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Oral history interview with Douglas S.
Cramer, 2013 October 23-December
13

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Douglas Cramer on 2013 October 23-December 13. The interview took place at Cramer's home in Florida and apartment in New York, New York, and was conducted by Avis Berman for the Archives of American Art and the Center for the History of Collecting in America at the Frick Art Reference Library of The Frick Collection.

Douglas Cramer and Avis Berman reviewed the transcript. Their corrections and emendations appear below in brackets. 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

AVIS BERMAN: This is Avis Berman interviewing Douglas S. Cramer, for the Archives of American Art oral history program, on October 23, 2013, in his house in Florida.

I start this way with everyone: Would you please state your full name and date of birth?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Douglas Schoolfield Cramer. My date of birth was August 22, 1931. Louisville, Kentucky.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, you seem to have had an extraordinary family. What were your parents doing in Louisville?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: My mother was probably, at that point, the first professional interior decorator in the state. She had married my father late, who was a "playboy," inherited a bit of money, which he spent a certain amount of his life losing, and she kept the family together with her interior design. Her mother had been a great antique dealer in Kentucky, and her father, the president of the bank, so that they were comfortable. But life grew increasingly tough through the Depression. We finally left Louisville when I was six, and moved to the far north, Cincinnati, Ohio, about 100 miles.

AVIS BERMAN: And your mother's name was?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Pauline Compton Cramer. She was rather celebrated as a writer about decorating homes and also household tips. In the '40s, and the '50s and '60s and '70s, I guess, she had a column in some 400 newspapers called "Polly's Pointers," which would tell you things about how to make warm sandwiches for your children at school. You wrap them in Reynolds Wrap in the morning and iron them, and then when they got to school and you opened them, they were still warm and melted. And she also had a column in the Cincinnati paper then, where she visited somebody's home every week and pointed out the furnishings, décor, period, everything, but I kept noticing art that was mainly absent.

AVIS BERMAN: How much of this do you think that you absorbed into your being?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I absorbed a lot. First from my grandmother, whose antique shop fascinated me. I used to work there on Saturdays to make pin money, and to help her in the shop, although I was a fairly small boy at that point, certainly precocious, but making money for when I went to New York. I learned a lot about furniture and looking at antiques, and started my first collection. I became obsessed, I think, with collecting something. The first collection was salt cellars. It's interesting; I've read just recently—on some other collector; I can't remember who—who was devoted to salt cellars.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, it's interesting because one question I was going to ask you was that many collectors really start as children. Even if it's only matchboxes or baseball cards or bottle caps, they collect; there's something there. As a child, I don't know how many saltshakers you were able to—salt cellars—you were able to amass, but what kind of—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Probably 200, by the time I moved on.

AVIS BERMAN: And what kind of a satisfaction was it? Why did you enjoy it?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: They were practical; they were in different shapes and styles and periods. They brought back memories of where I found it, or if I had actually lifted it off a table, which I used to get spanked for, it was just, they were evocative of the experience past.

AVIS BERMAN: And did you display them in your bedroom?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I did. That's all the further I was allowed to get with them.

AVIS BERMAN: But your mother, as a decorator, must have understood the instinct.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: She definitely did, and got a little annoyed that the collection kept growing, because we moved roughly every two years. My father had one unsuccessful business after another. He was kind of Willy Loman-like, and mother pulled us together, by working, and in a department store called Stewart's, which I believe was the first Midwestern department store that had a home section, or furnishings department.

AVIS BERMAN: This was in Cincinnati?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No, in Louisville, actually. But, we moved on to Cincinnati. And not long after that, she started the weekly column, and then she became the Midwestern editor for a home shelter magazine called *Better Homes & Gardens*. We moved every two years. It was many years, till I was in therapy to straighten out my life, and an analyst explained to me that my obsession with owning houses, and redoing them, came from the sense of loss in those years.

AVIS BERMAN: The rootlessness.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, the rootlessness, house after house that we'd love and leave. At one point in Cincinnati, in an area called Pleasant Ridge, mother had done seven houses, within a quarter of a mile. And we'd see them every day, as we moved from one to another.

AVIS BERMAN: Did you have siblings?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I have twin brothers, and had a half-sister. My twin brothers, who were four years younger, were very into all the things that I wasn't, so that my father was very pleased with them, because they were into footballs and baseball and cars.

Father had been married before, in Kansas City, where he came from—a gorgeous woman there, who I think was his secretary. And when they divorced, they had a child, Liz, and she and I were very close. She spent six months a year with us, and the other six months with her mother and the new stepfather, who was a producer at Paramount Pictures. Interestingly enough, many years later, I had his office at Paramount, when I was running the studio.

They moved to London at the end of the war; he started bringing her there. Liz was a fashion model, and a beautiful girl, and became an associate editor of *Vogue* at some point. But she would come in and out of my life regularly with "show biz" news, and tell me I had to get out of Cincinnati, and I had to get significantly more cultured and sophisticated. We were Southern Baptists, and there was no liquor in the house, and I remember when she was 21 or 22, and had come back to Cincinnati to visit, she insisted on setting up a bar, and you would have thought the world would've ended!

The only other thing that was so shocking in my mother's life, it was shortly after I was married and living in California, my first year married. We had a Christmas Eve party, and my new LA doctor arrived in a brand-new Rolls Royce, that Jack Benny had given him, and wearing a full-length mink coat that Edie Wasserman had given him. My mother almost had a stroke, and I remember her saying to me, "I think it's time you look for another doctor."

Just then, there was a ring at the doorbell, and the next guests arrived, and it was David Frost and his date. He was certainly very distinguished, but at that particular point, he was dating Diahann Carroll. And my mother froze on the spot. Today it's almost cliché, laugh line, but in 1967 she turned to me as soon as they were in the living room and said, "They're not staying for dinner, are they?" And it was the first time in her life, she later told me, that she had ever sat at a table with an African American.

AVIS BERMAN: Did your family have a lot of prejudice or just—I realize you were south of the Mason-Dixon line.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right, we definitely come from that period. My grandparents had had slaves. I remember, as a child, one still surviving, one elderly woman, who was not still working, but they took care of her. And she still lived in the four or five slave cottages in the backyard of my grandparents', in Hardinsburg, Kentucky. And that was in the '30s.

AVIS BERMAN: And was that on your father's side?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: That was on my mother's side. But it is interesting now, in these last few months, with several movies coming out, how much attention there is to the slavery issue, and the way we pushed it under the counter.

I have no real recollection of ever talking about slavery, or understanding what it was. Until *Gone With the Wind* came out. And there, a movie opened our eyes. It was not unlike when I went to Germany in the '70s, about wanting to shoot a film called *QB VII*, which was the first miniseries that I produced. And I couldn't find a Nazi concentration camp. The Germans were telling me everywhere, that it was an American myth.

AVIS BERMAN: They were still getting away with that then?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: They were still getting away with that. There was no such thing as a driver that could help you find one.

AVIS BERMAN: I don't know, but would they have thought that Cramer was a Jewish name?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: They might have. Yes, they might very well. Because I was in show business, there were always the people who would send me Happy New Year cards in September. The first Jewish ceremony I ever attended was a bar mitzvah; it was in the '70s, so I was 40-something. I didn't know what—oh, what do you call them—bagel and lox were, until I worked at MGM in the '50s.

AVIS BERMAN: What were your mother's birth date and death date? Do you remember?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: She was born—that's a very, very good question. She lived to 79 and she died in '79, in Palm Springs. So, backtrack.

AVIS BERMAN: So, right, 1900 to 1979. And how about your dad?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: My father was born a little earlier, and he died at 52, cutting the grass. There's no men in my family, until I came along with my brothers, on either side of my parents, who ever lived past 55. Heart attacks struck them all down. We've learned a lot.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, we certainly have. And again, just to continue the housekeeping, what is your half-sister's name?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Oh, Elizabeth Cramer Rose, she took her stepfather's name at some point. And then she married a P&G [Procter & Gamble] executive named Pete Link. So she was Liz Link.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, and your twin brothers' names?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Paul and Peyton Cramer. P-E-Y-T-O-N.

AVIS BERMAN: Schoolfield is an interesting name, too; it's unusual.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: That's my father's family's side.

AVIS BERMAN: Were they farmers out in Kansas?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No, they were mainly industrialists. His father was a doctor. My father's mother, who was also a great beauty, was married four times. Her second husband was in real estate in Coral Gables, and Dad was brought up as a child in Coral Gables. When we were growing up, Charlotte and Fred Drexler, my aunt and uncle—my aunt was a great influence in my life; we'd visit them in New York often and at holidays in the winter, in Delray. And we'd go into Palm Beach, but my aunt would not allow us to go as far south as Miami because she just said, "Civilized people didn't venture to Miami." She'd have a surprise today.

AVIS BERMAN: We were just talking about these prejudices, and was it hard for you to free yourself of them? Once you're in show business, of course, there are all sorts of people. But did you have conflicts, or did you find it difficult?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I found it difficult in real and superficial ways, and mainly, it was because of where I'd been brought up. When I graduated from high school, there were still black and white bathrooms; the black students sat in the back of the class; the school buses were that way. And in theaters were black balconies. The public swimming pool, blacks were only allowed in them on Friday afternoon, before the pools got changed for the weekend.

So it was moving into New York, in '50s and '60s, and through the Martin Luther King tragedy and the race riots of that time, and all those turbulent days—it was a shock, but early on, I always—I rode with the times. I put the first black-and-white sitcom on television, with an all-black cast. It was *Barefoot in the Park*, the Neil Simon play. And I put that on; it only lasted 13 weeks, because America wasn't ready for it, but I learned from it.

Not long afterwards I was involved with *Julia*. Since we'd gotten Diahann Carroll as a nurse, that was a big hit, because we'd learned a lot! We were flaunting sex, and a young couples' sexuality, in *Barefoot*, and people weren't for that yet. But *Julia's* approach was okay. I did a lot of interracial casting. I guess the capper was in *Dynasty*, where Diahann Carroll again came in, and she came in as Blake Carrington/John Forsythe's sister. And we never explained that and never got a question.

AVIS BERMAN: That is fascinating. At the time *Mission Impossible* was interracial. That was earlier.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, but he was a subsidiary character.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, but he wasn't a servant, or he wasn't—he had an expertise.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: He had a job.

AVIS BERMAN: He had an expertise.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right. Yes, now in *The Young Lawyers*—it was a series with Lee Cobb that was on for a while—we introduced a young black female lawyer, and in *Mannix*, Mike Connors had a black [secretary]—we now say African American. I got dressed down by saying African American recently to a black woman, who said, "I've never been to Africa; I'm an American all my life." [Laughs.] It was a misguided statement.

AVIS BERMAN: You were closer to your mother than your father, or your father favored the twins, and you were—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I was closer to my mother, and my sister, who took me to the movies regularly, talked about Hollywood constantly. Before she got married, to a Dartmouth-Harvard boy, she'd been engaged to Billy Wilder, who later became a friend of mine, and also engaged to Peter Lawford. After those two failed engagements, she was engaged to the Argentinian ambassador to Great Britain. And on her way to Argentina for six months, to embrace Catholicism and study Portuguese, she met a classic All-American boy and married him, and settled down in Cincinnati, at Procter & Gamble, beside him. She was with him till she died.

AVIS BERMAN: What was the main impact of the Depression on your family?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Well, it was pretty substantial, in that both parents had been accustomed to money. And for me, the first three or four years of my life, we had a big house, and a lot of help, an African American couple that doted on me and drove me on trips. He got to go home to see his family in New York twice a year. So he'd drive me with him, and I'd visit my aunt and uncle, and get to see New York.

I think by the time that I was four, I was determined to live in New York. And by the time I was six, my sister had given me a subscription to *Variety* and the *New Yorker*. So I was really focused, and knew where I wanted to be. But after the Depression began to hit full force, then there was a terrible flood in '37, in Louisville, and my father's plants were all uninsured. At that time, he was making bridge tables and Christmas icicles cut from aluminum, both of which had been his ideas and neither one of which he got a copyright on. But that really did it, and then [as] I said, we moved to Cincinnati. The war started; he was in the Navy but didn't go off; he

stayed at Defense in Ohio. We lived then in a very limited way. My mother had never been in a kitchen until after World War II started.

AVIS BERMAN: Just the other parts of the house?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Just the other parts of the house.

AVIS BERMAN: The gracious living parts.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: She'd photograph and write about kitchens, and she knew what a good kitchen was, but she really didn't quite understand what you did in a kitchen for years.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, you were having an interest in theater; you're reading; you're collecting. As a child, did you draw or paint or have any interest in that yourself?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I drew a little, and I wasn't very good. I wrote, and loved writing and thought I was going to be a writer. I knew I was going to be something in theater. I figured out what producers were, what directors, writers, actors did. I did 'em all, up through college. I was still acting, directing, running theaters. Drawing a little, but intrigued by people who could draw. I never got more than a C in art class.

AVIS BERMAN: Did you design sets?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No. I never did that. I loved the process of doing sets. I love sets in theaters. And I found out through my mother about interior designers and what they did. So all my life I'd been wanting to make enough money to use famous designers. And it worked a lot.

My obsessions were great actors, great designers, and great musicians. I had no ear for music, and could never play the piano, but I love music. It was a great coup to work with a lot of significant composers that I talked into doing television. But it was my sister and her constant prodding of me, my mother and the people she moved around, and then my aunt Charlotte, Mrs. Fredrick Drexler, who lived in New York, in Tuxedo Park, and Bucks County, and Palm Beach. Her husband never worked a day in his life, and they never had children. But they lived well. She was on committees of the Metropolitan Museum. She took me to the Modern and the Whitney when I was a child, and constantly. And started me buying posters—she wouldn't buy me catalogues; maybe they didn't make the same catalogues in those days, or they were too formidable.

AVIS BERMAN: Not really, they were pretty perfunctory. They were more like checklists for this point in time—very minimal.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: So that must be why I got—I collected, started to collect posters, and art postcards, which were very big in those days.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, the quality of those were very good; they didn't stint on that.

While you were visiting with your aunt and uncle, and were in New York, what were some of the images or the things that you remember from childhood, the sort of pictures or visual experiences that made an impression on you?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: There would be artists that I was absolutely captivated by. Probably, for me, it was Matisse, and seeing Matisse at the Modern, and other things that I knew, that was something special. And Picasso, because I—it took me a long time to understand Cubism, and so I came slowly to that, but I related to the color, and the theatricality, and finally Picasso began to get to me through his sets and seeing photographs of the ballets that he did.

I loved dance from childhood. When I came to Cincinnati, or when I was in New York, I went to many Ballets Russes and American Ballet Theatre programs. And I would look as much at who did the sets as who did the music.

But through all of that, I remember first really learning who Braque was, and working my way back through the Impressionists, beginning to study. They were then, I guess, what Koons is today, being discovered, and people leaping on the band wagon, and then they were safe and collectible.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: But I immediately related to the work of the '30s and the '40s, and early on, the first painting I ever seriously tried to buy was a Rothko. It was when I was at ABC; it was in the '50s, late '50s. I remember so vividly seeing the picture at Marlborough, trying to talk them into selling it to me—actually bringing somebody else back, who at least they knew who he was, Daniel Melnick, because of an earlier marriage he'd had to Richard Rodgers's daughter.

And so I was offered the picture for two or three days, and it was \$18,000. And Bill Weed, a friend of mine in New York then, wanted a summer house, and wanted me to buy half of it, in Southampton, out in that old Shinnecock Hills, where William Merritt Chase lived, the artists' colony was. And so I spent a terrible week talking to everybody, and I think probably to Jim Dine and to Marc Ratliff, about what I should do and spending that much money for a painting, and I bought the house instead.

AVIS BERMAN: What did they think?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: They basically said, The house.

AVIS BERMAN: Let's trace, since we haven't discussed it—I mentioned it to you off tape, but one of your classmates in high school was Jim Dine. Were you friends, or was he just someone you knew, or an acquaintance, or—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Jim was an acquaintance in high school, in my brother's class. I got to know him much better in the years afterwards. But I knew that he was very talented; I knew that he was the favorite of—I think his name was Dietrich—the art director at the school. He lived in another part of town, had a different whole group of friends. But I knew he was talented, and I remember that when I got to New York, Jim was there, and just starting to show at Martha—

AVIS BERMAN: Martha Jackson.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Martha Jackson. I saw his shows, and through Jim, I met Marc Ratliff at the time, and there was a strange little girl who was always with him, who was Eva Hesse. Jim kept wanting me to buy some of her work, and I never did. I just wasn't there yet. And Jim's art was easy, and a lot of people at the time said he was too easy.

But we remained friends, got to know each other better in New York, and as I was more successful, I began buying his work at Pace and accumulated maybe 20, 25 paintings at one point, and sculpture, and drawings. Which, I've got a handful now. But we still see him. He was upset at one time, I think that I was auctioning some work, and I think since then I've mainly given it away, what I've deaccessioned. I've given a good bit to Cincinnati [Museum of Art], where we're both from.

AVIS BERMAN: That is a question I was going to ask you: Over a time, when you have sold artists' paintings, have any been angry with you?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. Some have been angry publicly, and some have been angry privately. Some have never spoken again; some have looked for confrontations. But I've been always, almost always, as often as I could, very vulnerable to that, to their being upset with me. And I have always felt that when you buy a painting, it's your responsibility when you sell it, how you go about doing it. I know in the art world, particularly in the last 10 years, it's gotten more competitive. One of the most humiliating experiences I ever had was when a dealer—I'd sold a work, one I'd bought from her—came up to me at an art fair and spat in my face.

AVIS BERMAN: Because you didn't re-sell through her? Or you—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I offered it to her, and she actually turned it down, because she thought it was overpriced. But they said I would get it at auction, and it got triple. So it was a bad moment, but—

AVIS BERMAN: Right, but you behaved properly, in that you offered it to her—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It was one of those things where I had not owned it for more than three or four years. And it was—I'll talk off the record about it, but it was an artist who left the dealer and went somewhere else, in many ways because of how badly the dealer reacted, to the way the dealer handled the sale.

AVIS BERMAN: If we were using a name, we'll use it off tape. I could probably guess who this is,

but I will not do it on the tape.

Going back to Cincinnati, just for the tape, Marc is Marcus Ratliff, who became a terrific graphic designer and worked for many museums and galleries designing catalogues and announcements.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Correct. Where is he now?

AVIS BERMAN: He's pretty much retired. He still has a place in New York, but he's pretty much retired, up in Vermont, on the Vermont-New Hampshire border, near Dartmouth, and he paints.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: He paints now, which is what he always wanted to do.

AVIS BERMAN: I think he always did a little. But his son, in the *Times*, the music critic, Ben Ratliff, that's his son.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Oh, no.

AVIS BERMAN: Who's terrific, who really writes really well. That's his son.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: He's very good. That's amazing.

AVIS BERMAN: And I think he's got another child too; I'm not sure.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And Jimmy has a child who's a musician in the pit orchestra at the Met.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, maybe I heard him last night when I was at the opera.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Were you there last night?

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, I was. Speaking of production, I saw *The Nose*. The opera is when Shostakovich becomes secondary to Kentridge, and I've never seen such a total-environment production in my life.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It's an amazing production.

AVIS BERMAN: It really was. I had missed it the first time, and I'm so glad I got to see it. That is not just some artists making a backdrop. His hand, he shaped it. It was extraordinary.

Anyway, was Marcus Ratliff someone that you knew in high school really well?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I knew him in high school. I think he was younger; he was my brothers' age, probably. But then I met him in New York, through Jim, and we, they were all sort of there.

AVIS BERMAN: Did you ever regret—were you ever interested, when you could afford it, in buying Eva Hesse's work?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: At the time I really wanted to buy Eva, it was so pricey. And it really wasn't quite in the stream of what I was collecting. So I never did. I bid on a couple of drawings, because at one point, I just wanted a drawing by everybody. I must have had 400 or 500 drawings.

AVIS BERMAN: And were there any teachers in high school who you felt were influential and encouraging to you?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: There were many—the drama man at the University of Cincinnati, and at Walnut Hills high school, Wayne Gregory, who directed Shakespearean production there; then a man named Paul Rutledge, who ran the theater department at the University of Cincinnati, where I was for a couple of years, and he ran a couple of summer theaters, in Ohio and Indiana, and I took over one of those, which I ran for two years.

AVIS BERMAN: It looked as if you were at three universities for undergraduate?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I started out at Northwestern. All my life, my goal was to go to Princeton. And just the day I was sending my application papers off to Princeton, my father said, "I could never afford it. You have to go somewhere else." So I decided on Northwestern, because of the theater department. And got there, and was on the fence about the school; they were trying to get rid of my Kentucky accent and trying to teach me about Shakespeare and movement. And

my father said when I came home for Christmas [that] he'd had another business fold under him and I couldn't go back.

They wanted me to go to the University of Cincinnati, and I thought that was a fate worse than death. So I left and went to New York and got a job at Radio City Music Hall, where they had all those great sets and terrific movies every two, three, or four weeks. I stayed there six or eight months, and then the Korean War broke out, and—or was it the war before that? Vietnam? No. So, what would have broken out in '51?

