'll make you more

titles." But that seemed like—that if I had done that, I would have just been avoiding going on to the next thing. But I was a—I was nervous and fearful about it being over. Maybe that's an overstatement, but I had some nervousness and fear about it being over, because it was—maybe it would be like if you were a poet and you always wrote, like, villanelles or sestinas or sonnets—it's, like, yes, it's hard, but you also have a form you're supposed to follow. And then, if someone said to you, "Okay, you're going to write free verse next year," it could be terrifying. So, I think I was somewhat afraid about it being over. But I also felt like I had to face the music. I couldn't, like—like, it was a—it was a conceptual project, and the project was I called him up one afternoon and the thing came out of the fax machine. And to add onto it after that just seemed to me like it wasn't a beautiful thing, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: Like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Inauthentic.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. Kind of stupid and—and, like, you're doing it for the wrong reasons. You're doing it 'cause you don't know what else to do, or you don't have any [00:06:00] other good ideas, or, you know, whatever.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. And you were continuing to wo—make works on paper and prints all through that time. So, obviously—

JANE HAMMOND: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JUDITH RICHARDS: —you could do other things.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. But, I mean, when you paint in a certain way for eight years, you are a little nervous about, like, what am I going to do next, you know? But anyhow, at a certain point, it just felt like it was over. I don't remember really wrestling with it that much. I made *Prevents Furring*, which was the last one.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Sorry, what's the title?

JANE HAMMOND: *Prevents Furring*.

JUDITH RICHARDS: *Prevents Furring*. [Laughs.] Thought I didn't—

JANE HAMMOND: See—

JUDITH RICHARDS: *Prevents Furring* in here?

JANE HAMMOND: And then, I don't know, it just—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, that might have been 2001, but it might have been later.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. Now, *Prevents Furring*—can I talk about that for a minute?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes, please.

JANE HAMMOND: First of all, I didn't really know what furring was, so I looked it up. And it had a number of meanings. But one of them was a coating on the tongue. And so, *Prevents Furring* sounded to me like a snippet of language from an old advertisement. You know, like these early medicines where they had these grandiose claims about what it can do for you. And—and it's not because—if it would—if it had been—um, furring should be prevented, that wouldn't—there's a certain linguistic—there's a certain kind of language that advertising uses, and a certain kind of voice that it has. And—and that's what it sounded like to me.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, I—I went out—I decided I was going to do something that was like an ad [00:08:00] for a fictional product. So, I went out and I bought all these products, because I thought the shapes of their boxes might be interesting. Like I remember I bought ayurvedic dandruff shampoo. I bought some ayurvedic something or other—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Ayurvedic.

JANE HAMMOND: —and then I bought some dandruff shampoo, and—and I remember someone looking at it and saying to me, "Why are you buying all this dandruff shampoo? You don't even have dandruff." [Laughs.] And I—I

took the products out of the boxes and I kind of Scotch-taped the boxes and put them—I made—I got a box that would be, like, you took—you know, it's not like a Good & Plenty box, 'cause that's a kind of narrow box. But if you had, like, a box that some kind of candy or something came in and you emptied it out and the box was open at both ends so it had, like, the two little flaps and the one big flap and then, if you took that box and put a little pressure on it so it leaned over to one side—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, that—I gave—I—I did that, and then I build a cardboard model of that, and then I gave that to Jeff Syman, my stretcher-maker, and then he made this three-dimensional object that had a back that's hung against the wall and a front that was nine inches out in front of it, and then it had the three flaps—and so, then I did a painting in the shape of this box. And the product was called Blue Marrow Tea. Marrow is sometimes what the English call zucchini.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: You lived in England, so you probably know that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: I don't know if I [inaudible] that, but—[laughs].

JANE HAMMOND: Well, anyhow, so the picture was a blooming zucchini, like the flower. Looks like a squash blossom, if you've ever had that Italian dish where they [inaudible].

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, okay. And, um, and then above it, it said Blue [00:10:00] Marrow Tea. And then, above that, there was, like, a logo of these twining serpents. And I think there was supermarket scanning, scan bars below. And then, there were these claims on the side, like, uh, "Keeps you young and healthy"—I mean, I could get a slide of it. You know, the claims are more interesting than what I can remember. And then, the last one was, "Prevents furring." So, it was a fictional herbal tea that—that did these various things for you. Sort of like slippery elm or something—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —like that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: But they were—the claims were a little bit grandiose. They were sort of, like, the way the 19th century medical claims are. And so, that was—I mean, it's—it was like this all along the way. I—I—I would have to say I probably did that title last because I didn't like it for a long time.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: And it didn't say anything to me and it seemed kind of stupid. But then, in the end, I really liked the painting.

JUDITH RICHARDS: You know, concurrently, um, in the late '90s, some of the works on paper you did were—I presume it's your titles. Were—are very similar in a way. *The Crush of Circumstance*. That's your own title, right?

JANE HAMMOND: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JUDITH RICHARDS: And, uh, *Chalk Talk*, I think, just picking out random titles—

JANE HAMMOND: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JUDITH RICHARDS: —that are very poetic and—um, did those Ashbery titles provoke you to make these kind of—kind of equivalent titles on the—your own works on paper?

JANE HAMMOND: I don't think so. I think that—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And did those—did you actually end up titling those works on paper before you made the—the work—

JANE HAMMOND: So—so—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —like the Ashbery?

JANE HAMMOND: —oh, no, no—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Or no?

JANE HAMMOND: After.

JUDITH RICHARDS: After.

JANE HAMMOND: Always after—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay.

JANE HAMMOND: —pretty much. Yeah, always after, I would say, with very rare exceptions. But I've always liked titles and thought about them, and I [00:12:00] always—like, I used to have a collection of just sentences, you know, that would be, like, oh, I was reading about this woman and she had a boa constrictor, and she kept these dead mice in her freezer. And then, she'd, like, pop them in the microwave—and just the sense of how it was described, about how she got her boa constrictor, I just—it was in, like, *Time* magazine and I'd, like, cut it out with a razor blade and I had it in my little—so, *Chalk Talk* is actually—I have a bunch of books. I—and they're all called *Chalk Talk*. And they were, like—I think it was from Chautauqua, I'm not really sure. But they were like these—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh!

JANE HAMMOND: —Bible lessons, and the—the Sunday school tea—I don't know who did it, but, like, someone would be talking, and then they would be drawing on a blackboard. So, that's kind of where that idea—I probably saw the *Chalk Talk* books in an antique store or a flea market or something, and then I thought it was a funny—a funny conflation. You know, it's kind of—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And I—it's an image of chalkboards.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, and those—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: —that—that work on paper is actually chalkboard paint—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —on gessoed—thick paper. And then, it's painted with white gouache and chalk. So, it has the feeling up close of a chalkboard, and the concept in that drawing is: every drawing has a pentimenti of another drawing. So, there's, like, six different things or eight different things, but beneath A is B, and beneath B is C, and beneath D is F, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative], hmm. That's from—year 2000.

JANE HAMMOND: And they're so erased that you wouldn't be able identify the first layer. But you can identify it, 'cause you have the clue somewhere else [00:14:00] from the second layer.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And this is, if I remember correctly—this a little different, because each of these has its own little window map.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, it ha—yes, yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: The window in the [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: It has a border, as if that's the wood part that would hold an old-fashioned slate, and then it's window-matted inside.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, so they're objects and drawings at the same time, kind of.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right. So, as you came to the end of the titles, with some trepidation, um, and excitement, um, how—can you recall how you found the next way of proceeding with your paintings?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, what happened was, um, *Prevents Furring* lead me to that box, and that lead me to a small—the—for the next few years, I did several small projects. Small compared to doing something for eight years.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And the first one was I made a group of paintings called *Shanghai Costumes*. And the conceit of that project was a fictional company in Shanghai that made costumes, masks, and accessories. And all the paintings were box-shaped. So, it came right out of *Prevents Furring*. If I hadn't had the *Prevents Furring* title, I wouldn't have made the *Shanghai Costumes* paintings. And they all had this three-dimensional—you know, they were all three-dimensional birch plywood stretchers in the shapes of open boxes. And they all had a product, which was, quote, the image of the painting. And then, they had supermarket scanning, which I thought was kind of fun, 'cause it was, like, abstract painting. And they had a logo, and then they had a text—only the text was in Chinese, because the costume company, Shanghai Costumes—my concept was that it was over in China. So, I made, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Do you remember what years that was?

JANE HAMMOND: No, but I could get—

JUDITH RICHARDS: There's—there's something called [00:16:00] *Charades*. Was that before or after? *Charades* is 2002—

JANE HAMMOND: It was before.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —to 2003.

JANE HAMMOND: I think it was before.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, 2001. So, maybe the Ashbery did end in 2001.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah. I can answer these questions.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I'm quite sure the first thing I did was *Shanghai Costumes*, because the *Prevents Furring*, I just contin—I made more boxes. I thought the box was really fun, and it gave you, like, a very logical place to have language and pictures—and then, because there was a logo and a product, you could have two different kinds of pictures, one more kind of schematic than the other.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And then, I liked the idea that, like, the thing you were really making of, you couldn't see. It was supposedly inside the box. And then, my brother's wife was Chinese, born and raised in China. So, she did the texts for me, and she had all the, you know, the stuff on the computer so you can convert to Chinese.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, um, I would say I want to say, "Hawaiian dancing costume, real grass skirt," uh, "plastic lei, flowers included." And then, she would translate that to Chinese for me. So, the first one was, like, a—two boxes. They were—they were pretty big. I'm gesturing like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —five-feet tall or something.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: And one was a clown and one was a hula dancer. And then, there would be—

JUDITH RICHARDS: How three-dimensional are these?

JANE HAMMOND: They're, like, 10—10 inches—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm.

JANE HAMMOND: —thick or something like that. And—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —like, where the flaps are, you could stick your hand down inside—like, it's painted—the insides of the flaps are painted, and then you could, like, reach your hand around into the inside. It's not entirely

hollow. There's a bottom, the top, and then—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know? So, anyhow, there were—there were a couple of sets. There was one [00:18:00] big three-part set that had a Chinese costume, an American Indian native corn-dancing costume and, uh, I think another kind of clown. And then, there was, like, a box that had, like, rubber phrenology head and a bear costume and a Tibetan dancer, like, real—very heterogeneous. Then, there was another one that was all Native American masks, which—I took elements from those Bureau of Indian Affairs books, but I actually kind of collaged them back and forth a little bit. And then, the final one—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, I have a date here. *Shanghai Costumes* is 2003.

JANE HAMMOND: Okay, so maybe actually Ashbery [inaudible].

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, actually, *Shanghai Costumes, Number Three* is 2003.

JANE HAMMOND: Okay, so that does—number one—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Could have been 2001—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —2002, yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So, the last one was called Chinese charms, and it was 14 little paintings about this big. And each—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Like, 10-by-12, you're—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, or 12-by-14. Quite small.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And, um, and each one was an element, you know, like an item from my lexicon, but made into a charm of itself. So, there was, like, a spider, but with that little thing that makes it a charm.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: A spider, a knot, uh, Frida Kahlo, a bird, a pack of cigarettes. And then, in Chinese, on the left-hand side, it said silver spider, silver snowman, you know, like that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did anyone ever want to actually make that, especially in China? [Laughs.]

JANE HAMMOND: Well, you know, what's funny, is—

JUDITH RICHARDS: As a bracelet?

JANE HAMMOND: —I sold—well, the short answer is no. But I sold about half of those paintings, roughly—I can't remember exactly. And then, I was on this—

JUDITH RICHARDS: There were 12 of them, you said?

JANE HAMMOND: No.

JUDITH RICHARDS: You said—no.

JANE HAMMOND: There were fewer than that. Maybe—

JUDITH RICHARDS: The small ones.

JANE HAMMOND: —there were nine or 10, something—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, okay.

JANE HAMMOND: Something like that, [00:20:00] at most. This happens to me a lot, like, I move onto something else, and then people don't know about the earlier thing. But just within the last two—I was in a—a print show in China last year that went to, like, five Chinese museums in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and whatever. And

then, the curator who did that show wrote me about being in this biennial in Beijing, and what would I like to submit? So, I submitted a bunch of *Dazzle* paintings, and then, all of a sudden, that—like, three weeks later, I thought *Shanghai Costumes*. I think Craig might have thought of it. So, we wrote him and sent him the *Shanghai Costumes*. Then, he wrote back and said, "I think you're in the shows." It's a—it's kind of a flaky response I've gotten so far. But anyhow—and I'm actually talking to someone else about possibly showing them in China. So, the second half of that collaboration has kind of been in storage for the last six years or nine years, depending on how correct—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: But I kind of feel now like Shanghai is a place where people are showing art, and it's, like, could you have—could any other American artist have anything more perfect for that, you know? It breaks my heart my sister-in-law isn't around to see it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, some of them you sold and some of them you still have.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, to make a long story short.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, even if they were shown in Hong Kong, it still would have lots of—

JANE HAMMOND: Oh, yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —viewers from Shanghai.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. So—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, as you—this is—this series is going on, we're getting close to 2004, when you began *Fallen*.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Could get right into that unless there's something else that you'd like to—

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I could also finish up with the painting, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Sure.

JANE HAMMOND: —then I made a second [00:22:00] series of paintings that were rebuses. I—it probably came from seeing those plates in John Ashbery's kitchen, and it also comes from the fact that I'm fascinated by the interaction between pictures and language. And in a rebus, you use a picture as if it's language. You use it not for what it is, but for what it's—the aurality of what its name is. So, then something which is a rebus in English is not a rebus in German.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And there's just all kinds of games that you can play that point to what the nature of pictures is, what the nature of language is, how meaning is constructed. You can use—you can use pictures to make a word, where the pictures are extremely antithetical to what the word means or where—what the word means and what the picture signifies—have a funny or amusing relationship to each other. So, it was something I always wanted to do.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: And then, I felt like once I finished the Ashbery collaboration I was kind of free to move onto it. So, I made four paintings that were in the shape of a three-ring notebook and that are very physical.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: And each one of them looked like an open notebook with two pages.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And then, on each page, there was a rebus. So, the other thing that was distinctive about the paintings was that they were organized visually the way books and writing is organized. They read from left to

right, from top to bottom.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And if you looked at them all as a field, you couldn't read them. So, you had to read them like a book, not a painting. And they had funny titles, which were—'cause you don't—if the whole left page spells something as a rebus and the whole right page spells something as a rebus, you want people [00:24:00] to work—you don't want to say what it is. It's, like, giving the answer to the crossword puzzle, it's not fun to do it anymore, you know? So, I made the titles—like, one of the titles is *Some Species Like It Hot.* So—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Which is from 2002.

JANE HAMMOND: Right. So, *Some Species Like It Hot*. Once you—or possibly even halfway through putting the rebus together, you realize it's a—it's a conflation of *Some Like It Hot* and *Origin of the Species*, because the two people are Charles Darwin and Marilyn Monroe. But you have to—and instead of being efficient about making the rebus, I've gone, like—like I'm deliberately inefficient, in some cases. Like, I'll draw—I'll—where you—maybe you could, I don't know, maybe you could do one picture to say it, but I've made—I've gone kind of around Robin Hood's barn with it to be fun and deliberately circuitous. So, I made those four, and then I started on the *Charades* painting, and then I came back and made two more. So, there are six of those big notebook rebuses.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: And they're all famous people. So, they're, like, Marcel—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —Duchamp, Dolly Parton, Dizzy Gillespie, Bridget Bardot.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What was the process of selecting those—

JANE HAMMOND: I had to select—I wanted them to be celebrities, then I—they had to be celebrities whose names could be broken down into visual parts. Like, Bardot became—like, the D-O-T was a dot in a dot pattern, and in a connect-the-dots drawing of Bugs Bunny. So, then you have Bugs Bunny eating a big carrot, half done—half painted in and half in dots. And then, you're pointing at one dot. So, it's kind of funny, because you're not using the Bugs Bunny at all. You're just using one dot, one 40th of the [00:26:00] image. And then, of course, it's pronounced "doe" not "dot", so it's, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. [Laughs.]

JANE HAMMOND: —you have to kind of struggle through it. Um, but—and then, the "bar" part was a bear—just minus the E. So, you have to—some people, you couldn't do it because, I don't know—like, maybe somebody with an incredibly long name would be difficult, or—

JUDITH RICHARDS: I see.

JANE HAMMOND: —you have to—it—the words have to be close to pictures, or somewhat close.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Harry Houdini, it's a house, dice, and a martini for Houdini. So, it's, like, the Hou is from the house—

JUDITH RICHARDS: He'd be good at that.

JANE HAMMOND: —the D is from the dice, the -ini's from's the mart—you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So, anyhow—so, then I made a bunch of little paintings that were all the names of—that were rebuses in a different way, each one—one of them was a famous person. So, like, Hart Crane is one. So, it's a painting—I did—I did them in a really loose style, and they're really small paintings, and I bought, like, 75 small canvases. I had no canvas—

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you're—when you're saying small—and your arms look like it was about 20—

JANE HAMMOND: No, it was, like, 37-by—

JUDITH RICHARDS: By 24?

JANE HAMMOND: —28.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh.

JANE HAMMOND: For me, that's really small.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, I didn't plan which image goes on which painting. I worked on a whole lot of them at once. I made these really sloppy grounds. And then, I just figured out, like, I—I started thinking of all these names.

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you say sloppy—when I remember looking at them, I was wondering if that was—you're using an expressionistic approach to painting, or you're saying—you're calling it sloppy? Just a quick, purposeful, um, covering of the surface?

JANE HAMMOND: Those—there's a lot of convergence between those two ideas in my mind—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Sure.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know? But anyhow, um—so, they were people like David Letterman or, um—a lot of them ended up to be [00:28:00] entertainers, like Meadowlark Lemon or Blind Lemon Jefferson, because a lot of those people have made-up names, and those names often have a kind of image-y quality about them. Um, so I just chose people that I could think of—you know, Alice Waters, I had, like, two glasses of water, and then I used *Alice in Wonderland*, or, um, Felix Frankfurter, I had Felix the Cat and a hot dog, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Those are easy. [Laughs.]

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. Well, the funny thing was, they're easy to you and me, right? But, like, the funny thing was, I had them in the studio, and I had this group of Swedish people coming. So, I didn't completely hide them, but I moved them all down to the far end of the studio, and I really underplayed them, and I had some things in front of them, et cetera, because I just thought these are complicated enough. And you get this right away, but, like, some people don't even know what a rebus is.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And some people want to know exactly what the rules are, where I'm saying, like, well, try it six different ways. By the time you try it six different ways, something will work and you'll figure it out, you know? So, I thought—but I never would go through this with Swedish people. A, they don't know who a lot of these people are, like Patti Page? I mean—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: —she's, like, obscure. And B, they don't speak the language, you know, blah-blah-blah. But anyhow, someone discovered them and they were, like, "What is this? What is this? What is that?" And, of course, they actually know a lot about American culture. They knew who Felix Frankfurter was, and, you know, Blind Lemon Jefferson was another one, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Really, they knew that?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, they're really up on—they're really educated, the Swedes, and they're really up on American culture and they're really up on jazz and—I don't know.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, there's a history of—[00:30:00] of jazz and blues there.

JANE HAMMOND: So, anyhow, I ended up showing those *Charades* paintings in Sweden. It was the nuttiest thing. And most of them are over there.

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's—that's really interesting.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. I would've never thought it. I went out of my way to—to not cultivate that, but it just kind of—fate intervened.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Huh.

JANE HAMMOND: So, then, the only other thing I did before I didn't paint so much for a little while was I made a really big painting for the Whitney—I had a show at the Whitney Philip Morris. I had that show right after September 11th, because—2001, because I remember—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —that I made a really, really giant stretcher in 18 parts, and it was 24 feet long and something like 16 feet high, and it had—it was, like, a two-part theater set with a whole bunch of little ancillary pieces that kind of hung off of it. And I remember that when September 11th happened, Jeff had just delivered the stretcher, and I had hung on the wall. And I had the blank stretcher in my studio and I had the Whitney show in, I think, February.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. February—

JANE HAMMOND: Of 2002.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Two.

JANE HAMMOND: So, it was really a lucky thing, because everyone was super discombobulated.

JUDITH RICHARDS: I was going to ask you, as a separate question, about the impact of—since you're down here in SoHo—yeah, the impact of 9/11 on you.

JANE HAMMOND: I was super discombobulated in a lot of ways. I was so glad I didn't have to think of the painting. I had already thought of the painting, I had already made a paper collage for the painting, because the Whitney needed an image for their invitation. I had already made the patterns for all the parts that Jeff made, which meant I had an image in mind for each one of the parts. That's how I knew the shape and the size. And really, I just had to make the painting. [00:32:00] And I was so incredibly grateful that I had a project, and I just threw myself into it, in a huge way. Oh—

JUDITH RICHARDS: When—

JANE HAMMOND: September 11th also plays in the "butterfly maps" and *Fallen*.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm. When—after September 11th, were you out of your studio for a while?

JANE HAMMOND: The funny thing was—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Or could you stay here all the time?

JANE HAMMOND: —I had a—I had the opening show at Galerie LeLong in Chelsea. They had been in the 50s, on 57th Street—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: They moved to Chelsea and they opened on September 29th, 2001, with my show. So, we were quite discombobulated—not as discombobulated as the people that lived South of Canal.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: You know? They really had a tragedy on their hands. But we had to show ID to get into our neighborhood. The police had it cordoned off. We had, well—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Certainly a lot of soot.

JANE HAMMOND: We had—the story I always tell is, like, September 11th was a beautiful day. I'm sure you remember.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: And the wind was blowing over to Brooklyn. So, even though we could see the thing out of our window, 'cause we're only, like, 12 blocks away or 14 blocks away—and we could see pieces of debris in the air, kind of glinting and stuff. And when it fell over, that piece that you saw on the cover of *Time* magazine that was the shard that was, like, kind of akimbo—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: —that fell into our view, 'cause we have this little view right here, where—it's hard right now, 'cause that tree is blooming, but we could actually see, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —16 blocks, particularly before they built this new thing that's going up right now.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: There's a little sliver where you can see way down.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So, we—so, that [00:34:00] shard moved into the sliver, do you follow?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: So—so, what happened for us was it was really a nice day here, and it continued to be a nice day. And it was also hot, and we had our windows open. And on the day of September 11th, at two in the afternoon, I had a lot of—you know, in the summer, I really have a lot of flowers on—um, a migrating group of monarch butterflies, about 30 of them, landed on my windowsill. They were right here, in the central window, and they were all flitting around out there.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Wow.

JANE HAMMOND: It's really a crazy thing, because since—before nor after have I ever had—like, last year, maybe I had one monarch. I've never seen more than two butterflies at once since then. It's very rare to even get a butterfly in New York or see a butterfly—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Abs—absolutely.

JANE HAMMOND: —in New York.

JUDITH RICHARDS: A little white one in Central Park, maybe.

JANE HAMMOND: Exactly. So, I think what it is—if you want a non-spiritual explanation, I think what it is, is that in the East of the United States, from Ontario south, east of the Mississippi, all those monarchs migrate to a spot west of Mexico City.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: And they all arrive there around Day of the Dead. So, let's say they're coming from Ontario. It kind of makes sense that they're migrating about through here, about then.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: How they end up right here, right then, I don't really know. But—so, uh, that actually is where—is where the "butterfly maps" come from, in a way, because the war started, [00:36:00] and Craig and I are news junkies, and—we tape the news and we watch it—in those days, we were watching it at, like, 11 o'clock at night. Now we watch it earlier. But in any case, I would frequently have dreams that related to the news—I think just 'cause I went on—to bed on top of the news. And so, I had a dream that kind of braided together early footage of the war, which is very aerial and often cartographic with the monarch butterfly experience from whatever many months before.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And the dream was a map of the Middle East covered with butterflies.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm.

JANE HAMMOND: And because I had done this print called *Scrapbook* at ULAE, I kind of knew that you could scan and digitally print—particularly flat things really well, 'cause I had done a butterfly and a dried flower and a glove.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, you're developing this butterfly map series at the same time as you were thinking about *Fallen*?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I got the idea for *Fallen*—

JUDITH RICHARDS: They're both—I find both dated 2004.

JANE HAMMOND: I got the idea for both of those pieces in the same week. And if you think about them, they have a lot in common. They have aeriality, cyclicality, death, the war—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Nature.

JANE HAMMOND: —nature. I mean, they really, you know, have a lot.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Beauty.

JANE HAMMOND: Beauty, sadness. So, anyhow, I'm kind of wandering around. But, yeah, *Fallen* I did—*Fallen* was—so, that was a dream, and *Fallen* was a dream, too.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: And *Fallen* came to me in Oct—on October 11th of 2004, because it was fall. You know how sometimes, one of the things that happens in your dream is, like, you dream it's raining because it is raining, you know? Um, so, it was fall, and we were actually going up to upstate Connecticut, [00:38:00] which is—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You know, I forgot to ask, when did Craig come into your life? Obviously, you're saying we. I mean—

JANE HAMMOND: Craig came—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —Craig, right? [Laughs.]

