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Oral history interview with Richard Solomon, 2015 October 25- 29

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Richard (Dick) Solomon on 2015 October 26-29. The interview took place at Solomon's home in New York. NY, and was conducted by James McElhinney for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Dick Solomon reviewed the transcript in 2019 and made corrections and emendations. His corrections and emendations appear below in brackets with initials. An addendum written by Solomon is included at the end of the interview. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [00:00:00] Let's just do a couple of tests, so say anything you like.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Anything I like?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There you go.

RICHARD SOLOMON: [Laughs.] Can I say anything I like?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How's it sound?

FEMALE SPEAKER: Sounds fine.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Good? Okay.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Loud and clear?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Can you see the counter moving?

FEMALE SPEAKER: Yeah, it's [inaudible].

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No, can you see the counter here?

FEMALE SPEAKER: Oh, down there? Yes, going like that?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's going in reverse. Can you see it?

FEMALE SPEAKER: Yes, it's going in reverse.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay. Bars are moving?

FEMALE SPEAKER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay. Transcriber will ignore all this. I should have said that earlier. Get my pen out, so we can get started on this. Okay. Are we ready? This is James McElhinney speaking with Dick Solomon at his home in New York City on Monday, the 27th of October—

FEMALE SPEAKER: 26th.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: 26th, 26th, pardon me.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Is it the 26th? I thought it was—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, it's the—

RICHARD SOLOMON: —the 27th?

FEMALE SPEAKER: It's the 26th.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's the 26th, that's right.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Thursday's the 29th.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay. Start over, transcriber. Okay.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Monday, the 26th. You're absolutely right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay.

RICHARD SOLOMON: [Laughs.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: This is James McElhinney speaking with Dick Solomon on Monday, October 26, 2015, at his home in New York, New York. Good morning.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Good morning.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [00:02:00] What do you think is the present state of the print in artistic practice and collecting? I mean, it's a—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, I think that—I think what's happening in the art world is fascinating because it's less, today, about aesthetics, in terms of the commercial art world, and more in terms of investing. And art has become a fiduciary instrument. And the reason I start my answer that way is that for––generally speaking, prints have not become a part of the asset class that unique work is. And I think there are several reasons for that.

I think that the idea of something in more than one state, more than one edition, is something that is a concern to the investing public. I also think, in terms of scale and all kinds of reasons, which I can go into in great detail, but there's no point to do that, except to say that I think that prints today, unfortunately, have a pejorative nature to them, that they—the word "print" has been so misused in terms of posters, reproductions, God-knows-what, that people are totally confused about prints as unique, original works by artists and craftsmen in collaboration.

[00:04:00] And the technological and aesthetic value of a print is totally missed by the public. And so, what's happened is that, whereas photography—because of scale and because of color, has gotten into the mainstream—prints have been, sort of, left as a side issue. Works on paper and prints, I think, do not have the same cachet today in the public's mind that unique works have, or painting a sculpture, and in photography.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Then there's also the impact of the digital age and the construction of a netherworld between the painting and the print. I'm thinking about the Hockney show last—or earlier this year, late last year, in—at—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Right, at Pace—in—well—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —in Chelsea.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, at Pace. But, well, the whole deal is this. I don't think technology is the issue here. I think that, yes, when screen prints started, everybody said, "Well, the screen print isn't an original art." And then, 20 minutes later, it was original art. And digital—everybody said giclée, and they had these fancy terms for work that's created digitally. And then, now, it's—they have other terms for it.

But I think technology is not the issue here, or the advance of technology. I think there are many other reasons why prints have not gotten into the public view. Now, that being said, there is a new group of younger collectors who are beginning to—who are—grew up in the age of animation, et cetera, who, now, are beginning to understand that prints—contemporary prints, even digital prints are collectables.