AVIS BERMAN: Fifty to '52 is the Korean War.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Okay, it was the Korean War, and the draft started. And it was draft or school. So I went back and got in the University of Cincinnati, where they had to take me, and finished three years there.

During that time, my mother now had her column, which was doing very well, and she sent me for a summer semester, because my French was terrible, she sent me to the Sorbonne. And I had a great, great semester there. Got a job working at the Folies Bergère, with all the great sets, and of course, those showgirls, and that was the summer.

Then I came back, finished school, ran a theater in Cincinnati. My mother and my father felt that no one makes it in show business from Cincinnati, and they said that they would cover—again because of my mother's success—that they would cover my going to graduate school at Columbia or NYU, if I got a degree, so I could teach, so I had something to fall back on.

So I took—I think I didn't immediately take it, but I seemed to be putting the pieces together. I had made enough money from the summer theater; I was going to go to England or Spain, and write for theater and for a year. And I started, and took an awful Greek coal freighter to Rotterdam, and then the ferry or whatever to London. And while I was there, going to every play you could imagine, two a day, my father died and my mother begged me to come home. So I never got to Spain, never got a bevy of plays written, or a book, and when I came home and all, then I went on to Columbia. Unless I have that slightly mixed up, can you cut it off?

AVIS BERMAN: Sure.

[Audio break.]

Okay, you went to Columbia—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: You asked me a question about the schools.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, the school that—you went to Columbia in 1953—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right. And that was one of three or four places that I went. I started out at Northwestern, which came about because I wanted to go to Princeton [and] my father informed me we couldn't afford it. I took Northwestern for the theater school; I was a little mixed about my first semester there. When your teacher forces you to learn modern dance and Shakespeare—and I don't think an American company ever sounds right doing Shakespeare. At Christmastime he told me I couldn't go back for another—finish the year, because he had another fallback, fallout, his businesses.

And then I thought I was ready to go to New York; I didn't need school. I went to New York, got a job at Radio City Music Hall, which was in those days [inaudible] and Russell Markert and the Rockettes. And Vincente Minnelli, who later became a friend, had just left for Hollywood, having worked there.

After about six or eight months, the Korean War started drafting. And rather than get drafted, I went back to Cincinnati. It's about the only place that would take me; they had to, because it was the hometown school. And I found it was a better school than I expected. The English department, where Stephen Spender was an associate, was involved; they were terrific. And the theater arts was run by a man named Paul Rutledge, who was great, and made me sit down and write plays. And produced one of them while I was there. And he was running two theaters in Indiana, and gave me one of them to run, where I was leading man, director, manager.

And after I'd done that, I went to Columbia. My mother and father both felt I had virtually no chance of being a success in show business, whatever that strange thing was. And so my mother

said I could go to NYU or Columbia so I could be a teacher if I had to. And she would, from the money she was making with her column, put me through that. She was also a monthly guest on a man named Mike Douglas's show. She had a wonderful southern accent all of her life, and very outgoing. She would teach women her pointers, what to do. Anyway, I went to Columbia, got my graduate degree in a little over a year, had a wonderful teacher named John Gassner, who was the master of 20th-century theater and writing.

AVIS BERMAN: So you got it in theater.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: In Theater Arts, an M.F.A. I had written two more plays. Gassner gave one of the plays to someone Off Broadway, and they produced it, called *Call of Duty*, and it was done at the time—

AVIS BERMAN: Provincetown.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: —Provincetown Playhouse, thank you. It ran six months. An old Hollywood actor named Turhan Bey was in it. It was about the Korean War, and prisoners of war, and this was—somewhere in there I had skipped a space, but I had six months in the military. I never handled a gun, I was a quiet pacifist.

But I was a wizard clerk-typist at school. And so I learned to use an Olivetti, and write plays fast. I wrote a couple plays in three or four days, because I read that Noel Coward wrote *Private Lives* in three days, while on a steamer between Hong Kong and Tokyo. Anyway, the play was produced. I had a number of other plays floating around. Nothing happened. I wasn't getting a job in the theater.

I went and taught for a year at Carnegie Tech, basically, English, some playwriting, mainly to a lot of freshman girls from Pennsylvania who had never read a book or gone to the theater. But I enjoyed the experience.

When I got out of that, nothing was happening, so I started asking questions about this thing called television which was happening. The theater seemed to be dying; the movies were terrified of television, and everyone I talked to about it said that the real place to go was TV. Finally through some friends, I got appointments at two networks, they all said, You should go work for an advertiser. They control what's on the air, and they're the big force in television today. And they'd give me lists, which all started with Procter & Gamble, General Foods, General Mills.

AVIS BERMAN: General Electric.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And General Electric. Yes. So I thought, P&G, and—you all right?

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, we're fine, I always just check to make sure we're—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: My sister by then was married to the P&G guy, and those were the days of organization men and testing. So I went to P&G, and you had to take a test. I spent the weekend before I took the test with my new brother-in-law, and I went through the test answering it as though I were he. And I got the highest score anybody's ever gotten. They hired me, and very soon I was handling television serials.

AVIS BERMAN: Were you living in New York or Cincinnati?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No, I had to go back to Cincinnati. But I lived at home, and it was one week in Cincinnati, one week in New York, and the fifth week in LA, living at the Bel-Air. So it was a great life for a kid, but particularly somebody who loved flying and traveling. I was always fascinated by cruise ships, and by transatlantic travel. And the P&G job, I would get to go to England to develop new shows and meet talent twice a year. I would go on whatever the transatlantic liner was then.

After the time at P&G, I knew I wanted to get out of Cincinnati. I knew what daytime serials were fascinating, and I was offered a job with the queen of serials, Irna Phillips, to write it. I said, "No, I wasn't going to do that." I went for an interview with NBC and they offered me head of daytime. And I thought, Oh my God, I've made it at 25. I went back to Cincinnati and told everybody. They didn't say a word; they just listened. And the next day, I got a call in to the head of the P&G television department's office, and he said, "You're not going to be able to take the job." No, excuse me.

What really happened was, first I got a call from NBC saying, "We have to withdraw the job."

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, just a minute, I need to pause this.

[Audio break.]

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I went into the television department. And he said he wasn't surprised that they were withdrawing it at NBC; taking from Procter & Gamble was not appropriate or proper. And I later learned that they had basically said they'd pull their advertising from NBC if they started stealing their people. So I put another year in to P&G, and knew to stay away from anybody that was under their thumb, and later found another job.

AVIS BERMAN: But they didn't fire you at P&G?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: They didn't fire me then. I actually, not long after, got a raise, and more hours, more time.

AVIS BERMAN: Guess they wanted to keep you.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. And so I went and I found a job at Ogilvy & Mather, which was then the hot agency. Read *Mad Men*, because it was just like that. I worked on Lever Brothers, who was the biggest competitor. Well, as a result, no one in Procter & Gamble could be seen talking to me, or visiting me, or out in New York with me for at least a year. My sister loved it. My brother-in-law couldn't talk to me, and was upset with me.

But I liked P&G—excuse me, I liked Ogilvy & Mather. And met a lot of fascinating people, including David Ogilvy. I learned a lot about television, and within two years' time, I had met people at ABC, which was then the up-and-coming network. And I found in very short order I had an offer from two sections at ABC, to come there. One was from the man who was head of programming, Dan Melnick, who was an art collector and instrumental in my early days. And the other was from Ed Scherick, who was head of sales, saying that they needed somebody for programming orientation, to talk about the programming, while they were out selling. It was a bigger job with more money, but what I really wanted was programming. Actually, Ed said, "Go ahead and take the programming job. The guy that's got the programming job isn't going to last long; I'm going to kill him and get the job."

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And he did. Dan went on to Hollywood and ended up running 20th Century Fox, several studios, and became a very important producer. He was also a large art collector; he had been married to Richard Rodgers's daughter.

AVIS BERMAN: Mary?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No, Mary's sister, I'm blanking on her name.

AVIS BERMAN: I'll look it up.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, it'll come to me. Linda, Linda. But because of Rodgers's collecting—they collected, and had been given a Braque, for a wedding present I think. And Danny used to take me at lunch to galleries, and I said earlier, in New York, developing through a lot of my art collecting and my show business career.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, that's all right; no, because they're mixed. Ogilvy & Mather, they were key; it gets you to New York full-time, right?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: They got me to New York full-time.

AVIS BERMAN: So you're there.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Actually, four of us left P&G and Cincinnati at the same time; all went to work for competitors. Two of us at P&G went to Lever Brothers agencies, and we got an apartment through my aunt and uncle, at 277 Park, for \$450 a month, with five bedrooms and fireplaces and parking in the middle. That was that building with the big open courtyard—great introduction to New York.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, very *Mad Men*.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I'd been to New York a lot. I'd been going to the theater every chance I got. I'd been going to galleries. And at Ogilvy, before I moved to ABC and met Danny, there was a Brentano's across the street. And an amazing woman there, whose name I don't remember, ran a graphic department in the store. She was European. It was a shock one day, seeing a camp number tattoo when the watch slipped down. She had known Picasso and Braque and Matisse.

Feininger and I started buying prints from her. First print I bought was a Braque color, tinted, hand-painted—a print of flowers. It was \$350 and I paid 15 months on it. So I have it. And then I bought Picasso and Matisse, Giacometti, who I just had seen at the Modern and was fascinated by him.

I used to go every Saturday to spend the day at galleries. I would go both uptown and downtown. Write in a little notebook my thoughts, and then Saturday night, or Sunday, I would read the *Times* and the *Herald*. There were those two full pages of minute reviews, Brian O'Doherty and whoever else was the critics at the time, and put them together with what I thought, reviewing the day.

AVIS BERMAN: Were there any critics who impressed you, or you were reading, or looked to?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It's interesting; in those days I can't tell you the critics, but I seem to remember John Gruen, and Brian O'Doherty. Was John Russell writing?

AVIS BERMAN: He didn't come to the United States till later than that, about '70 to '74.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: That's what I thought.

AVIS BERMAN: There was John Canaday,

DOUGLAS CRAMER: John Canaday, yes, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: And eventually, by then, well, maybe later, Hilton Kramer, but I think Hilton Kramer was writing for magazines then.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Oh, I may have—

AVIS BERMAN: And there was Dore Ashton, and Barbara Rose,

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Barbara Rose, I definitely did read. Because I remember being able to quote some of her reviews when I first met her, 20 years later.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, and then, of course, there was Clement Greenberg,

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, Greenberg. But that was instructive, and that's the first time through seeing, again renewing my acquaintance with Jim, and Marc, which had dropped a little bit away. But I did buy my first prints from Jim. And, I tried—

AVIS BERMAN: By Jim Dine.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: By Jim. And I did try. I knew Leo's [Castelli] gallery in the 1960s up in the East [Side], and where it was then in the '70s. I used to go to Leo's openings, but I was never known enough that I could even get a print by Johns or Warhol.

AVIS BERMAN: Not even from Ivan [Karp], who was more open?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I didn't go to Ivan, for some reason. Ivan always seemed like there was something not right about him. I don't know why, I was always very uncomfortable and suspicious about what he was selling. But I felt, with Leo, it was like the answer. And so when I finally met him in the '70s, we then became friends, and he endorsed me in several articles, wrote about me as an up-and-coming collector, which opened a lot of doors. But we were all past that.

Jim introduced me to Martha Jackson. And somebody introduced me to the master conspirators at Marlborough. And I bought Jim, then I think I bought my first drawing or two from Martha, but I was collecting vociferously. I would see artists and—

AVIS BERMAN: So this would be American and European.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: This would be—I leaned more to Americans, and finally on the secondary market, there was a man named John Torson; he sold privately. Had a great collection of Feininger drawings, and he knew the woman from Brentano's, and had sold to her. I had bought from him through her. But I finally got the first Johns, and Stella, and Kelly, and Agnes Martin, and Lichtenstein prints.

AVIS BERMAN: So this is in the '60s by now.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: This is late '50s, early '60s. I left for California in '66.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Okay, let's leave that, because I want to go into this first collection. Unless you don't have time, then we can pick this up tomorrow. It's four o'clock.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. Let's go a little bit more.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. Because what I want to do is kind of characterize the various collections you have built, and [if] were you thinking of yourself as a collector, when you were buying these prints and drawings at this—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I didn't really quite know what a collector was. At that point, a collector didn't have—

[Knocking on door.]

I didn't understand collectors at those times.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Okay, we will stop.

[END CD1 TR01.]

AVIS BERMAN: This is Avis Berman interviewing Douglas S. Cramer for the Archives of American Art oral history program on October 24, 2013.

Where we left off yesterday is we were just beginning to talk about the first collection you made, which was of 20th-century works on paper.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Okay, that was really focused with my arrival in New York and working at Ogilvy and having the opportunity to get in and out of galleries. It was a small collection, which started probably at eight or 10 prints. By the time I left New York, I had, oh, 250. But out of that collection and getting around New York galleries, spending more time at the Modern and the Metropolitan, I really knew that there was a world beyond prints. And part of getting into that world was not only relating to artists and knowing their work, but making money, and having the money to make the step up.

In those days prints were, at the most, probably \$600. And then drawings were \$1,500 to \$2,000 or \$3,000. And paintings were five grand and on up. So it was a much less significant commitment. But it was still substantial in those days. And I gently, through Jimmy Dine's influence, I think, and getting to know Martha Jackson and a few other artists, a few other dealers who I'd met along the way—Leo was still the elusive one. There was a woman who handled Donald Sultan—and I'm trying to remember her name—the gallery, the Willard Gallery.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, Marian Willard?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Marian Willard, yes, who was very good and would put up with talking to me. And so I remember buying a drawing of Jim's and looking with fascination, with someone who I couldn't decide whether he was brilliant or horrible, Paul Jenkins. And I'd see, in the fashion magazines, his paintings in a lot of designers' homes. And finally I thought, Uh-um.

But I did buy a Paul Jenkins and John Hultberg—I don't know what happened to him—and an artist that I still love, Lester Johnson. I gave my Johnson away, leaving Connecticut to a real estate man who wanted to collect. Or I sold it to him. But I had that with me all those years. I went through a terrible divorce where I lost a lot of the art, or we sold it at auction. But I held on to that Johnson and to Jim's work.

But in those days, as I say, there was a small beginning of grabbing, of the collectors who were becoming more aggressive, and pictures with artists with a buzz began to sell. I didn't quite understand it. I was young enough, not that secure about my taste, and not quite understanding

what was going on. It was enough to understand show business and television and that whole world. But I also borrowed pictures. You could rent from the Museum of Modern Art. I don't know when that stopped. It must have been in the '60s. Was it later?

AVIS BERMAN: Maybe the '70s, right.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Seventies. But there were really interesting young artists. And you were talking less than a print to have the three-month rental of a real piece, and look at it and live with it. I've always been a very great believer in trying. I virtually never just bought a painting. I would start with a drawing and even sculptures. I would virtually always go for drawings and live with the drawing and then move on to the sculpture. I always said that's why I never bought Jeff Koons, just simply because of—do you want to stop?

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, no, I didn't know if I should pause; but that's fine. Because you couldn't see a drawing of his?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I couldn't. There were no drawings, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, what would you? That is usually true. Actually, there are no drawings for Caravaggio either.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: True.

AVIS BERMAN: But that's a different story.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: That's a very different story.

AVIS BERMAN: Not your area.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right.

AVIS BERMAN: But, no, that's always the great mystery, that there are no drawings.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No drawing at all, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Drawing, you really feel that's the epicenter of the artist. But you would also almost use it as a tryout or a learning?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It would be a trial. It was feeling. Somehow I sensed, with the drawing, it was more the ability of looking into the eyes and the soul of the artist. I've used that comment before. But I really feel I know more that way. And I also seldom bought when I hadn't met the artist and didn't know them. Back in the '50s, '60s, '70s, even in the '80s, you got to know the artist. They were at their opening. If you were a collector of any degree of interest to the dealer, they would bring the artist into the gallery when you were there, or set up lunch.

I went through a five-year courtship of Jasper Johns, and meeting him with Leo, before I ever got offered a painting. And then I passed on the first painting. And I didn't get offered another one for five years more.

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.] Well, a collector needs patience. It's just an endurance contest, I think.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It is, definitely. And sometimes I wish I'd bought the first Johns, to show him my commitment. Leo was very smart about letting you move on with his art and trade it for something else of the artist or a bigger, more important work. But it kept you in your tracksuit and running.

AVIS BERMAN: By the way, yesterday you had discussed how you decided to get half a house instead of the Rothko.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Oh, right.

AVIS BERMAN: Did you regret that in retrospect?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Not for 30 years.

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Maybe 40 years, when I saw the paintings sell at, I think, \$60 million. And

the house, the last time I know, it resold at about \$1.5 million. But also, I was out of the house pretty quickly, and I would've lived with the Rothko all my life.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, right, absolutely. Now, this print collection that you had, did you display it in your apartment?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. It became a part of my life and part of the display and part of the decor of the apartment. I love changing things, having different looks at different times. I began to collect more works by different artists, as my tastes kept changing, as did their styles and their movement. And I got a sense of what it is to embellish your life. Some people do it with cars, some with summerhouses, some with art, some with all three. But it became an early habit—that part of having a house—in my reclaiming the houses that kept getting whipped away from me in my childhood. They all now related, through art.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I had a very key stage in terms of leaping ahead as a collector. When I went from Ogilvy to ABC and was working with Dan Melnick, we went to the galleries—I think I mentioned—regularly in New York and LA. We were developing things with BBC and Lord Lew Grade, and I got to go to London at least once a month.

In London, I was fascinated and had, from Dan, names and connections with the gallery scene. So I went to Kasmin and to James Mayer, and there was a wonderful family, the Gimpels. They all spent a lot of time with me and introduced me to a lot of their artists. And so I began. The first two pieces of sculpture that I bought, I bought in England. One was a Bernard Meadows. I wanted a Henry Moore, but I couldn't afford it. Meadows was his studio assistant. And I ended up carrying back on my lap a Meadows, which I still have—we just unpacked it yesterday. And also an Elizabeth Frink, which is on the table in the other room. Two pieces that I never want to be without.

But first, there I heard of David Hockney. But I didn't buy Hockney for a year or two, till we both got to California. But I saw a lot of Peter Blake, who I didn't buy until much later. Armitage. I saw and heard about both Freud and Bacon. It took me a time to figure out which was which. Bacon was so in your face. It took me, I guess, my own being successful enough and coming out of the closet that I knew I wanted a Bacon but never got one. I was the underbidder for at least a half-dozen Bacons. I always froze. A great lack in my life was never having and living with a Bacon. I bought a Freud drawing somewhere along the way, but never anything by Bacon. But anyway, they all got me really involved within the English School. I bought a little Bridget Riley back to New York in that time.

AVIS BERMAN: Maybe Richard Hamilton?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I never bought Richard Hamilton. I saw his work. It was a little too scholarly for me. I bought, through the Gimpels, some of the Dutch, Appel, and Vasarely ended up in that period. And I bought both Dubuffet and Buffet. The first time I'd made a mistake. I had been told to look at Dubuffet, and I looked at Buffet and bought one and got it home to the U.S. And a friend and a dealer said, "You've made a horrible mistake." So I got Dubuffet later, but never in a major way. And the Buffet, I gave away or traded it, I think, at that point.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, you probably still could.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, still could. And now he's having a slight resurgence. But I very, very seldom ever sold anything then. I would trade to get something more that I wanted. And that, in a chapter to come as we talk, was my great success with Larry Gagosian, who thought the same way and who—probably, 40 percent of the collection at the peak came from Larry.

But back on those days, when I left New York to go onto the next stage of my career—

AVIS BERMAN: I just wanted to ask you, just before we do that, where did Dan Melnick guide you?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Danny guided me, really, basically, into going out and looking. Danny, I remember the artists that he loved and talked about were Pollock and de Kooning, Solages, and Dubuffet and Rouault. His taste strongly came from Richard Rodgers.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, it's also very gestural, the expressive tradition.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: They're definitely expressive and theatrical.

AVIS BERMAN: Dramatic.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, dramatic, which I liked and worked my way [into]. But I also, in the midst of what I was seeing, found myself responding when I first saw an Ellsworth Kelly I found, and an Agnes Martin, back in the '60s; there was something that spoke to me in both.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, the restraint, maybe the classicism, too?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I think, and there was a singularity of vision. Agnes Martin, and then I saw, through the Modern, Mondrian and the Russian Constructivists.

AVIS BERMAN: Were you ever down at Coenties Slip at that time?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Never went. But I heard it talked about. Never went to the Cedar Bar. Never went to the Slip. All of that still had a little bit of timid pushback.

And then I finally, reluctantly, left New York, because for the television business I knew I had to be in LA. I'd been out in LA at least a week per month for the last two or three years before that. It seemed to me a fairly barbaric, old-fashioned place. And the artists that I'd looked at, Bob Graham, Bob Irwin, DeWain Valentine, they weren't really of interest. I'd been there, seen that better with more exciting work coming from Europe than coming there from LA.