JANE HAMMOND: —into my life—yes. Craig came into my life—I had a show at Luhring Augustine in 1997 in, like, February or March. And Craig and I started seeing each other that September, which was 1996. Now, we actually met 30 years before—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You talked about that.

JANE HAMMOND: —when he was at Amherst and I was—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —at Mount Holyoke. Um, so—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And you've lived here—just a little day-to-day sidetrack here—you've lived here on Grand Street how long?

JANE HAMMOND: I think we bought this place in 2000. It was right be—we—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, and then before that you lived on Spring for the 30—

JANE HAMMOND: I lived at Spring between Wooster and West Broadway in a month-to-month rental for 23 years.

JUDITH RICHARDS: We talked about that last time, right.

JANE HAMMOND: And Craig lived on the Upper West Side, and we were spending an hour getting together. And so—and he was appalled that I didn't own any property, because I had a 94-year-old landlord and my place was a wreck. And at the end, I got rats, and they were really a problem. And I couldn't get anybody to help me. I couldn't get my landlord's handyman to help me, I couldn't get my landlord to help me. I called an exterminator and this guy came over in a, like, tweed sport coat with an ascot. I was, like, "You're the exterminator?" [Laughs.] He's, like, this Eurotrash guy that was on his way to some club or something. I mean, it was just, like—it was a mess. Laila Twigg-Smith had died and she left me—no, this was before she died. She gave me a set of—

JUDITH RICHARDS: The collector from Hawaii.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, she gave me a set of Pratesi sheets. I mean, they were castoffs, but they were gorgeous and they were—and I'd never really slept on good sheets and it was, like, amazing. And then, the next minute, I had rats running on top of my bed, you know? There was, like, rat shit on the Pratesi sheets. So, [00:40:00] I was so bonded to that place, 'cause I'd made so much art there and I'd lived there—like, I was single for seven years before I met Craig. So, I mean, I was just, like, home all the time. Suzanne McClelland was joking to me the other day about how, like, in the old days, she was, like, "Nobody could get you out of your house. Like, you could come over and visit you and you would make a sandwich. But, like, if I would say let's go out, you wouldn't go."

So, Craig was, like, "You should own something."

JUDITH RICHARDS: How did you meet?

JANE HAMMOND: We met through a mutual friend who also went to Amherst, who got a kind of—we all got together.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, he was living on the Upper West Side, and—

JANE HAMMOND: He was living on the Upper West Side, in an apartment that he owned. He had always owned an apartment. He'd owned three or four by—you know, in sequence. And, um, so, at one point, he kind of explained—I mean, you know, even though I went to Mount Holyoke, I didn't really understand how a mortgage worked. And when I first came here, I somehow thought if it cost $30,000, which is what a loft cost then, you had to have $30,000, you know? I mean, I just didn't really get it. And my parents aren't very sophisticated about money, even though they always owned their house, or they had owned it for a long time. They weren't saying to me, "Buy something." And Craig was, like, "You put your rent together with my mortgage payment that makes X. We could go out and buy Y," do you know what I mean? He was, like—and he just dra—he was dragging me into it. And then, when I got the rats, it severed my emotional connection to the place. I was afraid to sleep there. And I remember my landlord's handyman said to me, "How do you know it's a rat and not a mouse?" And I said to him, "The same way you know it's a Great Dane and not a Jack Russell," you know? I mean, it was, like—I remember, even Craig [00:42:00] was a little skeptical at first about if I had rats. And then, there was a rat on the bathroom floor, and I said to him, "Go in the bathroom. I want you to see." And then he went in the bathroom and it wasn't dead. It was, like, moving. You know, it was poisoned, so—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh!

JANE HAMMOND: And it made me—it was, like, this big.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, my God.

JANE HAMMOND: So, from that point forward, I did not want to sleep at my own house. I mean, it's the best—it really helped me become a homeowner. So, then I was working at my studio, 'cause I figured they weren't going to attack me in the daytime.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And then, I was commuting up to Craig's house on West 94th Street and sleeping there. So, after a few months of that—that's, like, an hour each way, right? So, I was, like, "Okay, about this real estate idea." And we were lucky, because it was the last window when we could have afforded a space big enough for me to work in. I mean, it would have been a lot more ex—I think prohibitively expen—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You said that was—

JANE HAMMOND: It was 2000.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So, we bought this place.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you want to continue to be in SoHo? Is that the goal when you were looking?

JANE HAMMOND: I actually thought it would be—no, I remember saying to this real estate agent—"I think if you're going to move, you should move to a new neighborhood." And Craig had lived on the Upper East Side, on the Upper West Side, and now—you know, he's lived in three distinct New York neighborhoods. So, I said, like, "I like a gas station on East Houston Street"—or I had all these ideas. Like, a little supermarket—but, in the end, there's a reason artists came here, 'cause there are these big, unobstructed spaces. And I couldn't find a good space to work in except here. I mean, maybe I could've, but I didn't.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: You know? And then we found this place and it seemed good to me.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, yeah. So, we'll go—that was a [00:44:00] good detour, but let's go back, then, to 2004, at this moment when you had the idea for both of these important bodies of work.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, the *Fallen* idea came to me completely in a dream, and Craig even joked that, because we had made a commitment to go visit our friend Arden [ph], who lives in upstate Connecticut—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What's his—

JANE HAMMOND: His name is Arden Mason [ph]—that I was cooking—I got—I got up in the morning and I said I had this dream. And it's like I'm walking through the woods and there's, like, a thick bed of leaves and I'm looking down on it. You know, like, that's the aerial perspective again. And then, I get up closer to it, and the leaves are really bright and beautiful and specific and particular. And then, there's the name of—and then, there's a name on each leaf. I just knew in the dream what the name denoted, you know, the way dreams are. And, um, and I remember telling Craig the dream and he said, "Ah, you're just cooking up a project to do at Arden's house," [laughs] you know? Like, "'Cause you're a workaholic, you know, you want to have"—or something. He made a joke about that. And, um—and so, then—and so, a lot of times, I get ideas in dreams. And then, I—I have to kind of assess, like, is this a good idea? You know, just because it comes to you in a dream doesn't—I kind of give it extra points for that. But I—it—I don't give it total points, you know? So—and I—I just kind of thought of it—I thought, you know—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What—what is it about the idea in the dream that makes it worth more points compared to an idea that you come up with in your waking consciousness?

JANE HAMMOND: Because I think in the dream, it's actually tapping into your [00:46:00] intellectual mindset, your ideas about art history, your emotional inner—it's synthesizing things from different periods in your life, with current events, with something you—so, it's kind of a—I know—I don't want to use the word pure, but it's just, like—I think sometimes the things I don't think too much about are the best things.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Is there a sense that there—it isn't censored before [inaudible]?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, something I—I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Self-censored.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah, that's—so, then I thought, well, this seems really great. But you know what? I'll think about this for, like, a couple of weeks and just kind of cogitate on it. And, like, when I described it to Craig, he wasn't blown away, [laughs] you know? As is often the case. [Laughs.] But I'm quite stubborn, so I don't really—you know, I've embarked on many things from that point of view. So, I thought about it for a couple of weeks. I also can see, the more I thought about it, that it was going to be a big amount of work. So, it's, like, you don't want to get into the—that kind of thing, make 700 leaves and then discover it's a cliché.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, at that point, it was 700—

JANE HAMMOND: Well, at that point, it was at least a—the first time I showed it, which was at Galerie LeLong in March of 2005, it had 14—it had, I think, 1,565 leaves in it. So, let's assume that in the previous October, there were, like, 1,100 casualties—I'm just guessing. You'd have to check that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And at the very beginning, you made—you established criteria, if I—if I'm remembering correctly, from something I read—that you would only include those soldiers who had died in battle. No.

JANE HAMMOND: I know what you read. You read Faye Hirsch's article in *Art in America*, which is a very nice article. In the subsequent *Art in America*, I wrote a letter to the editor.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Ah.

JANE HAMMOND: Uh, [00:48:00] it's—it's an inclusive number, and it's the same as the DoD [Department of Defense] number, because even if you go to—there's an independent guide called iCasualties.org. There is no controversy about the number of people that have—American soldiers that have died in the war in Iraq. In other words, unlike some other wars, where there was, where they tried hard to keep the numbers down, you—there's nobody out there who's coming up with a—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So, could die in the hospital two months later from wounds.

JANE HAMMOND: You can die of a heart attack in the plane on the way over. You can die—many people die in Germany or back here or two years later. You can die of suicide, you can die of murder.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, that's good. When I read that, I thought, hmm, that's—that's strange. What—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —why would there be—

JANE HAMMOND: I know—no, Faye is a very smart person. I don't know how she got that so wrong. But I called

her. I said, "Faye, I have to—I'm going to have to write this."

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: You know, 'cause she's a friend, too. I didn't want to make her look stupid. But, like, that's very politically incorrect, in my—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Absolutely.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I wrote this letter. And, like, when I had the show at FLAG, I said, you know, "Let's put this article out here, but you've got to put my letter out, too," you know? So, um—so, there's no individual polit—I mean, there's no individual politics on my part about the number of leaves. It's the same number—there's nobody that's—that, like, right now, the number is 4,487. There is no one with the thesis that it's really 4,512 running around in America. Not on the far left, not on the far right, no one.

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's comforting.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And the piece is done—

JANE HAMMOND: It's partially, like, the internet—the soldiers are all—you can't—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —lie about this stuff very eas—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, the piece is done and yet it isn't, because someone could die, still, from wounds—

JANE HAMMOND: Well—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —or have you decided it's—

JANE HAMMOND: —that's an—you're actually the first person to ask that question. [00:50:00] I'm now in the—in my dealings now, I'm saying 2004 to 2012, because I'm only 32 leaves behind right now, and I'm making those 32 leaves this spring. And they really have drawn every soldier out. And I don't have contractors in my piece.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Good.

JANE HAMMOND: But you're right. A soldier could die from wounds sustained in Iraq now. And if I made his leaf in 2013, I'd have to change the dates. But it seems reasonable to now say 2012. And if you still say ongoing now, it confuses people, 'cause—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —then they immediately say, "Well, the war is over, so what's"—you know what I mean?

JUDITH RICHARDS: It undermines the credibility, yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. So, going back to when you first conceived it, um, can you describe, perhaps briefly, the method, that's rather complicated I think, that you used to create each leaf?

JANE HAMMOND: Okay, first, I gather real leaves.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And I've gathered those real leaves in, like, Hawaii, Washington State, California, Colorado, Texas, Michigan, Mississippi, Alabama, Maine—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And they're all leaves that have fallen on the ground.

JANE HAMMOND: Actually, to be truthful, I look for—I look for leaves I'm drawn to. Now, some people have asked me what my criteria is. I—it's hard for me to say, but I look—I'll take one leaf off a tree, you know? Most of the time, I'm actually not picking 'em up off the ground, I'm taking them off the tree, because by the time they hit the ground, they're a little more dead and sometimes they're a little walked on, and they're just, like—I don't want them to be ratty.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: But I have certainly picked plenty up off the ground, too.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: Um, [00:52:00] and I've picked them in all different places. Like, Craig and I went to Bedford, New York, one time, and a friend—we were visiting a friend who has a place in Pound Ridge. We were driving around in a driving rain and he would, like, kind of park and turn around, and then I'd—I'd see a tree, and I'd say, "Let's go over here." And then, he would kind of turn the car around while I would get some leaves. And then, it was, like—it became very heavy rain. So, I backed myself against this big building. I think it was a hotel. And I had just gathered these really large sycamore leaves. In fact, several people at several venues have said to me, "Oh, you scaled them up on the computer, right?" But I backed myself into this plaque, and I turned around and read the plaque and it said, "This is thought to be the oldest sycamore tree in America. It was"—so-and-so recognized it during the Revoluti—you know, it's, like, a 200-year-old tree that I just kind of stumbled on in this rainstorm. So, um, collecting leaves is—has been interesting, you know? It's turned me on to trees more, and Craig found this website for Central Park where—it's the trees of Central Park. You can type in any kind of tree you want, and then it shows you where that tree is growing—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, how fantastic.

JANE HAMMOND: —in the park. So, we went up there one day and we went—like, we looked for the Osage orange and we looked for the, you know, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Were you—were you traveling around collecting leaves in different sites because you wanted to use a leaf from Tennessee for a man who—

JANE HAMMOND: No.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —from Tennessee—

JANE HAMMOND: I've never done that with all—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Was it—was because it represented the nation better?

JANE HAMMOND: I wanted—yeah, kind of. I wanted some diversity, because the nation is so diverse and big, it seemed strange, after a while—at first, all 1,500 leaves were from northwestern Connecticut, 'cause that's where I got the idea and that's [00:54:00] where I began the piece. And also, what happened was, in those years, in—in a certain number of years, I had, like, 15 one-person museum shows, because I had—the *Paperwork* show went to six or seven places. And then, I had three photography shows. And then, *Fallen* traveled around, and then somehow, I had a lot of visiting artist things, maybe 'cause I had the traveling shows, I'm not really sure. So, I never flew someplace to gather leaves. I'm sort of too frugal for that, or—I don't know what. Too practical. But I happened to be asked to come to Waco, Texas, to come to Jackson, Mississippi, to—you know, like, all these—great array of places. Colorado was one. I was visiting Bud and Barbara. Michigan, I have a dealer there, whatever.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, everywhere I went, I gathered leaves. And—and many times, I'll look at the piece and I'll think, oh, this is the St. Louis Zoo, this is the Mount—waterfall at Mount Holyoke. This is Deborah Butterfield's backyard in Hawaii, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, it—was it a lot of trial and error and experimentation to figure out how to make the leaves?

JANE HAMMOND: It was a fair amount of trial and error, but not that much. In other words, first I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, you color Xeroxed.

JANE HAMMOND: —gathered the leaves, and then I scanned them in the computer, front and back.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh.

JANE HAMMOND: And then, I thought I would just print them out. So, that part, seemingly, wouldn't be complicated. Now—

JUDITH RICHARDS: On special paper?

JANE HAMMOND: On double-sided archival paper. Now, it turned out the interim between scanning them and printing them was complicated. It's hard to say this in words, but leaves are not bilaterally symmetrical. So, it's hard to get the back of the leaf to fall squarely on the back of the front of the leaf, because they're not the mirror image of each other. And the easiest way to think of that is, like, if you have a maple whose stem goes like that, when you flip it over, it's going like [00:56:00] that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: This is barely on the back of that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Huh.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I had to hire people to address this who have a certain level of Photoshop skills. And I had to go through a number of people before I got that person. But eventually, this woman Vanessa Viola, who I had worked—I had made *Tabula Rosa* with her—you know, my print—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —that's the naked body with a—and Vanessa kind of figured out how to do it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Tell me her name again?

JANE HAMMOND: Vanessa Viola, V-i-o-l-a.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And for some leaves, it's as short as 10 minutes, and for some leaves it's, like, 45 minutes or an hour. Like, a—like a sumac leaf that's compound, she has to take that whole thing apart and, you know, it's complicated. So, that was a problem I didn't foresee. But, you know, if you don't—I have a tendency to just impulsively jump into things. But in some ways, I think it's good, 'cause it gets me into the thing, and then I have to solve the problems.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: If I tried to solve the problems from the outside, I don't think I'd do anything.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, they're digitally scanned, and then they're printed—

JANE HAMMOND: Then they're printed.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —and then, the two sides are join—are—

JANE HAMMOND: They're digitally scanned, and then—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —corrected.

JANE HAMMOND: —in cyberspace, the two sides are joined. Then they're digitally printed. Then, they're—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Two-sided printed.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, two-sided printed, front and back. And then, they are, um, cut out with either an X-Acto knife or manicure scissors. That job can be very easy if it's a simple ovate leaf, like a milkweed or something. And then, if it's, like, a Norway maple, [they laugh] it can—like, it can be—like, you could practically go blind doing it. And the stem is cut out, too. So, then the side of the leaf is white paper glaring at you. And if you've cut out the whole—

JUDITH RICHARDS: The edge, you mean.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, the edges. And then, if you've cut any holes out—a lot of the leaves have holes—um, [00:58:00] the edges of the hole are white, too. So, then you have to mix paint, and I make these things that are like a baby Q-tip with toothpicks and a little bit of cotton. And then, I paint the edges to just go away.

JUDITH RICHARDS: With water-based paint?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, with, uh, watered down acrylic paint, or possibly gouache—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —with a little matte medium in it. And then, um, then you have a situation where the leaf is pretty close to what it'll finally be, but the stem is too weak and too thin and too planar. So, I make a little clothesline in the studio and I fill a paper cup with matte medium, and I hang the leaves on the clothesline. I'll do, like, 40 at once, let's say, 'cause I have the clothesline going all over the place. And then, I'll take the cup up the length of each stem, and then release and then lower it. So, the stem is coated in matte medium, and it's going to drip down on the floor. And I do that twice, or—no, I think I do that three times. And then, I go back with the cup, and I just put the tip of the—I just raise the cup over the tip of the stem, and it—it works perfectly to make—especially if the matte medium is a little thickened by then. It makes that bulbous tip that a leaf has—there are just these things that you don't really notice, but you notice when they're not right, you know? Just looks fake and wrong, so then you kind of figure out—and then—and then, I paint the stem before I—I paint the stem quickly before I bulk it up with the matte medium. And then, after I bulk it up with the matte medium, I paint it again so it looks like the stem of that leaf. And then, there's a little intermediary step, which is we noticed, after the piece got out in the world, that the archival problem it had was the heavy stem [01:00:00] wanted to separate from the light leaf. Like, that was a weak point, where the stem, which is very narrow, let's say—and in the case of a maple leaf, that was, like, a—a thing that wanted to break.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: So, Shelley and I devised this system where we take fiberglass strand, and we put strands of fiberglass in Jade glue, and we bridge the—we run from the leaf down to the stem, like, about an inch, and then we paint it—we repaint it over that. And then, no—since we've done that, not a single fiberglass leaf has broken. So, in the first few incarnations of showing the piece, they would return the broken leaves to me and then we'd fiberglass them. Meanwhile, we were fiberglassing the new leaves. So, over time, all the leaves got fiberglassed. And then, um, then what you have at that point is a very lovely-looking leaf, but it looks like a trompe l'oeil picture of a—of a leaf, because it's utterly flat.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So, it doesn't really resemble a leaf yet. But while it's flat, I write the name of the soldier on it, because you can write better then, than when it's not flat.

JUDITH RICHARDS: In ink?

JANE HAMMOND: In sumi ink, with a brush pen. And, um, Craig has taken full charge of getting all those names for me, and it's a lot of work. And it's a lot of work to make sure you—you have everyone and you're not duplicating. And there's also a lot of people whose names—there's a lot of Hispanic people have four names, and they have a sort of a double last name. Like, their name is Gonzalez Rivera, and the DoD is set up for people with names like mine: Hammond, Jane Rebecca. So, you really have to check with anyone that has a four-part name, a hyphenated name, or a name [01:02:00] you suspect might be hyphenated, um, whether the DoD has it ex—

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JANE HAMMOND: —exactly correctly or not. They even have misspelled a couple of names.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, but it's not hard to check that nowadays, because anyone who's died in the war in Iraq is Googleable, and their hometown newspaper has—you know, they're—the—the story is written in many places. So, that's been a really interesting part of the piece, because it's gotten us into Googling the people, which has gotten us into learning more about their lives and the circumstances of their death. And there have been some incredibly sad moments that have come out of that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, I read about one, which was unbelievable: the woman who came to see it and she saw her son immediately.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yes, yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, it was at a long [ph]—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Were there any other such moments?

JANE HAMMOND: I've had other people who knew people, other people who served with people. Um, but that's, by far, the most poignant moment I had. I—I didn't know when that happened that that would be the only—but so far—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —it really is the only—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Was there any logic in choosing which leaf for which name?

JANE HAMMOND: There's some logic, but not much, and it's hard to describe. In other words, it isn't random, because random would mean, like, a computer would—some people have very long names.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, you need a long leaf. [Laughs.]

JANE HAMMOND: So, you need a big leaf.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, you were saying that—so, before it looks like a real leaf, and it's smooth, you write on it.

JANE HAMMOND: Okay, so I write the name, and when I'm writing the name, this is actually the saddest part. This is where you kind of connect with what the piece—you know, when I'm, like, doing the clothesline, I'm not thinking about this as a war memorial. I'm thinking about this as a construction project. Let's get this right, am I on the third coat, am I on the second coat? Did I do these over the—do you know what I mean? But then, when you're writing the names, the names are [00:02:00] so redolent with granularity themselves, you know? Particularly—if I had the piece in front of me and I could show you—these people are all young. They represent a really hybridized America. So, they have very interesting names. First of all, they have very diverse names of all different kinds. They have, uh, Thai names, they have Tongan names, they have Vietnamese names. They have Cajun names. They have, like, Southern rural woods—"Bobbies", you know, whatever. But then, they also have a lot of names of, like, very compound ethnicity, much more so than in our generation. So, the person's name is, like, Carlos Israel Whittaker, you know what I'm saying? It's, like, you wouldn't think Carlos's last name was going to be Whittaker, or Whittaker's first name was going to be Carlos, not to mention Israel, you—do you know what I mean?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: But there's, like, a lot of names like that. So, you couldn't make them up. So, there's so—Beau Henry Ballou, you know? I—it's, like, Beau Henry Ballou. I finally Googled him one day. Now, all along, I thought he was Cajun, and I thought how clever of me, I know he's Cajun, you know? Well, he is Cajun, but he's the Cajun from northern Maine, which is the—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh!

JANE HAMMOND: —other Arcadian—I mean, it just, like, made my mouth drop open when I saw it. I was, like—I remember learning this thing about Cajun that they mostly went to New Orleans, but there was this Arcadian, you know, north. And even where Craig grew up in Montpelier, there's a lot of French names. [00:04:00]

JUDITH RICHARDS: Huh.

JANE HAMMOND: So, anyhow, um—so, when I'm choosing—so, when I'm signing, there's something about the names. I mean, you wouldn't think a name would really bring up a person, especially a person you don't know. But it often does, 'cause it's so specific, yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Do you have a sense—I know that you have assistants in var—for various steps. Do you keep writing the name for yourself, or is that—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, totally. Nobody's written the name but me. Yeah, that would seem very weird to farm out, to me. But if I hadn't farmed out the cutting, I—I would still be on—I mean, it's just a gargantuan amount of work.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm.

JANE HAMMOND: So, anyhow—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, what do you do after you've written the name?

JANE HAMMOND: So, when I—when I'm writing the names, uh, my—I was going to make two points. And one is, that's when it's kind of sad and very humanized. And that's when, sometimes—like, Craig gives me the na—the list, and then he says, "Make a star next to anything you have questions about." And so, I make—I—I err on the side of making too many stars, and then he looks it up, and then we write—because the Whitney gets the DoD list from us. So, if we've changed the DoD list, the Whitney—because the piece is now owned by the Whitney—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Do they get all the new leaves, every time they're made?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. They question me when the name—they're treating it like it's 4,000 art objects.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh.

JANE HAMMOND: So, we have to have a source. So, Craig writes—next to Michael Stewart Rivera Gonzalez, he writes Michael Stewart Gonzalez-Riveras, as per the Arkansas *Sentinel*, at—like, he gives the newspaper, and we give that to the Whitney. So, then, that leads you into reading the newspaper articles. [00:06:00] So, we've had some amazing moments where, like—one time, I was working in the studio, and then I heard Craig crying in the office. And what it was, was he had found this guest book page—this is a thing online, when someone has died—it's kind of like the cyber equivalent of what the book used to be at a funeral parlor.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: And this woman was keeping it, and she was the fiancée of a soldier who'd just been killed. And she had written in it every day, kind of to him, about how much she missed him and everything. And then, she had a page—she had a photo, rather, of his grave. So, like, the headstone's like this, and the grass is like this, and she'd lying on it. So, it's very sexual, 'cause she's, like, lying on him. And it just completely broke us up, 'cause she was in such—you know, people at that age, like, your sex life is really hot, do you know what I'm saying? It's like to have your—to be really in love with someone and have them killed like that, it's just a horrible, horrible—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: You know, they're very in love; they're going to get married. So, a lot of these kids—people have two little babies. I mean, it's just, like, whoa. So, it's much different than—first of all, you couldn't make a piece like this without the internet. You couldn't assemble all this information and be on the least bit—level convinced that you were correct. And then, second of all, you can find all these people. You can find exactly how they died—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —what day they—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What—what kind of reactions have you gotten from, um, from military families, from veterans, from—

JANE HAMMOND: Well, one of the things that I've [00:08:00] learned is—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —from actually the Department of Defense or—

JANE HAMMOND: One of the things I've learned about this piece, which I haven't really been happy to learn, so far, but I think it's fair to say, and I think it's pretty true, is that the world—even the world of—you know, it's gone to, I think, six museums. So, you'd think that museums would have a wider public than galleries, which I do believe they do. But the people that go to contemporary art museums are a different world from the people whose sons and daughters are serving in that war. And, I mean, I think one of the most gratifying venues for me was, you know, was the, um, Taubman Museum in Roanoke, Virginia. Because, unlike some of the bigger museums, a lot of people there—like, the guard had just come back, and he said, "Oh, I know this guy. He was from Rocky Mount. That's 30 miles from here." So, then he called the family, like, and then he—

JUDITH RICHARDS: But it is in the newspapers in each place, too.