[00:06:16] And, strangely enough, the phenomenon is beginning to take place where they're thinking of prints as an investment vehicle. So, that's just beginning. But where we are right now, overall, in the print industry—as a matter of fact, one of the big fights I'm having with my organization—and I was president of the International Fine Print Dealer's Association, been on the board for years. And I'm fighting with them to change the name of the print fair to an art fair because that's a generic, like Kleenex. And it can be an art fair, "Works on Paper," et cetera, et cetera—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —to bring the print business into the mainstream.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: A lot of things are known as prints. For instance, when a feature film is delivered to a movie house, or used to be, in Cannes, they would call that a print—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yep.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —a photographic print. I'm a little surprised by what you're saying because Warhol, almost all of his work are what we would call prints.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, that's a different story because remember Warhol, Rauschenberg, the whole Pop art movement, used screen printing as part of their work. So, that group of—those artists were considered a separate category from the general thing. [00:08:00] And,—and, yes, Warhol became Warhol.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Side conversation.] Thank you.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —there is a—there are phenomena. And Warhol's a phenomenon. And, look, the—in the other room, there's a Rauschenberg, that he used screen printing—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —as part of his whole deal in making a painting. Anyway, you're right. You—there—listen, there are—the nice thing about life is there are exceptions to every rule. And you've asked—in the art world, there's not such a thing as a yes and a no.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. So, you're talking about Pop art as being these artists who appropriated, or who adapted, this very low-rent, cheap form of advertising that was used to promote boxing matches, and other such things.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, they just used the commercial process. I mean—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, commercial process, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —it was a cheap thing. You know, when I came in this business, you could—I remember being quoted two dollars a color. And, I mean, it was cheap.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And these guys figured out it saved a hell of a lot of time. Warhol was a great draftsman—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —a fabulous draftsman. But it certainly took a hell of a lot. It's easier to take a photograph, and make a screen print, and manipulate it, and all the rest of the stuff, a lot faster. And he turned it into a real creative medium.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. Also, he became, sort of, the high society. He became, sort of, the sargent of the age with his Polaroid, right? And—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, you know, I mean—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —the capturing, you know, the glitterati.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And then, years later, a guy like David Hockney—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —who is probably one of the most brilliant artists I've ever known or seen. [00:10:05] I mean, his ability to use technology creatively, and say to the world, "Look, it's art because I say it's art because I'm doing it. And forget how I'm doing it. It's the end result that really matters." And so, David with his—be it the camera obscura—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —or the the iPhone is brilliant, using technology.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, those iPad paintings, if you will, were stunning. And that show struck me for three reasons. One was there were charcoal drawings in the front room. And then you passed through into this open space where there was a video. So, there's a film, another kind of print or image, if you will. And around the perimeter of that room were these large iPad laser prints. And it was a stunning kind of juxtaposition of having looked at the same place in Yorkshire through these three different filters. So, how important do you think the taxonomies are, the old fine printmaking versus the Pop adaptations of the cheap advertising technologies?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, I have an etching studio. I think etchings are the quintessential method of making a print. The technology involved and the results that the—the whole idea of how it's done in collaboration is

fantastic. And, yet, I'm making—I'm publishing stuff in handmade paper. [00:12:07] I'm using digital. For me, it was Picasso who really was the—gave me this—if Picasso wants to use transfer paper to make a lithograph who cares? It's the end result. So, to me, it's always the end result, not only in the image, but in the quality of the product that's delivered. And, boy, there's a big difference.

I just saw a screen print project that's the worst thing I ever saw in my entire life. I won't identify it. But the printer should have been shot. Because he used a wonderful process, screen-printing, and created a flat, absolutely dead, work of art. And, you know––and so, so much has to do with not only the creativity of the artist, but the creativity of the printer.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And, also, the role that the process plays in getting to the end result.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Totally.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, would you just—aesthetically, as an aside, do you prefer works of art where the process is invisible?

RICHARD SOLOMON: No, I think, again, it's—if the process—if you have an—if you have no idea how it was done, but it was done beautifully, that's the first reaction. The second reaction is,, "How was it done?"

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: But the first reaction is, "What does it say to you?" I mean, how does it—how does it come off the piece of paper, in terms of its aesthetic value? [00:14:06] And then you look at it and say, "How was this done? How was this beautiful thing created?" And, sometimes, it's a big surprise.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Steve Martin quoted Ed Ruscha in saying that there were two kinds of ways to respond to art. One was to go, "Wow. Huh?" And the other one is to go, "Huh? Wow." The latter being, of course—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, I'm always suspicious as my first take––if my first take is, "Wow," then I start to say, "Wait a second, . Is it because it's shocking? Is it because of, some visceral reaction?" Then— then I'm really suspicious. And I'm also suspicious when I look at something and I hate it. And I, sort of, say, I go back to when Arne Glimcher once showed me a Dubuffet crayon drawing of the, sort of—Dubuffet, when he was doing these, sort of, African, kind of, Arab crayon drawings. And I said to Arne, "He is—that's ridiculous. Any kid could do that." You know, and 25 years later, I said to myself, "What a moron. That was really genius."

[They laugh.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, in dealing with young collectors, like, earlier in the conversation, you said a lot of new collectors are drawn to prints, that it's a good, kind of, starter form for a lot of new collectors to, sort of, hone their skills or build an aesthetic sense. How do you help people who are attracted to art, want to collect it, for all the reasons one might? How do you help them understand a method for reading a work of art? [00:16:03] Like, we're talking about how, or wow, and huh, you know, as opposed—or, you know, the first reaction as opposed to, you know, the time-release content that either leaves you suspicious or convinced that this is a great work of art?

RICHARD SOLOMON: It's—well, it's getting harder to harder to do that because people have less patience. This is a society that wants instant gratification, so that most people don't want to invest the time it takes to really look at something. They want a fast— fast-forward. And so, it's really a question of being at an art fair or in a gallery. It's trying to get them to slow down for a moment and look. And try to find some method of having them look twice, or maybe three times. And then lead them around to understanding what they're looking at. It isn't easy today because of the way people are—shop for art. They shop for art at art fairs. And if you go into an art fair, and after 20 minutes, you can see anything, you're a better man than I am. The overwhelming profusion of diversity.