But when I moved to California, I very soon met and married a woman. She was *Time* magazine's show business and art person on the West Coast, Joyce Haber, and she was a big, big believer in California art. She began, quickly, to just say, That's New York and we are here. Think LA. And you couldn't buy then; you couldn't afford a Matisse or a Picasso. We certainly couldn't.

AVIS BERMAN: But you are ahead of that anyway?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, I was ahead of that and had moved on. And so I gradually sold off the print collection, or put groups together and traded them.

AVIS BERMAN: In other words, that works on paper collection, you brought it to California with you?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, the print collection mainly, and a few other works. And we then, for a period of time in the late '60s and into the '70s, we were collecting really California people that Joyce knew. A few that I had seen or related to that hadn't made much of a stir yet, Ed Ruscha and Richard Diebenkorn, I went after aggressively on my own. Sam Francis, that's when the art was on La Cienega mainly. You had Irving Blum's Ferus Gallery on one side of the street, and on the other side you had Felix Landau. Felix really knew every artist I'd ever had and was grounded in a European basis and was always trying to sell me Schieles and Noldes, which I didn't buy, unfortunately. But then I settled back, and it would be Sam Francis.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, you were trying to focus. And I just want to say, for the tape, for housekeeping purposes, I believe you moved to California in 1966. And you married Joyce Haber in 1967?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Correct. That's the psyche of it all.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And by the early '70s, then I must have had 50 to 100 works from California. But I was, at the same time, looking at people with collections, like Billy Wilder and Ray Stark and the William Goetzes. And had a sense they all had more the European traditions. Some of them had wonderful collections with great things in it. But the art world was beginning to explore all over in different directions. And it was very hard to keep a focus and drive ahead.

I remember the last big battle I had with Joyce about wanting to buy something was a Joseph Cornell box that I had loved and had positioned to buy in New York. And she found I was getting it and had a fit, because she thought it was junk and he was a creep and it was not very meaningful. And I think we had to split the money it was going to cost. And I couldn't get a Cornell for my half.

AVIS BERMAN: Often today, people have his and hers collections, but I guess that wasn't then.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, well, we weren't enough his and hers at that point. The second child on the way, and battles. She was an alcoholic. It was a really bad problem just to keep her writing. She was then in a couple hundred newspapers and very powerful and wanted the world to come to her.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I remember—I grew up in Hartford—she was in one of the Hartford papers. I can remember seeing her, the little picture of her and her byline. I'm not sure if it was meaningful to me, as a kid at the time, but I remember the name.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: The name?

AVIS BERMAN: You know, she was on the columnist page.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right. And she had a television show that she did appearances on, but never one of her own. She was in three movie magazines, and a lot going on.

I was just remembering the Cornell; I gave up the box. But I wanted Tony Curtis for a television series a few years later, and I got him to do it by buying him a Cornell box. The agent came at me and screamed that that was a horrible way to do it, because he lost his commission. So I bought him a small one, which he said was one of the best investments he ever made.

AVIS BERMAN: So everybody got a box but you—[laughs].

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right. I ended up with no Cornell. But Tony did me a box!

In those years in California, I got involved with the Otis Art institute. I tried to get LA County more involved with contemporary art, but without much success. I put together a show to raise money for Otis Art Institute called *Hollywood Collects*. I don't know if you've ever seen that catalogue.

AVIS BERMAN: I think I have, but I'm not sure I know of it.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right. It was all the great Hollywood collectors and their pictures, from Edward G. Robinson and Vincent Price—and for me, it was a great way to see their collections and meet them, but also to learn more, to get that exposure.

The show had a terrific success. But it was very hard to get art in Los Angeles prior to MOCA, and prior to, I would say, Eli Broad focused. And there were the gallery owners that I'd gotten to know, Margo Leavin and Betty Asher, Nick Wilder—who was terrific, died young—one dealer, whom I won't name, in Venice, was whispered to be a crook, but had big shows and kept things going. First time I bought a Rauschenberg from him, he sent me the wrong Rauschenberg. And I think, simply, somebody else had come in and wanted my Rauschenberg, and so he tried to switch me into another one and didn't think I'd notice. He said, "They all look so much alike; what difference does it make?"

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, man. He must have thought you were really stupid!

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Really. Yes, a Hollywood yokel who didn't know any better.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, Hollywood also used to be, before, the land of the fakes. People were always buying fakes out there.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Fakes, right. Well, the great Marvin Davis story was when he bought Kenny Rogers's big old house, and he asked his wife what art she would like, because he didn't know anything about it. He brought her 10 books of masterpieces. And she marked the pieces. And she came home three weeks later, and there they all were. She just was overwhelmed with what Marvin had got for her: van Gogh, Matisse, Rouault, Picasso, Sargent. He had them all painted at the Fox Studio department. They had a houseful of fakes, which lasted through one dinner party, where everybody was roaring.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, how humiliating.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, oh, terrified. But it's that attitude in Hollywood. And there probably were more fakes sold in the 20th century in Hollywood than anywhere else in the world.

AVIS BERMAN: People didn't research. They just didn't understand that you had to approach something with wisdom and caution.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, and that's something that the late great Marcia Weisman taught me. I was lucky enough to meet and get to know Marcia, just through the art world. She sort of took me under her wing and introduced me to a lot of the artists and more New York dealers than I had ever known. And because she was Norton Simon's sister, she got a lot of attention. Her husband, Fred, was making money all over the place out of Toyota dealerships, so then they were spending. She had a great, great eye. And she really, finally, opened the door to Leo Castelli for me, and Mary Boone and a number of the younger dealers.

AVIS BERMAN: I think you had said you had a beach house next to them. What were some of the highlights or things, when they had something over, that really struck you, that influenced you?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Well, I think the importance of drawings and how drawings can be as strong and effective as a painting came out of Marcia, and to pay more attention to drawings and study them and live with them, and what to look for in them.

I'll just jump back to Joyce and myself. We had, God forbid, a Frank Gallo nude in the front hall. That was Joyce's idea of brilliance, which Mike Nichols bought from us at auction, God help us. But our marriage unraveled quickly and she couldn't agree on the art. She thought the art was worth a lot more than it was and I didn't agree.

We made a deal with Sotheby's to sell the art, in the last of the old Sotheby Parke-Bernet days in LA. They did a catalogue which was sort of our lives and the art. And she promoted the hell out of it in her column and with cocktail parties and used her still-considerable weight to get people at the auction. I'm not saying she beat them into buying, but the auction did very well. Most of all, it went to paying the lawyers.

AVIS BERMAN: And was this in the mid-'70s?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: This was '75, '76? It was '76, I guess. It was the last Sotheby Parke-Bernet auction in California. They sort of folded it up and stopped doing it.

AVIS BERMAN: The California collection, would you consider that the second collection you made?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: That was the second, the California—so-called Joyce—collection.

AVIS BERMAN: And did you keep any of them? Like Ed Ruscha or some of the ones—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I kept a few, mainly because it was all about paying lawyers and satisfying her. She got the house. She got the children. She got the help. She got virtually everything. I was so broke that I could only rent in Malibu. And for about three years I was paying off the bills and taking care of the kids and the nannies. One of the main points in the divorce was that I wouldn't hire her a majordomo. She felt that she really was abused with a staff of five, running a house, and three people helping her write—we both were making almost the same amount of money. But I wouldn't give her a top-notch majordomo to do it all.

So there was a lot to take care of since the judge allowed her to live in that style for a period of time. And meanwhile, I ended up in a rented house next to two other guys going through the same thing: George Hamilton on one side and Ryan O'Neal on the other.

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And we would sit and talk about our lives. It became the basis of somebody's television movie back in those years. But it was a good two to three years before I was back on a roll and making enough money and had paid off the divorce and was out of the commitments.

When I joined Aaron Spelling, we got, in the first year, a hit on the air in *Love Boat*. And in the next three years, four years, we had eight shows on the air, one-third of ABC's schedule. And as they say, the money was rolling in. And I wanted houses. And I wanted art. I ended up with a house in Palm Springs and in Malibu. And then I bought and built the Santa Ynez ranch. I was also going to do a big house in LA, but Aaron was getting so much terrible publicity on his mansion—his 57,000-square-foot house—I gave that up and focused on the ranch. Beginning in '80, when I bought the land up there.

But the real push and explosion as a collector in what I call the third and last collection—later

there was a fourth that came up when I was back in New York with Hugh Bush. I'd seen a lot of the then-young, new artists. I had gotten to know Irving Blum much better and he was back in New York then. I was a regular with Leo Castelli and on his list. I had met Mary Boone and Paula Cooper. There was a wonderful young collector named Barry Lowen, who lived in LA and I had known since ABC. I actually hired him when I was with Aaron to run development for us. And we art-shopped a lot. I met a lot of artists through him. He introduced me to Larry Gagosian, who was then selling out of the back of his car. Or when he got an apartment in Westwood, you could go there.

AVIS BERMAN: He started with posters. Was he beyond posters by the time you met him?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: He was beyond posters, and he was showing from the car, or later his La Cienega small space, some people that were also with Margo, until Larry became more established, Julian Schnabel and David Salle, and Joel Shapiro, and Richard Serra. Larry brought, through Leo's whole concept of satellite dealers—and he was one of them—he got his hands on some Kellys and Lichtensteins. Jasper didn't produce enough, and Leo kept him too close to him and Andy. And he sent me, in New York, to meet the woman who kept Basquiat in the basement.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, Annina Nosei.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Annina Nosei, yes. He was practically chained in the basement and getting money for drugs and God knows what else. And I started to buy Jean-Michel in those days.

So there was the whole group there. That's where I first saw Donald Sultan and went back to Willard Gallery in New York to get that. But I then had the money to see a lot of these young people, new people. And at the same time, the people that I'd been watching for 20 years but not buying, like Jasper and Ellsworth and Roy and Jim and Claus and Frank Stella, I began buying when I had the money and got to know the dealers well enough that I was in line. I began to buy out of each show.

AVIS BERMAN: How long did it take you to ascend, to have Leo pay attention to you?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Two trips with Marcia, and one trip to visit me in California. After the two trips with Marcia Weisman, I ended up, I think, walking out with a Warhol and a Lichtenstein. So from that point on, I was shaping up.

AVIS BERMAN: What was the first? Can you remember those first pieces by each of them that you bought?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I think with Andy it was a car crash, a smallish, orange disaster painting. And I believe the first work with Roy was a drawing, a double interior that I sold fairly recently. It wasn't that; it was another drawing, but it was a start with Roy, who was more money then than any of the others except Jasper. And Roy had such a large group of collectors that it was always a major feat to get there early enough to see the work and to make that studio visit. So it was a very key summer thing that you waited for the word from Leo that there was enough work that Roy was ready to have you come to the studio in Southampton.

AVIS BERMAN: So you went out to Southampton?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I would be on a plane within 24 hours, out to Southampton, trying to get there first, because I knew if I got the call, 10 other people did. And the Meyerhoffs, I think, just dropped everything and got on their own plane. And they were there first and quickest on the draw, but that's the way it happened.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, when did you realize that you would have to compete in this way?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: That came more as the market heated up and there were a bevy of collectors. I think Charles and Doris, the Saatchis, early on, were the most aggressive, and the Meyerhoffs, Joe and Emily Pulitzer, Agnes Gund, later the Eli Broads. And a little later, you had the Fishers coming along.

But as I recall, the whole heating up of the market really got going in the '80s, when you had that solid, established new school. De Kooning and Rothko were gone or going, and Pollock was gone. We were really looking at the nucleus of who was left in New York and about. And so that's when Johns and Rauschenberg—Twombly sort of had a quiet little market 30 years before he began to surface again and explode, but there was a body of work there—and Warhol. And then the whole

great burst of Salle, Schnabel—

AVIS BERMAN: Fischl.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Fischl, Rothenberg, Sultan at the time, Bryan Hunt. And everybody was buying.

AVIS BERMAN: You didn't buy directly out of the studio, though? It all went through Leo. You would pick something or see something, but it would all go through Leo?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Most would go through Leo, unless—and times got more aggressive—Larry would occasionally have market pieces that somebody would have second thoughts about. I don't know how he got them, but he would have them. But if you want a Mary artist you better stay close to Mary.

I had two big run-ins. One was, first, with Leo with Jasper, when I finally got offered a Jasper and didn't like it and turned it down. And this had taken two or three lunches with Jasper. And when I turned it down, I didn't get offered another one for a number of years. I think it was after I owned in St. Martin, and Jasper and I had gotten to know each other better.

And then Mary offered me a Brice Marden. Brice is an artist who I really always loved from a distance, but you didn't collect Brice and Ellsworth. Ellsworth didn't take to, in the '70s and '80s, having you collect Brice. And it was almost to the point where—Irving Blum said to me one day over a drink, "You know, if you really want to make serious inroads with Ellsworth and his work, I wouldn't be bringing him home to a house where you had Mardens hanging."

Mary offered me what I liked but wasn't ready for, one of the first of the big Chinese Marden paintings. It was a beautiful painting. And I spent a weekend, and finally I wasn't sure quite where it was going to hang at that point. And also, there was the Ellsworth problem, so I passed on the Marden. It was five years before Mary was really speaking and pleasant again, after making the painting available and I passed. So you always had to be prepared for that.

Margo Leavin didn't speak to me for 10 years after a purchase problem. She asked me to a dinner for a Julian Schnabel opening, the first show she'd had of Julian's. I had one piece of Julian's and wanted more. At the opening, she told me there were only three works that were still available that I could have. And they were the three worst paintings in the show, to me. She must have thought because I was coming to dinner and she seated me on Julian's left that I wouldn't say no. And I did. And was furious about all the good ones being gone. She explained to me that they were all long-term collectors who she had done business with, and she had to offer them to her people first. Well, it turned out I knew the best went to Charles Saatchi, who had never done business with her until that show. Anyway, I was furious. And I realized all that that night at the dinner.

So I made a date with Julian for lunch two days later. And he came and I said, "I really want a plate painting." And he said, "Oh, God, there's a list of 50 people." And I just said, "Well, what do you want? What would you really like?" That always works. And he took a beat. And he said, "I really would love a 1958 classic Mercedes convertible." That's always been his dream. So I called my brother Peyton who was a car dealer.

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And within a day, we got him the car. And a week later, I went to New York with my son and he painted our plate portrait.

AVIS BERMAN: I was going to ask you about that commission. But was that actually what you had wanted, a portrait commission?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. I wanted a plate painting. And he said there was such a list for plate paintings, "I can't give you one, but I could do a portrait with you and your son." And I said, "I don't know how. How do we deal with this with dealers and everything?" And he said, "Don't you worry about it. It's our deal. Just get me the car," in his name. And Margo screamed and called, and screamed and yelled at me, made a terrible scene. So I sent her a hubcap to a Mercedes.

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And she didn't speak to me for 5 or 10 years.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, before we just go back to that for a minute.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, that's the general—

AVIS BERMAN: What was the process? I'd like you to describe the portrait commission. It's a terrific picture, by the way.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Oh, thank you. I really love it. It is now in a museum.

AVIS BERMAN: I saw it, I guess, in one of these catalogues. I thought that the picture was in there.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: When the big earthquake of '93 hit Los Angeles, it fell off the wall and was absolutely smashed. And Julian redid it, built the armature up again, brought my son in, repainted the same picture, same place, but us eight, nine, 10 years older.

AVIS BERMAN: How did he work? Would you actually have sittings? Did he take photos?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No, he didn't take photographs. We did sittings. We must have done three sittings in close to 10 hours.

AVIS BERMAN: He worked quickly.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: He worked quickly. He loved an audience. He really only worked on the face and the body, and then did the rest of it afterwards.

I've had a very difficult time with my son, and we've been estranged for a few years. And really, living with the picture was a little torturous. So I gave [it] to the museum in Cincinnati, where I've given them 30 or 40 works. And it's a big favorite there, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, no, it looks good. Well, I'm glad that it still exists. It could have gone to the National Portrait Gallery, I'm sure, too.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. We thought about that; you're right. But I just felt, somehow, Cincinnati's righter.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, they would probably display it more.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. As a collector, that's one of the things that becomes more and more important when you're giving things—and I've given hundreds of things—but where they stay.

I love the Modern. They've been very key in my life. I've been a board member and was head of painting and sculpture under Kirk Varnedoe, which is one of the great experiences of my lifetime. But it's very discouraging to see work that's not out of storage for years. Even the current curator, when she was doing a recent Kelly show, had forgotten they had two of my pieces, which they pulled out. I gave them the first Chatham [*Chatham VI: Red Blue*, 1971], which there wasn't much enthusiasm for except for Kirk.

But you don't see work out, whereas I love the Tate [Modern]. I like the building. I like Nick Serota. Of the pieces that I've given to them, they are up more often, longer.

I gave them a great interior of Roy's after his death, actually. Kirk and I—Kirk had first choice and I had second choice of the interiors. And as luck would have it, I chose the same painting that he did as first choice, and then I took the second. Kirk later said he thought I chose better, and that over time it had held up better. But I gave that to the Tate museum in Roy and Dorothy's honor on Roy's death. And it's been up 10 months out of every year since they've had it.

I gave the Serra corner piece to them. And I think it's been up constantly. And that's wonderful. There are pieces I've given the Modern that have never been up. Or they're up for 20 days, something like that.

AVIS BERMAN: Of course, at the Tate, they have fewer, even though they have the American Friends of the Tate.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: They have less, and more space.

AVIS BERMAN: But fewer of your caliber there.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And they have great space, great space.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, yes, they have a huge amount of space now.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Great space, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: And just to go back to the dealers—and I'm not necessarily fastening on Margo Leavin, because there are other dealers—I understand she thought you went around her for the commission. But dealers getting mad, people getting mad at the customers in a service business, I find astonishing.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I do.

AVIS BERMAN: Vocally, you would be angry. But showing it seems to me so counter intuitive.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Well, it is totally, totally. And Margo lost a lot of business with me. And the woman we talked about in the earlier session [who] spat at me, I haven't been back in the gallery since. She's lost a lot of artists that I've bought elsewhere. You wonder where it comes from, that dealers get that angry. They don't realize what their business is all about. It's an insult not only the collectors, but to the other artists. And it's not doing the best work for their artists, I find.

AVIS BERMAN: No, the artists would be horrified.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, I find the same thing though, letting Saatchi, in the old days, or today, the Rubins from down here, walk in and buy out a whole show. I just think that's so bad for an artist.

AVIS BERMAN: Exactly.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And how it still happens or why they let it happen, where it comes from, you know?

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, I don't know that either. But I've never been in business as an art dealer, so what would I know? But just superficially, it just seems—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Well, you know people. And artists are people. And a lot of people like money.

AVIS BERMAN: That's true. But also, as with Saatchi, when they decide to sell the collection, and all of your works are in the hands of one—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Horrifying.

AVIS BERMAN: Also, in the past, even though when artists have had patrons, when too many go to one place, it's very detrimental because they control too many works. And some of them are going to be exhibited, but then they're not.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I think it's a terrifying thing, where we have today—like the Warhol market, which is essentially—what are the brothers' names?

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, I know, they're the Israeli brothers.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, something.

AVIS BERMAN: I know who you're talking about. It's not the Mugaris?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Mugaris. The Mugaris have close to 1,000, and Peter Brant has 400 or 500. It's scary for that market. Then when the holdings get too big, it does happen.

I reached the point in the '80s where I was possessed with art and buying, almost every day, something. And I ended up building space just to handle the art, inspired by Charles Saatchi at Boundary Road, [which] was such a brilliant space in its time, by Max Gordon. And the concept of having artists in depth and being able to look at them that way was great.

AVIS BERMAN: Did the Dia Foundation, those ideas of the de Menils, influence you in any way?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: In a way, but I'm not wild about Texas, and I didn't go that often. Whereas I

love London. I'm there three and four times a year. So I saw everything Charles did. And it has expanded. I never really knew the de Menils, and I got to know Charles when he was with Doris. Ellsworth introduced us, actually, on their boat in St. Martin. And we became good friends. And I've been friends with Charles through Kay, not so much with Nigella in those years, but we did see them. And Doris is still one of my closest friends.

AVIS BERMAN: She's an interesting woman.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Fascinating woman.

AVIS BERMAN: Just speaking of all that—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Because we were together—

AVIS BERMAN: Was your picture ever taken by Mapplethorpe?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. And I'm trying to find it, because I wanted to hang it upstairs. And I know that's where it went, but Mapplethorpe did do it, and it's in one of the books.

AVIS BERMAN: Because I was going to ask you about the Warhol commission, too, of course. But I wondered what it was like sitting for Mapplethorpe, or how he set you up, what he did.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Mapplethorpe was a totally different thing, in that he was at the hotel on the hills in Hollywood—which I will forget—the Chateau Marmont. He was there. And it looked as though he'd come from an assignation. And somebody else was arriving for a nude portrait. I don't know if it was Bob Wilson or Bob Colacello. Someone had set up the appointment. And he was going to do my portrait. It took about 45 minutes, and he seemed very disconnected and not quite with it. He was doing a series on California collectors, and then I got him to do one of me alone as well. I never had, except in a group portrait at the Modern—I was never photographed by Annie Leibowitz, or Jimmy Dine never drew me.