JANE HAMMOND: It is in the newspapers, but—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, if they read the—

JANE HAMMOND: —there hasn't been a really big military response. Now, I'd like to tell you there had been, but—but at the Taubman, like, people came from, like, Jim Webb's office, people came from several branches of the service. Jim Webb, the senator from Virginia. Um, there was more military representation, and there was a lot of people that wrote notes in the book and stuff like that. There were people that wrote notes in the book and it went to the MCA [Museum of Contemporary Art] in San Diego, which is a big military town. And there were people that wrote notes in the book, but I didn't meet them when I was there at my opening. [00:10:00] I would like—now, it's funny, because I had an experience where I met a man named Warren Cook and I told him about the piece. And he actually started to cry, and then—so, I asked him—I asked him about his association with this, and his son had done three tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan and was over there the night that I told him. And he had also fought in Vietnam. And he invited me to a dinner that I went to about a month ago that was a dinner

for the Marines, and it was on the *Intrepid*. And—and everybody there was either a supporter of this fund for wounded Marines, which is called the Semper Fi Fund, or a wounded Marine. So, I was seated next to a guy who had been blown up by an IED [improvised explosive device] in a Humvee and was missing both his legs. And, as he said to me, there was some digital damage, too—holding up his hands, and missing many fingers. And then, on my right-hand side was a woman whose husband was also—I said, "Is your hus—was your husband wounded?" And she said, "Yes, he's an—he's an AK." That stands for above the knee. So, when I told her about my piece—and I forget—I think Warren came over and said, "Tell these people about your piece." I mean, she was super interested, you know? And then, she wrote me and said, you know, can you send me a link to your website and blah-blah-blah. So, I think the military people there are very grateful and appreciative and—happy isn't the right word, but they like hearing that someone has [00:12:00] done this. But they—they don't necessar—the two worlds don't connect up that easily. Um, and I haven't really had any press—I mean, I had a nice article in *Art in America*, I had a nice article in the *Smithsonian* magazine. I had some nice blogs, um, when it was at FLAG. But I haven't had anything, like, you know, in a very ordinary—

JUDITH RICHARDS: *USA Today*.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah. And it's been complicated for me, because I'm a little torn about seeking it, because it's such a—it's a subject where you don't want to be—you don't want to be seen to be someone who's trafficking in the tragedy of someone else's life, do you know what I mean?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: So, it's—it's complicated.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm. Have you spoken about it—I mean, Charlie Rose or—uh, or any public—

JANE HAMMOND: I actually wrote Sebastian Junger cold. You know who he is? The guy that wrote *The Perfect Storm*?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh.

JANE HAMMOND: And he did it—he was, I believe, connected to the movie *Restrepo*, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —he was over in Afghanistan, and he's a journalist, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, let me take—write his name down again.

JANE HAMMOND: Sebastian Junger.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: J-u-n-g-e-r. Now, how the hell did I get his email? This is quite unlike me. Oh, I saw him once on TV, and he said that he owned a bar in Chelsea. And I remembered that it was called The Half King, 'cause I thought that was kind of a cool title.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Ah.

JANE HAMMOND: And then, I was walking home from something at LeLong, and I saw The Half King. So, I went in there and I said, "Does Sebastian Junger own this place?" And they said, "Yeah." And so, I asked for his email. Or I said—I said, "Can—what's the address? I'd like to write a letter." And he said, "Oh, I'll give you his email." [00:14:00] I forget if I told why—they made it very easy. I didn't—he—there weren't lots of—you know, he wasn't being heavily guarded by the—so, I just wrote him cold and I said, "I know you're interested in the war, and I made this work of art, and it's three blocks"—this is when it was at FLAG. "It's three blocks away from where your restaurant is. So, if you go to the restaurant with some frequency, I could meet you there and bring you to the piece if you'd like to see it." And I described what it was, and I probably sent him a link to the website. And he wrote me back and said, "Yeah, I'd really like to see it. How about Tuesday at three?"

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: I mean, it was super easy. And then, I went over and met him there and he was right on time and he was super nice. And we walked over there and he stayed, like, 45 minutes. I mean—and he was totally into it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: You know, when I was looking at images of the piece—um, I've seen the piece, but it was only in a photograph. But I noticed some leaves that in the photograph looked like they didn't have names on

them.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, that's because—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Tell me about that.

JANE HAMMOND: —the—the names are on the backs of the leaf. And I wanted the piece to read—you—[laughs] yeah, like, some—

JUDITH RICHARDS: But you see some of the names

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. You know how sometimes, like—I don't know anything about wine, but in wine writing, they act like it starts out tasting like this and it finishes like this? Okay, so, I'm really drawn to experiences like that, where, in the arc of the experience—even if what we're talking about by arc is two seconds—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —it's, like, it moves from one thing to another. So, I kind of wanted your first experience of the piece to be that it's a beautiful bed of autumn leaves. And then, you look at it in the next [00:16:00] moment, and you see that some of the leaves have names. And then, in the next moment, you—you connect up this idea that there's fronts and backs to things, and—and it's also accompanied, I should add, by wall text which reads, "Each unique hand-made leaf has been inscribed by the artist with the name of a U.S. soldier killed in Iraq. The exhibition begins with" X number of leaves. That's how we've said it so far. And I guess, in future venues, we'll say it a little differently if there isn't—if there aren't more casualties.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: But, so, that also gives people the idea that every leaf has a name.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Do some people fail to understand that? Yes, they do. But I can't make it any clearer—you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: What do you do in terms of controlling or involvement in the installation? The actual placement of the leaves?

JANE HAMMOND: I've done every installation, completely myself. I mean, Shelley has helped me, but no—the institution hasn't installed it, because—because what the Whitney sends out there is 40 boxes of leaves. So, you're actually making the work of art—

JUDITH RICHARDS: With—and you have to make your own platform, according to the Whitney's instructions?

JANE HAMMOND: No, the Whitney doesn't own a platform. We decided it was, like, kind of a waste of space, and the different platforms would look better in different museum spaces. Like, the Wexner has a very long, thin space. So, I made a very long, thin platform.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. So, you look at the space and you tell the—

JANE HAMMOND: I look at the space; I know how many leaves I have. I know how many square feet my piece should be now. And then, I make a size up on their floor plan so that it looks good in their space.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Always a [00:18:00] rectangle of some sort.

JANE HAMMOND: Always a rectangle of some sort, and then [inaudible] FLAG, which was the first show in New York in a long time, I hunched that it should be 24-by-7, and I made a perfect brown paper—piece of brown paper that was 24-by-7, and I wrapped it around a bamboo pole, a—

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you say 24-by-7—

JANE HAMMOND: Twenty-four feet long and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: By seven feet, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —seven feet wide. And then, I took it up there and laid it out on the floor, 'cause I figured this is my one chance to have this be perfect. And they have a beautiful Richard Gluckman-designed—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —room. So, like, 17 people at the opening said to me, "Wow, it looks like it was made for the space." And I was, like, "Well, it kind of was," you know? Um, and then in other places, I've just kind of made a guess based on their floorplan.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What about, um, fears of people touching it, the debate museums must have about stanchions or floor tape or—those issues that you encounter with a delicate work on the floor—

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I've—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —or near the floor.

JANE HAMMOND: —tried to—I've tried to say to the Whitney—we've worked through these things, and we really have a good understanding and a good system now. But it took us a while to get there. But, like, I don't think you can have a memorial and tell people stay away. And I don't think you want to have a piece where the unit is this big and the writing is this big—and it's got to be read to be understood and get the people away. I mean—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —that's one reason it's seven feet wide, not nine feet wide, because at seven feet, you can still read the names in the center if you put your mind to it. At nine feet, you can't. So, you're kind of consigning the center people to being, like, out in left field somewhere.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, I see, and that's why you don't put it on another base to keep people from it.

JANE HAMMOND: No, I think people should get up close to it. And the thing I've said to the Whitney over and over again is, like, send me any damage, send me any loss. I'll remake [00:20:00] it. You're never going to hear a peep from me, you know? And I even wrote a long thing about what happened—you know, if I should suddenly die, you know, like, I put Shelley in charge of making it, you know? Because I don't want them to be so afraid of it. I want people to see it and I want them to be able to get close to it. There's been incredibly little damage, and there's been no theft. Not one person in one venue has taken a leaf.

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's—that's great.

JANE HAMMOND: I mean, there's people that do stupid things. Like, in St. Louis, the opening was mobbed, and this woman straddled—she—instead of walking around the corner, she went like this, and she had a skirt with fringe. So, her fringe caught, like, 11 leaves and spilled them out on the floor. But I was right there and I, like, ran over and picked 'em up.

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Laughs.] Oh! She must have been highly embarrassed.

JANE HAMMOND: She was oblivious.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh.

JANE HAMMOND: She was totally oblivious.

JUDITH RICHARDS: I guess it wasn't her first drink.

JANE HAMMOND: She didn't even know it had happened.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, God. Um, that, I imagine, was a very time-consuming—maybe more time-consuming than you imagined—chunk of your—your work in your studio for several years.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I think I—I think I worked on it for eight years. Now, in the last couple of years, it hasn't been so intensive. But I remember, in the summer—think it was—I think in July of 2009, 200 people died. Or maybe it was 2008. I mean, there were moments where I thought, oh, my God, what have I gotten myself into? But I also kind of felt like—I had begun it, and I kind of felt like, well, if these people are dying, who am I to be complaining that I have—you know what I mean?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: It's like if you're going to take this job on, then the gravity of—of what their job is, is 40 million times bigger than the gravity of your job. So, like, [00:22:00] it would seem kind of, like, uncool to complain.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Speaking of—about—

JANE HAMMOND: And if you stopped, the piece would be zero. Like, if you did a memorial for half the people killed in Iraq, it would be a worthless object.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. Thinking about the issue of the kind of museum audience that sees the piece, did you imagine, fantasize at the beginning that if this were going to be in a museum that it should be in Washington, D.C. in some really public museum, whatever that would—yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, in the very beginning—the piece ended up at the Whitney because of Wynn Kramarsky. Wynn Kramarsky came—you know who he is?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: Wynn Kramarsky has been very, very good to me, and he's a marvelous human being. He's—they broke the mold when they made him.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And he was there at the opening in March of 2005, as was David Kiehl, and Wynn said to David, "This should be at the Whitney Museum of American Art." And I think he said very—if not that night, very soon thereafter, "If you want this piece, I'll raise—I'll help you raise the money, and I'll—I'll contribute to it, I'll get other people to continue to it. I'll work on this." So, David reserved it that night. So, I guess Wynn said that that night.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, you didn't really have time to approach [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: So, other people—other people and possibly even Wynn, too—other people said it really should go to the Whitney Museum of American Art or the National Gallery or the—or something in Washington. But it—you're right, I mean, one minute, I—I couldn't imagine anyone was going to acquire it or buy it. It didn't cross my mind. I mean, I certainly didn't think a person would buy it. I—would be a rare collector that could have such a piece.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And it would feel strange.

JANE HAMMOND: I think—yeah, it's inherently public.

JUDITH RICHARDS: It's a memorial for the—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. [00:24:00] So, I didn't think about it or plan or strategize in any way. And then, the next minute, there was a path. So, to have critiqued that—I would love it to get shown in Washington, and the reason Glenn and I ended up together vis-à-vis FLAG was he was—he approached me and said—

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's Glenn Fuhrman.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, Glenn Fuhrmann.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: He approached me about the piece when he was on the board at the Hirshhorn, and his idea was let's get this shown at the Hirshhorn. And then, by the time that—I don't know, in the next chapter of that book, he was no longer on board of the Hirshhorn, and he said, "Would you like to show it at FLAG?" And I was, like, "Yeah, I'd love to show it at FLAG. It's a beautiful space." Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You—

JANE HAMMOND: —so, I mean, I'd love to show it in Washing—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And you purposely had it timed for the memorial—the anniversary, right?

JANE HAMMOND: Well—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Am I remembering correctly?

JANE HAMMOND: —I think—I think Glenn thought of that before I did, 'cause I—I remember we were—we had already made the plan when it suddenly dawned on me that it was the fall and then it was that fall, that—I hadn't actually, to be honest, put two and two together right away.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: So, it would be great to have it shown in Washington sometime, but—it would be great to have it shown in Washington sometime, period, end of sentence. I also feel very grateful that it's been shown as much as it has. It's even on the Whitney's virtual tour of their new—you know, they have it installed in the museum, and they showed it at the groundbreaking. And so, I think it's—it's gotten a lot more play than I ever thought it would, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: But it would be great to have it in Washington.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: I even had a fantasy once about doing [00:26:00] Afghanistan, and then having some kind of, like, glass pavilion and having both of them and then having trees around—but, you know, it's, like, it is where it is and it's—wouldn't—I don't think it would be good energy on my part to try and engineer for it to go somewhere else. You never hear about a piece going to a museum and then ending up in another museum, I mean—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: —do you? I don't think so.

JUDITH RICHARDS: I know an instance where a museum deaccessioned a piece and then another museum—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —was able to get it.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Uh, but that wasn't a very happy situation.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So—

JANE HAMMOND: I think—

JUDITH RICHARDS: I'm sorry.

JANE HAMMOND: I think Adam's pretty proud of it, you know? So—

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's true.

JANE HAMMOND: —I don't think that—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Is that Adam Weinberg?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. I don't think that's going to happen.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. So, while you were working on this, I guess sporadically, um, you were doing other work, including the "butterfly map" series that you started the same time.

JANE HAMMOND: Right.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, let's go back and catch up with that piece now.

JANE HAMMOND: Okay, so I had that dream that I spoke of, which was a map of the Middle East covered with butterflies. And, um, I basically knew how to—I knew that I could make a pretty good-looking butterfly, 'cause I did it in the ULAE print. So, I decided that I was going to try and make this idea. So, I got my current assistant, Sh—

JUDITH RICHARDS: The ma—and the idea was the Middle East—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —mapped?

JANE HAMMOND: And it—and I wanted—I had a loose idea that the map would be very old and sort of rugged-looking.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And did you imagine these as paintings or works on paper, initially?

JANE HAMMOND: I imagined them as something I would make out of paper, 'cause maps are made out of paper.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And I wasn't exactly clear what they were going to look like. So, I [00:28:00] went on the internet and I, um—this is Shelley, my assistant.

SHELLEY ZATTA: Hello.

JANE HAMMOND: And she's—[audio break].

JUDITH RICHARDS: Go on.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I—we—we looked on the internet and we found that there are butterfly farms all over the world, where they raise butterflies for all kinds of reasons, including these butterfly whatever you call them.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Exhibitions?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, those places that there are now all over the place where live butterflies are flying around, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, including the Museum of Natural History.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. So, uh, so, we ordered butterflies. I don't know; let's say I ordered 40 butterflies. And then, when you order these butterflies, one of each species, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Forty different species?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, 40 different species, and they're all grown—like, they're not—I don't buy, like a wild—I don't buy a net-caught butterfly, 'cause I just feel guilty doing that. So, when you buy them, they come in a glassine envelope and they're folded up like this. They're not out like that. And Shelley was working at Evolution on Spring Street, and she was pinning butterflies, 'cause they sell butterflies. And she was doing these big orders for Damien Hirst, 'cause he buys butterflies from them, which is odd—

JUDITH RICHARDS: From Evolution, which is odd. Why does he buy them from—

JANE HAMMOND: It's totally weird. Like, why—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —where you bought—

JANE HAMMOND: —doesn't he buy them directly? It's way cheaper. But anyhow, I think he wanted the pinning, uh, I don't really know why he did it. But he was buying 2,500 at a time or, you know, whatever. So—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Are these expensive?

JANE HAMMOND: Some of them are, but a lot of them aren't. It—it kind of depends. So, um—and it also depends on the condition. So, I have this other assistant, and she said, "I know Shelley and she's working at Evolution and she knows how to do it." So, I hired her to [00:30:00] steam them and pin them. And then, in the end, she ended up coming over here and working for me. And so, the idea was you—you scan it front and back and you cut it out, and then—it's very similar to the leaves. And then, I made a little body—sort of like rolling a joint, only it was, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And again, these are life-size, not—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —blown up or—

JANE HAMMOND: Since I first started the project, I've—I now make them—I change the size if I want to. But I would say most of them are life-size, and almost all of them are the—are the colors and markings of real butterflies, although there's a couple that I've, like, taken a white butterfly and turned it into a red butterfly,

'cause I want red and there are really are no red butterflies to speak of. And then, I figured out a way of making antennae and blah-blah-blah. So, it's a little laborious. But I think they—they come out really well, and they look good. So, the maps, what happened was I just go over it—I buy paper at New York Central, and they have all the paper on display. So, I just go over there, myself—it takes, like, an hour and a half, 'cause it's a very slow operation. But I just pick out the paper. Like, I'll have six of this, I'll have one of this, I'll have—so, I don't have a paper that I make the maps out of all the time. Like, I use all these different papers. But it's basically handmade paper from—

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you're—and you're talking about this in the present. Is this ongoing?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I have—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Started in 2004.

JANE HAMMOND: I have a map of Lebanon in the studio I finished in the last month, and I have a map of Turkey and I—that was up in Brussels last week. So, anyhow, um—so, I got down on the floor and I just—I glued papers together, and then I glued other papers on top of those papers and other papers on top of those papers. I use this—

JUDITH RICHARDS: This is a layering system you had been using before.

JANE HAMMOND: It's—more [00:32:00] or less, yes. And it's—I use this stuff, it's called Jade 403. It's a bookbinders'—it's an archival bookbinders' glue. And its nature is that when you—it's like paper—it's like archival papier-mâché. You—it gets very hard and strong because of the glue. So, by the time you put 20 or 30 pieces of paper together this way, you have something you could almost call a sculpture. And when you knock on it, it makes the sound—more like this than this, you know? So, then, I paint on it, and then I have developed a way that I take sandpapers of various grits, with an orbital sander, and I put the map down on the floor and I grind on it. And then, I paint on it more and then I grind on it more. Then I add more paper, more paint, and I grind—so, it gets this kind of, like, old, sort of geological quality, because it's being sort of geologically acted on. It's like I met this guy—the guy that I sat next to, who was wounded, at the dinner, was a sniper. And he was explaining to me how he camouflaged himself and his gun. Now, he doesn't know anything about art. But he said to me, "If you really want to camouflage something, you can't just paint it"—in other words, what he was doing was he was, like, texturizing the gun and then painting the texturizing. 'Cause he said you can't really get camouflage if you don't make it three-dimensionally. And so, then I was explaining to him—I forget what I used as an example, but something about—I was—the point about—I'm making is that you can't affect the—you can't paint in a trompe-l'œil way the effect of a geological process. You have to get that effect by, like, stomping on it, cutting [00:34:00] it up, sanding it, getting it wet. You have to do operations to it that are kind of like those operations. So, then, um, when that seems like it's a good ground—and the ground has to be—I have a vision in my mind of what the palette is, and that comes to me based on the place. Sometimes, it's kind of easy to figure out. Like, Brazil is kind of green, and Sweden I made a map of, like, Scandinavia in the winter. So, it was, like, silver and white, you know? But, like, I've also done—like, I did Hispaniola and the ocean was all red and the island was black and the writing was white. Or—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And these are sometimes ancient cities as well as contemporary cities?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, the thing that—I—the thesis I went into this with, which I'll say abides, by and large, is that—the first one I made was Iraq. And Iraq is one of these places where some British people cooked up the boundaries in the '30s, and almost every boundary is basically a ruler line, except there's one little part—so, the cities, on the other hand, you—Fallujah is where Fallujah has always been, and it's been there for thousands of years, as you know. This is the cradle of civilization, right? So, that was one of the things—is, like, I wanted to emphasize the oldness of the place, the age of the place, in contrast to this very short-lived being, the butterfly. So, I did Iraq and I really deemphasized the boundaries. You can hardly find the boundaries—and really emphasized the cities, and had it bleed out, so Jordan is also in it and Israel's also in it, little pieces of—[00:36:00] and Iran is also in it. So, it's like—it's the environs of Iraq, as opposed to, like, Iraq as this set thing.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: It's a little different when I've done places that are islands. The island is there, discretely, surrounded by ocean, more often than not. So, I made that. I wasn't—I thought it came out really well, and I liked the contrast of the—the fresh delicacy and liveliness of the butterfly with the old, scrubby kind of place. And there was a way that I could glue the butterfly and get under the wings and arrange them so they really did kind of feel alive and moving. It's kind of like how the leaf comes alive after I sign it. We mold it—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, we did talk about that.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know, so it has that three-dimensional—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You mold it.

JANE HAMMOND: I mold it by—first of all, you kind of have to end up observing how leaves crinkle, they—'cause they crinkle along the central vein and then along the veins on the side, and then the tips kind of curl.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And so, Shelley and I devised this method of taking a lot of round objects like tennis balls and magic markers—sort of like the way you would set your hair—and curling the leaf around these objects so that it—and that—it's only then that it looks like a real leaf.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And then, steaming them or something?

JANE HAMMOND: No, they just stay that way. But, I mean, they have that presence that's completely three-dimensional.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, the paper's permanently—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, in the same way that, like, if you took that piece of paper and crumpled it and put it in the wastebasket and went around the world and came back five years later, it would be still crumpled in the wastebasket, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: But just like curling hair, you put the round objects in, you put the paper around, and then you take it out—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —after you've—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —judged how long to keep it.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. And did I have some fear in the beginning that they might flatten out somewhat over time? Yes, I did. But they haven't. [00:38:00] So where was I with the maps? So—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Talking about adhering the butterflies and making them look like they're alive.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, so I tried—so, like, I tried to make it look—I try to use the—people often ask me, "Well, how do you decide"—you know, I—I try to make the butterflies look as if they're real and alive and they're moving and behaving in that landscape. And then, I also try to use them by their color and shape and consonances and dissonances of color and shape, as if I were making an abstract painting.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And the butterflies aren't indigenous in any way to the—

JANE HAMMOND: No, they're not.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —place on the map.

JANE HAMMOND: No. They're really not. Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: They're metaphorical. [Laughs.]

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yeah, that's—that's right. And so, then after I did it—the map of Iraq, that is, the first one—I really liked it. And I was reading—reading *Lolita in Tehran*. So, I thought, eh, I'll make a map of Iran. So, then, I did Iran, and then I started thinking about, like, looking at the world through this lens of, like, trouble spots, pe—places that have had a lot of turmoil and violence and kind of—'cause it—it really feels like cycles of living and dying. And the butterfly really kind of connotes that to everyone, you know, on every level. So, I can't remember the order, but one thing lead to another. I made Vietnam, I made Rwanda, I made northern India, with Kashmir, southern India with Sri Lanka, China with Tibet. Um, Uganda, South Africa, [00:40:00] then that—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You mentioned Cypress.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, then I made, um—I was reading a book called *The Ornament of the World*, which is a

history of Cordoba from 700 to the expulsion of the Jews. So, that gave me the idea that you could look at places through other lenses of time. Like, once upon a time, Sweden was the Vikings. It was a very violent place. But then—

JUDITH RICHARDS: I was going to say, what was the Scandinavian—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —turmoil? [Laughs.]

JANE HAMMOND: So, then I made a map of—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Of Sweden.

JANE HAMMOND: —Spain. I made a black map of Spain with—Spain was black, Portugal and France were black, and the ocean was black, and it was all black butterflies. But I—I made these little distinctions so that you can sort—like, the water is slightly more purple than the land, and so if you look at it closely, you can—it's like looking at something at night. You can—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —actually see it all after a while. And, um, and then, I don't know, one thing just lead to another to another to another. I mean, the Sweden map happened because I—I've been to Sweden. I've—I've shown in Sweden three times, and so I've—and always in the winter. So, I'm—I've flown over those—Greenland and Iceland and Scandinavia in the winter, and you can sort of see where the ocean is.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm, you should go over in the summer.

JANE HAMMOND: I know.

JUDITH RICHARDS: It's beautiful. [Laughs.] All the water—and the green—

JANE HAMMOND: I know, I—so, anyhow, I—so, then, I keep thinking I'm a—I must be through with this. But then, it keeps opening up again. So, like, an example—you asked me about, um, Cypress. An example was, like—then I got interested in split places. So, I did Hispaniola with Haiti and the Dominican. I did the Korean [00:42:00] peninsula. I did Cypress; I did Borneo, which is three countries or maybe even four.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: I did New Guinea, which is split into two countries.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Ireland? [Laughs.]