You go into a gallery today and it's usually a one-person show. And so, you have an opportunity to take a look at a whole mess of work by some artist. And it has, usually, some continuity. You go to an art fair today and the booth, generally, has about six, or eight, or 10 artists, one after another. And it's, sort of, like, a visual bouillabaisse. [00:18:00] And it's very tough to get people to spend the time to look. Young people today are the worst. They have the least attention span. And, frequently, the problem is the first question, "Do you think it's a good investment?" In past days, and years, if somebody said that to me, I would say, "Wait a second. You know, you don't want to buy art as an investment. Let's assume you live with it for 20 years and you live with your couch for 20 years. At the end of 20 years, you throw your couch out. You throw the art out. Is it a good investment? Well, you've enjoyed it for 20 years. That's a good investment."

Today, if I said that somebody, firstly, they would think I was a moron, I'd lost my mind. And, secondly, they'd leave immediately because they'd figure I was a moron that lost my mind.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.] So, the challenge today is to get people to slow down and pay attention?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yes. And—and, also, to present a work of art in a way that is understandable and easily for people to see. Look, the worst thing you can do, in my opinion, is go into a gallery and not see any indication of who the art is done by. That's number one. And, number two, go in a group show and have no idea who the—most galleries do such a poor job of signing that—that they force somebody to ask a question. And 90 percent of the people, who are not sophisticated, walk into a gallery, are afraid of asking a question because they don't want to sound stupid. And if they ask a question, they don't know who the person they should ask is because the person at the desk is totally involved on the computer. [00:20:01] And, God forbid, they'd look up from the computer and recognize you. So, we've got a real problem in our industry of education. And I don't think we're doing a very good job of it, except in terms of offering an opportunity for people to understand the monetary value of what they're buying.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And that, of course, is subject to all sorts of whimsies.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. I mean—but, in any event what is fascinating is that there is, right now, a tremendous amount of really excellent galleries, you know. The museums are doing a very good job of showing art. And the media is giving it a tremendous amount of attention. So, there are—the world is not filled with philistines. There are a tremendous number of people who are really buying art because they understand it and they appreciate it. And I just—there's a Rauschenberg show down at Pace right now.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]

RICHARD SOLOMON: And you look at that show, and you say, "Oh, my God, look at that guy. This might not be the most important body of work. But, boy, this guy really knew what he was doing." And, really, it's very exciting. And you see some of the younger guys, too.

The concern I have is that these kids who are coming out of art school, who are being taken on by galleries and getting the whole hype, I hope that it isn't, like, a firecracker that goes up in the air and then that's it. I hope that some of these young people who have the opportunity now to show in galleries are able to sustain themselves over a career of 20, 30, 40 years.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [00:22:04] I think that's probably harder to do because, while there are more artists, there are more galleries. As you said, there are fewer people who are taking time to pay attention to what they're looking at. And the motivation for buying art is often financial, to enhance their status in some way.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. And it always has been, actually.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Always, yeah, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And it's just more public today. You have more galleries. Everything—years ago, I went to an opening. It was a Rauschenberg opening. I was here, in New York from Boston, where I was living. And we went down to White Street. And there's a loft, and Rauschenberg was having a show. And, literally, the loft was packed. But there could have been, maybe, 200 or 300 hundred people. But it was the whole art world.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I mean, collectors, museums, everybody. It was 200 a couple hundred people and whatever. Today you can have in a—on a Thursday night in Chelsea, there must be 2,000 people circulating. Now, are they collectors? No. Ninety percent of them are young people out for a good time, or—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know, doing the scene. But that's a big difference in my lifetime of 40 years in the art world. Maybe a little longer. Maybe 50 years. But it's a big difference today. And it's international and—anyway. It's a big change from where I started and how I got into the business.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, we have artists, now, who are superstars, people like William Kentridge and El Anatsui, and from. Nobody came out of South Africa or Nigeria. [00:24:05] And I just saw—was it a month ago—there was a show at Christie's, or one of the other auction houses, of contemporary Iraqi art. I mean, this is unheard of, to even 10 years ago, was even unimaginable. So, the globe is really all in play now.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, well, it's— art, like everything else today, is global, and it's flourishing. And people are able to sustain themselves being artists.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, this also, sort of, changes the hierarchies, and the traditional taxonomies, and what's a print, what's a painting, what's a work of art, what's not a work of art. How do you define anything as a work of art? I forgot to say, when I went to the Hockney show, everybody was looking at all the pieces through their iPhones.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Oh, yeah, totally.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I looked around the room. There were, perhaps, five people who were just using their eyes.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You should go to Hong-Kong and do an art fair in Hong-Kong. If I had a nickel for every photograph that was taken in our booth, I'd be a multi-millionaire in just one fair. I mean, everybody has the camera, and everything. No, look, it's an interesting world we have out there today. And it's very exciting. I think there's—my comment is, I'm a 20th century person in the 21st century. I'm not sure I know what the hell's going on. And I think technology and the new generation has changed everything dramatically.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: [00:26:00] And when I see the fact that, pretty soon, more art will be sold for your—for you to put on a box in your home. I mean, video was just the beginning.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, what—in the next 20 years, I wonder—was it Bill Gates who—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —decided that he wasn't going to have any paintings; he was just going to have monitors?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, right. And they became plasma screens—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly, exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and—yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, I think, more and more, that's going to happen. You know, there's one nice thing about life in this world. It's––change is happening faster than it ever has. And those of us who are trying to understand it have to really get on a fast treadmill to keep up with it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Be nimble. You have to be really not paying attention in order to become bored.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Or, make sure you have a 30-year-old person who is telling you what's going on.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, let's go back a few years. Let's talk about how you became interested in art. You grew up here in New York?