Ellsworth did and drew a lot of my son and I. Ellsworth will do 30 drawings in a night, sitting around, and only show you five. With luck, he'll give you one, or he'll say, "Let me keep it. And we'll find one another time." But it was never a commission. It was just an exchange of friendship. Ellsworth and Roy were the most generous of artists, I guess.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, and also very honorable artists too.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, very.

AVIS BERMAN: That was a characteristic. Not that others aren't, but you notice it.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And then Julian did the portrait, which was his idea. And Malcolm Morley, one night, on a tablecloth at Spago when I was having a rather traumatic dinner—when he was trying to decide if he was going to get up and leave Mary Boone and go to Pace or somewhere—he did a whole tablecloth drawing that Wolfgang let me have. I have it framed somewhere in a warehouse. It's not particularly good.

But I haven't gone out of my way to picture me. I've always used, for photographs, when I had to have one done for business or anything, the guy with three names.

AVIS BERMAN: Timothy Greenfield-Sanders.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Timothy Greenfield-Sanders, yes. He's done a series of portraits through the years that I like, and he catches it. But for him, it's an experience. It's all about knowing you, getting you relaxed, getting the cameras, the light. You bring a section of clothes and he picks it. And it's like a major seduction. And he's really, I find, a master at it.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, it's really about a shooting. It is as an artist working, or a fashion designer, all together.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, he's making a set, because you've got the clothes and other things like that.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right, and what your background is. No, I would say I think he's a great

portraitist.

AVIS BERMAN: Were you pleased with the Mapplethorpe photo, the image?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I felt like I was not very sexy. Mapplethorpe that day, it's interesting. Because with him, there was always that undercurrent, how interesting are you? And I felt sort of dumpy and getting older.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, maybe he was also a little bit perfunctory, or, as you say, disconnected. He may not have been concentrating.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I think that was definitely the case. Whereas with Andy, it was a different thing, because it had grown out of a long time of knowing him and a lot of discussions. And he really made a point. He did hundreds of Polaroids. And then we had a whole exchange with portraits.

When the Cincinnati Art Museum was giving me an honor—they started honoring the people that had done a lot for art in Cincinnati. Jim Dine got the first year. I got the second. And then Emily Pulitzer got the third. But the year of mine, the director of the museum decided to do a show with my Warhol portraits in it. And I thought there were maybe five, I had sensed. But I sensed there were more, from Joel Wachs. I'd known Joel from LA, [and] when he came [to New York] as president of the [Andy Warhol] Foundation [for the Visual Arts]. And it turned out that there were nine of them.

He originally did two as a part of commission, which I can briefly tell you about. But then when the two came, I didn't like them. There were dark and brown and gray. And I wanted something brighter and lighter and more up, and not what I felt was about getting old. So Andy took them back and did two new ones, which are the ones up in my bedroom now. And I thought that was great, hey, terrific. And that's all I thought there were. And then Vince Fremont said to me, one day, "I saw another portrait of yours, and come look at it." And I went, and it's the one that's in New York in the apartment, where he's done a pencil drawing over the portrait, which is rare. He only did four or five of those of anyone.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, and they're just different. They're not exactly on top of each other.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right, a little sideways.

AVIS BERMAN: Layered?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, layered. So they let me buy that. But when the museum decided to honor me and do a show, they managed to find that there were nine portraits. And why Andy did these, what happened, we don't know. And there were six drawings. He gave me two after he'd done it. He said, "I was sorry. I was disappointed." And he sent me two. And there were about four more. There were about 20 remaining, or 30 remaining, Polaroids, some of which I ended up with, and they're up there in the hall. But Cincinnati showed them all.

And then Hugh, my partner, did a portrait of both of us. In a kind of Warhol-inspired series of a portrait made of photographs, which he gave to the museum. And that was a show that was up for the summer, which was kind of nice.

But *The Love Boat*, if you wanted to talk about that situation? Because I tried to use people that I knew in New York in a lot of the shows, to give various degrees of authenticity. Henry Kissinger did *Dynasty* with the Marvin Davises, and Gerald Ford. And I brought Bobby Short to play in a party scene, and later Peter Duchin. And in *The Love Boat*, which was all about all the stars that I wish I had produced and worked with on Broadway but had never met, we'd write stories for them. And basically, we got him to do it.

Elizabeth Taylor would never do it for me. But I got Helen Hayes. And actually, in *The Love Boat* family, Carol Channing was somebody's aunt. And Pearl Bailey was somebody's mother. Ann Miller was someone's stepmother. And so we brought all the people from all over the place in, but I had never brought an artist in.

Andy was fascinated when we did one of the shows about fashion. I think it was Halston who talked to him about the experience of doing the show. We had Halston and Geoffrey Beene and Bob Mackie and one other designer. But we had both Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren, and they pulled out at the last [minute], because they thought that they should be the only designer in

the show.

So Andy was fascinated. And of course, he loved film and kept trying to talk to me into doing a portrait, because he was trying to talk everybody into portraits when they were, I think, \$15,000 a panel and \$10,000 for the second panel. I have some women friends, Denise Hale and Gaetana Enders, among others—they'd take people to the studio to have lunch with Andy and push them to do a portrait because he'd done a portrait of them. I know they got something for it, maybe another portrait or a discount on their own for delivering people. It was something.

So Gaetana took me a couple of times to the studio. Her husband was ambassador to Spain at that point. And she had also been an art dealer. Finally, I said, "Well, will you do a *Love Boat*?" And he said, "Well, there's going to be a reason for my doing it." And Aaron and I talked, came up with that we were about the 1,000th guest star on the show. And I said, "We'll give the 1,000th guest star of the show an Andy Warhol portrait. And we'll pay you for the portrait." And Andy said, "Well, that's not enough." He said, "Why don't I do both of you?" Meaning Aaron and myself. Aaron said, "No, do Candy, because she's dead to have one."

So the overall deal was I got a portrait, a double portrait, and Candy got a double portrait. The star got a single portrait for the show. And Andy would be in the show. And we, in trying to select the 1,000th star, we had to give Andy a list of 20 names of which he could cross off 10 that were insufficient. And of the remaining 10, if we delivered any one of them, he was locked into it, deal, had agreed to do it.

It obviously had to be somebody he really liked, and number one on his list was Elizabeth Taylor. And she wouldn't do it, bitchy about that. But she also said, "I've done enough for Andy. He's ripped me off enough," and all that. She made up for it to us by doing *Hotel* later, which was a nightmare, but she did it.

I think his second choice was Streisand and Julie Andrews. And neither one would do it because they hated Joyce Haber, who said had terrible things in her column about them, and [they] still remembered I had been married to her. And finally it was Lana Turner, and she said yes. He was elated and excited about that.

So he came and did his show. We wrote it for him. Excuse me, we sent a writer into New York to work with him on a script that he was happy with, which was just some silly little story. They were very brief and quick. The writer was there for six days and I think spent two 30-minute sessions with Andy, who wouldn't focus on it. And when we gave him the script, when he arrived early in Hollywood, he didn't like any of the language, so we rewrote virtually all of it. And then we got on set, he so tightened up and giggled mainly that he doesn't do much in the show. I don't know if you ever saw it.

AVIS BERMAN: No, but now I'm going to find it on YouTube.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Oh, right, I think it's on YouTube. I know the Whitney has it in the collection. It's there. But he really just giggles and doesn't make much sense. But at the party we had 800 of our stars present, had a big black-tie dinner, which got enormous press in LA. Andy was at his peak. There's a picture—I think it's Aaron and myself and Andy—in the bathroom here, with Lana getting the award.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, yes, I saw that.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: But he did Candy's portrait when he was out there; he did mine when I came to New York in a couple of weeks; and he did Lana on set. We sent it to her after the wrap of the show, and she sent it back. She said, "I hate it. I don't look like that." Well, it was a picture of the way she looks now. So of course, he was crestfallen. And a lot of conversations, several days talking back and forth, and she said that she was entitled to a Warhol. And finally, he said, "Send me the picture she wants." And it was a still from *Johnny Eager*. A good, what, 40 years earlier? And he made the picture of her. And she adored it and was very happy. And the original disappeared. And the portrait is still in Cheryl Crane's office, the daughter.

AVIS BERMAN: The *Johnny Eager* one? Now, is it just her? Or is Robert Taylor in it too?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No, just her. Andy, I don't think, ever did two people in those portraits. So I thought the other portrait just vanished. And the day before the Warhol retrospective opened at the Modern, I was there for lunch with Kirk and he said, "I want to take you through the show," and he said, "I've got a big surprise for you." And we went around a corner, and there was the

Lana portrait.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, well, of course, I have that catalogue. So when I get home I'm going to look that up.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It's there and it's from the collection of S.I. Newhouse. He said, "I found it." I knew he had it. It's incredible. I guess S.I. still has it.

AVIS BERMAN: I don't know, because they downsized a lot. They're in a large apartment now, but it's not the way their house was. So who knows?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: So I rejected my portrait. And Lana rejected hers. And Andy got six months of dinner parties, talking about the experience.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, and it's in the diaries too.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, it's in the diaries.

AVIS BERMAN: But he didn't really talk about the Lana portrait. I wasn't even sure if he had done it or not. Now, did Aaron Spelling collect art?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Very, very little. I tried and tried to get him. And for some reason, I think he had a Dufy, a real Dufy and a Vlaminck. And he liked Caillebotte and ended up, I think, so when he passed away, they had six or eight Caillebottes, but that's as far as he ever got. He may have had a little Renoir.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, they had so many walls. They couldn't have them be bare.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I know. They were full of awful prints and photographs and pictures of Candy.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, well, but she wasn't interested in art, either, much beyond images of her.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Images of her and a few classic names. She always said she would have loved a van Gogh, but Aaron never got her one.

AVIS BERMAN: Everybody has a budget.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right.

AVIS BERMAN: When you got to Los Angeles, the scene was a lot more sophisticated? Or you didn't feel like, oh, my God, there's nothing here?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No, I felt there was very little there. And in those days, in the mid-'60s, there were three or four good restaurants in town because that's where the movie stars went. But you went to San Francisco for the museums and the art and really good meals, symphony, ballet, opera, clothes. I did my shopping at Wilkes Bashford. That's where the excitement was, and LA was very provincial. There were four or five galleries, and they didn't sell much. And some of the dealers were aggressive. And when David arrived in town—

AVIS BERMAN: David Geffen?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: David Hockney.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, David Hockney.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: David Hockney; David was always more than an artist. There was that whole media swing about him. In those days, I believe he was with Peter Schlesinger. That's when he did Margo. Not Margo, Betty Freeman and Marcia Weisman, the portraits in the yard. And actually, Nick Wilder brought him to the first cocktail party that I had in my new house out there, to meet artists and I liked his work.

I bought, from Nick in the next month, two drawings of David—*Boy in the Shower* and *Peter in the Bed*. They were kind of homoerotic. And I was still not even where—I was buried in the closet at that point, and sort of fighting it, which was part of Joyce and the quick marriage. But I saw David. And we'd been friends for all these years. Dagny Corcoran, who was sort of a den mother out there, would have him at his house, at their house often.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, did you buy from James Corcoran?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I bought from Corcoran. That's where I first bought those Ruscha drawings, and maybe Billy Al Bengston. And of course, he was one of the outposts for Leo until Larry sort of shut him out for a period of time.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, well also, since his father-in-law was Robert Rowan, he also had the access —

DOUGLAS CRAMER: —to all of that, right.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, and Rowan, of course, was one of the early great Pop collectors.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, he was a terrific collector. He was, with Marcia, and myself, and who else?

AVIS BERMAN: Eli Broad.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And Eli, on the early MOCA board. Marcia got me involved in that.

AVIS BERMAN: We can break chronology. Why don't we talk about Barry Lowen?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Barry is on the way in trying to get art at LA County and going nowhere. And then Marcia getting me involved with MOCA in the early days, because there was a point—again, if I can get enough of the pieces in place at which Bob Rowan and Eli and I were going to buy the Italian collectors—

AVIS BERMAN: Panza?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: The Panza's collection for \$8 million, I think, which would have been one of the great buys of all time. But then, the fact that we were going to do it served whoever, broke down and gave the money for the museum and the city. So we've made contributions to it, but didn't get the collection.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, but MOCA got it.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: MOCA got it, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: MOCA got it.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And when MOCA was hesitant, it was Eli who said, "Well, why don't we just buy it? Then we can give some of it to them." And I don't yet know, because I was just getting phone calls about it, whether Eli really had sold the concept to them or not. I have a feeling that Eli was a good enough salesman; he had Panza ready and needing money.

AVIS BERMAN: Panza's problems were something. The stuff was all in Switzerland.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: And he couldn't move it into Italy without getting clobbered with taxes.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Okay.

AVIS BERMAN: But, of course, you're talking about something different—who was going to be the buyer? But Panza, it was in the warehouse. And there was nothing. He needed money. He needed to find a way to avoid Italian taxes.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And maybe it had to be a charity, nonprofit. I don't know.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, I'm not sure about that either.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Let me ask him a quick question.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, sure. We'll do a few more minutes on MOCA here and the beginnings of that, in founding it. And we were just briefly talking about the Panza collection, which was the making of it. But before that, in terms of what were the plans for making this into a significant place—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: If I can jump back for a minute about getting up to that point in time, when I came into what was going on with MOCA.

During the years where I was building this collection, beginning to really be learned and excited about what was going on in the art world, Marcia I had come to know through a good friend, Barry Lowen, who was a great collector. Barry had, originally, a collection, which was mainly Photorealists. Estes and Goings and even Cottingham—he must have had 30 or 40. And then he sold it. And in a house off Sunset Boulevard, he covered over most of the windows and almost made a gallery of his own. And that's where I really first saw Ellsworth Kelly up close, Richard Serra, Susan Rothenberg, and Brice Marden. And not Andy and not Roy, interestingly enough, but Joel Shapiro. It was tight and well edited.

Barry went to New York at least once a month and was in all the galleries and knew everybody. I went with him a few times and met a lot of people. And I began to be much clearer about the art world and what it was, and what the Modern was and the Whitney, and what they were doing as the Guggenheim was floundering, but in a spectacular building.

And I was in an early group that Barry was involved with at LA County, when Rusty Powell was there, who was a terrific guy. Not a great enthusiast for contemporary art at that point. And we tried, unsuccessfully, to get Hollywood groups interested in buying contemporary art for that museum, with really very little success. But there were mutterings about the possibility of a new contemporary museum. And Bob Rowan was a name that kept coming up, and Marcia Weisman and Eli, who I met in a couple of times out when he was at Marcia Weisman's.

Marcia had had a great little house in Broadbeach, which was then the place to live in beyond Malibu. It was a beach with Spielberg and Ovitz and Franklin Schaffner and Stallone and Herbert Ross and Johnny Carson; it was celebrities door to door, next to each other. And I wanted a beach house. I wanted to be out there.

Marcia showed me the house that she and Fred had built, or bought and had Frank Gehry redo. Who then was not that well known an architect. But he simplified it and gave it a great sense of the beach and light and openness. But it leaked like a sieve. And Marcia, she said if I would take it as is, I could have it for almost nothing. I think "nothing" was \$650,000 then. But for a beach house and a big chunk of beach, it was amazing. So I bought that and inherited Marcia as my best friend, who began to call on me to escort her to events.

She was there every weekend. And she had different artists for each weekend, art dealers. And art always—there would be a table on the weekend in the living room, where she'd ask you over and have the art that had been submitted to them that week from dealers all over the world, but mainly in New York. They would, every weekend, buy at least one piece for each of them. And she would say, "Here are the leftovers," or, "I love this, but Fred wants this. You should get this." So they were there, and it was really great, a terrific way to see the art world.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, because also, she had the passion. To be exposed to someone with a real art passion—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Who had the passion, the power, and the money—and that was great all at once—and a house on Angelo, which they were cramming from beginning to end with art.

But in those meetings I met Eli and Edie Broad, and I heard more and more talk about the Contemporary. And finally, one day, when everybody had settled and left and Eli was there, they said, "Why don't you join us and get on the board? We've explored it and we think it would be a great idea."

I had just come through the divorce with Joyce and coming out of the closet, and was sort of not somebody you would normally think of on a blue-chip, downtown establishment board, but as money came, so did a certain kind of recognition. And money can buy out everything. I thought, reading the paper this morning, on how we're evolving that as a national policy. If you pay enough money in fines, you can do anything. Break the laws, rig stocks, rig banks, rig mortgages. Just pay the government at the end and say, I'm sorry. It's not the way I was brought up, but it's true in a lot of worlds. And when you think of—well, one of the most successful collectors now in New York has been in jail fairly recently.

AVIS BERMAN: There are a lot of collectors who are convicted tax felons.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, that's true.

AVIS BERMAN: Several that you know well.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. That's right. And always will be, with the law—as long as the laws are such as they are, and the art world is such as it is.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, the art world is the last bastion of laissez-faire capitalism. It's completely unregulated. And well, now they put the little prices out. I think the FBI is now taking forgery seriously, but that's the least of it.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Thank God.

AVIS BERMAN: But that's the least. Within the profession, it's still unregulated.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: So deeply unregulated.

So anyway, they had asked me if I'd get involved with MOCA. And I did and was elected to the board as they were in the early stages. Pontus Hulten was there.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, you were there when Pontus Hulten was there.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, when he was there. He had great long-range visions, which were fascinating. The choice of Isozaki rather than Frank Gehry was already made, and I know it broke Richard Koshalek, the director's, heart, because he wanted Frank to do it, which I think at that stage in Frank's career would probably have been almost the disaster that Disney Hall was till Eli Broad took over, battled all.

But they were really a driven group of people who were involved in MOCA then. Many of them with downtown interests—Fred Nichols was very involved—and they wanted a great museum. And a reason to come downtown in LA. There were precious few reasons other than Dorothy Chandler and going to the theater at night—and in those days, downtown from Bel Air and Beverly Hills was 30 minutes. Now it's an hour and a half, with the freeways and the drive. But the focus of how do we make LA an important building? And then how do we find art to go into it?

I don't know where the first contact came with Count Panza, but it was already made. And when I got involved, there were discussions going on about buying the collection, which I was dazzled by, as everybody was, and particularly at what seemed, then, at \$8 or \$9 million. There were people saying, That's a lot of money. And there were also wise people saying, It's nothing, because it's probably a \$1 billion collection today, or more.

The Panza deal started to fall apart because they couldn't get the city—or wherever the money was coming together—there. And that was, at that point, that Eli had talked to Bob Rowan and myself, if we'd put up the eight million and give some of the work to the museum, or promise it. But the fact that we were ready to do it turned some switches, and MOCA bought it. And we were off and running.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, I think it turned out to be less than eight million.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Did it?

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, eventually, from Panza.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Funny, I'm not sure.

AVIS BERMAN: But didn't it come out of the endowment at MOCA? Wasn't that controversial? Or they borrowed it from the endowment? Am I wrong about that?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I'm not sure. I'm very hazy, because I wasn't that close to it or understanding that much at that point. It was all kept under wraps. I didn't know that they even had that much endowment. I remember Eli or Marcia arriving at meetings with colored charts showing what was committed to the building and for endowment and maybe Panza, as part of it.

AVIS BERMAN: What would you feel your most important contributions were and how you were most effective at MOCA?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I think early on I did two things. One was fund-raisers. We had great success with what was probably the first museum to do an auction. It was controversial at the

time, thinking that museums shouldn't be doing that. But we had a load of contemporary art that we went out and got committed, and we did a gala around the sale.

The first gala was our first real party. I had *Love Boat* on the air, which was a big hit, and I got Carnival Cruises to give a party. They brought a new ship into LA and let us have a dinner on it. And it was a black-tie dinner we had. In one of the lounges, I brought out Peter Duchin to play with his full orchestra, and in another one Bobby Short came and did three shows. And we had, after dinner—no, before dinner, we auctioned off 50 art pieces. Steve Martin and Irving Blum did the auction. And it was a great success, very talked about. We even had 20 violinists, as you went aboard that ship, 20 violinists lined the gangplank, playing as you went on. And the ship looked glorious. And everybody got pulled together. It didn't have lot of big stars, because they still didn't quite then know what art was, but it was an event.

And then the auctions became a yearly event after that. Sotheby's did it one year, Christie's the next. And they got to the point where they raised millions and were copied all over the world. There is not a museum or a lot of charities that don't have art auctions now. There's so many now, I scream and think, What was I doing?

AVIS BERMAN: Right, well, the bad thing about those is the artist is always expected to give them something.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Exactly. When that began to work against them because they were—the artists—getting fed up, I was part of coming up with a system that we made certain the artist got a part of it. We made it a little more advantageous to them.