JANE HAMMOND: Ireland—there's two things I want to do that I'm afraid to do. One is Israel, which, like—no one has ever requested a place except Israel, but I've had several people say to me, "Call me if you make Israel." But I'm so afraid I'm going to get—make a mistake. And Ireland is—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Or it'll change in the midst of your doing—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, and Ireland is the same thing. But I probably will make them. Then I just did Lebanon, with a piece of Syria next to it

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, so, now I think there's even more—you know, now I've—I've been looking at these, like, kind of, like, obscure islands, where it's, like, a very interesting shape, but you actually couldn't name it if I showed it to you. You would have no idea, you know, 'cause it's, like, Christmas Island or, you know, something that's, like, what is that? Where is it?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative]. Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: So, it's—I really enjoyed making them. Um, but it's, like, anything. It's, like, you—you learn about something—I was reading about Carlos Slim, and it said he was Lebanese and Mexican. And then, I remembered that that's what Salma Hayek is, Lebanese and Mexican. So, then I Googled—I'm sort of interested in, like, you know, *comidas chinas,* you know—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes, yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —okay, so then I Googled, like, Lebanese Mexicans. So, then I was reading about them. They basically had this bad situation in Lebanon 100 years ago or 80 years ago, whenever it was, and there was all this famine and this forced military service, and, you know, it's always something like that—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes, yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —that causes—so, anyhow, then I thought, wow, I bet these people have some cuisine, 'cause, [00:44:00] like, those are two—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —interesting cuisines that seem combinable, you know? So—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Although you wouldn't think Cuban and Chinese would be combinable.

JANE HAMMOND: They seem more combinable than Cuban and Chinese—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —in a way, to me. So, then, I was, like—so, then I was reading, you know, about the cuisine of the Lebanese Mexicans. So, it's just—it's fun, because there's a huge intersection between geography and politics and geography and culture and, like, the more closely you look at geography, it's interesting, you know? It's, like, I didn't even really know Brunei was on the island of Borneo. I don't know where I thought it was, but—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —you know? So—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, yeah.

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JUDITH RICHARDS: This is Judith Richards interviewing Jane Hammond in New York, in her loft, on May 24th, 2012 for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, disk five. Jane, hi. I'd like to start with questions about your actual working methods and studio procedures. And first, a more general kind of question in terms of methods. You've done lots of works on paper and, of course, many paintings. And you divide those. They're distinguished in different ways. But can you speak briefly about what the difference is to you between working on what you consider a drawing and working—creating a painting, and why would one subject or one approach take you to a drawing and another to a painting, one set of ideas?

JANE HAMMOND: You know, usually when I get an idea, it's in a material. In other words, I get very few ideas that are so kind of purely conceptual that they're not embedded in some materiality as part of their nature. So, like, when I got the idea for *Fallen*, the leaves were paper. When I got, you know, the idea for *My Heavens!*––the print I made with Bud Shark, it was a print. Um, when I got the idea for, I guess, book-shaped pieces, I—it first came to me 'cause it was inspired by one of Ashbery's titles. But then, sometimes things do migrate. And at a certain moment, I thought, well, jeez, [00:02:00] why don't I do this paper? I mean, books are paper, you know? But usually, you just kind of—it's very rare that I would get an idea and then I would think, well, gee, what medium should I do that in? Because ideas come to me with great specificity and granularity, for the most part, you know? There's maybe some exceptions to that. Sometimes, I also get ideas from materials themselves, like—like, in making prints with Bud Shark, I really used a lot of Mylar, a lot more Mylar than I ever used at ULAE [Universal Limited Art Editions], because Bud uses these—kind of makes these Mylar plates. So, like, if there's, say, seven plates in *My Heavens!*, I made seven Mylars: the one for the red, the one for the yellow, the one for the silver, blah-blah-blah. So, by the time I came out of that experience with Bud, I was thinking, wow, I'd like to make something with Mylar. I kind of like it. I like the toothy feel of it, I like the cloudy look of it, the sort of semi-transparency of it. I even like the way it sounds when pieces of Mylar slide over each other. So, then I made these very long, thin, kind of Japanese-y Mylar collages that were just made with Xerox toner and black ink and Mylar and different kinds of tapes. So, sometimes, materials come out of other materials. And I even think—like, the *Dazzle* paintings, I think they may have had an uncon—although they consciously come out of the photography, and I'll tell you that story in a minute. I think, in some ways, they may unconsciously come out of that first print I made with Bud, where those—there are those really sparkly little, tiny passages. And if you think about it, the way I illuminate a figure in the *Dazzle* paintings, it is sort of like a constellation. It's like the person has these highlighted [00:04:00] points of light the way Orion has or something like that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: But, um, I mean, I sort of see myself as a conceptual artist who's also very in love with materials, process, and construction, and, um, sort of the marriage of concept and materiality.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Would you say that before you start the work and you—thinking of the work as a paper work, uh, or a painting, if you have a sense that you're exploring an idea and you don't want to be limited to a certain stretched canvas shape, that—

JANE HAMMOND: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JUDITH RICHARDS: —the paper, which is not predetermined as much in terms of—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, that's a—that is—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —size—is a big factor?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, that is an essential thing about works on paper that, like, it's very easy, when you're making a butterfly map, to switch it—to decide that you want it to be fatter and shorter rather than longer and thinner. It's very hard to do that in painting, you know? Like, you make that commitment to that structure, and then somebody goes and makes it in Upstate New York, and then they bring it down to you three weeks later. And then, you have the thing you have, you know? But I remember, a good example would be, like, when I thought of the feet for the Ashbery painting, it didn't—I didn't think about it as a shaped painting. I just thought about it as the feet, the feet of the Buddha, an influence from tantric paintings I'd seen of the feet of the Buddha. And I thought about the problems and intricacies and challenge of organizing a painting that was in two physically distinct parts. But I never thought of it as—other people said, "Oh, you're making shaped canvas." It's, like, kind of a too much of a super-category—[00:06:00]

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —for me to think in.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: Um, I don't know.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Have—this is a—slightly, uh, tangential, but I know you've collaborated. You—we talked at length about the John Ashbery work. There's someone else's ideas in that case, titles coming to you to—

JANE HAMMOND: Right.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —form. Have there been other instances—I mean, I know you've collaborated with Raphael Rubinstein—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —also, uh, where you've collaborated in a sense, or possibly a commission or something where certain elements are predetermined. Or have you purposely avoided those kinds of situations and not wanted to do a commission piece that—well, a commission with structure could be a commission—but [ph] didn't have any, I'm sure.

JANE HAMMOND: I think, in a way, I would like to do something commission sometime, because I do like constraints. I mean, I've embraced constraints, and I like the sort of seesaw oscillation back and forth between freedom and constraint. I think if I were a poet, I would definitely have written some villanelles, some sonnets, some, you know, sestinas. This would be in my nature to do that. Um, I've never really strongly thrown my hat in the ring for, like, public art or—you know, a few times, people have asked me to do things and send my slides in or whatever, and I have. So, I'm not opposed to it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: But I haven't really—I don't know. To me, one of the real pleasures of being an artist is you get to do it by yourself, and you get to do what you want. I mean, I just think that's everything, you know? I'm very lucky my career has worked out as well as it has. But, I mean, it's something I would waitress for, do—you know what I'm saying? 'Cause I just think it's, like, such a great thing [00:08:00] to be able to do—to be able to have ideas and then make them. There's so few people in the world that get to do that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: You know? And there's so few times in history when anybody gets to do it. And there's so few places on Earth where you can even fully do it now.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right. When you are working in your studio—a couple questions about that. I know you have

at least one assistant now, part—

JANE HAMMOND: Uh, yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —part-time, I—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —think, part-time assistant. Um, could you talk about—

JANE HAMMOND: She's actually full-time now.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh—the kind of approach you have to having assistants, why, when you have them, how you work out—

JANE HAMMOND: It's always complicated, because on the one hand, it's really great to be alone in your studio and to not be running a little operation where you become an employer, a boss, a manager, and to not have to be communicating to other people about how you intend for something to be done when you know it perfectly well inside your own head. But on the other hand, you know, I had no assistant for a lot of time this winter, for various reasons I won't go into. It's so slow, you know? And then, within my work, there's always lots of sub-jobs, and most of the time, someone else could do them. So, it's like in a perfect world, you'd have six assistants that would be—you would—you could call them into being at a moment—by rubbing a magic lantern, and then you could cause them to disappear, you know, when you rubbed it the other way or something like that. So, you just have to kind of make that decision. Shelly's now been with me for seven or eight years—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What's—

JANE HAMMOND: —and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —is it S-h-e-l-l-e-y?

JANE HAMMOND: It's Michelle—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh.

JANE HAMMOND: —is really her name. Zatta, Z-a-t-t-a. [00:10:00] We do a lot of strategizing out loud and we do a lot of kind of arguing and debating. Um, and I think it's helped with—the *Dazzle* paintings have had a lot of technical challenges, and I think it's—I think two heads are better than one on it. So, that's—and I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, her responsibilities have been evolving to—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah. And she—she's actually a design student, not an art student, and it's the first design student I've ever had as an assistant. And there's actually something quite good about it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Is that graphic design, you mean?

JANE HAMMOND: Industrial design. She has good hand skills and good fabrication skills. But it's like she's totally willing to take direction, completely, from me conceptually and not fighting with me on any level, because she doesn't actually think that way. So—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, that sounds ideal.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I think it's worked out well. I—I just—I actually hired her 'cause she knew how to pin butterflies. So, it was sort of an accident. She was working—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, you told that story—

JANE HAMMOND: —at [inaudible].

JUDITH RICHARDS: —yes, yes.

JANE HAMMOND: Right? You know? So, it was really kind of an accident, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you're in your studio, do you always have silence or music or different sound?

JANE HAMMOND: Today, we're listening to NPR [National Public Radio]. I tend to be—we're also doing a lot of very, um, a very physical, labor-intensive—tasks where you don't have to think that much. It's just a part of the job that's that way. And so, we were listening to *Radiolab* on NPR. Shelly actually said, "Can we listen to NPR?"

And I said, "Yeah, sure." I never think of it. I'm, like—I could live—I could live in complete silence for months on end, and I can be alone for gigantic periods of time, even though I'm with Craig now. But it's just some—it's a faculty that I have. It's really easy for me. Um, maybe 'cause I was an only chi—I mean, I [00:12:00] don't even know.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, music not only is—is it not necessary, but it—it's not an inspiration in any way, either.

JANE HAMMOND: No, it isn't. I mean, when I go to Bud Shark's, he listens to music and he has great music. And one of the artists that he works with is this West Coast tattoo artist, Don Ed Hardy. And—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Don Ed Hardy.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And you see his t-shirts and everything—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —all—he's developed this. But all along, he's been a fine artist and a tattoo artist, not a designer of clothing, hats, energy drinks, et cetera. But this thing just happened to him recently. But he is a real musico-phile, and he—before the internet, Bud had these amazing collections of, like, Moroccan rap and French pop music, and, you know—and so, I'd go out there, and I'd listen to music while we were making prints, and it was wonderful. And I'd come home and I'd say to Craig, "We've got to listen to music." But then, I'd forget about it. So, it's just—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know, I don't know.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. What about light? Is it important to work in a—with a steady artificial light that you imagine, perhaps, is like a gallery lighting? Or would you prefer natural light? Or is it just not an issue?

JANE HAMMOND: I'm very, untuned into light. I mean, I have to have enough light that I can see what I'm doing.

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Laughs.] Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: And everyone always comments or many people comment that I have north light. I don't care about that at all. I mean, I just—I'm very untuned into it, for an artist.

JUDITH RICHARDS: It's not affecting the color choices or your—

JANE HAMMOND: I'm sure it does, but it just—I'm not really that optical that—I mean, I don't know how to say that. I'm not that tuned into light. I mean—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Sounds like you thought of it.

JANE HAMMOND: —I'm tuned into color in a certain way, you know? Like, I can really fuss with *Fallen* if I think it's, like, too green [00:14:00] or it's too yellow or, you know, and, like, move all the—you know, I was tweaking the color at FLAG for the last day and a half, but—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. The FLAG Foundation.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. But, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, it sounds like you're not really concerned if it does look slightly different when it's displayed in different kinds of lighting situations. Those might just be interesting to you. You're not trying to control the way the greens look, because it def—they will definitely look different in different lighting—

JANE HAMMOND: I'm tuned into the light and the color in—when I have an exhibition, but—I'm very tuned into it. I guess I'm fairly fussy. But, um, I had the gallery painted grey for the *Dazzle* paintings and a darker grey for the photographs. I painted the walls of the studio several different shades of grey to determine which grey I thought looked the best with the photographs.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: So, it's not like I'm—but I don't expect my studio—my studio is like a—sort of a sloppy place,

and I'm not expecting perfect conditions in there. I don't even really want perfect conditions. And it's not particularly neat, and I only paint the walls every once in a great while. And I get a kick out of how much better the work looks at the gallery or, you know, it sort of seems like—it's kind of like I wear these sloppy clothes at home. But if you saw me out, I wouldn't be dressed like this. It's sort of the same kind of thing.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. What about routines? Are—have you always worked in a—with routine? Or do you really—

JANE HAMMOND: I'm not super routinized. Like, I couldn't tell you when I start the day in the studio. Lately, I've gotten into this thing that we quit at six, but it's really, like—it's kind of 'cause I'm in a relationship, and because I have an assistant—you know, [00:16:00], when I lived alone, I never had a quitting time or a starting time, ever, ever, ever. I remember there were years when I used to eat dinner during *Charlie Rose*, so I think that was, like, very late.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Eleven?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah. [They laugh.]

JUDITH RICHARDS: Unless his schedule's changed.

JANE HAMMOND: And I had a—and I developed a friendship with an Argentinian woman. [Laughs.]

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's good.

JANE HAMMOND: It's like she was the only one that was willing to eat then. Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, it sounds like you worked late and you woke up late.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. I've never been really too much of an early riser, and I've—and for years now, I haven't worked too late at night. But I work almost every day of the week. So, somehow, I get in a fair amount of work.

JUDITH RICHARDS: No doubt.

JANE HAMMOND: And, um, it's rare that I take Sunday off. But sometimes, I take half of Sunday off. But I usually do some little job.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. When you want to take a break from the studio—

JANE HAMMOND: I can.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —routinely, is there some particular thing—

JANE HAMMOND: I like to travel. I mean, we just went—

JUDITH RICHARDS: But I mean—I mean—

JANE HAMMOND: Oh.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —on a daily basis. Like walking or biking—

JANE HAMMOND: I go to the farmer's market—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —or going to the—

JANE HAMMOND: I walk to 14th Street almost every day of the week. And—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, that's a long walk.

JANE HAMMOND: And I go to the farmer's market religiously. I go all four days of the week. I go to the flea market every Saturday.

JUDITH RICHARDS: On Sixth Avenue?

JANE HAMMOND: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JUDITH RICHARDS: And 25th?

JANE HAMMOND: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative]. And I frequently go on some other shopping foray as an

excuse to get exercise on the non-farmer's market days. And I think it's married really well with photography, because I often take a camera with me, and then I, like, discover something or take pictures of something, or I research—like, I went to this party store in the Village.

JUDITH RICHARDS: On 14th Street?

JANE HAMMOND: On—

JUDITH RICHARDS: That big party store?

JANE HAMMOND: It's, like—it's right off LaGuardia Place, on about—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, I don't know that.

JANE HAMMOND: —Tenth [00:18:00] or something, but it was in the Village and it's just moved. But it's a really good party store, and I bought a whole bunch of masks to use in photographs, and—in other words, I got a refinement of an idea for a photograph because I went in the store. I mean, New York City is really pretty amazing that way. You can—one day, I went to the farmer's market and I didn't have my camera with me. And there was a group of men protesting some Diesel ad, Diesel the clothing store. And there were 11 men dressed in full bear suits, and every man had a different kind of bear suit on.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh! [Laughs.].

JANE HAMMOND: And I was, like, this is the biggest mistake I've ever made in my life, not bringing the camera today. But, I mean, as you know, you can see amazing things in New York if you spend—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Enough time on the street.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know, enough time out on the street.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. And Union Square these days is a kind of a—of a—it's just everything is sloping toward it.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Everything runs into it.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yes. So, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, that's a—that's the kind of outlet you have when you want—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: When—what would you s—had—did we—did I ask you this? Are there times when no idea has come to you? And what would you do? I mean, obviously, taking a walk is a short-term answer, but—

JANE HAMMOND: In some ways, I'm kind of—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —but does that ever happen?

JANE HAMMOND: —looking—I—kind of—no, I keep all these folders of ideas, thinking that I think I should write down every time I have an idea, because maybe someday I'll be out of ideas, and then I can go back through these folders.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: But I almost never look at the folders. And then, after a while, I can't even, like, read my own notes or, you know, whatever. But usually—

JUDITH RICHARDS: They [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: —I have ideas.

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you've—over the years—[00:20:00] you touched on changes in working methods that relate to technology. Is there anything else you'd want to say about how computer, digital—new developments have impacted your work?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I think that my work, from the get-go, has been about, sort of, the Information Age, and

the idea of a surfeit of information that we have easy access to, and the idea of kind of curating and collecting among that surfeit of information, and the idea of the bodylessness of information, that is to say information and image detached from the haptic, objective, concrete thingness of the thing. And, um, and I've always kind of perused around and searched and foraged for information. I mean, I used to go to old book fairs all the time.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative], we talked about that.

JANE HAMMOND: And I think it comes out of being an artist in the Information Age, but then I think it's also been enormously helpful to me that that the wave that I was riding got bigger as I was on it, or whatever you want to say, that this stuff has only come my way, you know? And searching, for example, has become a vastly more extensive, complicated, and opportunity-filled thing than it was before. I don't know if I said this before or not, but it was, like, you could still go to the flea market, and the great thing about the flea market is you don't know what's going to be there. And so, you're surprised. But then, you can also go to the internet, where you say I want to buy a [00:22:00] female ventriloquist's dummy—and, you know, you could go to the flea market 100 times and no one would have one. But you can name the thing you want and it's out there in the world, you know? And so, you know, when I started making the photographs, I searched for photographs of bears, and I got these—I discovered this whole subset of these German photographs of men in these bear costumes. And so, I think the internet has really worked for me, and there's all different ways in which I could say it. I mean, I think that it's not a complete accident that it's working for me, 'cause there were things in my work that are about our time that the internet comes out of. But, I mean, I just—I just think the whole way that you can loop and connect and leap and circle back and dive down a rabbit hole that connects to another rabbit hole that connects to another rabbit hole, it's—it's very parallel to the way the human mind works. Of course, it was the human mind that created the computer, and—and this marriage of those two models, consciousness and the computer, it's, like, this is the traffic of my work, you know? The nature of thinking itself and the nature of relationships themselves, and the nature of—um, the Surrealists called it free association. Now, neuroscientists tell us that we don't really know how free it actually is. But the nature of association and the nature of thinking itself, that's profoundly interesting to me, and I hope my work has some feel when someone looks at it closely over time and sees things popping up and disappearing in different bodies of work and being reconsidered—and senses connections between things, [00:24:00] that that's something that is the subject of it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Thinking about connections, are—if I—if we were sitting in your studio this minute, standing in your studio—we're in a different room right now—uh, what would we see on the walls? And is that typical, and do you have images that—that recall these connections? Or are they earlier works, or are they just something clearly different?

JANE HAMMOND: I almost never have my own work hanging around. And—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Has that always been the case?

JANE HAMMOND: Pretty much. I mean, if I have my own work around, it's only because I don't have another place to store it. It's not—sometimes, I used to have work around that—I wanted to make sure this was how I wanted it to be, or—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You mean, for consistency?

JANE HAMMOND: No, like, that I wasn't going to change my mind, or I didn't—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know, something like that. But I'm not—I've heard other artists say that they need to live with their work. I once went to this show of Brice Marden somewhere where there were these really, really, really big paintings. I think it was a museum, but I can't remember which muse—and Brice was in there on a chair, looking at his paintings. I don't think it was an act, but I was thinking you made the goddamn painting. What do you need to look at it now for? Do—you know what I mean? I was thinking, like, what is he getting from this painting? There's many things I would like to contemplate, but a finished Jane Hammond painting isn't one of them. I don't know that that makes me better or worse than anyone else. But, in other words—and I don't really have a lot of these little things around in the studio anymore that are so interesting for other people, where they see—oh, she has the periodic chart over there and she has this, you know, Uccello painting over here, and [00:26:00] she has a picture of Frida Kahlo over here. I really—I don't have a big enough studio and I don't—

JUDITH RICHARDS: I wasn't thinking as much what other people would be interested in. I was thinking about the utility of it, what you need, want to have on the walls, if anything, of your workspace.

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I can take you over there later on. But, like, in my little room, I've started picking up objects on the street in New York when I take these one-hour daily walks. I must have six pacifiers, so—that's a

very dropped object. And I was thinking I would make some kind of diary kind of drawing of, like, the objects I find on these walks. So, I have them in little Ziploc bags, and I have them pinned up, and some of them have dates associated with them. But I'm not really sure that I'll do that drawing. But that's one thing that's on the wall. Then another thing that's on the wall is—because I'm constantly using new materials, I—I often have samples of the materials with a note about what it is and where I find it. Because otherwise, I can really fall back in love with something and forget what kind of Mylar this is and who I got it from.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And I have lots of paper samples around, 'cause I use so many different kinds of paper. It's complicated to keep track of them. I have a few photographs hanging on the wall, because people always ask me how they're framed. But I don't really have much—my studio has this very rough workshop-y kind of feeling. And it used to be—my loft used to be more like you were going inside my head than it is now. [00:28:00]

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: I don't really know why that is, exactly.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Do you think of your studio as a very private space that, uh, you would—that if someone asked you—even your dealer asked to come visit, you would really think about, well, are the works developed enough or are they not—I mean, do you have to think about that and really protect people—yourself—

JANE HAMMOND: No.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —from—or is it—doesn't it matter at all?

JANE HAMMOND: I think about it. When people are coming over, I—I think—I look around the studio and I think what do I want to hide or what do I want to put away or what do I want to—you know, so it's not like something I don't think about. But I have a lot of people over to the studio. And in general, I'm quite open to it, and I like doing it. And it's fine.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And I have a reputation for being, like, a great studio visit. I mean, so many people have said it to me, there—there must be truth in it, you know? And, um—like, today, the gallery sent me an email and asked me if I would have this Norwegian woman to the studio who is an artist with Galerie Lelong in Zurich and she wants to do some studio visits. And I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Is there a Galerie Lelong in—oh, in Zurich.

JANE HAMMOND: In Zurich.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, I was thinking—it's Norwegian.

JANE HAMMOND: And I said no, and it's very untypical of me. But I don't know, I just—I don't know, I won't go into all the reasons. But anyhow, so then they wrote back and said, "That's fine, don't worry about it. We'll ask someone else—" I mean, I got the distinct feeling they had asked me first. Do—do you know what I'm saying? And I said that to Craig and he said, "Well, you're such a good studio visit." But, you know, so—

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Laughs.] Speaking of the gallery, let me talk a little bit about the history of representation. You've had a long history. Um, and we can go through it a bit how these relationships developed and evolved, and—

JANE HAMMOND: Well—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —you've—you've had a number of shows and—

JANE HAMMOND: I told you about Exit Art, right? [00:30:00]

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes, yes, yes. And then, you had a couple shows at Fiction/Non-fiction?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I actually had four shows with the man named Jose Freire.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: In two of them, he was called Fiction/Non-fiction. In two of them, he was called Jose Freire Fine Art. He now has a gallery called Team.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: But this is all the same person.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: And I think I might have told you the story that a woman who's a friend of mine named Marilyn Levine—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —hooked us up.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, so—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And I think you talked about the connection with—did you talk about the connection in Seattle with Greg Kucera Gallery?

JANE HAMMOND: I met Greg through ULAE. I met a lot of people in the art world through ULAE, and, um, Greg was one of them, and Lemberg, my gallery in Detroit, was another one of them. I didn't really ever decide—and Björn Wetterling, my gallery in Sweden—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —is another one.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And you—and you—

JANE HAMMOND: And I never said to myself, oh, gee. I want to show in Sweden or I want to show in Detroit or I want to show in Seattle, as opposed to Dallas or France or—it just kind of happened. It was really more about who—what people the people I know, know.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Was it a goal to show outside the U.S.? Was that something that you—and certainly outside New York?

JANE HAMMOND: I didn't really—I mean, Björn came to me before I thought I should show in Europe. I didn't really have that thought. Um, but like all Americans of—of a certain—I mean—but I—I was impressed with the idea of showing in Europe. I think there's something about us. We always think the Europeans are a little better or something, a little more refined, a little more elegant.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Culturally—

JANE HAMMOND: So, it seemed—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —sophisticated.