RICHARD SOLOMON: I did. You know, parents have a tremendous influence on children, as you obviously know. And my mother was a very, very smart, active woman. And she used to run something, like, called the Scholarship—the Art—the Radcliffe Scholarship Fund Art Tours. And she would take people to homes for the benefit of Radcliffe Scholarship Fund. And, as a result of that, she met a number of dealers. [00:28:00] And my dad was in the department store business. And he worked Saturdays. And my mother needed a companion. And I was a companion. And she dragged me off to galleries. And I was always convinced that the best things were in the back room. So, I always snuck into the back room while she was talking—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: —to a dealer. And, which—and so, I, sort of, became self-educated. And if you're a young kid, and you go in the back rooms, you usually find somebody in the stacks who is sympathetic and would talk to you. So, anyway, so—and then I decided that what I would do is—my mother would take me to a couple of these places. I said, "You know, Mom, how about giving me a drawing for my birthday?" And she said, "Sure. What would you like?" And I said, "Well, I like that." And it was a Mailol. And, then, that became—it was a sculptor's drawing.

And that—we—so, I kept getting these presents from 16 on. And, those days, a drawing was, like, $25 or $50, and I forget what—which. And, anyway, it wasn't until about 30 years later, when I hung them in hallway back there, that I realized that I wasn't collecting art, at all. They were all female nudes. I was just a young guy who was horny, I guess. And it was before *Playboy*. But that's how I got into the art world.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: I started collecting. And then I started in a—I grew up in New York. And I went to school in Boston, and graduate school in Boston, and went to work in a family supermarket business. And one day, while I was in the store as an apprentice meat-cutter—I had a day off in the middle of the week. And my wife and I walked down Newbury Street, and we saw something [a Mirko Sculpture] in the window we, kind of, liked. And we went in and there was this lady there. And she was very nice.

[00:30:03] And I said, "Could I take it home"—and she was a little nervous about that—"to see what it'd look like in my apartment?" And, anyway, it turned out to be Arne Glimcher's mother. We bought it from her. It was the first thing Arne Glimcher sold as a dealer. He had just opened up on Newberry Street. He and I became fast-friends.

And fast-forward a number of years to 1968. I had left the supermarket business, come back to New York, was working for Clairol, when Arne said to me one day, he said, "You know, Lucas Samaras wants to do a project, and I can't afford it. Would you like to put up the money?" I said, "Well, I'm not sure I'd like to put up that much money. But I'll get my buddy, my business school roommate." And he and I put up the money. And we published a book by Lucas Samaras, which was a lot of money in those days.

And a year-and-a-half later, after a couple of other projects, and having absolutely no success in selling them, Arne said to me—well, I said to him, "Who's—I mean, we got to sell this stuff. This is ridiculous." And he said, "What do you mean, 'we?'" So, that's how I got in the art business in 1970 full time.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: —the first publishing—we published in 1968, and I left Clairol in 1970 and started at Pace Prints. And, just an aside to a comment I made earlier. So, having come out of the supermarket business, and having realized that, in my mind, everything in the back room was better than it was in the front, when I opened the print gallery on 57th Street, I decided to have open stacks, so that people could go into the back rooms and just look at the art, and see the price on the back, and they wouldn't have to ask any questions. And they could pull the stuff out, and it would be self-selection.

[00:32:03] So, that's one of the ways I thought of breaking down the barrier between, people coming in the gallery and feeling lost. And the other thing I did, which is probably not politically-correct, but I said, "I don't want anybody at the reception desk who has an accent that would lead one to believe that they didn't speak English, or American." And so, I wanted people to feel very much at home when they came into the gallery. And I instructed the staff always to look at the kid and say that—if there's a kid in the gallery, talk to the kid because that will make everybody else feel better.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, when you were a small child, before you were your mom's tour companion, was there art in the house? Was she, herself, a collector? Or was your dad a collector?

RICHARD SOLOMON: My mother was a collector, for sure, absolutely. And I—but I don't remember when the first time my mother asked me my advice on something or when I, actually, recognized the fact that there was art in the house. I think it was—I was probably close to a teenager. I don't have any real recollection of being from the cradle to the grave, kind of, situation.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I had—it was a—I was pretty mature by the time I recognized there was something on the wall.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Do you recall what it was the work on the wall? What was it that you recognized and said, "Ah, that's a work of art. I get it now. This is"—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well revisionist history. [00:34:02] You know, my mother had a Monet, a *Water Lily*. And she—which, right now, is at the Met. And I don't remember at what time—when I realized what it was. But that was a long time ago.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But that's, you know, the piece that—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, that's the piece that—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: ––stays with you?