I did a lot of other social events. And also, for three or four years, I was head of the painting and sculpture committee. And that was, for me, a good experience, which educated me. Even better when I did the same thing at the Modern, but I had Kirk Varnedoe watching over my shoulder and inspired me. It was not the same with Paul Schimmel at MOCA, I can assure you. I'm not a great fan of Paul Schimmel's, who I talked Richard into hiring, begged him to hire because he needed a curator, and he's been a big disappointment.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. I think we'll pause for right now.

[END CD1 TR02.]

AVIS BERMAN: We are continuing the interview with Douglas S. Cramer on October 24, 2013.

As I said, we were talking about the beginnings of MOCA and hiring Paul Schimmel and Richard Koshalek. That's where we were.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right, yes. Somehow in the 1980s and 1990s, as the art market became worldwide, and phenomenal, and ever-growing. And the balance was delicately between the dealer, who was the star at time; the museum, who was vitally important; the collector, who was growing in different pockets as major collectors; minor collectors, people just bought; and finally, sadly, just the artist. Almost, it seemed to me, decade by decade there was a shift, and there was a period when the collectors were stars, and then we came to a period where the dealers were stars, which we still have.

I think we're seeing more of the museum directors as stars, but Richard Koshalek in the early days was a star when he was running MOCA. It was a bright, new museum. It seemed to have money. It had a great new building. With the Panza collection, it had a phenomenal collection. It didn't have a curator of any great strength or importance. Richard was everything, because he was there, and the contact, and directing, deciding, which happens in a lot of museums where the director becomes the star. But one of the things that I believe—it was during my time as president of the museum we had to find a really strong curator.

And out of a succession of people, Paul Schimmel emerged as the best candidate. He was near, he knew the scene, he talked well, and he looked like a great art scholar. He was a disappointment to me once we, firstly, told Richard to hire him and gave him a lot of power and strength and support, but it never merged in the way that it should have. In the way, for instance, at MoMA when Glenn Lowry was there, and the master of handling people and building museums. And Kirk Varnedoe, who was, to me, one of the all-time great curators. I never saw anyone who had as wide a range of everything, and the passion and the love they both had for art, and he made looking at art exciting, being around artists exciting. Paul didn't quite accomplish all that, and I think the seeds of the problems the museum had was they never got

anybody strong enough as a director after Richard to handle Paul. Paul really wasn't ready to be a museum director, and the museum was flawed and suffered.

And Paul, some of his personal problems with art, the artists that he liked—I'd hate to say who. He hated Ellsworth Kelly. And as an example, I found a wonderful Kelly painting that I gave them. Paul put it into a John Cage show to demonstrate a musical suggestion, and they brought it out every 24 hours and turned it upside down. And loving Ellsworth and the passion of his work, I just couldn't understand that, but a lot of things about Paul I didn't understand.

I've always given to museums a lot, and the first big picture that I offered to MOCA he turned down. It was an early Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Hollywood [Africans]*, but he turned it down because I'd already offered it to MoMA and they turned it down, interestingly enough; not quite sure they were ready for Basquiat. And finally, after Paul turned it down—he said, "I'm not going to take rejects from MoMA"—the Whitney took it. And it's now the star of their collection and one of the great Basquiats. Somebody said it was insured for \$20 million when it was last out and shown.

Those things happen, but for Paul, they were legendary. I could go on with another 20 such accounts. For me, the final clash was when I was moving from California and sent 10 museums a list of 100 works that I was going to give away. I asked each museum to make their wish list of the top 10, and I tried to see they got at least one. And indicate works they would like from the list. Everybody else came back with the top 10 marked and with a lot of Xs and plus-pluses, all of that. Paul's list came back with, scrawled in Paul's hand, the big letters, "Not good enough."

AVIS BERMAN: Uh—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: So, for the tape, my jaw was really dropping.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right, I love that. And it was that degree of arrogance—

AVIS BERMAN: Well, it was so personal, too.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Personal, absolutely personal. I said to Jeffrey Deitch—who's been a good friend and advised me about a lot of art, from my first sale I ever had at Sotheby's. Jeffrey was my advisor and counsel, and pulled it off brilliantly. I think he brought six artists that are all-time high out of that sale and helped me sell Sotheby's on the concept, which they'd never done before, of putting the artists' pictures on the cover, which was a first. And we had a dinner at Sotheby's, and I think eight of the 10 artists showed up, which was again unique in its time.

AVIS BERMAN: Especially because you were selling some of their work. They were accepting of this?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Well, I told them all what was happening. I discussed why, discussed what of their work I'd given other places. It was at a point when the auction houses were not as strong as they are now, and auction was not considered—well, for artists, auction came right after divorce and cancer as undesirable. But I think that's so turned around, and I really think my sale helped him.

AVIS BERMAN: I saw, though, that this particular sale—we could jump and discuss this. This was the Sotheby's sale, and this was November 14, 2001, so it was barely two months after 9/11, but it was successful?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. Actually, my art was on its way back to California on that day of [September] 11, 2001, and we didn't know for four days if it had made it or not.

AVIS BERMAN: I guess you want to say to New York, right? Because the sale was in—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No. It was already all in Sotheby's possession, and they sent some to London, some to Paris, some to LA and San Francisco. It wanted a big four-city tour, and a lot had left New York to go back to LA to be seen, and we didn't know where it was.

But there was a lot of consideration as to whether to cancel the sale, and Sotheby's urged that we didn't. And we didn't, and actually after my sale, there was a round of applause in the auditorium. I think there were, say, six to eight artists' sales at all-time highs. And virtually everybody called and thanked me and wished me luck. In these days it's nothing, but back then the fact that everything went for over the high estimate, and everything sold, obviously, and it

was close to \$30 million. So that was key in its day.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, the 100 works that you were giving to museums, were those coming from the Douglas Cramer Foundation?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Both Foundation and personal. And what happened when I moved from California to Connecticut, I knew I was never going to have the space I had in California for art. The Foundation things had to go if I wasn't going to set up a new foundation. And the personal things, I knew an apartment in New York and a house in Connecticut weren't going to have that kind of room. I did [have] a small building, a 1,200-square-foot barn, but the California Foundation had 15,000 feet of space, which was open to the public, and the house in Santa Ynez across the street was 25,000 square feet with all that hanging space.

AVIS BERMAN: So this list—in this 2001 catalogue, there is a selection of gifts from the Foundation, and those would have gone to MOCA beforehand or before you got that letter?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: That's in the letter, and it had those things in it. I sent the letter offering works that were available. If museums didn't take them, they were going up for sale.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But evidently MOCA did get a lot of gifts from the Foundation, so I wondered how these got in if Paul Schimmel rejected them.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: These were works that have been given earlier, before that.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, okay.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: This list were gifts from the Cramer Foundation that I had made through the years. So it wasn't part of that list. But Paul took nothing at that point. I didn't give anything to MOCA at the time, and I don't think I have since, other than cash.

AVIS BERMAN: When did you end your involvement with MOCA?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: That's a very good question, because I'm not sure. When I moved from California to Connecticut, I certainly left the board then, if I hadn't earlier, but I started as just a trustee and then was head of painting and sculpture. I was president for three years, but they wanted me to go on and be chairman, and I wouldn't, because I wasn't a great believer in Richard and certainly had questions. And so I stepped down from that.

I think I stayed on the board until I rotated. You rotated off after seven years. I may have rotated off, come back, and then left. I'm not sure. But I was out of there truly by the late '90s, when I made the move to New York. I joined the Modern board in '97, I think. And their painting and sculpture committee before that. So my activities were a lot more focused.

AVIS BERMAN: What were your questions or conflicts about Richard Koshalek?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I hate to get into that because he's still out there and functioning, and we've built a friendship factor. I've found that he's aged well. At the time, I was worried that MOCA was too much about his ego and personality, and that he didn't build a strong museum staff, and a long-term problem that Eli had—Eli Broad—that MOCA didn't show a permanent collection, which had started with the great original gifts, the Panza gifts. My friend Barry Lowen, who I mentioned, left his entire collection, which is about 50 works, to MOCA. And then Lennie Greenberg gave her parents'—many of their major works, Giacometti and Mondrian. She gave them to the museum, and they were not up much of the time. Both Eli felt and I felt that they should have been a major part of MOCA from the beginning, and always had those things up, that they were important enough that any museum would. And bringing in a lot of rinky-dink, tacky shows was not the answer.

AVIS BERMAN: Do you think that Jeffrey was given a fair shake when he was there?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It's a very good question. I wasn't involved enough to know what kind of shot he had. I thought it was a great move, but I thought that the seeds of his destruction were planted by not getting rid of Paul before Jeffrey came. And he either didn't think it was necessary or wasn't willing to put up the fight, or wasn't given by Eli and the board power to get rid of Paul. I have a feeling they probably said, Try to see how it works. And the word in Los Angeles, and certainly I heard a lot second-hand, third-hand, was that Jeffrey didn't have a chance the day he got off the plane, because Paul had so dirtied the waters about him.

AVIS BERMAN: Also when he left, it was like the cause célèbre. It was like the crucifixion or something. I mean, it was really—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: —shocking.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes. All these departures and all this stuff.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It was incredibly badly handled. Jeffrey did some very interesting shows. He got a lot turned around. Certainly he didn't do what I think in LA County has been done so extraordinarily by Michael Govan, where he took over a much larger space with a lot more money, but it was empty. You should shoot buffalo. And now when I was out there two years ago, MoMA was jammed. Jammed! LA County, excuse me. And there was nobody downtown.

AVIS BERMAN: I also think, with MOCA, it seemed everyone said it was doomed because of how Jeremy Strick was a scholar type, but Jeffrey was the opposite.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: He didn't understand what was needed of him. His strengths were not the strengths the job needed.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, and Jeffrey had some of those, but they were castigating him for not being the pure scholar. I don't think you can win.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: You can't win. You couldn't win in that town at that moment and with Paul there taking potshots at you. So it was sad. I hope now they can get it straightened somehow.

AVIS BERMAN: Do you think they would hire Paul back?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: God, I can't imagine.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I don't know.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: That's a shattering thought that they'd be that sick. [Laughs]. But Paul, I'm sure, can be a great success as a private dealer because there is his team, people that were great supporters and loved to follow him, like the late Tom Armstrong with his playing musical pipes, and would go anywhere he went because it was always a party, but it had very little to do with art. And now he's with a big, very flashy, forward-going gallery, which is picking up some better, interesting artists, and they work for him that way. Larry Gagosian he's not.

AVIS BERMAN: What do you think of the Broad Museum, the idea of that?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I don't know. I'm not wise enough or knowledgeable enough of Los Angeles in recent years to have a real feeling. I do know that basically, having had one space like a private museum, I think if they're run well, you get a lot of people who can learn a lot about art. And the enthusiasm and the purity of the collector-owners' visions show artists to a very good advantage, if they care.

When I built my space at the ranch, I had the artists all involved with what was hanging where, helping do their space, getting involved, and I kept changing the art. There were a couple of years, at least one year, that we had more people in the museum than MOCA did, and they drove a hundred and some odd miles past Santa Barbara to go out in wine country and spend time looking at the space.

We had, I would guess, 400 works of art in 15,000 square feet. There was basically a room of Roy, a room of Jasper, a room with Ellsworth, a room of Jimmy Dine, a room of David Salle, and a room of Eric Fischl, and a room of Julian Schnabel. And then other mixed rooms, Susan Rothenberg, Sean Scully, Donald Sultan. And then an outdoor pavilion and sculpture, things around the yard. And I had in those days probably from 10 to 25 works by each of the artists I just named. I hadn't just bought one show. Did I say Frank Stella? I forgot Stella.

But there was an attempt to show the artists historically, so from earliest—even if they were just prints or drawings, I tried to have every period of their life work as it changed.

And the museums, the personal foundations, that did that—like the Meyerhoffs, which was at their home, but it was wonderful to look at. It was closer to the Barnes than anything else. Going through the Fishers, Don and Doris Fisher, and the Gap factories had great sense of that. Eli really did it beautifully out at the fire station or whatever that old electrical building was. And of course, Norton Simon started out that way, and it became his Museum of Art. And of course,

Saatchi began it all. Now we have Franceres and Bernard who have done it. I guess in Washington, who was it that's just opening?

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, right. It's out in Potomac.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, I know who you're talking about. Does the name begin with G? Is it something like—I think it begins with G, Greg or Gale [Glenstone]?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Charles or Lane [Charles and Emily Rales]? I don't know.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, right. But it's out in Potomac, Maryland.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. And now here we have in Florida, we've got the four or five foundation spaces, and they all change their work every year, and they're all actively collecting. In many ways it's the art of the new. But if you've got the money and you have the passion and willingness to share, that's great.

Mine really came, my building space, because I had so much art that was in storage, and I hated it being in storage. I wanted it out to be seen. And the day I first went to Charles and Doris's London space, I said I'm going to do this. I actually tried to get the same architect that had done theirs, and he felt he'd done it already, so I ripped it off. But to the point where he came to the gallery, and he walked in; he stopped, turned around, and he looked at me, and he said, "Very familiar." I'm blocking the architect's name. He was a wonderful Englishman: Max Gordon. He's passed away.

AVIS BERMAN: Not Rodgers?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No. He's gone. Anyway, we can add the name later.

AVIS BERMAN: It's not Norman Foster?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No, it certainly wasn't.

AVIS BERMAN: Why did you have to create this as a foundation, as opposed to making the space and just having it be your—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Oh, mine. It was actually tax reasons, and they said that I could have more money to buy more art if it was a foundation. The only difference between it being my home, belonging to me, and belonging to the Foundation, was that I could never bring it into the house. So I put it on the other side of the street, and I was there every day I was in the country. And guests, people could see it, and it just was more compatible.

But it was, I would say, finally, there were tax advantages, because you could give the art earlier at its then-appraised value. It would have, in the long run, been much more effective to have kept it and to have owned it to sell, because of the great appreciation that we saw in all of the art. But once it got going, it sort of took on a life of its own. I think that's happened down here in Miami, and now it's lots of places where there's still the advantages of having it, and it's easier.

It's complicated to have it open by invitation that people set up, but it's a nice feeling to know that doing it that way, you can let more people in. There was a turning point for me, when art became chic and collectors were notorious, that collectors' turn had come in the wheel. *Vanity Fair* did seven pages, I think, on me and the Foundation at one point.

But when I was the president of MOCA, all these other museums from all over the country were out touring. They would take groups of people to houses and view and chat and look at the art. But at the same time, you'd lose things off of coffee tables. Pictures would disappear, even things in your closet. Because they'd go everywhere, and I had art hanging in the closet.

And it was a big bore. The groups would come late. They'd try to bring bags in or smoke, and I had a group from a rather well-known museum in the Midwest, or Northwest. I had a group of 20 that came in a bus, and I was told that they were all docents and knew the artists and would be respectful. I was being much more careful about who we let in the house by then. And I'd had a meeting at home in the morning. It was late, and so I left when the group had just finished. I said hello in the living room, and I thanked them. They'd come through the house, and my curator had pointed out all the art, the artists, and dates, and all that. And the vice president of group

thanked me for the group, and she said it was just been amazing to be here, to see your house, and to see your collection, and to know all the wonderful television you've done, and that you've had time as well to paint all these pictures as well.

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And that was the last group that went through the house. The Foundation stepped forward; it happened.

AVIS BERMAN: In terms of something that went into the Foundation versus what was in your personal collection, how did you make decisions, if any, as to what would be there and what would be in—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: The personal collection, anything that was too big I wouldn't really take in my own collection, because I didn't have any space that could hang it. Like the Lichtenstein *Interior* was a painting I thought I'd never live without, loved as much as anything I've ever owned, but I realized that there were very few New York apartments that could take it, and that in Connecticut it would be difficult. So kind of any painting over eight or nine feet would end up going to the Foundation

AVIS BERMAN: You mentioned Joel Shapiro and Richard Serra; were you interested in—I haven't seen it mentioned—in commissioning site-specific pieces of sculpture?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: For years I was totally opposed to the idea. I thought usually when you did it, they lacked the passion and the fire of work that had sprung up on its own. But when I had the ranch and the space, I started commissioning some outdoor pieces.

Richard came to the ranch three times with three different dealers, first with Leo, then with Arne [Glimcher], and then with Larry. And we never could get him to agree to do a piece that excited him that either I thought I could paid for or the state or the city would approve it going up in town or out. So I never did.

I bought a prop piece because it was there. Still, a nightmare to get it up, and when I was moving and going to take it down, Richard said, "I'm going to denounce the piece unless you give it to a museum." He wouldn't hear of it coming up for auction. It had to go to a museum of his choice. So he approved the Tate, and it went there, and he oversaw the installation. So it's still on his approved list.

I think the first person to do the commission was Joel Shapiro, who did three pieces that were—where is that catalogue—three pieces that were germane to the house and the landscape, because it was a Grecian style house on two levels, and there was a giant waterfall and a surround, and below, a waterfall. So he did three sets of sculptures, a man sitting, a man sunning and a man leaping, but they were all of his classic bronze forms.

In any case, that was a first and was very successful. I love them. Originally, I didn't like one of the three, and he actually took it back and redid another one to replace it. I thought that was a grand move, so I was very much for that. And then I went from that. Ellsworth did the big totem, the 25-foot totem in the yard, of which that version is out here in the yard. And Richard Artschwager did a couple of giant-sized chairs that were the top of a piece. No, I'm wrong about—the Joel piece was sold before that, because I did a sculpture sale a year earlier of outdoor pieces.

AVIS BERMAN: In that sale of 2001, the works of art there are so great. Are there any that you really regret that—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It was a space decision. I was also going into retirement, and everything I had was in art or houses, because I had a big house in Bel Air, and five acres and a house in St. Martin, and I'd bought the farm in Connecticut, and the apartment in New York. My business managers just said, "You've got to get some cash," and so that was kind of a part of it.

No, I'd just say if I had this sale to do over, I would never, ever have let the *Kelly Red, White, and Blue* go. Certainly the *Ruscha*, the gas station, which I love, and the *Johns Montez Singing*.

AVIS BERMAN: Exactly.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It's always tough, and you always regret it. There surely could have been a

place for the big Serra plate piece somewhere. It's now at Henry Kravis's in Palm Beach I think.

AVIS BERMAN: Now I want to backtrack back to California, because you were going to talk more about Larry, in a minute.

But I have one other thing from the past that you mentioned yesterday as we were leaving off tape, and I just want to get it in because it is from the past—I had happened to say that *Batman*, of course, had real Pop art sensibility, but of course, the Pop artists took from comics. And then you said that Roy had influence or had something to do with *Batman*. So I wanted to get that story on tape.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. My first real successes at ABC were in development. You suggested ideas for TV series shows and developed them with the right creative people. I came from P&G and the daytime soap operas, [and] I wanted to do a soap at nighttime in primetime. And so we put *Peyton Place* on the air, which I had gotten thrown out of school for taking from the library growing up in Cincinnati. Years later, I reread it and put it on ABC. It was a giant hit, three nights a week. And so everybody at ABC wanted to me to repeat it with a show with action elements in it.

We went out to try to get *Dick Tracy* or *Terry and the Pirates*, and neither one was available, and so I proposed *Batman*. There were lots of questions if it was just too far out, but I had met Bob Kane, who created and drew it, and he gave me the right to sell it. And I talked to Bill Dozier, who was a wonderful Hollywood producer who understood the camp elements of *Batman*.

We made a pilot together with Fox, and I had dinner with Roy, on a Saturday night, who loved the idea that I was doing it and was talking about his favorite *Batman* memories. I guess it was an Irving Blum dinner; I really didn't know Roy well then, but talking about *Batman* and his enthusiasm for it.

The next night, we had the first test-screening—the show had been on order when some things fell apart mid-season, so it was rushed, and we made a pilot that they ordered as a series before the pilot was finished. But it never went through advertiser's screenings or testing. In television, as in the movies today, the audience testing is very important. Studios put films in work in a theater on Sunset Boulevard for test audiences. They have clips on people's fingers, and when you like it or don't like it, you're indicating by pressing onto a board, so they can watch every moment of the show.

And *Batman* came up for this test, and it was a week before it went on the air. There was high anticipation. We were counting on it to save a night in the schedule, and everybody thought it couldn't miss. But the test audience hated it. Didn't understand it, didn't know what it was all about or what we were doing. I sat with test groups afterwards. They'd go into rooms and tell you they thought it was silly, and grown men talking like that, and wearing capes around, and driving a Batmobile. And we said, Well, you know, it's a comic strip, and it's animation, and it's not for real. Most of the people there, it was totally beyond them, and even those that when you explained it to them, they didn't get it.

And then like a magical button, I thought, Well, it's Roy—Roy Lichtenstein. I called an animator who did great titles for television series and showed him all of Roy's work that I could pull together by the time he got back to the studio, and said I wanted him to work from this. And how can we in five days do this?