JANE HAMMOND: —like somehow cooler to show in Europe than to show in Chicago or something like that. I just—it's just some provincialism that's—[00:32:00]

JUDITH RICHARDS: In part, I assume, because you've been very prolific and done prints, you had options to be showing with a number of galleries at once.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, although galleries—I did get to know Björn Wetterling, because he was interested in prints, and he was—and he and Bill Goldston had a very close relationship, which I think really centered, primarily, around Rauschenberg. But as a general rule—and Greg Kucera has been interested in prints and interested in my prints. As a general rule, I have found many dealers are not that interested in prints, so—but—well, period, end of sentence.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: I don't know. It's—it's worked out pretty well for me with most dealers. In other words, I

haven't had to work too hard to get them. I work on keeping up the relation—I do my end of the barg—end of the deal with the relationships. And every dealer I've ever worked with has said to me that I'm responsible, that I'm organized, that I'm easy to work with. Um, I have no idea what the other people do and don't do that causes them all to say that. But, in other words, if you call me, I call you back. And if you ask me six questions in an email, I answer all six. I don't really think I should get much of a medal for that, but it's, like, [they laugh] I don't know what goes on with the other people. But, you know—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Tell me about the—your development—your—the beginning of your show with Galerie Lelong.

JANE HAMMOND: I don't remember—I remember that when—

JUDITH RICHARDS: I think your first show was [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: Jose Freire kind of—and, uh—

JUDITH RICHARDS: It's 2001.

JANE HAMMOND: —my relationship sort of blew up. That's a long story.

JUDITH RICHARDS: You—do you want to go into that or no?

JANE HAMMOND: No.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay. So, that was the last show you had there [cross talk] was '96—

JANE HAMMOND: And—and he was in the same building with Luhring Augustine.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And Luhring Augustine's collector—I forget the guy's name right now. I could [00:34:00] summon it up if I really put my mind to it. There was a collector who owned a painting of mine who was the Luhring Augustine lawyer. And so, I think he told Luhring about me. So, Luhring actually called me, and, um, and they came over and basically asked me to join the gallery. I mean, it was fast. And it didn't work out as well as either of us thought it would, for a variety of reasons. I mean, these things are like blind dates. You don't really know what you're getting into—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: —until you're fully in it in a very big, complicated, lock-stock-and-barrel way. There's no real foreplay.

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Laughs.] Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: You know what I mean? And even if you went out to lunch 20 times, you wouldn't have any idea what it was like to work with the person until you worked with the person.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Absolutely.

JANE HAMMOND: There must be things like this in your field, too.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Sure.

JANE HAMMOND: So, it's, like, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: But it's—

JANE HAMMOND: So, Lelong—when I went from Jose Freire to Luhring, I remember that [inaudible].

JUDITH RICHARDS: And you were working with Luhring, not Augustine.

JANE HAMMOND: You work with—I—in those days, you worked with both.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, you m—I had a round with Mary Sabbatino in Gallery Lelong, and I chose Luhring, do—do you know what I'm saying

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And when I had my show at Luhring—

JUDITH RICHARDS: That was 1997.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I think it was. And when I had my show at Luhring, Mary came to the opening. I thought it was an incredibly classy, elegant thing for her to do, you know? Most people'd be, like, "I'm through with you," and whatever. And so, when Luhring and I went our separate ways, Mary kind of reappeared. And [00:36:00] she asked me to dance again, in essence, do you know what I mean? And it was—I don't know, I just thought it was very kind of mature and, um, levelheaded of her, you know? And—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —and I also thought she really wants me, and—and I have this feeling that you—even if you're really good at playing every trick in the book, like, you don't really want to trick yourself into some relationship where the other person doesn't genuinely want you. So, if you kind of hang back a little bit and see who comes to you, there's utility in that, too. So, I don't know. I'm not really such a logical fit in Galerie Lelong. It's filled with Minimalism.

JUDITH RICHARDS: No, oh, there's—I mean, think of Ursula [von Rydingsvaard], think of, uh, Petah [Coyne].

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I don't—I can't tell you why—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —she wanted me, but—but she did.

JUDITH RICHARDS: I think it's a good fit when I think of the aesthetic and—

JANE HAMMOND: And, um, and I think that Jean—that Jean Frémon, who runs the gallery in Paris—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Tell me his name again.

JANE HAMMOND: Jean Frémon.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: J-e-a-n F-r-e-m-o-n. I think I'm something of a fit with his sensibility. And a couple of years ago, I read a book he wrote. He's a writer, too. And, um, and I felt that way even more after I read the book.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Have—do you think of what you've wanted from a gallery has changed over the years?

JANE HAMMOND: Um, no. I think I want someone to, um, work hard, promote me, and make me some money. I think it's as simple as that, really.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: I guess all artists would also say that they would like their gallery to, um, show other artists [00:38:00] that they respect, so they feel that they're in a good context, and get some attention.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Indirectly—

JANE HAMMOND: You know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: —like that way, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: You know, something like that. You want to continue to believe that you're in a good place. Not lie to you, not cheat you, you know—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —blah-blah-blah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, I think—I think it's a little bit of a difficult system, because I think that—you know, I remember once I had this fight with my mother, and I said to her, "Well, you have four children. You're my only

mother," you know? And congratulations on your son graduating from NYU—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh. [Laughs.]

JANE HAMMOND: —Law School, by the way. [Laughs.]

JUDITH RICHARDS: Thank you.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, so, I think that it's very hard for the dealer to be thinking about you on any given Tuesday when they have someone else's show up, someone's show who just closed, someone's show that's happening after the show that's up, and they're doing art fairs. I mean, it's hard for them to also be thinking, like, now, what should we be doing for Jane Hammond, you know? So, really, I think, you're only on the front burner a small percentage of the time. And other than that, if you don't say, well, what about blah-blah-blah, there isn't that much contact.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And I think that a lot of—

JUDITH RICHARDS: It's a very rational approach that you—

JANE HAMMOND: I think that a lot of artists are unhappy with their dealers 'cause they think the dealers—I mean, I—what I observe is that artists actually do a lot of what's done for them—they are the initiator of and the facilitator of and the connector of. And the artists that do well and that are successful are almost all little entrepreneurs. Now, there's a—there's a—um, like, there's a [00:40:00] value in—in the art world that's complex that says that you're not supposed to be. So, people pretend that they're less entrepreneurial than they are, except for people that are known for it, like maybe Julian Schnabel or something like that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right, or Jeff Koons.

JANE HAMMOND: But I—my observation is that all artists whose names we know in common, who are successful in this world—and I'm talking about the world from, like, 1990 forward—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —they are self-promotional. If they weren't self-promotional, you wouldn't know who they are. The days of, like, you know, Betty Parsons picking some drunk artist up off the floor and, like—do you know what I mean? I just think that's completely over.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And I don't know if it ever existed.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: You know? If you read *Life with Picasso*, you know, he and Françoise Gilot, they're, like, roleplaying the night before Kahnweiler comes over. "Now, what if he says this? What are we going to do? What if he wants to buy all three, what are we going to say?" You know, so they didn't get completely outsmarted the next day. And I think it is a little bit entrepreneurial, and in my lifetime, that's gone from being something that was, like, completely hidden and people felt completely conflicted about—to being out in the open and okay. And younger artists don't even feel this conflict.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: You know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Speaking about getting involved, when you're having a show, do you want to write the press release or okay the press release, uh—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yes. I mean, in a perfect world, I'd like to have a dealer who could write an even better press release about my work than I could write. But I've ne—but that is—that doesn't happen.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: I mean, I have a situation where the press release is usually written by a younger person who [00:42:00] works at the gallery.

JUDITH RICHARDS: As a draft.

JANE HAMMOND: And if you don't check it, you have to live—you—if you're not going to be the kind of person that's going to own up to wanting to check it and do the job of checking it, then you have to be so laissez-faire that no matter what it says, you don't care. And I'm not that laissez-faire. I'd like to be, but I'm not.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: You know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: And picking the images for the announcements or the email announcements, are you doing that, too?

JANE HAMMOND: I'm pretty much doing it. Now, sometimes they'll say to me, "We think we should use" blah-blah-blah. And I listen, because—I mean, I'm a headstrong person, but I also don't have distance a lot of times on what great numbers of people would think about something, or what's the most appealing thing, or what's the most whatever. I don't know what the right word is.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, I'm completely willing to listen to those kinds of things.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Do you take part in installation? Or do you let Mary or someone else do that?

JANE HAMMOND: I take part in the installation, but it's not something I think I'm really great at. I think Mary's good at it, so I do listen to her. I think she puts on very nice shows and they're very well hung. And I have a tendency to hang too much. I mean, just like the way our house is all crowded and cluttered and everything, and—and she has, like, an elegant, more spare sensibility. So, I think we're actually a good com—if she—if you can get her to hang my work, you're going to come up with something good, I think.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative]. Do you have, um, any restrictions on the sale of your work or—yeah, I mean, requirements and—concerning what can be done to it and where it needs to be presented and anything about—

JANE HAMMOND: No, I don't have any restrictions.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: I mean, no. Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You do want to be informed and [00:44:00] approached if—

JANE HAMMOND: I like to know where my work goes—[cross talk]

JUDITH RICHARDS: —you want to be inclu—

JANE HAMMOND: —and I like to keep records of where my work is. And there's always a little bit of tension with that, because galleries would prefer not to tell you.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes, I noticed that.

JANE HAMMOND: And, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Has that evolved? I think it's changed. Like, 20 years ago, there wasn't so much hesitation, and now there is.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, but ironically, we live in a much more transparent world now. So, you always end up finding it out anyhow.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: You know? That's the thing that's so silly.

JUDITH RICHARDS: If it—do you think, in your case, or in your experience, not just at your own gallery, that there's some kind of sense that if a gallery tells an artist who bought the work, then somehow, the artist will approach that person independently?

JANE HAMMOND: I can't—I cannot tell you—

JUDITH RICHARDS: I mean, not that artists would do that, but—

JANE HAMMOND: Well, some artists probably would do it. And then, there's always the possibility that if you leave the gallery, you could approach that person later on, and you wouldn't have been able to if you hadn't known who it was or something. But to me, it's infantilizing to, like, spend two months making an object and to have—and have someone spend $35,000 buying it and you can't know who that someone is, and the thing is living in their living room for the next 20 years. I mean, I just think that's ridiculous.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, and then—so, you want to keep your own records and your own inventory, in a sense of—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —knowing where things are.

JANE HAMMOND: And, you know, it's almost part of how I work, you know, that my work is about information and it's about keeping notebooks and keep—I mean, you know, I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —have very good records. And, um, it's part of how I—it's sort of part of my whole system, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And so, for me, I really like to know. And—and then, there's always things that are interesting, too. It's like you find out so-and-so is somebody else's brother. You find out so-and-so and so-and-so were in a movie together. You—[00:46:00] you know, it's like it makes it more fun and more interesting, and this is the only world I'm a part of. I'm not part of some other world. So, I like to know—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —and feel the texture of it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you've had shows at the other branches of Galerie LeLong, Paris or Zurich, do you also find out or try to find out—

JANE HAMMOND: I think—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —where the works went?

JANE HAMMOND: —I've never shown in Zurich, and I've only had one show in Paris. But my gut instinct is they're even less likely to tell you this information in—in Europe. I have no idea where it comes from. It—it—there may be a component where some collectors don't want their information shared, or they don't want their financial information—you know, they don't want someone to know they're spending this much money on art. I have no idea where it comes from, what the—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative], yes, there is that.

JANE HAMMOND: —derivation of it is. I know in Italy, I—I asked this person when I had the show in Milan if—if Giancarlo Zanutti, who I had a show with, was going to give me the collectors and their addresses, and they just looked at me and said, "You're crazy. Nobody in Italy divulges this information." And, in fact, in Italy, I never did find out. But in America, when someone buys your work, inevitably you meet the person, sooner or later—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And then there's—

JANE HAMMOND: —because it's a pretty small world.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And then there's loans to exhibitions, and then their name is on the lender's list, for example.

JANE HAMMOND: I went to the *Bomb* benefit the other day—

JUDITH RICHARDS: *Bomb* magazine.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, and, um, someone introduces me to this woman. Her name is Jane Love. And I said, "Oh, I'm a Jane, too," and—and then I looked at her and I said, "God, you really remind me of Nancy Portnoy." Do you know Nancy?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: She said, "She's my sister." [Laughs.] I don't know that—what the—and then—she's Keith Richards's agent. You know, but I mean, this is just [00:48:00] like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, connections.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Have you noticed any difference in the reception to your work when it's shown in Europe—I mean, not necessarily Galerie Lelong, but Wetterling or anywhere else, as opposed to or in contrast to the reception, public reception or art world reception, in the U.S.?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I know when I first showed in Sweden—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And I'm saying Europe, because most of your outside U.S. shows have been in Europe, but—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I—fact, I—yes, they've all been in Europe, I mean—

JUDITH RICHARDS: You had something at—for making [ph] show that went to—

JANE HAMMOND: China.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —China, yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, that's right.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And Sao Paolo. But anyway—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —looking at Europe versus the U.S.—have there been differences that you've learned about or noticed yourself?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, in Sweden, I showed with a dealer who had a bias towards Pop art. He showed Lichtenstein, Rauschenberg, and Jim Dine and Tom Wesselman and Jasper's prints. I don't think he ever did a Jasper painting show. And so, the fact that I dealt with found information and recognizable subjects and the fact that I was—you know, there were connections that you could make between, like, you know, what Lichtenstein is doing in that poster over there where there's—you're, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —and, ah, that's Swiss cheese and, oh, that's a pocket handkerchief. There were—there were connections, there were ways in which I was getting framed as sort of a next generation kind of Pop person or something like that. And—and I thought that they had a bias towards Americans who looked and felt like their idea of what [00:50:00] an American was. I mean, that was perhaps true in Sweden in those years, as opposed to someone like—let's say if you painted, I don't know, in a kind of, like, Tàpies-like way or something that feels European to them. So, um, nowadays—I mean, when I first started showing in Europe, I think it was still the tail end of the era where everyone, sort of, believed that America was ahead of Europe, you know? That we were more avant-garde here between 1945 and 1990 or whatever. And nowadays, it doesn't really feel that way anymore. I mean—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What about press? Has—is there a different response from press to your work there as compared to here if a show is reviewed?

JANE HAMMOND: Um, there's a slightly different sensibility in Europe and America. And, so people—

JUDITH RICHARDS: I mean, I know it's terrible to generalize all of Europe and all of the U.S. But—

JANE HAMMOND: No, I know it is, but there—there is a sensibility still that feels European to me, and it's more romantic and it's less ironic, and it's more grand and it's less—I think there's less humor in a—the—there's a certain sensibility which I would characterize as European. And I just—it's sort of like I know it when I—it's like the Chief Justice said about pornography: I know it when I see it, you know? Or whoever that was on the Supreme Court. It's kind of like I know that—I know it when I see it. It's more—you know, all the ideas and feelings that you associate with existentialism, [00:52:00] they're not completely dead in Europe now. They—you'd think they would be, but they aren't. And so, there's a little bit of that kind of grandness with a capital G, and significance with a capital S.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And a little bit less, um, let's see. I don't—I don't—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Sounds like there's more respect, the—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, there's more respect and there's more seriousness—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Gravity.

JANE HAMMOND: —and sometimes, that seriousness can feel old-fashioned. I'm trying to sort of say both things.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: There's more seriousness and more respect and more grand ideas, and sometimes they feel old-fashioned and grandiose. And the American way feels hipper or, you know, wittier or more ironic or more complicatedly interesting or something like that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, I've been—I've—I mean, it's not like I'm the big art star in Europe. In fact, I'm sure you could meet lots of Europeans who wouldn't know my name. But I've done well everywhere I've shown. You know people—my work has a kind of accessibility about it, I think, on a—on the primal level, and then, if people cogitate about—on it for a while, they—they get things out of it, so, like, I've been well-reviewed in Spain every time I've had a show there. I've had good coverage in the newspaper.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And, um, I was just in Belgium, and I—I had a good reception there. And I think Europeans want to believe there's ideas in the work. And if you can communicate to them what those ideas are, they're very pleased, where [00:54:00] I think there are some Americans that—they want an attractive thing in their—over—[they laugh] over their couch or something, I don't know, so—but these are gross generalizations. It's not true of all people. But if you gave me, like, eight reviews and made me—made me figure out which ones from—and what come from Europe and which ones come from America, I would score higher than just randomly guessing, you know what I mean?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: But—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Because of [inaudible]?

JANE HAMMOND: —it's hard for me to isolate for you exactly what the qualities are that would be my criterion in guessing. But I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —think I could do it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. All right. Yeah, one last question about criticism. Uh, has there been any misinformation put out there, uh, in any review that—that you felt very strongly about and would like to correct the record, as it were, with this—on this interview?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, the only thing—um, I think there's a lot of people that don't really understand what I'm doing and that it's all sort of a grand project and it's all interconnected. So, I—I seem like a person who's, like, changing their mind every three years. But I can't—I'm not sure that's entirely bad, because, like, the world is moving in that direction and this is what all the young artists are doing, you know, this very kind of diverse practice, A. And B, I mean, I—it's not so much that I'm thinking of something that's been—like, it's very frustrating sometimes, because, for example, Jerry Saltz wrote something, I don't know if you'd call it a review, about the show I had—not the last show, but the show before that. Now, they go to so many shows a week, Jerry and Roberta, and I—you know, like, a lot of times, when you're an artist—I work very hard, and I make—[00:56:00] I make these photographs that—I think there's a lot to see in them and there's a lot to think about what you see. And you could look at it for a long time. And I have people say to me all the time, "I don't get tired of your work, I have new ideas about your work, I suddenly noticed the rabbit the other day. Is that the same rabbit that's in" blah-blah-blah, you know? And it's, like, I had 31 photographs, and I had—this was my show that was only photographs. I had a photograph that had photographs of Marilyn Monroe on the floor in it, and I had one photograph where I was marrying Elvis Presley in this kind of, like, crypt. And Jerry wrote this thing that I was making photographs with celebrities.

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Laughs.] Oh, dear.

JANE HAMMOND: You know? And I almost wrote him and said, like, "Please, could you spend two more minutes doing your job?" You know? But I didn't. So, that can be frustrating, because I feel like you work so hard and that so many people have such a short attention span that if they're not already in your camp and they're not already going to give you the time of day, it's very hard to get the time of day from them. And although I haven't been treated badly by the press, I haven't had much that's really, um, kind of totally helped me that way. I mean, everything I have is just kind of like a little of this and a little of that. But I've never had, like, a—you know, a great review from Roberta Smith. You—you know yourself that can really change—if—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well—

JANE HAMMOND: —if you get that when you're—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —think of the opposite, how devastating a bad—

JANE HAMMOND: Oh, my God.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —review from Roberta Smith—

JANE HAMMOND: Oh, my Lord.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —could be.

JANE HAMMOND: She wrote this review once of David Reed. I think I would have died if that had happened to me. And it was mean, and it was personal. And, oh, it was horrible. I'll never forget it. Um, [00:58:00]so, I mean, Faye Hirsch, who's been very supportive of me—she put me on the cover of *Art on Paper* when she was there—wrote a piece about *Fallen* that had an inaccuracy in it. And I—and I called her up and said, "I'm going to have to write a letter to the editor. I hope you"—

JUDITH RICHARDS: We talked about that—

JANE HAMMOND: —"understand," right?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: And I did it. So, when people—when people have that copy, that thing, I say to them, "Please be sure and get the next one." That's the only thing where the factual error is really problematic to me. The Jerry Saltz thing just annoyed me as a matter of ego. I felt like, "Please, spend more time looking at my work, will you?"

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, talking about photography, I wanted to open that chapter and ask you how you began working with photography and—and start exploring that whole body of work.

JANE HAMMOND: Okay, so I had a little tiny—I mean, I have used photographs in a couple of prints. It's not the case that I've never used them before—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —or never taken them. But it's very minor. Um, and let's see what happened. What happened was I was making some scrapbooks, works on paper, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: This is around 2005 or a little before.

JANE HAMMOND: They came after the scrapbook print I made with ULAE.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay.

JANE HAMMOND: And eBay was now a force in the world.

JUDITH RICHARDS: The scrapbook was 2003. Oh, that's—

JANE HAMMOND: Okay.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —not the print. That—well, there's the work on [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, that is the print, I think.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I made these paper scrapbooks, and they had three or four or five pieces of paper on either side, and they were shaped like a book, although you couldn't actually turn the pages. It—the pages were—they were pages—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —as opposed to a drawing, which is usually on one piece of paper. And they had that shape that an [01:00:00] open book has. And they had a heterogeneity of images, not particularly connected to one another, which is something I also like. Many works of art, I do have—feature and traffic in a big connection of two or three things to each other that add up to something else. But sometimes, I have these pieces that are a—sort of, like, non-hierarchical, and they're just, like, a mini-lexicon. And the scrapbook is appealing to me in that way, because it's—it doesn't have to have any larger significance, necessarily, because it's—I don't know, it's cataloging every walk you took that day or whatever it is. So, I hatched this idea that I would use a lot of different media in the scrapbooks to make them feel more scrapbooky, and that maybe photography would be one of the media. So, I started searching on eBay for found photographs in about 20 categories, bears being the one I told you about, and ventriloquists and chickens and hands and rabbits and, I don't know, a bunch of things. As you know, they have to be nameable things, and it gets hard if you're searching for "shame," you know? They have to be—

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Laughs.] Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know, okay. So, um, so we turned up this bear photograph, which lead to another, which led to another, which led to another. And it was really funny. You buy these photographs on eBay, and the next thing, I bought 900 of them. I don't know, it was just, like, one thing led to another. And I was about to—I was supposedly having a painting show, so it was kind of, like, what the heck was I doing spending all this time amassing all these photographs? And it was clearly more photographs than I was going to use in scrapbooks. I only made, like, 10 scrapbooks or maybe 12 or something like that. But it was sort of addictive and it [01:02:00] was the right degree of, like, control and lack of control because, like, you think bear—

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JANE HAMMOND: —but then, you'd find a bear birthday cake or some other funny kind of bear that you hadn't thought about. And then, it would be a little surprising still when it came. It wasn't exactly what you thought it was when you saw it on the computer screen. So, um, I laid all these photographs out in various systems of organization. This is one of the things about my—my information. You have to organize it, but then, if you want to be open about what it means and how you're using it, then the criteria for that organization also shifts, and it isn't constant. So, I had the things in various piles, and the piles were shifting. And I had them all laid out like that game *Concentration*—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —okay? And then—have I told you this already?

JUDITH RICHARDS: I don't think so.

JANE HAMMOND: Okay. So, I would remember, like, this person was over here and this person [inaudible] were over there or whatever. And so, I—I went in to cook dinner, and I was cooking, and I saw a photograph in my head. And then, I went back in the studio to see if I was—I don't know what. I went back in the studio to check on the photograph. I don't know if I was thinking, well, what was in the upper right? Or am I remembering this correctly? Or was that woman really looking at the guy? I don't know what I was—why I went to check on it. But when I went to check on it, I could see immediately that the photograph I had in my head was a fiction, and I had braided it together from three or four photographs. So, I had the dog from this one with the woman from this one with the man from this one and the parking lot from that one. And I thought I want to do this.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: I want to make something that walks at you through the portal of the kind of verisimilitude [00:02:00] we associate with small black and white photography, but is actually fictional. So, this was, like, in December of 2004, I think, or maybe it was October, something like that. And I had a show in March of 2005, and that can be, like, a very good thing, because you can't be endlessly ruminative, and you have to trust your instincts.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I—I explained this idea to Craig McNeer, my partner. And Craig said, "Well, you know, when I worked at Science Faction," which was Craig's old job, "there was this guy—"

JUDITH RICHARDS: You said Science Faction?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, there was this guy who had a digital printing business on the fifth floor. So, in other words, we just started—we went to this guy, Philippe Laumont, and then we went from him to someone else, and then to someone else. And then, I remembered that Kathy Grove—a woman I went to grad school with in Madison—had told me at a party that she was making a living by photo retouching.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm. Is that Cathy with a C-a?

JANE HAMMOND: It's K-a-t-h-y.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay.

JANE HAMMOND: G-r-o-v-e. And she was a printmaker in Madison. And I could tell she was doing it at a pretty high level. I just—I don't know how, but I just—so, I suddenly remembered that. And all these people we'd been to so far, they were all kind of pitching you, 'cause they want the work. And they're all pitching me on making digital photographs. But I'm thinking it would be so much cooler if I could actually make, like, a real photograph—by that, I mean, like, a silver gelatin print or something. So, I called Kathy up, and I asked her if she could come down and I could explain to her what I wanted to do. And I just, like, hit the jackpot with her, because [00:04:00] it's, like, she was photo retouching. She knew both the analog and the digital versions of it. She knew how to make a digital negative. She knew Chuck Kelton, who's my printer, and worked closely with him. And she knew these people in Princeton, NJ, Taylor Photo, who have, like, a half a million-dollar scanner, and who make what's called the LVT negative, which is called—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm.