RICHARD SOLOMON: ––was––well, that was the piece that, you know, as she moved from one apartment to the next, and I grew up, and all the rest of the stuff, that's the one piece I—I mean, it—much later Dubuffet, and

Nevelson, and Wesselmann. But by that time, I was pretty much an art junkie myself.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, when you went off to Harvard, did you study any—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, that's embarrassing because—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —history of art or—

RICHARD SOLOMON: —yes, I did. And I realized, very quickly, in the—my sophomore year that I had no visual memory, and that if I wanted to go to the Harvard Business School, which I really wanted to do, I wouldn't have the grades to qualify. So, I left being a history of art major, and became a government major. And that was—that did not require a visual memory. So, that decision worked out really great.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Have you acquired one since? I imagine you have.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Not really. I mean relative—I mean, Arne Glimcher, for example, remembers everything he ever saw. And he has an artistic eye.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And I think that, I don't have an artistic—I have a pretty good design eye. [00:36:03] But I don't remember, necessarily. But that goes back to problems I had in school that I—some people have parts of their brains that are not as developed as others. And I think that's probably a liability. Now, that doesn't mean that— that I can't see. But I don't have the, really, the kind of visual memory that would allow me to identify slides that I saw for two seconds. You know, so I'm very happy that I switched.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah. It's interesting. A few years ago, there was an article in the *Times* or somewhere in the press, about a perceptual tic of Chuck Close not being able to recognize—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. Well, he can't—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —for instance.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —faces. He can't—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —recognize a fact. I mean, that's why, so much of the work he does is self-portraits. Because he, kind of, remembers who he looks like. But, yeah, it's true, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's an interesting—so this theme of these heads for decades is, sort of, kind of—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, I think what he did—he was lucky. I mean, again, technology. The Polaroid camera.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: The Polaroid camera gave him the opportunity to record a face. If he ever had to do it from life, I mean it would be a disaster. But, with the Polaroid, he was able to concentrate and—but there's—I mean, if somebody could explain to me what the chip in his brain that allows him to do four color separations. I mean, please, give me a break. [00:38:15] I mean—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: —God knows what the hell's going on in his head. It's—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: —just amazing. And the latest show—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —is breathtaking.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I mean, at his stage of—you know. But I know how it came.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: He once said to me—I said—just before he had his stroke, he changed his style. And so, I was explaining. He was in the gallery once, I think. He says—I said, "You know, if there's a God—if God was looking after Chuck, he had him change his style just before he got sick." And Chuck turned to me, and said, "If there's a God, I'm really pissed."

[They laugh.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, you went to Harvard, majored in government. Then, when you got out of—and just—

RICHARD SOLOMON: I went right to business school.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Went right to business school?

RICHARD SOLOMON: And then I went into a family supermarket business.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And what years were those?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Fifty-six at the college, '58 at business school.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, you overlapped with Charlie Bergman at Harvard, right?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He was—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Fifty-four.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly, we're the same house.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And Matthews, is that—

RICHARD SOLOMON: No, well, he was in Eliot House.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, oh, Eliot, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, he was telling me about how he would buy all of his clothes from the Andover shop. And I was in there a year ago—and I forget the name of the guy. I mean, I just was introduced to the proprietor. And I said, "Oh, I know one of your customers." He says, "Who's that?" I said, "Oh, it's years ago." [00:40:01] He says, "Who's that?" I said, "Charlie Bergman." He said, "Oh, yeah. Pittsburgh, '54."

RICHARD SOLOMON: [Laughs.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There's a memory.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, well, it's amazing. Yeah, it hasn't changed much. The—so, then, I was in the supermarket business. And I had met Arne. And I had been collecting a little bit before that. And then I became a trustee of the Institute of Contemporary Art for—while I was there, and then decided to leave Boston and my family business. I think they were very relieved.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: But I want to make sure, it's not because I wasn't good at what I was doing. But I think they had other plans for other members of the family. In any event, I got this great job at Clairol. But, having been an apprentice meat-cutter, I then found myself at Clairol's hair coloring school. So, I can say that not only did I graduate at the Harvard Business School, and became a union member in the Butcher's Union, but I then went on to become a hairdresser. And that was, kind of, an interesting four-week stint.

But then I went into Clairol, and I was in—had a great job there, had a lot of fun. And, but, as I mentioned to you, Arne convinced me to come into the art business. And we set up a separate company called Pace Editions and started publishing, primarily, artists that were represented by the Pace Gallery. The theory was—and I got into it a little late. [00:42:00] But Gemini had been established. ULAE had been established. And the company called Multiples had established themselves on Madison Avenue. And the Castelli artists were publishing with Gemini, with ULAE, but selling, basically, through Multiples.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Was that Marian Goodman?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And Arne and I had talked a lot about the fact that if you're going to be a successful gallery, and an artist wants to do something, you should be able to do it. So, he didn't have the energy, the time, or the inclination, although he liked prints a lot, to do it. So, with artists, beginning with Ernie Trova, and then—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —with Louise Nevelson, and then with Jean Dubuffet, and artists like that, and a lot of hard-edged artists, Nick Krushenick, Jack Youngerman, artists like that, we had a natural group of artists that we could publish. And so, we did that. We had no facilities in those days. And we—jobbed everything out. Everything was jobbed out. But we had the gallery on the third floor on 57th Street.