We threw out the straightforward score, and the animator looking at Roy's work did a series of *Pow!*, *Biff!*, *Boof!* And after 24 hours, yes, it was so successful for the title, Bill Dozier said we should put it in the show. So we worked into six or eight sequences where the animation came up. We didn't get it finished. It was still wet film when they held it together at ABC and aired it.

It was an overnight smash hit. When we tested the second episode, a day before it went on the air, with titles and everything in, it went through the roof. And then the all-time low was one of the all-time highs.

AVIS BERMAN: Just because it was infused—the humor literally became physical.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Came out, yes. Roy's—the cartooning, what he did, gave the audience a sense of understanding where we were going.

AVIS BERMAN: Did you tell Roy all about this? Was he aware?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I told him through the years, yes. He loved it, and he loved Hollywood people, like Ellsworth loves French actresses.

AVIS BERMAN: That goes back to Jack Youngerman and Delphine Seyrig.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Delphine, yes, right.

AVIS BERMAN: I think Roy really enjoyed being out at Gemini when he used to go out every year.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Oh, he loved being in LA, and then having people at LA collect him.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, I agree, and I think that Sidney [Felsen] and Stanley [Grinstein] made it very nice for all the artists, when they were out there, to fit in and to meet the people and all.

So you were saying that you were going to tie in the MOCA experience with the growth of Larry Gagosian, or his development.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Well, during MOCA's really formative years, or the years that Larry was emerging from the back seat of the car in Westwood, and he opened his little gallery, and MOCA's birth, and the fact they found and brought together collectors of art of the '50s on, they fed on each other. And Larry, because he was out there and in the houses and busy photographing what was in the collector's houses, and building his file up, there was a great synergy going back and forth between the two. And then as Larry introduced them, got a lot of New York artists and showed them in LA. He helped sort of edge them toward MOCA.

It was at a time that museums all over the country were having their contemporary departments suddenly affected. You couldn't go anywhere in Philadelphia or Washington, it seemed to me, without finding Mark Rosenthal leading a group of his collectors in how many places. And the same thing everywhere, that Diane—Upright?

AVIS BERMAN: Upright, yes.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, from Denver. And who is now deeply at MoMA, who came from the Walker.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, Kathy Halbreich.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Kathy Halbreich is fabulous. But there they were, on buses, planes, and trains bringing collectors to LA to go to homes and museums and look at art and get involved with the contemporary departments.

And as Larry had more people working for him, they suddenly seemed to be there and in the mix, and selling and buying and encouraging movement. Larry didn't just become an 11-gallery wonder with his own Gulfstream as big as any of his clients and living in a style a Prussian king would have had. He worked hard, and he was at the right time, and I think found the right artists. In a way, if MOCA had been as successful as Larry was, you'd really see something. But MOCA became more Eli's museum, as the West Coast became more and more Eli's hunting ground, and all the museums, and Eli's finger was everywhere. Larry's was, too.

AVIS BERMAN: In terms of MOCA, on some level Paul Schimmel must have responded positively to Larry to have that kind of synergy between the two institutions.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Paul Schimmel had very little connection with Larry. I doubt he even went into the gallery. Maybe his people, because Larry's very smart about all that, spoke to Paul. But I would not say Paul had a fingerhold in MOCA's success. It was just they all went their own way. Larry was close to Eli, and Larry and Eli's—the synergy there was very positive and direct. I think if Eli had gotten Larry at an earlier term, rather than Jeffrey, you might have seen a phenomenal museum. Probably by now, if Larry was in charge, he'd also have the Getty, and Norton Simon, and Huntington.

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.] True, but I can't imagine that Larry Gagosian ever wanted to be—because Jeffrey did start as an art historian. He had a degree in business and in art history.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I don't know what Larry's education was. Do you?

AVIS BERMAN: No.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Where he went to school? What his background was?

AVIS BERMAN: Actually, he—because of his resourcefulness, he could even be self-taught, because he seems to almost know more than someone—a lot of people who were self-taught almost know more than others, because they feel they have to.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right, that's true.

AVIS BERMAN: Not that he didn't go to school, but whether or not he went in art was another question. It almost doesn't matter. He's like Coriolanus: he was author of himself and he had no other kin. You almost need someone like that. Because he's such an entrepreneur, he never could have been happy. But your disillusionment with MOCA was because of Paul Schimmel or for other reasons?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Because of Richard, yes. I mean, first, the combination of Paul and Richard seemed to me to be a losing team, and they weren't supplementing it with other positive people. Eli drew away, too, and a number of others did. Some held on because of their own—like Lennie Greenberg, because her guilt over giving her family's work there rather than LA County or the Modern.

AVIS BERMAN: I think Eli drew away, but then he came back.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Came back in a way, yes. It was too good a thing to give up. I think it's very interesting the way Eli's own museum within terms of LACMA worked out, and it'll be fascinating to see how it works. It's like Eli and Michael, who he brought out and was so supportive of in the beginning; now they seem to almost be on separate tracks. Some of it may be apocryphal, but Michael supposedly feeling empowered by not taking Eli's calls, it's just symptomatic of that situation.

AVIS BERMAN: Glancingly, you mentioned Michael Ovitz before. Do you intersect as collectors or in any way? Obviously, you intersect professionally, but in terms of art interests or—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Well, I've had a lot of collectors as friends and major intersections in terms of the artists that we loved or collected, both competitively to find out what was going on and who was getting things, but also both because of my work with both museums and trying to get other collectors involved with those museums.

I watched Michael Ovitz, who was my agent in Hollywood, for Aaron Spelling and myself, for years. But I watched him get involved with collecting after knowing very little about it, but he was, of course, very close to Arne Glimcher. And Arne was helping his movie career—Arne's movie career—with Michael, and vice versa with Michael's art career.

Michael got on the MoMA board just before I did, and I think he was the first West Coast person in years in MoMA in any kind of way. And then when I came on, it was sort of astonishing. I was the second person. But particularly since being on the MoMA board and then on the international council of the Tate, we've gotten to know a lot more collectors and see them more regularly.

Down here in Florida, when there's six or eight of us, we're constantly running into each other. I'm certainly not in the league with the five or six with their own foundations, but they're fascinating people, and we love the same things, and it's also good to know what the competition's doing.

So there are people that we've really grown close to along the way. In Washington, for instance, Jane and Bob Meyerhoff, and visiting their collection because we had rooms of the same artists and the same situations. Jane loved to compare what works you had by different artists. Once I came for drinks at their apartment in the Carlyle before going on to dinner, and she had brought out a deck of cards. So she said, "Now match me." And each card had a work by a different artist they owned. So she wanted to be matched with the Johns, the Kellys, the Stellas, the Lichtensteins, et cetera, if I had one that she thought was as good or even in the same class with hers. And with each period, did we match this? Did we have that? I loved that.

AVIS BERMAN: It's true, the collectors of contemporary are all over. They're national and international. But I asked about Michael Ovitz, and also even though there's competition, it seemed to me there was this real esprit de corps or a dedication to making Los Angeles this kind of center. Now it's been recognized for a while, but there was the sense of saying, Hey, we count too.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: In the 80s, there was an absolute determination to say we're at a level with New York or bigger, and we have all this happening, and we have all these artists who are about to explode. And the artists didn't explode. Until LACMA found its footing, which was actually when Michael Goven arrived—2008 or '09—there was 15 years, almost 20 years, where people were saying, Well, it hasn't happened in LA. They just didn't do it.

I now find it interesting that we have LACMA hitting in all gears. We have the Broad Museum about to open, and we'll see how that shakes everything down. We've got a lot of new interest for Disney Hall by Gehry—the building finished downtown. And I find it fascinating, while there are no major new artists that have come out of LA, except possibly Mark Grotjah—somebody who's gone through the wild roots, a number of older—well, Ruscha held up very well, and Diebenkorn, who was there, seems to have held it. Sam Francis has dropped down in interest, and I think Bob Irwin and Vija Celmins need some major critical attention.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, Baldessari is—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Baldessari has always been the dean. Who else have we missed from that group? But we're now having retrospectively to see an artist that I had years ago, Llyn Foulkes, and John Alexander, John McCracken. We're looking back in New York galleries, Bob Irwin.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, that was the other one, right.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: You're seeing some names and people that you couldn't sell at auction, and it was hard enough privately, that are now coming out. Well, there's so many dealers and there's so many collectors, they need to find things to sell.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, exactly. Well, there are also a lot of people that maybe the public isn't interested in, but museum curators are interested in, people like Wallace Berman.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Who else like that?

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, maybe Lawrence Weiner. Who else?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Ed Moses.

AVIS BERMAN: Ed Moses, right. And then there were—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Bob Graham.

AVIS BERMAN: And then there was—is she still active—Alexis Smith? Is she still active?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: She's had a show. I have one Alexis left that I've always loved. But you don't see the regularity of a new artist cropping out in LA that grabs attention and becomes a box-office star.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, I know. Of course, he moved, because he ended up in California, Allan Kaprow.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Who?

AVIS BERMAN: Allan Kaprow.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Oh, Allan Kaprow, yes. Yes, I'm not a big fan.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, he didn't make his sort of resurrected-like performance, and things like that, with objects. But he was influential.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, big artist. John Paul Jones has sort of disappeared. Bill Brown. Paul Wonner.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, then there were others. There were other Ferus artists. There was Craig Kauffman, and there was John Altoon and some of those people.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: The ceramics.

AVIS BERMAN: Ken Price.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Ken Price. And DeWain Valentine, who was on the board of MOCA in the

early years when there was supposed to be an artist involved.

AVIS BERMAN: Barbara Kruger.

Now, when you were on MOCA, when did you first begin to get involved with MoMA?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: In probably the late '80s, I went on the international committee, which was a great social traveling group. I had an opportunity to meet people and for the museum to see whether I was somebody they should be thinking about. I enjoyed that.

AVIS BERMAN: When you are an important trustee and officer of one museum, does the other museum—is it considered poaching if you overlap? Or how does that—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It's only poaching if in the same city, but cross-country there's no problem with poaching.

AVIS BERMAN: Because that's how the Whitney started their national committee, so that they could reach out to all sorts of other—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: —to all over, right. And the Whitney's national committee, I guess, came before the Modern's? Or—

AVIS BERMAN: No, that international committee at MoMA, I think, had been around since the '40s. The Whitney started that national committee under Tom Armstrong.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Oh, right. He was indeed the ringmaster. But MoMA's international committee has always been an international council, a very sort of elegant group of very rich people who had time to travel and love getting to people's houses and looking.

AVIS BERMAN: The last thing, isn't that everybody? [Laughs.]

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Just about.

AVIS BERMAN: So that you were on that, and then you were able to show him that they should pursue you, shall we say?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I think, and although the Whitney kept making entreaties, I really wanted MoMA, and I just waited until then they first asked me to be on paintings and sculpture, and I was on that for a while. And I may have gone on the film committee as well, and then came the trustee.

AVIS BERMAN: And when you were saying it was such an exciting experience to work with Kirk Varnedoe, could you elaborate on that a little?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Other than the fact that he was one of the most charismatic men that ever lived, and talked better off the cuff than most people do with prepared notes that had been punched up by a joke writer. It just came naturally to him. But his knowledge of art and his knowledge, his understanding, and his use of that knowledge and understanding, was just phenomenal. I've never again met anyone else, and I've met a lot of curators and a lot of art critics, but no one equaled Kirk for me.

As curator—the painting and sculpture committee was a committee that voted on what we were going to sell and what we were going to accept. And in Kirk's days, I would say less than 50 percent of what was offered got accepted. It's much higher than that now, which is sad, particularly when it goes into storage. But the meetings where a lot of very rich and elegant, and also determined, collectors could sit and talk about art and what should be in the museum or not be, and by sort of misdirection a lot of collectors were testing their own feelings and knowledge and were out there—Kirk kept that alive and vital, and those meetings, which were scheduled for an hour and a half, usually went three hours. And there were some amazing, amazing people that were on it.

When I was there with Kirk, he just said, "Let's be a little bolder," and people that might never be trustees but are really important, even though they have commitments at other museums. So we brought in Emily Rauh Pulitzer from Saint Louis and Emily Landau Fisher from the Whitney, and Don and Doris Fisher, who were involved in San Francisco.

I even had, for one meeting, David Geffen, who joined the committee. He was devoted to Kirk.

He'd never buy anything without talking to Kirk. But he and Ovitz did not get along, and we carefully asked him to join the committee, didn't mention Mike's involvement. At the time, we were sure, because of a film opening in London, Mike would not be in New York, and of course, David walked into the meeting and there was Mike, and David left shortly afterwards. Never came back.

But there were lots of quirks and lots of things like that. Steve Cohen is on the committee now, and Leon Black.

AVIS BERMAN: That would make sense, given the preeminence of their collections.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, and that's what it should be, and kind of always had been. It was Ronald Lauder to Aggie. You got elected once for six years, so Ronald, then to Aggie, and then to me, and then to Leon Black, and now it's Mimi Haas from San Francisco, of Levi Strauss family. She's very good at it.

AVIS BERMAN: MoMA is the Holy Grail, so they could have the top, and they should. And you would learn a lot from what people think.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And from Kirk, yes. I don't think I ever learned a thing from John Elderfield, but it was nice to watch him. But after Kirk, it's a hard act to follow.

AVIS BERMAN: I would say the two most eloquent people I have ever heard on art were Kirk Varnedoe and Meyer Shapiro.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Oh, interesting.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, because he would just have these lectures, and they weren't captured as much. The writings are wonderful, but he was an electrifying lecturer. There was once he came up with—because he was actually discussing Pop art, and people were talking about the commonness, the thingness, of Pop art. And he eventually—and this was early on—he had a phrase for a museum: "the Valhalla of things." I almost fainted. To have come up with a phrase like that in the middle of a lecture. I said, "Ahh!"

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Do you think he came up with it, or he had it and he worked it in?

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I don't know whether, but to have conceived of the phrase as well, what would you not give?

[END CD1 TR03.]

AVIS BERMAN: This is Avis Berman interviewing Douglas Cramer for the Archives of American Art oral history program on December 13, 2013, in New York City, in his apartment.

Today we're going to start by discussing some of the most important artists in Mr. Cramer's life—he had an effect on them; they had an effect on him—the work they bought, salient events and experiences. And how, shall we say, each of them grew together and separately. I think we could start with Roy Lichtenstein, or we could start with Ellsworth Kelly, as you prefer.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It's up to you.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, why don't we start with Roy Lichtenstein, just because we were talking a little bit about him off tape.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Okay.

AVIS BERMAN: Mr. Cramer was talking about being in Roy Lichtenstein's studio for the last time. And maybe we could just begin with that and talking about when you had gotten a painting versus when you froze.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Okay. I visited, as I think I mentioned earlier in the interview, Roy's studio almost every summer—of those prize collectors that got a first look at what he'd done—to be offered by Leo in the fall. And just days before he took ill with that summer cold, which he never recovered from, I'd gone to visit him for the weekend, taking a new puppy that I had been given—Sutton, my King Charles Spaniel at the time—which Roy absolutely adored. And he and Dorothy had—I can't remember—either a big lunch or dinner for a lot of our friends. It was their last, sadly, big dinner, big event of that sort at home.

But I spent a lot of time in his studio and looking and talking about what he had been doing. He was so relaxed and so easy in a way. I think probably he and Ellsworth were two painters that made their work look so easy and comprehensible. They had an ability to talk about it and make you see what they were doing and why they were doing it, and understand it.

But I had had—going back to that weekend—I'd had a little problem with the Chinese paintings, and I wasn't quite sure. And then, sadly, he went into the pneumonia in Southampton at the hospital, then in New York, and never came out of it.

A couple of years later, I went back for something going on at the Southampton, the Parrish Museum, which Dorothy and Roy were always devoted to, and stayed with Dorothy in another part of the house then, because she was remodeling the old house. And went back to the studio. I kept putting it off for the weekend, but finally the last day she said, "Come on, please. Let's do this."

And we walked through, sort of hand in hand, and it was almost a religious experience to see how strong the art was, how strong his presence was. And you have those moments where you see what eternity is. And somehow, it was there for Roy.

But that experience with the Chinese paintings was one that I had had earlier, and again with the Chinese-derived work, when Brice Marden went into the Coal Mountain paintings. Mary Boone called me to come to New York and to see the work, which was coming into the studio—from the studio to the gallery. And I had an overnight first chance to buy a spectacular big painting. And I didn't step up to it. It was such a shock, I wasn't sure. Today, of course, you'd have 20 minutes to walk in the door and if you didn't buy it, it was out. It was gone. I've had experiences like that where other collectors were driving by a studio and they had to wait till you got out, and then they took their turn and they came and looked.

I think the last time I had that happen was Cecily Brown, after she'd gone to Gagosian. But so much about reacting to art now, at art fairs, everything is of the moment. Back then, back in the '90s, you could think about art and have a little time to discuss it and feel if you wanted it. And even at moments—I can't recall whether we talked about this or not—but the first time I was finally offered a Jasper Johns painting by Leo and taken to the studio, it was like going to Lourdes. The cure was there, and I didn't like the picture. I passed on it, which doesn't—I learned later from Leo—he couldn't remember it ever happening with Jasper. But we built a great friendship out of it, and it took five years till I got offered another Johns. Finally did. By then I was in St. Martin and we saw each other a lot. But anyway, it's all going roundabout. But for a collector, and looking, and buying, committing to a work, it's not easy. And it doesn't grow any easier today.

AVIS BERMAN: Sure. You were saying it doesn't get any easier today. It just seems it would be very difficult to make quick decisions, because the act of looking—you can't take it in all at once. Do artists really expect you to?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I think they do what their dealers train them to do in most cases. And because now most of the art shopping, it's done, to me, it's like Stop and Shop. And at the galleries, during the Art Basel and Miami Basel, and Frieze, et cetera. It's Stop-and-Shop fast. There doesn't seem to be much of the reflective quality to it. And I find that so much of the art that's out there looks almost like it was painted by demand, as it was in the 16th and 17th centuries, apparently. And if an artist was doing something that he knew people wanted, he got his students to work and they made a lot more, i.e., Jeff Koons. [Laughs.]

AVIS BERMAN: And others, too.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And many others, too. But it's not fun anymore. It's still great when you find something you love and bring it home and it's yours.

AVIS BERMAN: But sometimes, though, you can see something and all of a sudden—sometimes you do know something is great immediately.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right.

AVIS BERMAN: But sometimes things—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: When's the last time you knew something was great, that you saw it, walked into it unexpectedly?

AVIS BERMAN: Well, there were two sorts. For an artist, maybe about 10 to 15 years ago immediately. But sometimes for shows or something, you haven't seen that from the last year or so. But that would say something that—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Who was the artist?

AVIS BERMAN: Well, believe it or not, it was at the MoMA show of Magritte. Because you only know five or six images.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: And you began to see a lot more ideas came from and out of him. So that was an artist that I think I had probably compartmentalized. And MoMA did a great job. It really opened my eyes about that artist. So that's what's supposed to happen.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, that's right. That's what museum shows were about.

AVIS BERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] It's true. It's getting that feeling that you've been punched in the stomach. That doesn't happen very often, that sense of authenticity. I will really grant you that, that this is the—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: The shock or the surprise.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes. Or this is the real deal or something when someone—it's true. Well, we should circle back to Roy Lichtenstein. Did you meet him when you were living in California?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. I think I met him—I'd seen him in big parties in New York, social things, and at the studio. But I really got to know them well when he came out and was working in Gemini.

That was really an extraordinary—it still is. Gemini, the best printmaker, I think, in America. And they had Roy, and Jasper, and Ellsworth, and Richard Serra, and David Hockney. A multitude of artists that would come for a month. They'd be in LA, and there isn't that much to do in LA. And to have a collector who likes to entertain and to know artists' work—there were a few of us there, but not what there is now. And Roy and Dorothy were always great company.

AVIS BERMAN: And was Irving Blum in the mix for this, too?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Peripherally. Irving was in New York then. Irving had pulled away. By the time I really knew the Gemini people, they had gotten over the fact that I was more or less not buying prints, but loving their artists. And we set a whole new basis. Now Sid and Joni [Weyl] are dear good friends, and I have a lot of Sid's work as a photographer around.

AVIS BERMAN: That's terrific.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: But it was a great opportunity to know people. Ellsworth, the same way. He liked being in LA at certain times. And he gave us the opportunity to get to know him and have him visit and work from there.

AVIS BERMAN: And, of course, by the time you got to know Roy, you would have had—did you have some of those '60s pictures by then?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I did. And that partially was Irving's influence, as well as Leo, but that's when I had three or four '60s, and more '70s, pictures.

AVIS BERMAN: I think you had *Fastest Gun in the West*.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I finally got that from Betty Asher, which I'd had my eyes on for years. And finally one night, with a little help from Irving and Patt Faure, worked out a deal to—I'd pay for it over two years, I think. And it was enough to keep the gallery going in those years. But I finally got picture I'd always wanted.

I bought something else somewhere at the time, and I can't remember what it was. But I think it was also a Kelly that had been at Irving's, that we worked it out, a Chatham.