JANE HAMMOND: —which stands for light-valve transfer. It was like I stumbled on—you know, if I hadn't gone to that party, I think I could have figured this out eventually. But I wouldn't have met Kathy, who's an essential part of the success of my photographs. And I wouldn't have met this whole team of people who were gears that were already meshed into each other. And that's, like, really important. So, she also said that she would work on doing the retouching with me. And so, [00:05:00] I just started, you know? I make these folders—I worked for a time in my father's construction business, and he had those classic manila folders, and I used them—like, my whole life has been in these folders, you know? So, I had certain ideas for photographs, and I had them in these folders, and Kathy and I began working together. And after a time—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you sit next to her at her—

JANE HAMMOND: I sat—she came—she came—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah?

JANE HAMMOND: —over to my house. I've never been inside her house.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: And we sit very close together, as close as those two stools are.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And we work on the photographs for several hours at a time. Our methodology evolved, but by the fifth photograph, we had our system in place. And soon, it came to me—it occurred to me that I should make a collage. I didn't even make a collage—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Or a mon—would you say a montage?

JANE HAMMOND: —in the beginning. Well, a physical object that I can show her—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, okay.

JANE HAMMOND: —so I can say the guy goes [00:06:00] over here, the dog is facing this way, he's this big, it's

darker over here, the—you know, whatever.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: Take the shorts from this little boy and put it on this little boy.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, the images she's using are scans, digital scans of actual photographs that you have, whether they are reproductions from magazines or actual photographs you bought on eBay.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, they're—they're never from magazines. You wouldn't get good enough resolution. The—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, they're scans. You [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: She's working from scans.

JUDITH RICHARDS: High-resolution scans of those photographs.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay.

JANE HAMMOND: Very high-resolution scans.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: Um, on a very good scanner. And when I do them on my own scanner, there is only a small difference. But it is discernible to my eye, so—so what happens is now we—is—is our system is pretty much flowing. I make a paper collage on my Xerox machine, and if you looked at it, you'd say, "Oh, that's a photo collage," you know? It's sloppy. It's made with Scotch tape. It has writing on it, and every photograph has a number. So, like, you might see a woman, and she might be, like—the pants and shoes might be number 69, and the bodice and shirt might be number four, and the pin might be from another photograph, and her head might be someone else's. And she might be wearing a necklace that I made and photographed in the studio or something like that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And then, all of that's numbered on the collage so Kathy doesn't have to struggle to find these things. She gets the scan and it's kind of a diagram of how to build the initial thing.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And then, um, most of the time, after we start working in the digital phase, I will usually change something about my idea, 'cause it's—I don't [00:08:00] like it as much as I thought I liked it or—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know, whatever. And so, it's a combination for about the next month of me changing my mind about things or me being unable to decide about things, or me having a clear idea of what I want, but she's unable to get these babies really looking like they're lying on these lily pads, something like that. And, uh, she is wicked good. I mean, I don't think anybody else—if she can't do it, nobody can do it, you know? She's very good at this.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, it hasn't crossed your mind that maybe you could just do it all yourself. [Laughs.]

JANE HAMMOND: No, I—I wish I could, because I'd like to make a lot more photographs than I do, and I can't get her to work for me as much as I would like her to. But I think if I worked on it all day, every day, I couldn't acquire the Photoshop skills that she has. And the fact that she did analog hand painting photo retouching before that and the fact that she has an MFA in printmaking—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —it's a killer combination.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: You know? And there's something about the—we weren't even really friends in grad school, but there's something about the fact that we were in Madison at the same time in the same years—when I say something to her, she totally gets what I mean, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: It's a great partnership.

JANE HAMMOND: And when she makes suggestions to me, they're fantastic nine times out of 10. And if I say to her, like, "Well, you know, if you put the dog over here, he looks like he's waiting for the driver to come back. But if you put the dog over there, it looks like the girls are registering in the hotel and he's waiting for them to come"—like, she—she never says to me, "What do you mean?" or "What are you"—you know? Like, she knows completely what I'm talking about. It's very exciting to me. It's much more exciting for me than it is for her, 'cause it's my work, you know? [Laughs.]

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, you're paying her, though.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. But, um, so I just [00:10:00] lucked onto that combina—you know, I lucked onto her, and then Chuck Kelton, who's a printer uptown, on Union Square, who she introduced me to, who's a great printer—I mean, he's Danny Lyon's printer. He was Helen Levitt's printer. I mean, you know—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Wow.

JANE HAMMOND: —he's, you know—

JUDITH RICHARDS: He's over on the east side of Union Square?

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: I've heard of him.

JANE HAMMOND: And he is a beautiful human being. I mean, he is such a cool guy, and it is such a privilege to work with him. And he is so good at what he does that when we go up there and proof, you know, he'll have, like, nine versions of it, and then he—it's really interesting. When he brings it up in the dark room, he doesn't want to know anything about it. He doesn't want to see the collage ahead of time.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: He doesn't even want to know what he's looking at.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, he's not trying to match it to what he thinks you want.

JANE HAMMOND: No, and he has no—but then, when we go up there and proof, I'll say to him, "Now, Chuck, this is my mother, and she's very pregnant in this picture. But she doesn't look pregnant enough to me." So, then, he'll, like, dodge, you know—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh.

JANE HAMMOND: —or, you know, he'll, like—and I'll say to him, "And I remember that shirt she had on. That was a gold shirt. It was as gold as the gold on a wristwatch." So, then, like, he'll draw on—you know, like, that means something to him. And you—you know, we'll—and it's, like, one time, I made this—this photograph, and there was a clown in a funeral—a glass coach, like something you'd see in a fairy tale. And then, there was a priest leaving, and Chuck looked in—over on the left, and he said, "Now, Jane, if we lighten up this area here, the priest will have somewhere to go to." I mean, this is—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Wow.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know—do you [00:12:00] know what I mean? It was, like, such a good idea, you know? And when I had my show in Spain, that photograph was a double-page spread in *La Vanguardia*, which is the big newspaper in Barcelona. And I looked at it—I almost cried. I looked at it and I saw the priest going away and I was, like, ding-ding-ding! Chuck Kelton, you know? Like, it was such a good suggestion. So, that's one thing I've really enjoyed about the photography is that because I'm untrained and not expert, I've had a much more collaborative role with other people who are expert. And—and I got lucky that I got such good people. And so, it's been really fun. I—I've enjoyed that. The only thing I've had that's analogous to that before this is printmaking.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Now, what about the fact that it's all been black and white—

JANE HAMMOND: I see it as—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —photography?

JANE HAMMOND: —as—as two things. Well, three things. The idea came to me as black and white, so you got to

trust that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Because the images you collected on eBay were black and white.

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I think it's a lot of things. One is, I think I'm collecting the photography of my lifetime a little earlier and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know? So, that is largely black and white. Two, I'm really interested—you know, there's that William Carlos Williams poem—it goes, "So much depends upon a red wheelbarrow glazed with rain and a flock of white chickens"—or, it's something like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Do you remember the title of that poem?

JANE HAMMOND: No.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay, it's all right.

JANE HAMMOND: But anyhow, I made a photograph and I called it "So Much Depends" after that poem. But anyhow, the point is, Williams is celebrating the concrete particularity of things. And hum—implicitly humble things, right? And I really like that. And my [00:14:00] theory about color photography is that when people invented color, they traded resolution for color. And the stuff is very poorly resolved in the found vernacular color photographs from the '70s. It's like you're—you're swept away by the color, but you—you don't really know what fabric those curtains are. You don't really know whether the chair is Naugahyde or leather. You don't really see the woman's skin that well or whether her hair is straw-like or shiny or—do—do you know—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —what I'm saying?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Absolutely.

JANE HAMMOND: A lot—a world of haptic textural things has been given up. And I really love—it's, like, in some ways, I'm kind of falling out of love with my own imagination, and I really love the shared social world, the cultural world of this vernacular photography, you know? That you—you look out on this world of birthday parties and Christmas mornings and beach events, and you—you think, wow, my grandmother had a thermos like that. Or you think, I've seen those placemats before. Or, I had those bedroom curtains. I know how they move in the wind. I know what they feel like. My friend had them. You had them. Do—do you know what I'm saying?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: And all that stuff is there in black and white, and it disappears in color to me.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I really—sometimes Kathy and I work and I'll say to her, like, "I want the person to know that this is fur, and this fur is fake and this fur is real." Or, "that this is cardboard." Or, like, "this is cardboard, like, that's been reused. It's not like planar, like a cardboard box. It's, like, banged-up." Or—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —you know, like, "This tennis ball [00:16:00] looks too new." 'Cause all those things have a story and meaning in them.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Speaking about meaning, how does this size that you—the size of the photographs that you create relate to the meaning you're trying to convey? Because—

JANE HAMMOND: I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —they're relatively—not very small—

JANE HAMMOND: They're really small.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —but they're relatively small.

JANE HAMMOND: They're really small. And nowadays, people just go, like—people are so imbued with the idea that photography is supposed to be color and eight feet across that, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Less these days, I think.

JANE HAMMOND: I guess, but I've had so many people say to me, "Is this the real size of them? Or is this, like—[they laugh] where are the big ones?" Or, you know, like, "Is this really how big they are?" Or—it's funny. Um, I think black and white photography of that size seems more documentary or more factual or more filled with verisimilitude—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —and seems more like a record of something that actually was than big color photography.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And also, would you say touches the past in terms of—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —the history of documenting—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —photography.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yes, all those things. And I also feel—because I have made one photograph at the next size, 'cause I kind of wanted to see what that would look like.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And what happens for me, is, like, because the original kernels of information are in these small photographs, you could only blow them up so much and they start getting soft.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And then, I lose all that granularity I'm after.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, I don't think I have endless options, technically speaking. I think I have a proclivity towards having it be the size that it is. But I'm actually open to having it being a little bigger. I'm kind of—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, what's the—

JANE HAMMOND: —going to [ph] floor that. [00:18:00] And here's one—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —typical size right now?

JANE HAMMOND: —11-by-14. And as you probably—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —know longer than I've known it—is what 11-by-14 means is this photograph is printed on paper that's 11-by-14. The photograph itself could be six-by-seven—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: —eight-by-two, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And if you look closely at my photographs, you'll see that they're all different shapes—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —because I'm honoring the found-ed-ness of the original mother shot, which could be German film from the '30s or American film from the '60s or—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, different—

JANE HAMMOND: —the Brownie camera, or—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —proportions.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, totally different, so—and I feel like I'll always do that, 'cause I like that. I think that's a cool idea. But I—whatever the next size is—I guess it's 14-by-16—I'm kind of leaving myself that option. And photography is crazy. It's, like, you can make a photograph—I mean, 17 people have told me this: there's rules in each game. Like, there's rules in printmaking, right?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Well, there's rules in photography, and the rules in photography are: you can make your photographs an edition of X in this size, and then you can go to another size and make another edition, in another size, and do it all over again. And that's not even considered, like, bad.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: You couldn't begin to do that in printmaking.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, no, of course not.

JANE HAMMOND: You know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: You'd have to make the whole—remake the whole thing.

JANE HAMMOND: So, anyhow, um, so that's a whole option. That's a whole body of work that—

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you first show those photographs—I mean, did you talk to the gallery about this change in your work and—[laughs] were they totally shocked?

JANE HAMMOND: You know, one of the things—I mean, yeah, I—I mean, it's—I mentioned to Mary that I was making photographs quite late in the game. And I hung the whole long wall with the photographs. [00:20:00] And I would say tops on my list of things I like about Mary Sabbatino is she doesn't begin to tell you what to do. And maybe I could make a body of work that she wouldn't like. I never thought she was crazy about the rebus paintings. But, like, she's going to basically hang your work, it—do you know what I mean?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: 'Cause this is what you're doing.

JUDITH RICHARDS: She might think who do I know—who's—who am I going to sell it to? I mean, who—

JANE HAMMOND: Totally.

JUDITH RICHARDS: There's a change, and—

JANE HAMMOND: Totally.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —this is maybe going to be a different body of—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —collectors.

JANE HAMMOND: And maybe she—I don't know. But, in other words, I didn't ever feel like I couldn't do that, you know? And I think at this point, she knows that that's something that I appreciate about her. It would be hard for her not to know that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Sure.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, and Peter Galassi came to my opening and said he wanted to buy some. So, it's, like, there wasn't more than hours between that moment of hanging that body of work and some real substantial feedback.

JUDITH RICHARDS: From MoMA [Museum of Modern Art].

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I mean, you couldn't actually get more substantial feedback. Um, and to me, he said, "How come you didn't tell me you were making photography?" And I said, "I didn't tell anybody," [laughs] you know? Because I wasn't really confident I could pull it off. So, I didn't want to go around saying it, and I didn't—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Of course.

JANE HAMMOND: —know how long I'd be doing it for, and I didn't, you know, whatever. But anyhow, I hung—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —a whole wall of photographs in that show, and—and, you know, Mary went with it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, and that show was—what year was that show?

JANE HAMMOND: I think that was 2005.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, okay.

JANE HAMMOND: And I think—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —that's my point about having to not be—

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's right.

JANE HAMMOND: —so ruminative, is that, you know, I didn't make the—I didn't have the first [00:22:00] photograph going 'til—or finished, let's say, in Decem—in December. And I had the show in March.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Wow.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I got a lot more of Kathy's time in those days.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative]. And then, in the show that you did in 2008, was that, again—

JANE HAMMOND: That was all photographs.

JUDITH RICHARDS: All photographs.

JANE HAMMOND: And actually, that was Mary and Mark's idea. I jokingly said to them, "You want this—you like the subject 'cause there's a recession on." [They laugh.]

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, it was late '08.

JANE HAMMOND: It was, uh—I think the show I had was September 2008.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Uh-huh [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: Because the thing happened—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. That's right, right before that—

JANE HAMMOND: —right in the middle of it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: But anyhow, um, that was their idea.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, was it at that point, then—at what point did you stop working on the next body of work? The, um—

JANE HAMMOND: So—and then, I also made this—this—uh, some things—like, I made these really big photographs that were many, many snapshots—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —and then MoMA bought that piece. That was really a thrill. That was, like—that was super exciting for me. Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: That wasn't their first acquisition of your work, was it?

JANE HAMMOND: It was. Actually, what happened—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh!

JANE HAMMOND: —was Peter was going to come over to the studio and pick out some of the photographs he admired at the opening, the 11-by-14s. And he never—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, while—

JANE HAMMOND: —came over—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —they were hanging in the gallery, he was going to come to the studio?

JANE HAMMOND: While—while they're in the gallery, he said he was going to acquire some work. But he's a busy guy and he never got around to doing it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, he risked those that he wanted being sold to someone else.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, but they're in editions of five, and I had just start—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, I was [cross talk] going to ask you about that. That you decided to make—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah. I mean, it wasn't much of—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —editions of five.

JANE HAMMOND: To be honest with you, it wasn't much of a risk.

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Laughs.] Well, of course, I didn't—I didn't realize they were editions of five.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay.

JANE HAMMOND: So, anyhow—

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's a—and that number was—you just arrived at it—

JANE HAMMOND: I just kind of picked that—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —or Mary picked it?

JANE HAMMOND: I—I arrived at it by talking to various people. And I kind of wish it was a little bigger now. But anyhow, um, [00:24:00] for one reason or another, Peter didn't come over for quite a while. By the time he came over, I had made this big piece that was 110 altered snapshots. Found snapshots in which—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: —I had inserted myself in Photoshop into the lives of other people. And I called it *Album*, 'cause it was an assortment of gathered photographs.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And I named it, uh, after—a couple of the photographs had people's names in them. There were, like, a nurse's shot where it was her identity card or whatever, and I named them—so, I named them after those found people.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, by the time Peter came over, I'd made the first of those pieces at—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Do you remember the title—that was 2008?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I think it's called *Album Madeleine Tomani* [ph], and if you go to the MoMA website you'll see it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, Peter came over, and Craig actually showed him some c-prints that he had made of that big piece. And the big piece was down in Texas, at a museum show in San Antonio, at the McNay. And Peter looked at it and he said, "Let's bring that piece to MoMA when it comes back from Texas." Now, in the end, it didn't go to MoMA. It went to the gallery and Peter went to it, you know? And then, Peter said to Mary, "Jane and

I are friends, and I want all the other curators in the department to look at"—I think he was saying, you know, "I want to make sure I'm not being influenced by the fact that I know her and she's a friend of mine" or something like that. So, Susan Kismarec came down, Roxana Marcoci came down, Sarah Meister came down. I don't know—

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's quite an amazing—

JANE HAMMOND: One by one. So, I had to pass muster [00:26:00] with all these people.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Wow.

JANE HAMMOND: And I guess I did, because they acquired the piece. So, it was a bigger and more substantial acquisition than he had talked about in the beginning. And that was just—I don't know how these—you know, it just worked out that way. It was good. I was lucky.

JUDITH RICHARDS: It's fabulous.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, it was really good. So, that was such a vote of confidence from, really, the—the institution. And that's the most heavyweight photography institution and the big curator there, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's right.

JANE HAMMOND: So, it was really good.

JUDITH RICHARDS: As you kept working on that—those works, after the 2008 show, how did that evolve into the next body, the *Dazzle*—

JANE HAMMOND: Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —and was there some point where you wanted to—

JANE HAMMOND: Well, it was sort of a negative thing as much as it was a positive thing. I was—I was really thinking about photography all the time.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And I wanted to ask you, thinking about photography: were there—I mean, you can always read about Hartfield and other photographers who use photomontage when thinking about your work. How aware were you and how important were those other artists—

JANE HAMMOND: I know about those—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —from the past?

JANE HAMMOND: —people, you know? Hannah Höch and all those people. But, um, I never really thought about them once. And in some ways, I don't—of course, what I'm doing is—has—has a relationship to what we call photomontage. But I also think that photomontage has, behind the term, a set of assumptions that a photog—that a photograph is a record of one moment in time of things that are in a contiguous space with each other. And so, when your montaging, [00:28:00] you're bringing several of these together. But I think digital technology and the world that we're in now is like eliding these distinctions and redefining the nature of photography itself. And so, I actually—I call them photographs, 'cause I want to stress the unicity of their new oneness and their meld over their multi-partness.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: I could make them look a lot more collage-y than they are. Um, I could make them with manicure scissors and without Kathy Grove. But I kind of really like this idea that this man from 1930s is holding this woman from 1960 in his arms, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you're making the compositions, with her, with Kathy, you're creating some impossible spaces and some very readable spaces.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I'm always—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Are you—

JANE HAMMOND: —making—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Is there a balance that you're always aiming at, that you want it to be that—the space to be readable, or you always want there to be some point where someone says, "Oh, this is impossible."

JANE HAMMOND: I realize that they come out on different meter—they come out on different places on the plausibility meter. And, of course, with different people, they come out on—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —different places. But even with the same person, some of them are kind of—extremely plausible.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: If you didn't see them in the context of the others, you might think they were, quote, a regular photograph. And some of them are extremely implausible.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And it's fun to—sometimes the ones that are plausible, you spot little things, whether it's a time—where it's something is 30 years before another thing, or there's something you realize is—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —not plausible. But I'm just saying that the basic spatial—

JANE HAMMOND: But sometimes, also, the implausibility of some causes you to doubt things in the others [00:30:00] that are actually, quote, real things. Um, I enjoy that about them, but I enjoy that mixture of periodicity, place, blah-blah-blah. But I enjoy it about them after the fact. When I'm making them, I—I really am just dealing with—I have a photograph in my hand and I think, ah, this woman could be sewing his pants. And they're in this—I just sort of see this little play in my head, and I don't really think about is it plausible or not? It's plausible to me, 'cause it's engaging me in my mind, you know? And then—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —and then, when it starts getting made, I kind of think about, well, let's try to make this feel more like it's really there, let's try to make—if her hair is blowing, then his hair has to be blow—you know, those kinds of, like, forensic, almost things—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —that you think about. But I'm—I'm kind of willing to accept the general body of work—that some of it is quite fantastical and some of it is quite ordinary, and some of it's on a spectrum in between. And some of it's mixed with both in between.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And, um, I don't know, I'm not so worried about that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, I was—going back to the—I was asking about the transition to—to *Dazzle* and you said there were some negative elements.

JANE HAMMOND: Oh, yeah, yeah, good. You're good at getting us back on track. So—so, I'm really spending a lot of time and energy making the photographs, and then I'm spending a lot of time thinking about the photographs. Then I'm spending a lot of time collecting photographs. Then I'm spending a lot of time pawing through the photographs I've collected, 'cause that's a very good way of getting ideas for the photographs I want to make. Then, a lot of time onscreen, looking at other people's [00:32:00] photographs, looking at other collections of vernacular photographs, looking at what Kathy sent me that night, saying, like, "Do you like the dog this way or do you want him smaller? Please relocate the dog where you want him," you know, blah-blah-blah. It's a glassy, flowy, different kind of looking, and it's made me quite disinterested in making a big, thick oil painting. Like, very much so. Almost, like, you've been in Mexico three weeks and you do not want another Mexican meal. And it's, like, you're not confused about that. You want to go to McDonald's and get a burger. Like, do—do you know what I'm talking about?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: It's really clear. So, I'm, like, oh my God, what the hell am I going to do? And then, I've—I wanted to show in Paris, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: At Lelong.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, and Jean Frémon asked me if I could do a show of all butterfly maps at one point. And I—I didn't want to do that. So, I said I didn't want to do that, and I explained—he understood, but then I saw him

again and he said, "You know, I'd still like to do a show, and let's do a painting show" or whatever. And so, I just thought, wow, I can't say no to this twice in a row. It's too weird, you know? So, I agreed to do a painting show, knowing that I'm in this swivet [ph]—well, I'm not fully in it. I was really in it after I agreed to do the painting show.

JUDITH RICHARDS: But that kind of is a different approach than you said you had with Mary, where you would choose to do what you wanted and she would hang it and—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, I said to him I'd like to do a photography show—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —and he's telling you what to do.

JANE HAMMOND: —and he said, "We have no photography collectors."

JUDITH RICHARDS: A-ha.

JANE HAMMOND: So, um, yeah, I got myself in this kind [00:34:00] of, like, jam. And you're right. So, I had a show in May, and I would say that from about September 'til December, I just fumed and paced and agitated, and I didn't know what I was going to do. I made one—one idea—I had one idea, and I got some stretchers made for it. And I wasn't that into it, and I just—it was a mess. It's—it's not something I experience very often, where I'm, like—I don't know, it's like when you're riding a bike and you're in the wrong gear and the thing is, like, all slipping on you or something. It's horrible. And, um, and the clock is ticking, you know? And then, you have to be finished even more ahead of time when the show isn't right down the block, 'cause there has—it has to be dry and it has [inaudible].

JUDITH RICHARDS: Crated.

JANE HAMMOND: —oh, God. So, I'm—I'm sure I wasn't fun to live with, you know? And anyhow, I went to New York Central. I was buying paper. I always go over there myself and buy the paper myself, because I always get different paper every time, and I get ideas from seeing the paper. So, I can't send someone else over there. And, um, I saw the word mica on a drawer, and I played in a mica mine as a kid that was across the street from us in Connecticut. So, I could picture exactly what the walls of mica looked like in the mine. I had a very positive association with it. It's—it's pretty and glittery, but it's also mineral, you know? And so, I said to the woman, "What does that mean, mica? What—what do you have in that drawer?" And, um, she brought it out for me. I'm a good customer there, so, like, she, you know, got it out [00:36:00] and brought it in front of the window and brought it over and blah-blah-blah, and I bought it. And I brought it home and I said to Craig, "I don't know"—

JUDITH RICHARDS: How—how thick is that? Is it—

JANE HAMMOND: It's very thin. It's, like, a 16th of an inch, and it was a sheet that was, like, I don't know, maybe 30—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, it's—it's heavy—it's something that would be more equal to cardstock than paper.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, that's right. That's—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay.

JANE HAMMOND: —a good way of saying it. It's something that if you and I held a sheet of it and we both wiggled our hands, it would make a loud noise.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Almost like a—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay.

JANE HAMMOND: —thunder, so—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Is it actually mica through and through? Or is it mic—paper coated with mica?

JANE HAMMOND: It's mica through and through. It's not paper coated with mica, which I've actually used in the past, but I didn't really make the connection between those two things. It's a compound laminate of mica—like the way particleboard is a compound laminate of wood chips. And the mica is actually—it's a mineral. It's called a phyllosilicate, and phyllo is spelled like phyllo dough.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And what phyllo means is, like, plate-y layers, sheet-y layers.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: Okay?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: So, it's, like, a mineral that occurs in these sheet-y layers, and then they take the sheet-y layers apart and they spread it out like you would if you were making homemade—yeah, you know, particleboard. And then, they put, like, an epoxy on, and then they put more epoxy and more—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, what ends up happening with this mica sheet is that it is variegated, 'cause it's an artisanal product, it's more transparent over here than it is over here. And it's transparent and it's reflective—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: —and variably so, you know? So, it's—it's really beautiful, and it's kind of colorless, but it's also sort of, like, champagne-y, ash blonde-y kind of color.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Are they all that color? Or some more grey—

JANE HAMMOND: Ah, some of them—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —cooler.