And then, Vera List and Barbara Krakow had this business called HKL when they published List Art Poster—they had the—they did Lincoln Center and posters like that. And they were as good at publishing as we were, and as bad at selling as Arne was. And so, I ended up buying from them the List Art Poster business. And, now, not only did I have about 40 posters in editions of 1,500 to 2,000, but I also had all these posters that hadn't sold. [00:44:13] So, from 1970 to 1975, I, basically, worked on selling off the posters and working with some of these artists that I mentioned earlier. And it wasn't until 1975 that the big break for me came, when Jim Dine, Chuck Close, and Agnes Martin, all at the same basic time, came. And so, all of a sudden, we had some really powerful artists who liked prints.

And, at that point, I decided I would have to learn how to make them. And so, we— we bought an etching press. And we did—we paper-making—we moved down to Spring Street and got it fully-equipped.

And then I had a very, very, very lucky break. Aldo Crommelynck, who was Picasso's printer, and also Jim Dine's printer, had a falling-out with his brother. And Jim Dine came to me one day. He says, "You've got to save—you got to do something. You got to do something for Aldo. You got to do something." And I had met Aldo. And he lives in Paris. And so, I said, "What am I supposed—I mean, what am I going to do?" He said, "You got to save him. You got to do something."

So, we—I said, "Okay. Aldo, we'll set up a business in Paris, and you'll do your thing." And he put a press in some other place. And then, I realized he was a printer. He wasn't a salesman. He wasn't a go-getter. So, I said, "Okay. We're going to close that. We're going to move you to New York. You'll come to New York. You'll work in New York three months, four months, whatever it is." [00:46:01] "Come back and forth." And so, that was the big break. But the worst thing about that was Aldo said, "I need better presses." I said, "Fine. So, let's go look." He said, "Oh, no, no, no. I have these presses in Paris." I said, "But, Aldo, we have perfectly good presses in America." He said, "No, no. I'm used to using these." So, actually, we ended up bringing all of his presses over here from France and set him up in our loft, and—but that was wonderful because it gave us not only an incredible human being, wonderful talent, but also trained our printers. And I remember we did an art fair, once, in Chicago, in the old pier—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —in the '80s and gave Aldo a booth for some of the editions we had published together. And people came around, like, kissing his ring because they thought he was Picasso. I mean, it's the god-damnedest thing you ever saw. There—here was a contact with Miro, Picasso, Matisse.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: This wonderful man who, unfortunately, had passed away a few years later. But that was a tremendous change in my career, and my business, and everything else.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Just a little housekeeping. When you went to Harvard, you continued to collect art?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And what were you collecting? How did your personal taste evolve from the Mailol drawing to—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, it continued along some—very modestly. You know, I would say that I didn't really collect much until I got married. We got—I graduated '58, got married in '59. You know, the year that—the business school didn't give you much time to do anything except—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —meet my wife.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [00:48:00] [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: And that was great. But—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, how did you meet?

RICHARD SOLOMON: It was a blind date at Smith. It was a blind date. And then, and then, so, we got—so, we got engaged after I graduated. And then we got married a year after that. I lived in Cambridge, for that year, with my former college roommate. But, you know, I was working pretty hard in those days. And, on the weekends, I was driving up to Smith. And, during the week, I was cutting meat.

And, anyway, so, I think we started collecting, really, when I got married. And, as I said, the first major thing we bought was this sculptor by the name of Basaldella Mirko from Arne. It was the first thing he sold. And then, we were—it turned out that Arne, his wife, and Ann had all gone to Brooklyn High School together, although they didn't really know each other. And Ann and Milly, Arne's wife, had gone to camp together, although they didn't really know each other that well.

We spent a lot of time together. And he used to open shows on Sundays. And I used to help him with installations. And then, Arne had the opportunity to move to New York, which he did, prior to my moving to New York. I think he moved to New York in 1965 or '66. And I moved to New York in '67. And then, really, started—our basic collection started while we were married in Boston. And Arne had a lot to do with that. [00:50:00] For example, there's a gold Nevelson wall out there.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, one day, as I was leaving to—I was managing a Stop & Shop in Quincy in Mass. And I was leaving about seven o'clock and 7:30 in the morning, and this car drives up in front of our apartment, and it's Arne. And, "What are you doing here?" He says, "Well, I got—brought you something." I said, "What'd you bring me?" He says, "You'll see when you get home."

When I got home, there was this Nevelson wall installed in our apartment. And "Hey, this is really nice, Arne. Okay." And when we moved, I realized—and took the wall down—that there was gold paint. I guess Arne had retouched the thing. But there was remnants of the gold paint on the wall.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: Anyway, this, well—and so, then, so, in Boston, as I said, I was collecting. And I was lucky enough—Ann and I were lucky enough to be in New York in 1962, walked into the Castelli Gallery. And Ivan Karp, who was one of the great guys in the world, and never got the credit he should have gotten. Leo got it all. Ivan said, "Hey, you know, what do you got—what are you doing now?" I said, "Well, nothing much." He said, "Well, why don't you go over to the Stable Gallery. There's this young guy who's just having a show there. Tell me—it's Thursday, but maybe they'll let you in."