AVIS BERMAN: Let me see if this—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: The making of the deal is often as important as anything else, finding the time. But I had a falling out with Irving when Irving and Joe [Helman] double-crossed me. There's a picture that I bought right out of the studio, and loved it. And one of the great, great regrets is that that's gone.

AVIS BERMAN: The *Nude with Abstract Painting*.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, was that in this sale here?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No. I did not put it in the sale. I thought I'd never sell it. And I had a collector who, as I did in the early days, just kept coming back and back and saying he wanted it. And it was Leon Black, who has it now.

AVIS BERMAN: But you bought it straight from Roy?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right out of his studio.

AVIS BERMAN: That's terrific. This is in Florida, right? Am I right?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No, that's gone.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. There were a couple of them in Florida.

I just wanted to see, as long as we were on Roy, if there were anything else. But I think the rest of it—there's a wonderful picture of you in St. Martin with Jasper Johns.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Jasper, Ellsworth—this is after Roy was gone, and Dorothy came down that first Christmas to be with us. That's terrific. And that's the year Jasper and Ellsworth, we always battled over who was doing the Christmas tree. And finally one year we let them each do half.

AVIS BERMAN: Or you could have had two Christmas trees.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: We should have. If I'd had any sense, that's what I would have done.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, that would have—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: But then they would have argued over who had the best.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes. Which was the better tree.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Tree, and that's all they'd do, right.

AVIS BERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DOUGLAS CRAMER: That's the Basquiat.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, that's at the Whitney.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Which is the one that the Modern and MOCA turned down, now at the Whitney. That's the Ellsworth, the great one that Paul Schimmel threw into a John Cage show and had it revolve for 24 hours every day.

AVIS BERMAN: Just for the tape, *Red Orange Panel*.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: A nightmare.

AVIS BERMAN: And I should say that this is the red Christie's catalogue, for the record here.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And this Lichtenstein, the big interior, was the one I think I mentioned that Kirk got first choice that year and I got second. And then I gave it to the Tate.

AVIS BERMAN: This is the picture I was looking for with the *Fastest Gun in the West*. And then you had the *Mirror*.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right. The great *Mirror, No.1*, which Eli now has. I love that. *The Fastest Gun* was more everything.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes. No, that's classic. And I could see it. And this is always kind of cool, that both Irving Blum and Joe Helman always collected them. Well, Joe Helman still has a couple of great ones still left, too.

What do you think Roy's most salient characteristics were as a person?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: That's an interesting question. One I don't know that I'm—better to have Dorothy answer that. But certainly as a painter [used] a very unique style that no one had really done before, which grew out of everyday pop.

I think it's so fascinating that there is a certain period that Roy and Andy were doing work that was so much alike. They were such different people—but certainly different things about certain kinds of advertisements, and dots, and use of the dot or the image, Polaroid or however they took it, they both launched that. And then somehow—I never asked either one of them that question, but how they came to separate and do different things.

And it's in the same way there's a lot of Jasper and Bob Rauschenberg in work at a certain time. In their case, when they were together. But somehow they moved enough apart to each create very strong works of their own, which all came back to sort of the same—what do you call it where a river starts? Tributary?

AVIS BERMAN: The mouth or the same source or the same delta.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: The delta. And they made different things out of it.

Roy was the strongest and the cleanest and the most defined, for me. And Andy became more and more related to the newspaper image. It's one of the things that I worry about Andy's work and place, whether when we, 50 years from now, don't have newspapers and magazines, and life comes from the images on our computers or whatever, God knows.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, he would have been right up on that. I think that Warhol is the most influential artist since Pollock. I think he is our Duchamp.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: You do?

AVIS BERMAN: Yes. Actually, he had more ideas than anyone else. But I think his influence is so global, and over media, because of film and photography, and, of course, celebrity and all of the rest. Roy became a more classical artist. Andy, no matter what he did, somehow either he shaped or was tuned into the zeitgeist. Maybe that's an argument for what you're talking about.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Roy does influence some artists, but I think that the culture has been Warholized.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It has. Certainly a lot of the art culture, that has been—and that more and more, Jasper seems very refined and special. And Bob is more all over the place. There was so much time that he wasn't taken seriously, but he kept working. And that work now, I think we're just beginning to look at in the right way.

AVIS BERMAN: I agree. Well, there are so few artists that—they all work—who retire, unless they lose their sight or something happens. I think you can almost name them, because artists don't.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. Really to Roy and Bob, well, they were all to their last day, when they could, the brush was in their hand.

AVIS BERMAN: Absolutely.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Ellsworth has stacks of new canvases waiting, and he's out there with the respirator—whatever that oxygen thing—on, and he's there at ten in the morning, if he's walking, and working and working and—fascinating that his work has—we've seen this with a lot of artists. Their late work now is among the greatest work they do. I can remember when I was told by two or three very important dealers not to think about anything Picasso did after 1950. And that's not the way it worked.

AVIS BERMAN: There's more distance on that now, too, and people are always looking at art differently. Well, thank goodness for—if they hadn't, we'd never even have El Greco.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: That's true. That's something that—that's a very, very good point, because when you go to the art fairs, our way of looking at art now, it was a time for discovery. It used to be four or five years ago, in the last of the sort of refined days, before they became circuses, you really would come on those moments where you would see something and be overwhelmed by how wonderful the art was. It was being made and not only looked at.

AVIS BERMAN: Also what happens is the fairs, of course, the fair people want to make money, so they expand it so it gets big. And then you get hundreds and these people, more and more dealers. Not everybody is going to have home-run art, so it's just they all want to be there. It's the marketplace.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, and they don't want to take chances. They want things that they know. In Miami two weeks ago, most of the dealers had, by Sunday—when the fair opened on Wednesday, they had a totally different booth. And stock in many cases, was the third or fourth time. It was almost daily they would take it from stash. I didn't know until last week about the private viewing rooms that they started in Basel. The real Basel they now have in Miami, and I'm not sure whether they have them in New York. Do you know about those, that if you see a work of art in a booth, they take it out right away and take it to a private room that they all rent for the hour?

AVIS BERMAN: No, I didn't.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, and so you're not seeing, not looking at it, and you have the ability to see it in a quieter place.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, that is a good idea.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It's a wonderful idea.

AVIS BERMAN: They must have it at the Armory because there's so much room there, I'm sure. Because also, if they have to take it off the wall or someone wants to see them, it would be too awkward to do much of that at those booths. Interesting. It used to be if something was in the fair in the booth, they'd put the little dot on, and then it just stayed there till the end of the fair.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right. No more. It's gone by the end of the day, or even if you make the money exchange or they have an arrangement and carry it out. There was more of that, but so many of those buyers have their own planes, and that way, instant gratification. They take it home with them. And from the plane, run it in and hang it.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, as André Emmerich used to say, "What sells art is not the steaks, it's the sizzle."

DOUGLAS CRAMER: [Laughs.] That's interesting. That's very true.

AVIS BERMAN: Anyway, with Roy, did you and Dorothy ever travel together?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Dorothy's visited us many times in St. Martin. In Florida, in rental houses. She hasn't come in the last year or two. But Dorothy's also close to Lee Radziwill, who's a dear friend. And so they were a great pair, but sometimes come together. And we see her not as much lately as we did. Now, we moved to Florida, but she's on the other side when she comes down.

But no, I traveled a lot with Ellsworth. And he's been fabulous that way. And also, I did more going to museums and galleries with Ellsworth through the years, so that he was able to say, "That's a picture you ought to have," or "Look how this influenced me." I bought a wonderful Schwitters that had two of Ellsworth's great shapes in it that he guided me into. And also a Matisse drawing of leaves, which he felt was almost as good as his.

AVIS BERMAN: I will just ask you just a couple more questions about Roy. When he came to the house and saw his work on the walls, did he ever comment on his work or was interested in the arrangement?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Very, very seldom. Unlike Ellsworth, who would send you diagrams and charts. The last two installations that we did, we had them covered on this camera and sending him pictures and talking about where the sculpture was going to be placed or moving things up and down.

Roy's attitude was that you bought it, you owned it, you were entitled to do what you wanted. He would sometimes say that picture and that picture maybe would be better a little separate. The architectural elements that are over my shoulder, the pair here, I've had those on and off for 30 years—40 years I'd say; traded a house in Palm Springs for them and a couple of other works. And so Roy played with them in at least four houses of mine, and moved them back and forth next to each other, changed the distance, which he'd originally written on the back of the canvas. That's the only time I remember him ever doing it.

AVIS BERMAN: And did he like the orientation on top, or did he have them next to each other?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: He finally said it doesn't matter. I think he really sort of liked them next to each other. But when he looked at them this way, he was fine with it. And they hung in Florida next to each other. And then we brought them here and flipped them back. It's a constant conversation.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Exactly. And if you change the order, the blue on the bottom, then it would look different, too.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. He's always been precise, though, that what was on the bottom should be in the bottom. That your eye should go in that way.

AVIS BERMAN: So you say you've had them off and on for 40 years?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Well, actually at one point, Larry had a client that wanted them and had seen them in the house. And I wanted something from that client—I can't say what it was. But we made the change. I let them go. And then three years later, suddenly there they were at auction, and I was astonished. And I went to the auction not intending to buy them, but had seen them hanging there the night of the auction, and they were in the room. I just couldn't stop. I ended up buying them back.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I love them. They're unique. I'd never seen anything like them before, and they just really—they're like tromp l'oeil, but they're not. But they do fool the eye in terms of depth and dimension. And he was so architectural.

So you traded a house in Palm Beach just—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: A house in Palm Springs.

AVIS BERMAN: Palm Springs to—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: To Margo Leavin, once upon a time, for those two and an Oldenburg sculpture, and I think an Agnes Martin drawing. And she lived in the house for years.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, you are not the only one whom I have interviewed who has traded a house for a Lichtenstein painting. And actually not regretted it.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I'm thinking all the way back to when we first talked; I mentioned that my first chance at buying a big work of art was a Rothko, and the money would have gone to that or the house in Southampton.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And that time you took the house.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I took the house, right—[laughs]—sadly.

AVIS BERMAN: With Leo, as you say, you had to wait in line and get his attention. And then once you—and I think you had said there was some important Roy painting that you bought that got him to pay attention to you; is that correct?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, it was somewhere along the way from a show. I think it was a big—it was after Millet's *The Sower*, or the reapers, sowers.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And it was a big painting, which I finally gave somewhere. I can't even remember. So somebody, one of the auction catalogues, listed a lot of the works I had given, and it was helpful for me to go back to that, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Do you think—obviously, besides the intense pleasure of looking at the art—do you think that Roy had any personal influence on your life and career, other than the Batman episode, which we discussed earlier?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No, I don't. I mean other than loving his art. And perhaps of the things at the houses that I lived in, where I built or had certain places created for specific works of his.

But I wouldn't say he had the same profound [effect] as Ellsworth, probably. I keep going back to Ellsworth. Of the people that I knew, I spent more time talking to Ellsworth about art and having him explain it and lead me through to understanding.

AVIS BERMAN: Then let's go to Ellsworth Kelly, because I think we really have to devote full attention to him, and especially because he had given you the message. I guess he had given you a reminder. He had said there were about nine things that "I think I really influenced you on" or something. It was a very funny, precise number as you had said. So let's begin with Ellsworth Kelly and when and how you became aware of his work.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I first became aware of Ellsworth's work when I was still in New York in the '60s. At the time of the Color Field artists, they were all there. There was also Ellsworth, with the clean-shot definition of space and color, and he was quite different.

Somehow he always appealed to me more than anyone else, and I bought a few of his Paris prints. And they were—really, when I sold the whole print collection, having moved to California, the Kellys and the Johns are two, and the Hockneys and Dines I held onto. And I always kept reading what he had to say.

I didn't really know him until I met him at a collector, Barry Lowen, when I lived in LA. Barry had a big Kelly hanging in his living room up in the Hollywood Hills. I met Ellsworth there at a cocktail party and found him fascinating. And all this silly chatter going on in a room with a hundred great-looking people, and all men. It was a little—I think Ellsworth and I were both a little uncomfortable, having neither one of us quite come out of the closet yet. But—

AVIS BERMAN: Or being circumspect.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Being circumspect, right. But I also found that he was a charming, wonderful person.

Not long after that, a couple of years, I bought the house in St. Martin. No, I was looking for a house in the Caribbean, and I had actually chartered a boat of my own, going through the Caribbean house- and island-looking. And Ellsworth called and said, having heard from Irving or Joe, I think who he was with then, that I was in St. Martin. He said, "Oh, come have drinks on this boat I'm on with a collector from London you will like. And then we can have dinner." So I went and found the boat, and it was Charles Saatchi's, who was then married to Doris. And both became very good friends. Doris on through all these years—we spoke yesterday, interestingly enough. And Charles I knew through Kay, and then through Nigella, which is still all over the papers.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: But I learned a lot about collecting and displaying that art from Charles, and from Doris a lot. And the whole genesis of the spacing—excuse me, in Santa Ynez was Charles's exhibition, Boundary Road space. Which Max Gordon did for him and I'd hoped would do one for me, but he didn't. So I ripped it off, shamelessly.

But out of all that, Ellsworth and I became close friends. He came to California. And the next time he was out, he stayed with me for a couple of weekends at the ranch, which I was in the business of building in the early '80s. So he was there in the early stages when we were talking about and building the Foundation. And I was buying more and more of Ellsworth's work, going back in time, getting past things and new.

Irving and Joe were very difficult to deal with in those days. They were using the fact that Ellsworth was their prime artist, that you had to buy a lot of other artists to be able to buy Ellsworth, which was kind of irritating. But Ellsworth's feelings about architecture and landscape are so involved with the Foundation and building it and the art I had at that time. And I probably was up to 22, 24, 26 Kellys in my collection.

AVIS BERMAN: And I imagine that he was—when he came out, or he would come out to install them or to direct installation?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: He would. He would place them, and then usually was able in those days to be there when they came and went in place. And then if I ever wanted to make a change, he was very involved. I'm still terrified of his being well enough to come to New York and coming into this new apartment, because he hates his work on any wall but white. And he's going to be disappointed. But it's almost white, in its way. Does it bother you?

AVIS BERMAN: No. It's a tone. And also, the light is coming in from outdoors. It's a different—it's not a museum.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right. [Laughs.]

AVIS BERMAN: Yes. Well, we'll see what what happens.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: He'll be gracious about it.

AVIS BERMAN: Of course he will. No, he'll tease you about it though.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: [Pointing.] And that's a piece that I put a frame on because he wanted it. And then I took the frame off because he decided he didn't want it. I—

AVIS BERMAN: By the way—sorry. Go ahead.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Go ahead.

AVIS BERMAN: I was going to ask you, Was Ellsworth aware at the time, and in the '80s, when he was with Blum-Helman, that you had to purchase other artists' works to get to him? Was that something he would know or control?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: He couldn't control it, but he would listen, but to say, "I can't do anything about it. They're selling my work and they say that's not the case." So there you are. It all led to when Joe and I broke up over it, and Irving, for a while, because Ellsworth did create a fantastic chapel—

AVIS BERMAN: I was going to ask you about this.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: —that I was going to put up in Santa Ynez somewhere and leave it to the city, the state, something, or endow it so that it would stay there. But it would be Ellsworth's version of the Matisse Vence chapel. It had all the stations of the cross in black marble paintings, black-and-white marble paintings. The chapel was in the form of a cross. And at the very front, there was a single sculpture, what eventually became the totem form that is now outside in Philadelphia, in the Barnes collection. I left the piece he originally did, the 24-foot piece, with the house I sold to Mark Booth in Connecticut, and then he did make the smaller version for me. But that was all done in the mock-up chapel. I had a contractor involved, and we were ready to go forward. And Joe and Irving stepped in and said, "You can't do it unless we get 20 percent."

AVIS BERMAN: Even though it was really going to be essentially a public work?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Public work. And I was paying for all of it and turning it over to the public immediately. I just have been, in the last few weeks, thinking again, with new planning wills and everything that I'm going through, whether or not Ellsworth would like my doing it, and leaving the chapel—underwriting the chapel somewhere. I would have no problem if it was in Spencertown, or somewhere up there. That is, if somebody keeps that; I hope to God somebody keeps Ellsworth's studio. That studio is—have you ever been there? It's so—

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, yes, yes. Actually, I met you many years ago briefly, because I did a show of Ellsworth's works on paper when the Archives of American Art—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right.

AVIS BERMAN: —honored him.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: That's right.

AVIS BERMAN: We shook hands, but there were a million people there. But shall I say, I laid eyes

on you then; let's put it that way. Because you came to that. And I went up to the studio several times to talk with him and get some information and see the work.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Now much bigger.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, but it was an astonishing experience.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. It's now even more so.

AVIS BERMAN: And, of course, Jack was so helpful. And it was lovely.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It reflects Ellsworth and Jack in so many ways.

AVIS BERMAN: I had made some photocopies of some early letters we had from other artists' papers from—when he was a young man, he was friendly with Bernard Chaet, who just died. And so we had his postcards to him, which Bernard Chaet had donated. So we had documents, and it was a small show, but it was wonderful to get to work with an artist of that stature. So I did get to go there.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Good.

AVIS BERMAN: It's terrific. Because, again, he has no time, so to get to even go up for an afternoon was a privilege.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, and there he really takes the time to show you the work. In recent years we bought most of the work that we've gotten out of the studio, and having him saying, "There are these pieces coming." You don't always know with Matthew [Marks] whether you'll get it, but at least by going there, you've got a chance, a leg up, and a deeper understanding of everything in the show, seeing it all together first.

AVIS BERMAN: But does Ellsworth know about your interest, or possible intentions, about the chapel?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: That he doesn't. I haven't discussed it yet, because I'm just getting there and I need to see Jack first, which I had hoped to do this trip, but it didn't work out.

AVIS BERMAN: It's a terrific idea, especially if he might be able to know about it. But of course, it demands land; it demands zoning; But it's a wonderful idea.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: They actually have the land. And Jack might really think of better sites. It's just finding the moment to talk. There have been so many other things that I've been doing with Ellsworth, with the move and the art and where we hung things. We've had some condition problems with the new piece in Florida, and he has only little bits of time for everything. He's so consumed with finishing the next show, and then it's the next show and it's the next show.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And he has, justifiably, because I'm sure it was almost dreadful to be 90, because he had an invitation from almost every museum in the country to celebrate him, and that is great, but it's grueling.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: But just to have the experience. If there were any one artist that you could have as a teacher, Ellsworth I think is probably the best. Jasper's offered great insights. And the few times we've been invited in the studio, it's always, with Jasper, a sort of cat-and-mouse game of whether he's going to have you there, even in St. Martin, where it was a small house with a small studio and you knew something was in work. Some days he'd let you come in, and other days he wouldn't. And then some days when you came in, he'd listen to you talk. Once in a while, rarely, could you get him to talk. But with Ellsworth, the door was always open, the flow was there.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, when—I think that would be interesting if maybe you can talk about some of the museums or galleries or shows that you went to in which he talked about things or made comments, as an insight into his mind.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Well, now, that's going back through a lot of years and a lot of shows.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I know. Whenever you remember about it.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, but I remember his big opening at the Guggenheim for that

retrospective, which he really had wanted to be at the Modern, but didn't want to wait till there was time in the Modern schedule and so went forward. And I thought it was a beautiful show. I don't know that Ellsworth's pieces worked as brilliantly in that Guggenheim space as they would have, without so much light.

AVIS BERMAN: Let me just pause this.

[Audio break.]

We had been talking about the Guggenheim, but I was interested that he had pointed out Schwitters as an influence.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Matisse.

AVIS BERMAN: Matisse, of course. And I'm sure Picasso as well. He took the time to go through shows. That, it seems to me, extraordinarily generous in terms of time to spend—a time to see things together.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. If you were one of his favorite people, he would do that. And really, it gave him great nourishment, and he was penetrating with his questions. And he questions a lot of what you see in his work. Because all these shapes and forms and colors always really relate to something very real.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, in nature.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: In nature, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: He could see an eyelash and make something of it.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Something amazing out of it.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, that's actually something I always thought was an interesting tie between Roy and Ellsworth. The kind of opposites attract. They were very friendly and they really respected each other's work. And even though people would say it was representational, Roy would see it as an abstract composition, and everyone would see Ellsworth as abstract, and he would always see the basis in nature. So they were coming at things the same way from the opposite. There's an affinity in these works.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: I realized I forgot to ask you about one item having to do with Roy Lichtenstein. And that is the painting in Florida, which I think is called *Paintings: Craig*. Roy gave it to you. So would you be able to describe the circumstances of how and why?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Certainly. I had, in the '80s, a partner whose name was Craig. Dorothy and Roy really first knew him in my life. And they got along very well. He was a landscape architect, and he was very outgoing and personable. They developed a close relationship. Roy had said at one point when I saw the show, with the painting and the *Craig* in it, well, yes, the name sort of came to him because we'd just been there or something, or they'd had dinner with us. And I said "Oh, God, I've got to have that painting." And he said, "I really want—going to keep it. It's a small size, it's easy, and I'm not going to sell it. I'm sorry. We could maybe talk about something else with Craig in it," and I said, "No." So he kept it.