JANE HAMMOND: —are different. I've sent for samples from [00:38:00] different people. And a few of the samples, I have just thought were awful looking. Like, I thought green, that'll be great, and then when the green came, it was just, like, horrendous. Um, but I came home with this material, and I said to Craig, "This is it. I have an idea here," you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: "Hooray," he said. [They laugh.]

JANE HAMMOND: So, I have this really great stretcher maker that I've worked with for years. You know, he made all the hand-shaped paintings and the foot-shaped paintings, the big Connecticut-shaped painting. Jeff Syman is his name. And I called Jeff up and I was, like, "Help me," you know? And so, he came in and we worked out a plexi-stretcher. I thought this is what I'm gon—I went to Canal Street and bought some plexi, and I wanted to make a transparent painting that wasn't completely—you think you want to make a transparent painting, but then if you have a sheet of glass in your hand, you—you don't want it that transparent, you know? You want it transparent, like, you're wading in the water and the water's clear and it's four feet deep and you can see the bottom, but you don't—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know.

JUDITH RICHARDS: But you know something's there.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. So—so, Jeff and I made four sets of stretchers and I made paintings out of each set, and I threw the paintings out. You—do you know what I mean? But I—I had a general sense—

JUDITH RICHARDS: But you knew—and were they all the same size, the same proportion?

JANE HAMMOND: No.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, you were trying out different—

JANE HAMMOND: They were just—I was just trying to figure out what it was that I was doing. I—I didn't even yet have the—I think I made some stretchers and some paintings before I even had any idea about imagery.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, I didn't really have, in the beginning, a clear idea about the dazzle board, about the part behind. But I wanted something to be behind. I—I think that I was trying to get at the feeling [00:40:00] of a computer screen, was one thing I was trying to get at, where the image is dematerialized and it's on the screen, in the screen, behind the screen, and where the hell is the image?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: You know? That feeling. It's much more ambiguous than the way the image is on the printed page of a magazine—and I think unconsciously, when Kathy and I work on the photos in the office, we're often switching places, because the image changes slightly depending on where your head is in relation to the screen. So, I think it's not an accident that I've created this thing that you move in front of and it changes, because I think I've been very influenced by that. And I think it's not an accident that it has a glassy quality and a shiny, liquid-y quality, because that's coming from the screen. And then, I think when the dazzle board thing got invented—and it got invented in a very kind of trial-and-error sort of way. I think, on some level, I was looking to make a photograph, you know? Something that was a cross between a photograph and a painting that wasn't, like, photorealism, which has been around for 20 years. You think I could make a better painting than—

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Laughs.] Forty—

JANE HAMMOND: —Richard Estes?

JUDITH RICHARDS: —years.

JANE HAMMOND: Doubtful, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: So, um, I think these things were all in the mix. They were all kind of what I was hunting for, but I didn't know it 'til I made it kind of, so to speak.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And so, I started putting things behind there, and I—I guess I thought of the silver Mylar right away, because that's what I had used in the print with Bud Shark. And I don't believe—before the print with Bud Shark, I don't believe I ever made anything with silver Mylar. And it wouldn't have appealed to me to do so, because it's, like—it's too silvery—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —you know? It's not something I would've ever wanted to draw on or something like that. Um, [00:42:00] but I started kind of, like, tying knots with it, and I started knitting it on big knitting needles and, like, forming it on, like, a cootie-catcher folding paper—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —kind of way, you know, folding it in different ways that it would have, like, faceted surfaces. 'Cause it—it quickly was obvious to me that when you just put plain old Mylar behind there, you just have a mirror. It's actually not very interesting.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I could see that there was something that—there was potential there, that it was—that it was rich, you know? And I love science, and I love the history of science. And I love reading about—you know, I've read several of the books on Galileo, for example—of, like, you know, a person makes an observation and then they make another observation and then they make some deductions about what those two things in tandem mean. And then, they go to the next level and—it's just one person with their own curiosity and their own sensory apparatus, and then they're trying things. And so, I—I never—I wanted to make it something that I could—could sort of do myself. I didn't want to have, like, a machine inside there, I didn't want it to plug in. I didn't want to hand it over to someone else and have it be really high-tech. I wanted to somehow see if I could make something work in this arena that was becoming an arena for me, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: It was gelling enough that—

JUDITH RICHARDS: At what point did you think about what would the images be? Was that at the very beginning, or—

JANE HAMMOND: In the beginning, I want—in the beginning, I had this idea that I was going to make a painting of these two snowmen on a raft drifting down a river. And I had made a collage like that. In the end, I've never made that—

JUDITH RICHARDS: A photo collage.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. In the end, I've [00:44:00] never made that painting, but—so, I knew the imagery was photographic.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-mm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, then the next step was when I got this material sort of working and I could see that I could paint on it and I thought it was going to be interesting, I thought, okay, now how am I going to translate the imagery in the photography to this medium? And how did this actually happen?

JUDITH RICHARDS: And you knew you'd use acrylic, because it would fit ready—best with the mica.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, oh, yeah, and I called—Golden is a paint manufacturer—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —and they have a fantastic tech department. And I called up there, and I got this woman, Sarah Sands. And I had five conversations with Sarah Sands, and I have pages of notes from each conversation. And she was, like, wildly helpful. She knew—usually, when you get these—I—there's so many people nowadays that don't know anything about their products, don't you find that?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: You go buy a pair of shoes and then you say, "How is this different from that?"

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: They have no idea.

JUDITH RICHARDS: You realize you know more than they do.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah! So, it's such a pleasure when you get someone who really knows about their thing, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: And you were concerned about archival issues, I'm sure. You don't want the paint to flake off or—

JANE HAMMOND: I was concerned about archival issues, I was concerned about what—what I could put on the—you know, like, I was looking for the right varnish. That's not the right word, but—to put on at the end—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Sealer?

JANE HAMMOND: —that would sort of seal and consolidate the surface and marry the paint in with it and keep this shiny look. And then, I was looking for something to add to the paint that would make it grab onto a nonporous surface, that—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Had you—had you worked with metallic leaf, the gold leaf and filigree—?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I'd worked with gold leaf.

JUDITH RICHARDS: You've done those before.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, you knew how they might combine with the paint.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: But the mica—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —was a different—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. The mica and—and I haven't worked all that much with acryl—it's not like I'm someone who made acrylic paintings, you know? I really made oil paintings. Some of them have some acrylic component to them, but—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [00:46:00]

JANE HAMMOND: So, anyhow, I—I really consulted with her, and then Craig is really good, you know, like, he is—so, then New York Central stopped carrying mica, and they wouldn't tell me who the supplier was—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Wow.

JANE HAMMOND: —which was kind of weird. But—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Very.

JANE HAMMOND: —you—again, like, you can't do this in this world.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right, just go on the internet.

JANE HAMMOND: You only go to the internet, you know? So, it's, like, what's the point? So, anyhow, Craig was really good at calling all these people and he called this woman who made the lamps in California, and he found these mica suppliers—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, lampshades, mm.

JANE HAMMOND: And he found—mission-style lampshades are frequently made with mica.

JUDITH RICHARDS: I've seen that, yes

JANE HAMMOND: And then, we found this crazy Russian guy and we went to see him. And, um, so we're moving on all, uh, on all tracks at once, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: You had a deadline.

JANE HAMMOND: The stretcher, you know, the mica, the paint, and the photographic imagery. So, the photographic imagery, what happened was, I called up—Wynn Kramarsky is a really close friend of mine and, you know, one of the—probably the best person I've ever met—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Nicest—

JANE HAMMOND: —in my life.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: You know, like, they broke the mold when they made Wynn, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —so, Michael Randazzo works for Wynn. And Michael will help—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Could you tell me his last name again?

JANE HAMMOND: Randazzo, R-a-n-d-a-z-z-o. And I feel totally comfortable calling Michael and asking him to help me with something, because I know Wynn would want him to help me, do you know what I'm saying? So, Michael helped me with some other digital matter, 'cause he taught digital something or other at Parsons at one point in time. So, I said, "Michael, I have this thing I want to do, and I need to find someone that knows how to do" X, Y, and Z. I could barely describe what X, Y, and Z was. And I—I [00:48:00] didn't want to get Kathy involved in it, because I didn't want it to take away from my photographs. I'm—I'm already, like, maxed out with her. So, um, I said—so, Michael put me in to—charge—in touch with a guy named Ori Kleiner, who I think is the head of digital media at Parsons. I'm not really sure, but he gave me his email. And I wrote Ori Kleiner, whom I've never met, to this day, and I said, "I'm looking to convert vernacular snapshots into what I think is vector-oriented line art." In other words, not something that looks like a Warhol silkscreen and not something that's pixelated, but something that has a more linear quality about it. Not as empty as a coloring book, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —you know? I tried—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —to explain, in my own layman's terms, what I was looking for. And he said, "You should use Jamus Marquette, and he put me in touch with Jamus.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Jamus Marquette.

JANE HAMMOND: So—

JUDITH RICHARDS: How do you spell that?

JANE HAMMOND: Like—like Marquette University, I think.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I wrote Jamus and I gave a longer, more wordy version of what I just said to you. And then, he came back with a bunch of questions. His questions were really almost too sophisticated for me, you know? And so, I said to him, "Why don't you try 25 versions? We're going from this to this. Or 10 versions or something. Try something," basically is what I said to him, "and I'll tell you warmer and cooler," you—do you know? So—so, he tried a bunch of things. I mean, one of the things that's very cool about this in my mind is I've never laid eyes on Jamus Marquette. And, um, and he was close right off the [00:50:00] bat. And then, he said, "I think we can get closer if we buy this filter," which was a filter that you put on Adobe Photoshop; you know how you can adapt the program. So, we bought the filter and he was right, it was better. And then, I realized that what I—so, now what I do is I give him an image and he makes about, like, 13 versions of the image, that—I looked at one the other day. And then, I say to him, "I like the opened-up woman's face in version four," but I like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Sneezes.] Excuse me.

JANE HAMMOND: —the dark foliage in version six. And I like the guy better in version three. And so, we—it's sort of like a little bit of a collage that—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —goes on and, uh, and then eventually, one of those images becomes the painting. And sometimes, I go back and forth with Jamus three times, and sometimes he's very close right off the bat. And sometimes, the quote "found photograph" that the painting is based on is actually a fiction, because what I've done is I've taken this woman and this man on this diving board, because I love her bathing suit and I think it's going to sort out great in this computer program—but I've changed her head for this other woman, 'cause I like the fact that she has a turban. And I've changed the guy altogether, because I want a guy that's not so fat, or standing closer, or—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. When you were making this body of work for this show, were you thinking of—could you think about relationships between and among all the pieces in the show as—as some sort of connected narrative? Or was that just impossible? You had to do one work and get that right and then the second one—

JANE HAMMOND: I started with a few things, and it was really interesting, because I [00:52:00] still can't completely choose—in other words, maybe I've made, I don't know, let's say 18 of these *Dazzle* paintings. I've had Jamus make 65 images, because it's very hard for me to completely guess how—some things turn out surprisingly great, and some things are not—it's a great photograph, but it doesn't make a great painting. It's—it's the way the computer hunts out the information.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: It distills it to something that's very graphic. And you—you have to guess that that distillation is going to be, but you don't completely know it 'til you see it. Like, you could have a chain-link fence in the photograph, and it's not that high contrast. But, like—and it's not that interesting. But then, it looks great once it's passed through this—it's this fantastic pattern, far better than you would have thought, you know? Um, and then other things like faces can get really stupid looking and you don't like them at all.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, um, so in answer to your question—

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JUDITH RICHARDS: This is Judith Richards, interviewing Jane Hammond, uh, in New York on May 24th, 2012, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, disc six.

JANE HAMMOND: So, where was I? I was saying—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Uh, you were talking—

JANE HAMMOND: Oh, I know what happened. So—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —first I just made several paintings, because it was hard enough to find a photograph that I thought was interesting enough. And it has to be sort of complete as a photograph. I'm not collaging that much with these, so it's not—it's a different criteria, really, than the photographs I collect for the photography where I could buy something just 'cause I like the Coke bottle on the table and figure I'll put that Coke bottle in with 30 other photographs to something else, but—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right, right. Well, like, there's one called *Shooting Lesson* [title later changed to *Alcohol, Firearms, and Tobacco* - JH], I think, I wrote [inaudible].

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I mean, that—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —a woman with a rifle on the porch—and did all that—was that a real—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yes, yes, that is a real photograph. Um, that is a real photograph, and it's—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, you're saying most of these photographs, most of the images in the—this body of work, in the *Dazzle* paintings are actually single photographs?

JANE HAMMOND: Most of them are single photographs, and for that reason, because I want to take this photograph and make it into a painting, and then I'm going to change it substantially, it's actually very hard to find these photographs. I mean, everyone is kind of, like, "Well, you must have millions of them by now," 'cause I have tons of photographs. And I'm constantly going through them and seeing what I can make into a *Dazzle* painting. It's not very many. I mean, the—the vast majority of vernacular photographs are banal.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: You know? Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, there has to be enough to tell a story—there to be a narrative. All the omens have to be strong enough to survive this computer—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —system that—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —transforms it. [00:02:00]

JANE HAMMOND: And there has to be some kind of, like—I mean, they're not all that edgy or anything, but there has to be some frisson of something in it that I can smell, that I'm interested in, that's, like—I don't know what adjectives to ascribe to it. It's a little sexy, it's a little dangerous, it's a little—it's got a complexity. Like in *The Shooting Lesson*, you know—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —it's, like, she's got high heels and a pocketbook, he's smoking a cigarette. She's shooting a gun. She's not really shooting a gun. She's getting a lesson on how to shoot a gun. I mean, it's got a lot of—it's freighted with a lot of—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: —sexuality, danger, manners, convention.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Going through the process of trying to find these images, as you said, it's difficult. And since you're putting through this system which could change a color photograph to black and white in addition, did it ever cross your mind to take photographs yourself and use your own photographs?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah—yes, and it has more crossed my mind as I get—I think these paintings are going to get somewhat more complicated and more combinatorial. And then, when they get more combinatorial—like, I have this nice, sexy girl on a swing, but I'm, like, eh, she's kind of boring. So, then I thought, well, like, well, what happens if I give her that camel mask I have in the studio? Or, you know, something like that. So, um—and I had this idea the other day, I want to make some photo booth pictures. Like, a strip of, like, four of them. And I

thought, well, okay, I'll do, like, Andy Warhol, and he'll be trying on a Mao mask or something like that, you know? So, I think—I'm not sure how the—how the non—first one—you know, like how—how it'll develop. I mean, that's part of the fun of it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: But I wanted to say—

JUDITH RICHARDS: But this show itself, you couldn't have conceived at—of—as you were working on them, what you're saying, you know, you couldn't imagine—

JANE HAMMOND: I didn't have a concept for the show—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —that a whole show had a certain concept—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I—I couldn't—I couldn't [00:04:00] kind of go there, because I was so busy, like, trying to make three paintings I liked—to try to find the photographs for them, whatever. But then, at a certain, well, moment in time, I remember saying to Craig, "Wow, I'm going to have to call my show *To the Lifeboats*, 'cause it's all women and children," you know? It's, like, that's what I had. And so, at a certain moment, I was kind of, like, God, I got to find a man, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: That's interesting. Does that—is that—

JANE HAMMOND: I don't know.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —related to—

JANE HAMMOND: I didn't want it to just be—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —the vernacular photographs, that most of the photographers were men photographing women and children? Or is it you just picked those?

JANE HAMMOND: I don't know the answer to that.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm.

JANE HAMMOND: I don't know what the association was with gender in the beginning. I certainly know in my own family, my mother was the photographer. Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, anyway, I don't—yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —but I think there is—there are very interesting gender issues in vernacular photography of all kinds. I mean, for example, there's lots of photographs of men taking pictures of their girlfriend, and men taking pictures of their girlfriend naked. Now, I've never found any photographs of the girl taking the pictures of her boyfriend naked, you—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —that I can think of right now, off the top of my head. And I'm not talking about professionals or—like, there's—you come across all kinds of pin-ups or all kinds of, like—you know, it's not really that good, but it is professional. But there's a lot of, like, intimate gendered photography.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And, of course, there's a lot of photographs of children, and a lot of them are taken by women, I would say, but not all. Anyhow, for whatever reason, I didn't want it to be only women and children. I—another time, I might think that was a good idea.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And, you know, at first I thought, oh, God, my photographs, I have too many children. Now, I'm, like, the hell with it. Just let it be what it is, you know what I mean? So, anyhow, [00:06:00] at a certain point, I thought a little bit about the show, but I didn't really have, like, a concept, because I kind of felt like the real meat of the show, for me, was the nature of the *Dazzle* paintings themselves and the nature of the experience they bring to you. That is somewhat inhabited and altered and enriched by the image and the vernacularity of the image, the Americanness of the image, the periodicity of the image. But the thing I like about them is—like, I called the show *Light Now*, because I thought it was sort of a pun on "right now". But

because it's, like, actualizing the photograph. The photograph might be 50 years old. But, like, it's actually being—you're having an experience with the photograph, because the photograph's been transformed into the painting and the painting is gleaming at you right now, in this moment, in this time. And it's actually even unfolding in time in an almost cinematic way, 'cause you have to roam around and look at it in time, and move before it. So, it's kind of re-actualizing the frozen moment that was plucked out of a stream of moments 50 years ago and making it ambulatory and unfolding and actual right now. To me, more than something about the subjects of the paintings, that's the subject of the work, or that's the most interesting thing about it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: It—it sounds like you experimented until you found the right combination and procedures that you needed to use—the elements, the mica, the silver-gold-copper, the leaf—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —and then, [00:08:00] they were all made in the same way. Or did you—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —no, okay. You didn't stop halfway and say, "Oh, you know, I'm going to change this a bit"? You found the right—quote unquote, the right—

JANE HAMMOND: I think—yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —way to do it, and—that would give you the image that you wanted, and then—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, I mean—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —you were able to—

JANE HAMMOND: —that's somewhat true. Now, in actuality, I'm still fine-tuning the technique, and no two paintings have been made the same way. But only Shelley and I would know that, I think.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, there haven't been any substantial—there weren't, in the body of work, any substantial, uh, uh, evolution that was going on in the way you made it?

JANE HAMMOND: No, but, I mean, I think there's certain things like—the *Dazzle* paintings traffic in time. Like, you know—like, I think time is, like, a big thing that they address.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, like, when you have a painting of a father throwing his little girl in the air—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Which is *Girl in the Air*, right?

JANE HAMMOND: Right. That's different than if you have a painting of a man posing with a bow and arrow in front of a target, who—the man is stationary, the target is stationary. So, the subjects have two different relationships to time. One is this thing that photography does so well, which is to capture a moment. You couldn't even really see that if you were standing there. It's only the camera that sees that, you know? And then—so, the relationship of that moment to these moments is different than, you know—like, I feel like I still have ahead of me probing the rich terrain of what is the right sub—what are right photographs for this technique, and how can this—or this, um, way of making paintings, of—that [00:10:00]—like. I think it can—can be richer and deeper and bigger than it's been so far, even, you know? I think it's going to unfold in very interesting ways. Like, for example, the photo booth carries with it the assumptions—the associations of a flashbulb.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: You know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So, the—so, the dazzling experience will call up memories of that in a way that the girl in the air—you might think about sunlight or—you know what I'm saying? It—it'll be diff—it'll be different. And so—and I think there's—there's some kinds of photographs that have a strong implication of the photographer. Like, the photographer's shadow is in the photograph or something like that, and that—I mean, there's just—I'm just

getting started with this is how it feels to me. And there's all kinds of, I think, interesting ways in which it can unfold.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, since you did that show in—last year, 2011—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, in the fall.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —do you—do you expect that—you've continued with that body of work.

JANE HAMMOND: I've continued with this body of work.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Although you said you also want to work with the photographer on photographs.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I—I'm continuing with the photographs and I'm continuing with the *Dazzle* paintings. I don't think it's going to put an end to everything. I mean, I'm making these costumes right now for photographs. I'm making a photograph right now of a man judging a contest of other men dressed as birds.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And you said you're making a costume?

JANE HAMMOND: And I've made two bird costumes. They're—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, like, you're not just using the found photographs for once.

JANE HAMMOND: No, I got into some set-up photography right from the start, because there are some things it's just easier to set 'em up than to go out looking for 'em. And then, I got into some kind of documentary photography right from the start because, like, I was making [00:12:00] this thing and I had—I needed all this pavement and it's, like—I'm, like, running around, killing myself trying to look for photographs where there's a little pavement at the right angle. And then, all of a sudden, I'm thinking I live in a world of pavement. There's pavement all over the place. Why don't I just go out there and take pictures? The roads in SoHo are like a collage, you know? So, then I started taking all the pavement pictures and I used that in the—now, that is like a scene—you wouldn't know that, you know? But—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And if you take a picture of four square feet of pavement, you could digitally make it multiplied, right?

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. Although—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And create your own large expanse.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yes, although when you clone things—you can clone things like this floor. But when you clone this plant to make it look like the leaves are growing over here, too, your eye picks that out so fast it's unbelievable. It's really inter—it's like pattern recognition. You're hardwired for it, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: It's how you tell the poison berry from the non—I don't know what it is, but it's, like, you can pick it out so easily, it's crazy. But right away, I got into it in small ways, you know? Like Kathy would say to me, "Well, I can't work with this girl's skirt. It's all blown out." So, then I made a skirt, you know? I kind of sewed it—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And you took a photograph—

JANE HAMMOND: And then, I put it on this mannequin, which happened to have—'cause I thought I would sew some clothes, which I've never done. And then, I took a picture of it, and then I sent it to her and I said, "Well, how's this skirt?" She said, "Oh, that's"—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Did you take a black and white picture?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. No, I took a digital picture—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, that you make, yeah, yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And Craig turns it into a black and white picture.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So, I mean, at first it was just little things like that. Oh, I think I'll put a tennis ball on the ground, or, you know, or this guy should be living in the back room. And he's working, and he's washing his shirt. So, I washed a shirt of Craig's and hung it off a clothesline and, you know, and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, then it's just getting a little bit more elaborate, [00:14:00] I guess, is what you'd say.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, as you're—so, are you then developing these two bodies of work simultaneously, would you say?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, pretty much, because the photography—well, first of all, I'm kind of hooked on collecting photographs. I think it's really fun.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Still going, huh?

JANE HAMMOND: And, uh, and I've entered this whole sub-world of, like, vernacular collectors, you know? I've made a bunch of new friends and, you know—and, um, I'm really good friends with this guy, Peter Cohen, whose collection was shown at MoMA. And I met Peter because I was bidding against him online. And I was bidding against him over and over and over.

JUDITH RICHARDS: How did you know that?

JANE HAMMOND: It was the early days of eBay, where they let you see who you were bidding against.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Ah-ha.

JANE HAMMOND: And his email had the word village in it. And I said to Craig, "The Village." I said, "Village is the Village, and there's only one Village in America, and that's Greenwich Village and this guy's a New Yorker." And Craig was, like, "You know, I bet you're right." And I—and I said, "Why don't you write him and see if we can collude?" So, Craig writes him. And, of course, nowadays he can Google me, you know what I mean? So, it's, like, he has some info. So, Craig wrote Peter and Peter said, "Call me." So, yeah, he lives on 11th Street.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh my God.

JANE HAMMOND: You know? And so, Craig and Peter were on the phone for an hour. And then, Craig came back into the studio and he said, "We have a date with this guy. His name is Peter Cohen, he lives on 11th Street, we're going over there Thursday at four." So, Thursday at four, we go over there. I have $600 in cash on me, because I figure if he's going to—we're basically saying to him "I don't have to own these photographs. I'm really just interested in the information"—[00:16:00]

JUDITH RICHARDS: You just want to scan it.

JANE HAMMOND: —and the scan.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: "So, let's not drive the price up, because we're bidding against each other." You can see why eBay forbade this after a while, right? Because they're losing out on money, because I'm, you know, colluding. It's probably illegal, but I don't care. But anyhow—

JUDITH RICHARDS: But not really. You're finding someone who wants to buy something. You just want to borrow it.

JANE HAMMOND: I'm finding my competition and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: I guess so.

JANE HAMMOND: —cutting eBay out of the benefit of them having an auction. So, I said to Peter, you know, "Like, I could borrow photographs from you. I could let you have them and I'll borrow them from you, and I'll pay you to borrow them. Or, you could let me have them and I'll use them for a while and eventually give them to you for your coll—you know, like, let's get together on this." So, we got out to Peter's, I have my money with me, you know? And I brought a catalogue, so—and Peter's, like, super nice. I mean, he's the only man I've ever met online, you know, and he's, like, a charming, wonderful, generous—you know, I adore him. So, anyhow, we stay for hours, he gives us 6—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Had he known your work?