So, I went over. And they were installing the Warhol show. And it was Warhol's first show uptown. So, having come out of the supermarket business, and being a dirty old man, the first thing I saw was this Marilyn Monroe. And that was pretty terrific. And then there was *Five Coke Bottles*, and that was good. [00:52:06] And then there was Martinson's *Coffee Can*, and that was pretty good, too, and that kind of thing. And so, I started to go after the––and so, finally, my mother turns to me and she says, "Look, enough's enough." I said, "What do you mean?" She says, "Look, three should be—that's fine." I said, "Mom, but, you know, the"—so, they were $250, but because I was buying three, I got 10 percent off. So, that turned out to really change my life dramatically, in many ways.

Anyway, so, that was my first run-in with Andy Warhol. And that really changed my life and––many years later. But so, Ann and I really started to collect. And we'd collect stuff that we thought would shock people in Boston. And it did.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, that must be fun.

RICHARD SOLOMON: That was fun, yeah [inaudible].

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Like, for instance?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, it was the thing from—Mike Todd was a sculptor. And it was a terrific thing. It was a—

the bottom half of a female mannequin. And on top of that, he put an iron, and hung a brush down so where—in the pubic area. And so, I hung that up. And then Marjorie Strider had this great painting. Marjorie was, sort of, a Pop artist. But it was three-dimensional. There were these three radishes with these long roots, you know. And so, it's, sort of, like, hermaphroditically phallic, these big, red radishes with these long things. I mean, it was fantastic.

So, I—we had that kind of stuff. And I'm sure that part of the appeal to me was the idea that people thought I was a little weird in Boston, anyway. And that, sort of, worked on that concept. And my great claim to fame came when the ICA, the Institute of Contemporary Art, had a Warhol show. [00:54:02] And they had pictures of Holly Solomon. There was—I think there were, maybe, a dozen of her images Of course, I—to the public, I adopted her as my aunt. Of course, I never knew who she was. I never heard of her before. But she was from New York. I was from New York. It made a lot of sense, right? So, I got a lot of credit there for being part of a really hip art family.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How did you become involved with ICA?

RICHARD SOLOMON: It's a really good question. You know, I don't really remember. I guess, you know––I guess they, sort of, realized that I was a collector. And because I was—had—I was in a family business, at that time. And Stop & Shop was a major company in the area. That—I'm sure had a lot to do with it. Yeah. It's a really good question. You know, and I was a young guy. And who knows? It's was a good question. I, honestly, do not remember.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But you were out of school, at the time?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Oh, yeah. I was working for Stop & Shop.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. Were you, at all, involved with, like, the Boston MFA or any other organizations, any other—

RICHARD SOLOMON: No, not at all.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —any of the Harvard museums, or the Fogg or Busch-Reisinger, or any of those? No?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Oh, no. In those days, no, not at all. I mean, I guess––you know, I guess somebody must have come into my apartment, looked at the walls, and said, "Geez, this guy, he's either crazy or rich."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Or both.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Or both.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: They were disappointed, but that was another story. [They laugh.] Anyway, so, so we came to New York, and got this great job. [00:56:01] And then, because I was considered a collector, I got on the acquisitions committee at the Whitney Museum, which was one of the worst experiences of my life. And, luckily, when I went in the art business, I disqualified myself, and got off the acquisition committee at the Whitney.

But I was amazed at the Whitney in those days because they didn't have a buying plan. I mean, they—I'd sit in the meeting, and they'd say, "Well, we just—this is the last picture in the show." I said, "Wait a second. You're telling me that you're buying this. It was the last picture in the show. What about the—you know, why wouldn't you go to the studio before the show opens if this artist is somebody you want? Get a list. Put a list together. Who are the 20 artists you want? Then go visit collectors and see if you can get it for nothing. And if you can't, then go to the studio."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And they looked at me, and it's a really good thing because, probably, they would have killed me if I—probably—one more meeting, I probably would have been shot. But I had about a dozen of them. And it's enough to—anyway. That was an interesting experience.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, what was their rationale? How did they reply to your observations?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, I was young. And they, probably, said, "Uh-huh [affirmative], thank you very much." You know?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Easily dismissed?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. And—and, unfortunately, the Whitney has—the Whitney really has missed the boat, tremendously, over the years, in terms of competing with the other museums. And I think Adam made the right decision of moving down to the high line where he can have a museum that caters to out-of-town tourists.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: When I interviewed Dick Gray about, God, almost 10 years ago now, he made a comment that was, sort of, amusing. [00:58:09] He said, "Well," he said, "all of the serious galleries are within walking distance of a museum, MoMA, 57th Street, the Met, I mean, Madison Avenue." He said, "But, apart from that, there have always been a lot of galleries flailing around downtown trying to make something happen." Almost his precise words. And I—just as an observation, now that you've got, you know, the New Museum on the Bowery, there's a new Lower East Side art scene that's now the new Lower East Side, which, of course—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Right, sure.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —we, of course, all know it's east of Chrystie Street and all that. And now that the Whitney's at the end of the high line, some are speculating a slight shift to the south, by a lot of Chelsea galleries to be closer to that. But it's close enough to—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, they can't afford it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I mean, they're asking—you know, I immediately looked down there.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And it's $400 a square foot.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yikes.