A couple of times in the next couple of years I made an attempt to get it, to talk him into it. If I did this now, could I buy *Craig*? And no, no, no. Anyway, Craig and I split up in about '90, and he died a few years later. But it was a tough split-up. And Dorothy and Roy and I spent a few nights talking about it all. Why it wasn't working, it couldn't, et cetera.

So it was eight months later, I guess on my birthday in August, a big box came. And I thought, What in the world is this? And opened it, and there was the painting. And a note saying something like—I'm sure the note is in my files, but—"Always thinking of you. Enjoy this."

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, that's—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: But it was so sweet.

AVIS BERMAN: That's wonderful.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. And after Roy passed away, about 35, 40 days later, somebody appeared at the door, and just said, "Dorothy Lichtenstein wants you to have this." And it was the—

AVIS BERMAN: The little bird drawing.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: The little bird sketch. Nice.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, very nice.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Ellsworth's given me amazing amounts of drawings that he's done, when he's been house-guesting or visiting. And in every case, I think they've been the best of a group. I was really kind of irritated when none of them showed up in the Metropolitan show [of Kelly's drawings]. But I think that was a case of a show that was more about selling.

AVIS BERMAN: And also, weren't most of those big drawings? I don't know if there were too many small ones in there.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Maybe. I've got some fairly big ones, yes. No, there were enough of what we had. Dealing today and keeping an artist's career going is phenomenally exhausting and takes a lot of work and a lot of thought.

AVIS BERMAN: Absolutely. Would you like to talk about Jasper Johns?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. Well, just to say that I think Jasper, for me in my career, was the most reticent, the most difficult to get to know, and to talk to. And as I mentioned earlier, there was the first chance I finally, after having had two or three lunches with him with Leo, but before I bought the house in St. Martin, that I finally got a chance to buy a painting.

I was taken to the studio. They brought it out, and it was one of those strange sort of still lifes that he did in the early '80s, where there was poison and a death image, and an old photograph or two. And it just didn't hit me enough to make that big commitment—and Jasper's always been probably the most expensive painter to buy new.

AVIS BERMAN: Because he's not prolific.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, he's not prolific. And he's highly sought after by a small group, but it's a group. Anyway, I passed on it. That was it for some years.

But during that time, I had moved onto his island, and we were both on the French side. And we got soon in the custom of his coming for lunch or dinner and Christmas and New Year's and Thanksgiving. We'd have a group, and there were other artists and dealers and art people. And more, it was through I think Roy and Ellsworth, who he respected, that he paid some attention to me. And began sort of teasingly to let me see sometimes what he was doing in the studio. And then in New York, when he was still in the old Gypsy Rose Lee house, I would get to see more work, and was finally offered something.

AVIS BERMAN: I know.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: We had some similar friends. I'm from Cincinnati, and James Levine is from there. And James's brother Tom was an artist and one of Jasper's close friends, as was Bill Katz. So there were other people we knew and would see, and Emmy Pulitzer who was also an Ellsworth friend.

And so a relationship developed, and he became very close to my daughter, who had a tragic, difficult life. But Jasper always had time for her. And one of the things I'll never forget is that almost the last visit to St. Martin—she had periods of hospitalization all through her life, an eating disorder, an alcohol problem, all that came from birth. But Jasper came to dinner one night and always would go play backgammon with her and get her, in playing backgammon, to talk about how she was, how things were going. And that night as he left he said, "Courtney needs some time from you and from others." "But," he said, "First, I'd like to take her to lunch tomorrow. May I?" And he came and she was beaming. And he took her out to his favorite place on the wharf and they had like a three- or four-hour lunch.

AVIS BERMAN: He probably talked more to her than any other human being on earth.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Maybe, maybe, yes. It was he just—

AVIS BERMAN: Or listened to her—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Listened to her.

AVIS BERMAN: —as well.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: But he really opened her up, and it gave her another couple of years, I think, of her life, with focus. He had spent the time with her and all for that.

AVIS BERMAN: Incredibly compassionate.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Amazing. Amazing that people don't realize that.

AVIS BERMAN: No, because he is so reticent and secret. He just does not want to share himself with people, which is perfectly understandable. So you never hear these good tales or bad, but he likes to have his mystery.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Right. And when he bought in Connecticut, not far from us, we saw him a lot at Anne Bass's, because he was very close to Julian [Lethbridge, Bass's companion]. And went to the studio, but never to the house. We didn't quite make that final step of being aggressive enough to pick a time and say could we come here or there. Because usually it was, "No, not today, but let's talk about a time." It's interesting. I think that's part of the whole mystery of his life.

AVIS BERMAN: I don't really think he speaks to too many people at all or—well, he doesn't want people—not you, but other people—blabbing about him.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Blabbing about. Yes, it's true.

AVIS BERMAN: I think that's important. So I think that his devotion to your daughter was especially extraordinary. It was almost like he saw a wounded bird and helped.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. Yes, and reached out. He's an amazingly private person with his life, to be such a public figure.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, it's as much of a public—other people have made him the public—it's not that he didn't want the shows or anything; he wanted his life as an artist, and people will eat you up if you don't establish distance.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. And when he came to our house in Connecticut, you always have to be very protective of who was there and where he was seated, and realizing it was almost an hour drive for him both ways. The last party we had at the house before we sold, Jasper was there, and Steve Sondheim, and David Hockney. And it was like finding a moment between them all.

Jasper said on arrival he really didn't know David and would love to know him better. And David said the same thing about Jasper. But we had the seating for lunch all over the house, and put them each in a room where they were the center of attraction. We couldn't, before sitting to lunch, get them to talk to each other. They were all in their specific area. And finally, I took Jasper and David, somehow with Hugh getting one and I got the other, till we introduced them and led them to talk. With David it was immediate, hitting it off and going and sitting in a corner. And they talked till four o'clock.

AVIS BERMAN: I'm sure. And I imagine more with Jasper Johns and others, no, he's not interested in lay people. He likes to talk to artists.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Artists, yes. Artists or somebody who's enough of a star that it warrants who they are, what they have to say. Jasper's very literate, and loves movies. Hugh, who was a filmmaker originally, just said he never knew anyone out of the business that knew as much about film. Jasper runs them regularly. And was always borrowing, because we'd get—Hugh is in the Academy and so you get those advance award-screener, and Jasper was the first person that was ready for them.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, exactly. And then he didn't have to go out either. He could watch it when and how he wanted to watch it.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. That's very, very Jasper—it was in his control, when he started and stopped.

AVIS BERMAN: Or if he wanted to rerun parts or isolate something. Because there were sometimes in some of his works—like his *Four Seasons*—there is a cinematic quality to them.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. I love them—of the things that I regret, never having even one of the *Four Seasons*. I was supposed to have had one of them, and then at the last minute, Leo did a flip and sold it to—was it Asher Edelman? It was someone that had no right to own it and sold it soon. One of the four, no one yet knows—no one will admit—where it is. Even the Modern, Kirk didn't know. Came in a very strange fashion to them for the big Johns show. But I just think the four of them are among the great works. And it's a crime if they can't be united at the Modern or somewhere finally.

I also regret never getting a big Francis Bacon. I was the underbidder time after time, and I never had the guts to push. I would watch his—the astronomical climb.

AVIS BERMAN: We spoke a little bit about Andy Warhol off and on through the other interviews, but if you wanted to focus on your friendship—we did talk, of course, about the *Love Boat* commission, which is really an important thing. But I don't know if you want to talk about other sorts of things you did together, his work or his attitude towards you.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I, unfortunately, can't remember exactly what we said the last time around. But I can—

AVIS BERMAN: Well, we talked about why they were so many portraits, and then you talked about the *Love Boat*, and then why there were some and not others, and why there were so many.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Okay. I really had first met Andy with Gaetana Enders, who was the ambassador to Spain's wife, and was one of those ladies that sold Andy's portraits. He must have had six or eight ladies. They would set up luncheons down at the studio, and they would do a whole luncheon and end up saying, Well, Andy would love to do your portrait. It will be this much and that much.

I was thinking of this the other day, talking to some people from Andy's studio who hadn't been to our house in Florida, but knew we'd gotten a lot of photographs recently. But Andy never worked; all the times I was at the studio, he never focused on the work that was sold and out there. Never saying—oh, other than the portraits, if he thought of you as a portrait and that sort of person. He never took the collection, me as a collector, seriously enough, and I've never found another collector who would admit that Andy talked about his other work and urged you to buy it or to have it. You were either a collector who wanted a portrait, or you just—I don't know if it was because he didn't believe in the other work enough, or didn't want to be seen pushing his serious side, or he left that to Leo or other dealers.

But there was a level of—I don't want to say a lack of belief in what he was doing was serious, or was major, or was the most important part of his life. But he was a very unartist artist. And he would love to gossip by the hour. Also loving what was happening in the theater and movies or all of that that littered his life. But do you know anyone who's really had serious conversations with Andy about the work?

AVIS BERMAN: No.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Or what he was doing, achieving?

AVIS BERMAN: No, because it was part of the affect. He never would have broken the mask. Well, maybe he did to someone. I never met because—no, because he went into that sort of, Gee, or the—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: The giggles.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, exactly. He had a persona. Do you ever watch Steven Colbert, the *Colbert Report*?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Once in a while, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, you know how he never breaks that character, ever. I think that Andy had gotten to that point, because he did not—unless there was some emotional side that he reserved for someone, only maybe for Pat Hackett, when he called her up and talked.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And went on and on.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But otherwise, I don't think that was something he did or was comfortable with. He had developed this persona as an armor. And—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And it stayed there.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I was trying to spot Bob Colacello two nights ago at a dinner to ask him that question. He was gone by the time I finally—

AVIS BERMAN: He would have known before.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: He would know. He had a serious sense of how it came about. But when you think of now, the time and attention and focus all that work is getting, that was sitting laid against the wall.

AVIS BERMAN: Exactly. No, I don't think he could have been—and it's not that he couldn't have, but I don't think he would have wanted to have sounded profound or serious to anyone. It was against his theatricality.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, that's true.

AVIS BERMAN: But certainly, but the work, the serious work, is absolutely—yes.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It's almost as though there are two distinct people making his work: one who made a certain kind of art, and one who made a certain kind of film and performance, and was at Studio 54.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes, it's amazing, and how much work in such a short time. I would have bet—leaving the funeral at Saint Patrick's and going on to the party afterwards, downstairs or whatever that place is that's about to be opened up—next to Birdland. That's where there was a post-May reception.

AVIS BERMAN: Is that Roseland or something? No.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Roseland, I think it was. The art world and all kinds of worlds were there. But I would bet that the odds would have been five to one that Andy would be remembered, and that in 20 years what has happened would happen. The funeral press didn't depict him in that way. And there was a period, his art was very low and very available. At Thomas Ammann and Bruno Bischofberger, there were back rooms full of Warhols. And then gradually it got to selling. However, it'll be another 20 years before we really know. But certainly, collectors and the—what are their names, the brothers?

AVIS BERMAN: The Mugar brothers.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: The Mugar brothers and Larry Gagosian and Peter Brant and Aby Rosen—

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, right. Mm-hmm [Affirmative].

DOUGLAS CRAMER: —had a hand in this monstrous growth. But money and high commerce, and recognition of what Andy was doing—all that suddenly exploded. But that all goes back to the art world and what's happening, what's going on.

AVIS BERMAN: I want to move a little to try to cover this last collection that you and Hugh Bush assembled. Because I think it's interesting that—I don't want to say you started over, but maybe you pivoted.

Why don't you talk about when you got together, and how the two of you must have decided or explored or evolved to figure out what you were going to do together in this regard?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: We did television, a series called *Tradewinds*, for NBC, set in the Caribbean. And did a movie. And I really knew that Hugh was New York focused. I had always loved New York, and was tired of making television. I'd made about 3,000 hours of it, and very little of it in

California in recent years. I was always in Toronto or Montreal, Prague, or Paris, or London. And so I just said, "Let's move East. I want to move East and be with you." He wasn't that ready yet for a commitment, but I knew what I wanted. I didn't really—I've never liked California.

AVIS BERMAN: So you were on a 30-year business trip there?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Yes. A 35-year business trip.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: That's a great way to phrase it. And the trip was over and I'd better grab my return ticket. I sold everything very quickly. The Bel Air house, the ranch, and that meant I had a lot of art in the ranch that belonged to the Foundation. I decided I wasn't going to build a new foundation in the East, and I gave a lot of the work away.

That's when I had the first two sales, first Christie's on the outdoor art, and then Sotheby's. And in coming in and out of New York and getting to know Hugh, and having Andy gone, and Roy gone, and Jasper so expensive, and Frank in a crisis with his art—and I had lost a little faith in it. I still think he's a monumental and important figure that we're coming back to.

AVIS BERMAN: Frank Stella, that is.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Frank Stella, yes. But when I started—I was always going to galleries wherever I was, even though in the original collection of the '70s, '80s, '90s, I was all over the place. It was then that Irving Blum, when we were still speaking, he said, "You're doing too much. You can't have everybody. You have to decide who you like and what you want to do with it, and focus."

That conversation led me to calling Mary Boone and saying, "I want to get rid of the Germans." And then seven days, 20 German painters were gone. Polke, Richter, a lot of Kiefer, and Baselitz, and Immendorff. Anyway, there were others. But she sold them and I just narrowed it down.

But I had been looking at new work, and there were a handful of artists that Hugh had also seen in New York, and we looked at them together and really liked them. And I said, "This is silly to say that I'm going to stop collecting art, and we're going to buy some." And that's when we decided—by then we were moved in at the house in Connecticut, which is where I moved to; that's where I really lived, and would go into New York for a few days during the week and go to galleries and look at art.

And gradually—I think the first thing we bought was Lisa Yuskavage, which led us to John Currin—they'd been roommates at Yale. And on to Inka Essenhigh, and Ghada Amer. And then the real love of the latter years, Cecily Brown. And we got to know them all. There were very few cases where I'd never met or didn't know an artist that I bought. But in the case of these, they came naturally.

AVIS BERMAN: And I guess also Elizabeth Peyton?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Elizabeth Peyton, and definitely—who I just saw last night. And Jack Pierson. And Richard Prince.

AVIS BERMAN: And Tracey Emin, is that correct?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Tracey. And Chris Offil, and their peers—Ellsworth and Joel Shapiro, I really kept buying as they would do new shows or go into new moments. And so we assembled and kept building onto the house in Connecticut, and the art was the place for it. But ended up with things in storage, which I hate. I've never liked to have anything I can't see.

[Side conversation.]

AVIS BERMAN: When we just stopped, you were saying that Joel Shapiro and Ellsworth, you were still buying.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: We were still buying Ellsworth and Joel with Jasper, about all I could afford, having retired officially, was a drawing or two. But they were all there. I found this particular group of the then-young new artists, very vital. Because there were elements in all their work of other artists that I had known in the last 50 years and that we had. I think they were attracted to us and spending time with us because of what was around us and what we had done. And we

related to—

AVIS BERMAN: And your history. Fred Tomaselli was another one.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Tomaselli was in there, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: And not that I would ever have said to you that you were or were not collecting artists because of gender, because I know you had Elisabeth Frink, but it just happens in the younger group there seem to be a lot more women than in the other collections that you made. And I don't know if that's just an artifact of something or other.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I think it was an artifact of the time. I did, from the very beginning, have Elisabeth Frink, and I had Agnes Martin, Louise Bourgoise, Elizabeth Murray, and Lynda Benglis, who was an important figure at a certain time. Oh, and Susan Rothenberg.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Alexis Smith in California, another artist. And Vija Celmins, who sadly went. Anyone else? And Jennifer Bartlett. I had a lot of Jennifer Bartlett at one point.

AVIS BERMAN: And in this new collection, were you thinking about media or drawings, paintings?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: I hate media. I hate media work most definitely—the only media that I think we bought were a couple of Sam Taylor-Woods, in the days when she was married. And there's another one of the first few with the big projected films. Do you remember who it was?

AVIS BERMAN: No.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Bill Viola! It was showing at Lincoln Center.

But I didn't like media art. I had done so much television, so many thousands of hours of dailies. And I find most media art is a joke. They're not good filmmakers. They don't have stories. They don't shoot well. The people don't look interesting, and they don't hold your attention.

AVIS BERMAN: It's true. You're used to the highest professionals.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Professional status.

AVIS BERMAN: So amateur hour is probably not going to appeal.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: And this was amateur. So much of it was amateur hour in terms of filmmaking. And I excused myself, the six years I was head of painting and sculpture at the Modern. Whenever they came up with a media offering, I just stepped out and let another committee person handle the vote, so I didn't color it. I couldn't be accused of stopping a good acquisition. Now that's all out of painting and sculpture and it's in a whole new area. That and performance art, which I was usually fairly aghast at. The Abramovic thing is just something I don't understand.

AVIS BERMAN: That's like amateur plays as opposed to professional.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Exactly.

AVIS BERMAN: But without—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Bad dancing.

AVIS BERMAN: I agree. There are some that are good, but a lot of it is too easily made.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Too thoughtlessly made, yes, and easy.

AVIS BERMAN: Or this idea of, Oh, well, we'll perform and so it'll be spontaneous, as opposed to, Let's have some intention here. But maybe that's my prejudice—which really gets me into this question—and I don't know if this was Hugh or you, but I broach it because these are really contemporary artists who were in the fourth collection—which is that I think that most collectors of contemporary art, as I said, they get and they can see their generation and maybe the generation after. And then it gets harder and harder to see, because one either has prejudices or you've seen so much art, you could see, Oh, that was done first, which isn't always the point. Or

it doesn't look like art. So how do—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It's not interesting, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. So how do you keep seeing, and down into more recent art?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: It's painful. It's hard. It's really difficult to get out there. Just thinking of two shows on now. I collected Mike Kelley, had him through the years, found him an interesting artist. I couldn't bear Paul McCarthy then or now, but Mike I could take. But when I went to see the show at the New Museum, which is a wonderful show, my general response was, Why did I relate to that? Maybe it was like dogs and baby toys, et cetera. I have had and still have a problem with Christopher Wool and those prices. I thought the early work, paintings, were fabulous, and a statement, and looking like they were something fresh. But what he went on to, I can't get it.

Maybe we can only get so much in a certain time frame. I had no interest in the years I was really doing major collecting, in going back for anything much before 1950. The first couple of times that I was in Florence or Rome or Venice, so much walking through art galleries, I just went by. It was only when I was in my 70s that I began to spend time and go back and look and see.

I think I would have been a much better collector if I had gone to art history first, if I had more of an art school education. The only art classes I ever had were back in Cincinnati, with Jim Dine, exploring what all that is out there. But I really—I wasn't prepared, and I think a lot of other collectors are not. They hit a certain area and a certain period of time, and then they sort of dry up and they stop and the enthusiasm is gone. I worry about that in particular now when there are so many collectors with no background, no real interest in the history of art, but an interest in certain artists and works of art as instruments—financial instruments, knowledge instruments—whatever they are.

AVIS BERMAN: No, the usual, the prestige and influence or that sort of thing.

That leads me to ask you, because a lot of people who don't have background use art advisors. Have you ever used an art advisor?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No. Let me say no, and yet in the last five or six years, when I moved from California and I no longer have a curator—I had a curator, who didn't tell me what to buy, but she handled making the deal, paying for it, getting it, registering it—Paula Waxman—for 10 or 15 years in California. And when I came here, I didn't have that. I had a registrar, sort of, in Connecticut, and now in the move to Florida. But we began to work with Megan Kelly, and she has been—I've been comfortable enough in the last few years to say, Tell me what you see at this show that we should go after or talk about. Or I'll find a new artist and I'll say, Who are they? What do you think about them? What is their price range?

AVIS BERMAN: So she can be your legs, on a certain level.

DOUGLAS CRAMER: She's the legs. And I'm letting a little more of the eyes go to some other people. Hugh is a large part of that, now that he's out there and in the art world, and talking to galleries about being represented. So he will—like when we went through Miami Basel, saying look at this or look at that. I finally got overwhelmed, although I tried to buy a couple of things, which were overpriced. And I'm sure that I'll find other, comparable works. But I don't have any regrets. It used to kill me to go to the fair and not bring home five or six things.

AVIS BERMAN: Why do you think that was?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: Because I'm a competitor. And if I put the time into going after something, I want at least a bit of something for having done it, and not feel foolish that I got drummed up into all this.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I think I'm pretty much done with my questions, but if you would like to add something?

DOUGLAS CRAMER: No, I thank you. You pretty much brilliantly moved us around.

AVIS BERMAN: As I said, I'd either have to keep you prisoner for five months or we kind of do a summary. But—

DOUGLAS CRAMER: But if you do have any other questions, we could do it on the phone, or I'll

be back in January.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. Well, let me thank you and stop. Thank you very much.

[END CD1 TR04.]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]