JANE HAMMOND: I don't think so, but I'm not totally sure. But I'm sure by the time we got there he knew it. He gives us 63 photos. He makes tea for us. He won't take a dollar. When I bring out my money, he's, like, "What are you, crazy?" I mean, you know. So, I mean, I've borrowed hundreds of photographs from him. We go to the

flea market in Allentown, Pennsylvania together. I mean, you know, and I've met this whole other world. He took me to the flea market and introduced me to all these people, and then he knew all the sellers online. And, you know, he really kind of helped me. So, it's been sort of a fun world. I have some people that pick for me. Like, this woman, Stacy, up in Northampton, and then she comes down and she'll bring boxes of photos. And then, I have Peter come over to the house, and then she shows the photos to me and Peter.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: So, it's like she's picking for us.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: I mean, she's picking for other people, too, [00:18:00] but, you know, she has an eye, so it's good.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, she just marks up the photographs that—she takes a cut or—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, and she, um, she sells online, too. She has a website; it's called House of Mirth.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, but—and then, I've gone to flea markets in California and I've met the people that show there. And then, I've gone and looked them up at their house and their garages. And, as you can imagine, it's a funky group of people, by and large. Um, but it's interesting.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. What—what do you think—how are—what are your current concerns or issues that you're dealing with that might be different than the ones you were looking at—thinking about that—when you first did the *Dazzle* show, those paintings, now that you're working on these? I'm thinking of just the dazzle rather than the photographs.

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I—I was trying to explain it to Craig the other night. I—I think—I want something—I'm very happy to make a few more paintings that are very similar to what I have made, 'cause I feel like I'm just getting started. But it's challenging to find photographs that live up to what I want for the *Dazzle* paintings, that they—that they have enough edge or enough significance or enough clarity or enough—I don't know what noun to put in the sentence. But it's, like—it's a challenge to find it, and I don't know whether the answer, as you suggested a minute ago, is I'm going to make more of it, I'm going to take the photographs, or do more adding—do more where it's an altered found photograph, you know, that I've, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative]. I mean, not using the found photograph at all would be a major change—[00:20:00]

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, now, see, when you find, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —conceptually to your work.

JANE HAMMOND: —if you remember my show, there was one painting of two men facing each other, and they're each pretending—they each have a noose around their neck and they're each pulling the noose of the—they're each pretending to kind of hang the other person. Now, I couldn't have thought that up or staged it exactly as well as that—as I found it. But I've never found another photograph like that, and I don't own 10 photographs as good as that. I don't even—I mean, that—that was such, I thought, a perfect image for—I just—I love that image. It's funny, it's sexual, it's dark. It's aristocratic, or—you know, they somehow look like—sort of like Gatsby-esque. I mean, it's just got all this sociology embedded in it. And yet, it's kind of casual at the same time. It doesn't trumpet its significance in the way that if I did a painting like that, it would. And that filter of the content, that it's coming from a found thing, is, like, it's very appealing to me. It's, like, whose ego are we talking about here? Theirs? The photographer's? Mine? The muddiness of that is interesting to me. It's more interesting to me than me doing a painting of it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: And so, I think, in the future, finding those—I think it's, like, maybe you're, like, a director, and you have a great script and you have to find the right actor. And it's, like, if you don't find the right actor, your movie dies.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: So, it's—it's something—it's some kind of casting call kind of, like, problem. [00:22:00] I feel like I've got this potential now with these paintings, but it's—it's more challenging to find the right photographs

than I actually thought it was in the beginning. But it's a good thing sometimes that you don't understand all the problems that you have. I'm like a jumper-inner. I had no idea how much work *Fallen* would be.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm, oh, yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: I mean, none. But in a way, it's good that I have that quality, or I wouldn't jump in.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. Thinking about not knowing ahead, I—you once said that, speaking about the process of doing your work, that when things go well, there's more there than you even—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —know there is.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Um, and later you find out and that's one of the most interesting parts that you can't anticipate in advance.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Or you can't really know—

JANE HAMMOND: I mean, you know that famous lecture that Duchamp gave? It's, like, called "The Creative Act" or something? I mean, like, when you—when things are going well, you're doing more than you're aware you're doing. And so, when it all comes together well, you've tapped into something that has synergisms. You don't even really know, like, was I the author of that? Did I know that all along? You know what I mean? Or did some—you're—a lot of it is unconscious.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Um, just skipping for a second, uh, before we get—

JANE HAMMOND: It's, like, I read cookbooks all the time, and I read, you know, recipes all the time. And then, I cook dinner. Like, I'm usually not following a recipe. And sometimes, I have the feeling that I've invented this. But I think I haven't really invented it. I read about it and I'm sort of collaging half of this recipe—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, absolutely.

JANE HAMMOND: —do you know what I mean?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: But I don't even know when I—when I'm original and when—you know—do you know what I mean? Like, I don't know whose ideas are whose. They're all sort of in the [00:24:00] air.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, and the thing with the photographs is crazy, because you have no idea what you're going to find.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. That's one of the wonderful things about working with the found photographs that obviously would be totally different if you were taking your own photographs. And you'd be stepping into the territory of all of the artists who do set-up photography—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —that they—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, totally.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, that's a—now, speaking of other artists, I wanted to ask you: are there—do you find yourself looking at photography more than you used to, and—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, but I never—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —what are the—

JANE HAMMOND: —looked at it at all.

JUDITH RICHARDS: What are some of the things—if—when you go out to—you take time to go to galleries or museums, what are you looking—

JANE HAMMOND: Not as much as I should. But, yeah, I mean, I paid no attention to photography, and I'm old enough that when I grew up—when I went to graduate school, photography was, like, ceramics. It was, like, jewelry.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: It was, like, really—what's the word I want? Marginalized, or, you know, whatever.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And it was only black and white.

JANE HAMMOND: Was only black and white, but it just didn't seem important.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: And—I mean, that's certainly been one of the biggest changes in our lifetime, right, is the dominion of the photographic image. I mean, no—

JUDITH RICHARDS: There's still—

JANE HAMMOND: —field has grown in stature more than photography.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative], true.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, so, yes, I have looked a lot more at photography. I'm much more interested in photography, and when we travel or something, I'm, like, totally interested in going to see—we saw this show in Paris of a photographer. Oh, I—I can't give you his full name. I believe it's, like, M-O-N-A-I. It's sounds like money when you say it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And he took photographs of Paris, and the—it's so fabulous, 'cause, like, you get to see Paris, [00:26:00] you get to see what it was like then. You get to see his vision, you get to see—I mean, it was just fascinating. Um, yeah, yeah, I like looking at it. I'm not that wildly interested in—like, Andreas Gursky, I understand why people are so ravished by it, but I'm not. I don't find it that interesting.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: And I wouldn't want to live with one, because I feel like it would look the same to me every day. But obviously, this is a minority opinion, you know? [Laughs.] But, yeah, I find it interesting. I mean, I—I just bought the Francesca Woodman catalogue and I really love those photographs. I think they're—

JUDITH RICHARDS: It's the show at the Guggenheim?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, I think they're terrific. And, um, uh, we went to the Brassaï show, and that was fascinating to me on millions of levels. I mean, my sister-in-law lived through the Cultural Revolution, and she's told me all these stories about—like, one day, we were in Nantucket, and somebody left the front door open and the house filled up with flies. And then, I started swatting the flies. And she was, like, "Jane, watch me. I know how to swat flies." Well, Mao had this thing: you were supposed to swat 1,000 flies a day. And she actually did it. And Cartier-Bresson had these pictures that showed some of these tasks of killing mosquitos, killing flies, you know, that—that the Chinese were doing during the Cultural Revolution. So, it just—this is the thing that photography can do. It's, like—because I knew Yafei and because I'd heard her stories about swatting flies—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —then I could look at that [00:28:00] picture and bring all these other people's stories and all these things I'd read to the picture, and it was so interesting to me in this shared cultural, big, super personal way.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. When you go to museums and galleries, are you mainly looking at older work or more cont—or your contemp—very new work or—

JANE HAMMOND: I'm looking at contemporary work a lot. I mean, I went to Cindy's opening at MoMA and I loved it, and I thought it was really great and I was happy for her. Really, genuinely very happy for her. Um, but I'm—if you had a lot of artists—if you had, like, all the people on the Skowhegan board that I'm governors with, and you started talking about what shows you've seen, I would be getting a D-minus, because everyone el—I—I just don't make—I'm not proud of it, but I'm not ashamed of it, either. I just don't go out to galleries that much, and—for whatever reason.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Do you—we talked—we've—

JANE HAMMOND: We went to the Met the other day 'cause I really wanted to see that room from Damascus.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: I had a bee in my bonnet about that. I don't know.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Uh, in the early part of this interview, we talked about your friends, artist friends. And, um, we haven't talked about that much since then. Has—

JANE HAMMOND: I don't have any friends. [They laugh.]

JUDITH RICHARDS: I mean, it's very—it's very usual that as artists get older and they're—more and more time spent on their work and they have less time, somehow. They have less time. They're actually seeing friends less. Uh, do you—

JANE HAMMOND: I think that's true. I don't think it's just about [00:30:00] less time, though. I think it's, like, when you're young, you're, like, networking.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, support net—support—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —system.

JANE HAMMOND: And then, when you get older, you have so many networks you're already enmeshed in that—I mean, I don't even remember when I met you, but I think it was the ICI print portfolio—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Or maybe the show you were in before that.

JANE HAMMOND: Whatever. But in other words, like, you can't—a lot of people—people say to me, what—how did you meet so-and-so? When did you meet so-and-so? Shelley asked me that about someone the other day. It's, like, I can't even remember when I met that person.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative]. I—I guess my main point is have there been any new, important relationships with artists?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, Peter Cohen—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh.

JANE HAMMOND: —is a good example.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: He's not an artist, but that's a new, important relationship.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, central to your work, for sure.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. And, um, and he's a lot of fun, too, so it's made it—it's made the whole thing about collecting vernacular photography more fun. And then, we also strategize about it together. Like, should we go to Seattle? Should we call Mike Fairly [ph] and see—should we tell him we're coming to Sea—you know, like—you know, we—we discuss these things.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Comrades.

JANE HAMMOND: Who knows anybody in Belgium, you know, that kind of thing.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, now that you—now, when you're buying photographs, they could come from anywhere in the world.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, but some places are better than others. For example, when I was buying photographs here, time and time again, I chose the photograph, turned it over, and found out it was German. And that's because they had such good lenses. It wasn't some German subject I was drawn to. It was grass; it was just, like —

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: —every blade is, like, defined, you know? Because they—especially if the photograph is a little on the older side, they dominated the lens business, right?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. Um—[00:32:00]

JANE HAMMOND: So, I said to Craig—then I went to Spain, and I met this woman, Annette Gentz, and she'd seen my—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Tell me her name again?

JANE HAMMOND: Annette Gentz. A-n-n-e-t-t-e G-e-n-t-z. Now, Annette and I were at this party—I don't really speak Spanish. We were at this party—I had a cold, and no one else spoke English. And Craig and I have this idea that it's stupid to go to a party in Spain and talk to each other. We can talk to each other here, you know? So, I kind of attached myself to this woman, because she was German and she spoke really good English. Then, I could see that she was very intelligent. And she said that she managed some new musicians. In other words, like, new mu—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —like, avant-garde musicians.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: That's what she does for a living. And one of her musicians is also a performance artist and a video artist, and he shows with my dealer in Spain. So, that's why she was there. So, she had seen my photography show that afternoon.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh!

JANE HAMMOND: And she was very complimentary about it. And then, I said—explained how I was making it from found photographs and she seemed to get that very well. She seemed oddly brilliant about photography. I mean, I couldn't figure out why this woman—but I didn't think about it too much. And then, she said, "I have a friend who collects vernacular photographs, and if you'd like to come to Germany, I'll help you look for them." So, I already had been making jokes to Craig about "let's go to Germany and look for photographs." So, then when I met Annette at this party, I was, like—I said to her, "Don't say it if you don't mean it, 'cause I'm going to come." So, we went to Berlin—this was, like, two Junes ago, and we met Annette. And she's become a [00:34:00] new friend. And she took us to a bunch of flea markets. And, I mean, we went to some flea markets on our own, even before we hooked up with her. But she introduced me to this artist, this German artist, Joachim Schmid. J-o-a-c-h-i-m S-c-h-m-i-d.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: I don't think there's a T on the end, but I'm not 100 percent sure.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm, okay.

JANE HAMMOND: If you Google him, he has done nothing but collect found photographs, and he—he puts them in books.

JUDITH RICHARDS: He must do something to pay for the—

JANE HAMMOND: I think his wife supports him, but I'm not completely sure—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, okay.

JANE HAMMOND: —about that. But he—he—I guess you'd say he makes artist books, and the books are collections of found photographs. But, like, he doesn't transform them into something else, at least not that I'm aware of. But he's, like, Mr. Found Photography. And so, she had me over to dinner with him. And, you know, so, like, he told us which flea markets he goes to and, you know, was extremely helpful.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah, generous.

JANE HAMMOND: So, um, and you'll see—I mean, curating has always been an art, but it's become a new art in a different way in the age of the internet. And you'll see, like, he'll draw together photographs just of people lying around swimming pools. And somehow, there—the—the 45 of them together is better than any one of them singly by a factor of 20, do you know what I mean?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: They're just—these curated collections, they're really kind of wonderful. Um, and he's collected all—he's made a lot of these books, 30 of these books, I would imagine. So, I bought a lot of photographs in Germany. I think I bought 2,000 photographs in Germany or something like that. I mean, it was a lot. It was so many photographs that I set off the [00:36:00] metal detector, because each photograph has, like, a little tiny bit—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yes.

JANE HAMMOND: —of silver in it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: You were actually carrying them on?

JANE HAMMOND: I had it—I had them all in a backpack, because I didn't want to check them.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Two thousand—wouldn't even be too heavy to carry in your bag?

JANE HAMMOND: Well, I don't know whether it was 2,000, but it was more than 1,000. And they—you know, they're small, and they stack up—and you could put a lot of—if you—if you pack carefully—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: —you can put a lot of photographs in a large L.L. Bean backpack, which is what I did. And I also set the metal detector off after we went to France buying photographs. So, now I just now this is something that's likely to happen. But anyhow, so we did go to Germany and—and look for photographs. So, Annette is another new person. And then, after I'd known her and we were, like—we went to flea markets and we had dinner, we went out to lunch with her and then we had dinner with she and her—the man she's now marrying in two weeks. And blah-blah-blah, it sort of came out that she was writing a PhD thesis on Richard Bellingham. I believe that's the British kind of fat [inaudible].

JUDITH RICHARDS: Right.

JANE HAMMOND: And she actually kind of fell out of love with his work and stopped writing the thesis. But, in other words, that's why she knows so much about photography.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Okay, yes.

JANE HAMMOND: Um, and I—it's almost good I didn't know that, you know what I mean? So—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm.

JANE HAMMOND: —I don't know where I'm going with all this.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, I asked you about—what were we—I just asked you about photogr—I said where do you find most of your photographs? So—

JANE HAMMOND: Oh.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —you ended up saying that, in fact, Germany had the—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. So, now I'm interested in going places to look for them. But, like, we went to Belgium because I was in a show at this museum.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And you're looking for them both for the paintings as well as the photographs.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, and maybe even for the next thing that [00:38:00] I don't even know what it is yet, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: I also just like them. But, um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: When you bring them back, do you try to sort them?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. Yeah, I do. I have them in books and I have them sorted by categories. But I don't sort them—like, I'm in a big sorting thing now and I haven't sorted in six months.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh!

JANE HAMMOND: So, it's, like intense, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Do you—you—there are—as you know, there are all these collectors of—of vernacular photographs and—I'm sure in different—in different ways, and some of them have acquired some substantial value.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, I guess Peter Cohen or someone else could—could—

JANE HAMMOND: Peter Cohen, when I first met him—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —create collections from your photographs you no longer wanted, because you've scanned them, and you could actually recoup some of your investment.

JANE HAMMOND: It's possible, but I have one category called good as they are. And I don't have any more than 10 photographs in it. I don't actually own a lot of great snapshots. I'd like to say I—

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, when you're picking a piece—

JANE HAMMOND: When I see something that's a really great snapshot, even if I don't want it for my work, I'll buy it just 'cause it's a great snapshot. But it's, like—but I don't hunt for great snapshots.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, the—when you say you—you had—you bought 2,000 photographs, what you're talking about is—there's some piece, some element in each of these that was of interest to you.

JANE HAMMOND: Right.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Not necessarily the entire composition.

JANE HAMMOND: And nine times out of 10—no, not the entire composition, rarely. If the entire composition is really good, then I kind of feel like I can't improve on this, you know what I mean? Like, this is just a fully-fledged object. Doesn't need Jane Hammond to work on it, you know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm.

JANE HAMMOND: But lots of times, you'll see a photograph and it has someone in it, and that reminds me of something else. And then, if I have that little vector coming off of it, I'll buy it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: It doesn't ev—I don't even have to know [00:40:00] exactly what's going to happen to it.

JUDITH RICHARDS: At this point in your work, what would you say are your greatest challenges, and has that changed from the past?

JANE HAMMOND: Um, I think it's a challenge to find enough time to do work that is good, and to innovate and change enough to keep yourself interested, to do what you want to do, which in my case is usually kind of moving forward and trying new things. And I feel considerable consternation balancing that with making a living.

JUDITH RICHARDS: How—could you explain that, because we—

JANE HAMMOND: I mean, it would be interesting to know—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —you know that most of the work that you've done has sold fairly well—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes.

JUDITH RICHARDS: —if not very well, which has been your living since you stopped teaching, more or less.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, that's true.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And you've never had to think, "What am I going to make that will sell?" You've made what you've wanted to make. So, why at this point are you—

JANE HAMMOND: But there are certain things that—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Maybe production costs have gone up so much?

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, it's expensive to—like, it's very expensive to make the photography. And so, I—I worry. And so, I think you said, "What are your challenges?" So, like, my worry is a challenge to me. I don't—it would be interesting to see, if I won the lottery, if I actually changed something or not, or I worried less or not. It may be that it's, like, a constitutional thing and I'll—

JUDITH RICHARDS: But factually, you've—you—the *Dazzle* paintings must cost much more to make than the earlier oil-based paintings.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah. And—

JUDITH RICHARDS: And the photographs, when you're working with—

JANE HAMMOND: The photographs are wicked expensive.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Very expensive, because all the processes not only—

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, yeah. I mean, the—

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Inaudible] working with—

JANE HAMMOND: And everybody that works on them makes high money. It's not like—like a—like Joe Blow [00:42:00] studio assistant.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And there's only so much that you can sell them for, even if you had five copies—

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, yes, yes, yes. And there's a world of black-and-white small photographs by well-known photographers, and the photography is very inexpensive. It's shockingly inexpensive to me.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And you can't obviously sell your photographs for much more, because they cost more to make.

JANE HAMMOND: Well, no, you have to—I mean, there's some—no, nobody cares what something costs you to make. That's your problem.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, yeah. So, first of all, you said the challenge is to keep creating things you're interested in, and—

JANE HAMMOND: And not worry too much about what other people are interested in or what you did before or whatever. Just go on and be bold, and go where you want to go and kind of trust that there'll be some net there for you when you get there.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JANE HAMMOND: You know?

JUDITH RICHARDS: Are you—are you imagining—and this is a kind of a different question, not a challenge—but what you'd love to see happen in the future or dream project—first of all, a dream project that—that you haven't done, but I—that—

JANE HAMMOND: The thing about me is I don't really feel like—like, I was trying to pitch Judy the other day, um, through my friend Stephen Watson on contacting Anne Strauss and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Anne Strauss, the curator at the Met.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And Judy Pfaff.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. I was saying to Judy, like, "You should do a roof at the Met."

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, yes, she should.

JANE HAMMOND: But it's, like, I don't want to do the roof at the Met. I could—I—you know, I'd like to talk to her about, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: But you need to be a sculptor—

JANE HAMMOND: Why don't you get, like—

JUDITH RICHARDS: —of large—

JANE HAMMOND: —pigeons and have dove coats [ph] up there and, you know, like, I have ideas, you know? And make it very interactive with photography, 'cause everyone's taking pictures now, so create these places where they—[00:44:00] but I don't know. I don't really—even if I saw myself in the most ideal circumstance. I don't know if I want to do these really big proj—I mean, this is one problem with the art world nowadays, is, like, if you want to have really big career, you need to do these really big projects and you need to be showing in five million places all at once. It helps. And it's kind of like—I think I'm happier somewhere closer to where I am right now, because it's, like—I like to make artist's books, I like to make prints. These photographs take me a month to make. I just—if you were a dealer, you wouldn't be salivating over this. There's just, like, the—do the math. It doesn't add up that great, do you know what I'm saying? And it's kind of like—I wouldn't want to show with Larry Gagosian if he came here and begged me. It's just too much pressure, and then you have to make too many of the same things.

JUDITH RICHARDS: And it's sometimes—is to the artist's detriment, because when you go into the gallery, you think immediately this is thin, this is rushed.

JANE HAMMOND: It's this big, thin—

JUDITH RICHARDS: This is blown up.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes, totally.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So—

JUDITH RICHARDS: What about color coming back into your work? I mean, I know it's there subtly—

JANE HAMMOND: Well, you know, if you look at the *Dazzle* paintings, the one I've done will—the five I made most recently have quite a bit of color in them. Like, the color is a little bit coming in.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Ah!

JANE HAMMOND: Um—

JUDITH RICHARDS: In the form of—of the acrylic?

JANE HAMMOND: In the form—no, the acrylic is black, but in the form of, like, the metal splittings are—now you would say that man is wearing green shorts.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh!

JANE HAMMOND: Okay? And then, like, one of them, there was a kid with a Ritz cracker box, and there was, like, that golden—you can picture that Ritz cracker color—like, [00:46:00] behind in the dazzle board, there was all this gold that—was like a stained-glass window kind of thing.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, these are not—these are colors that are coming naturally from the mica and the metallic materials.

JANE HAMMOND: It's co—they're coming from the materials that I'm using back in the dazzle board and the—and the metal leaves that I'm using. Like, I bought all this Japanese metal leaf that's, like, pink and lavender and mint green and—

JUDITH RICHARDS: How do they make that?

JANE HAMMOND: I have no idea how they make it. It's silver leaf that's—that's completely tinted to lavender.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Hmm, okay.

JANE HAMMOND: You wouldn't identify it as silver at all.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Lavender's a familiar color in your paintings.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. So, um, so there is a little more color coming in. I don't see myself making color photography at all. But, you know, never say never.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, you spoke so eloquently about the benefits of black-and-white.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah. I've been known to retract statements I made.

JUDITH RICHARDS: [Laughs.] As we're coming to the close here, um, one more question about the current work. Um, and you're talking about all these new photographs and ideas. Are there any particular areas of—that you're finding yourself focusing on—uh, I don't know how you would define it. Uh, you talked about all the children coming up and the women and—and, uh, different ways of approaching the imagery. Is there any particular new—new kind of narrative or—or quasi-narrative element that you see coming into the work that you're doing now?

JANE HAMMOND: No, but that question—I mean, [00:48:00] usually when things happen, it's almost like I'm the last to know. I mean—

JUDITH RICHARDS: Oh, okay.

JANE HAMMOND: —it's not—I'm being clever, you know, but there's truth to that. It's sort of like some change happens, and I don't really identify it necessarily, consciously, 'til it's already happened. And other times, other people identify it before I do, because they look at your work more objectively. And I'm just—sometimes, I'm so close to it, I don't actually see the difference, or I think this is the same as that, or of course this is connected to this or is—this lead to that, or—you know? I mean, for example, like, I thought of the butterfly maps and *Fallen* in the same week. Now, in retrospect—and maybe it was only a month later, I thought, oh, well, they both have the cyclicality and the—they come—you know, all these things that they have, and—not to mention their connection to the war. But I didn't think that at the time that I thought of those ideas. They seemed, like, very distinct to me.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: So, um—nor did I think, for example, that, like, I would end up gathering leaves all over the country so it would have this kind of geography embedded into it, because I gathered all the leaves in Connecticut the first time. I didn't have the idea at all that I'm going to go to Mississippi and Hawaii and Texas, you know what I mean? So, I don't know. The thing I like the most is, like, Craig and I are emailing this guy, Michael White. He keeps the website called iCasualties.org, and he lives in Stone Mountain, GA. I don't know, I—I guess he's a journalist or something, but he's like a military buff. [00:50:00] Or, like, this spring, I went to a benefit for the Semper Fi Fund of the Marines on the *Intrepid*.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Well, you talked about that.

JANE HAMMOND: So, it's, like, I wouldn't have gone there if I hadn't done *Fallen*.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah.

JANE HAMMOND: Because the man who invited me wouldn't have invited me, and I probably—you know what I mean? So, your work—you get these ideas, you don't really know why and how you get them. But then, you—you build them, and then they take you to new—they're, like, a little boat, and they take you to a new place. And then, you have other experiences in that new place. And then, you don't really know where you're going next is the way it feels to me.

JUDITH RICHARDS: Yeah. Well, this seems like a good spot to end.

JANE HAMMOND: Yes. Feels like an end, right? Yeah.

JUDITH RICHARDS: So, I'll say thank you very much.

JANE HAMMOND: Yeah, you too, Judith.

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]