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, you know, so, that's not going to happen. And, matter of fact, the concern I have is Chelsea. And what's happening in New York and I don't think—well, Chelsea's going to be very different. Pace is building a big building down there. You know, the monster galleries have built major edifices. The normal gallery can't afford to have a street gallery—I would—we opened a gallery this year, and I was looking for space. [01:00:03] And what was once 100, now, is 250.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Wow.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And, you know, for street presence. And you can't get insurance in half of the places because it's—there—it's in the flood zone. So, I don't know what's going to happen. I don't think Brooklyn is necessarily the answer. But—and the Lower East Side doesn't have the facilities.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Very small spaces.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: When—

RICHARD SOLOMON: And so, I don't know what's going to happen. You know, it's—I think that—I think a lot of galleries have less than five years to live.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There was an observation, I think, amusing observation, that Lower East Side galleries are the same size as art fair booths.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, the art fair booth becomes the new paradigm for the white cube. It's––now it's the art fair booth is becoming the paradigm for the gallery. And a lot of galleries—of course, you can't get into the fairs unless you've got a brick and—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, the worst thing—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —mortar operation.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. I mean, the worst thing about—excuse me. Okay.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Bless you.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Thank you. The worst thing that's happening is that—oh, the art fairs, I mean, they've

taken so much play out of the galleries. And they've become, as we were saying before, the, sort of, the flea market approach to the marketing of art.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And people are waiting for the next art fair for the social aspects of it, et cetera, et cetera. [01:02:04] And, of course, the other thing is the power of the Basel guys.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, there was an article in one of the online fish-wrappers—I think *Hyperallergic* or one of those—about how Miami is gearing up for more crazy parties during the art fairs. And it had an image of a stripper.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, I mean, and really, in a lot of ways, the kind of attention that you earlier said is required to look at a work of art becomes more and more impossible to achieve because you're, sort of, in this ADD environment of these art fairs. Now, you got strippers, and booze, and all sorts of other things, rock stars. And it's just, increasingly, this carnival atmosphere, and the gallery environment, as we all understand it, was created so that people could go and look quietly at art for as long as they pleased.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, the other phenomenon that's really very upsetting is the pressure it puts on the artist. The pressure it puts—for example, let's assume that you're with a gallery who's doing three or four art fairs a year.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, and you're one of their more successful artists. So, they need a work for each one of those fairs.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: Okay? Then you also have to have a show every year, year-and-a-half—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —to maintain your status in the community, okay? How the hell can anybody either produce it, or change, or develop a style if you're under that kind of pressure? [01:04:08] And so, what you're finding, it seems to me, is a more and more homogenized kind of product coming out of wham, bam, thank you, ma'am. I mean, it's this whole, kind of, deal where nobody's thinking; nobody's just putting it out, getting there, getting it, and getting there. And I think it's a very, very difficult thing for the artist to live up to the demands of these shows.

And, if you have two dealers—now, what happens if you not only have an American dealer, but you also have a European dealer? So, now, you have the problem squared.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, they're also—there's, also, the problem that—in some of the mid-list galleries, one dealer might represent an artist's paintings. The other dealer might handle their works on paper, or if they do three-dimensional work.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Less and less. More you represent the whole—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: The whole thing.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, pretty much, the whole thing. I mean, and it's getting very complicated. It's getting very complicated. And the other thing that's interesting is that, you have the—everybody has to be at Frieze. Well, you—not everybody can get into Frieze. So, some guys, smart guys, said, "We'll have another fair at the same time." [01:06:02] And those fairs, you know, marginally successful. They're all real estate deals.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How do mean real estate deal?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, they're selling space. I mean, they don't—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, I see.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —give a damn. I mean, the best example are the Art Miami guys, who keep opening fairs all over the place—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —with no possible prospect of doing business.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, earlier, you used the term "flea market." And, of course, traveling around the country, you see a lot of—what was that store, Ames? It's now out of business. A lot of these Ames' stores in Kansas, or down south, or whatever, are just standing empty. And the thing that has happened with a lot of those is that somebody buys them and then rents out space for an antique mall.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And so, it's almost the same thing.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Sure. Well, yeah, I mean, well, we—for example, I just did Chicago. Beautiful fair. Beautiful fair. But there're no people there. Now, the guy who's doing it, it's a terrific guy, the guy that runs it, terrific guy. But there was a time when Chicago was fantastic—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —because, not that Chicago was fantastic, but the destination was fantastic because there were no other fairs in America.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, was this—this is not at the Navy Pier? This is at the merchandise mart? Or it's at the —

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, in fact––

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —Navy?

RICHARD SOLOMON: ––now it's back at the Navy.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And now it's back at the Navy?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. And a beautiful, beautiful—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —show. But there's not enough. Firstly, nobody at their—it's not a destination anymore because there are too many other fairs. [01:08:03] And there's not enough purchasing power in the Midwest to support this kind of a real estate project.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, they're spending the money there. People like Alice Walton are—

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, well—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —I mean, yeah. But why? I mean, she goes to—well, Alice Walton will come to New York.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, she's here now, too, yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, but—or she'll go—she'll come to—she'll go to Miami—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —and certain places like that. But why should she go to Chicago? I mean, firstly, you and I know that this best stuff isn't going to be in Chicago. It's the stuff they haven't been able to sell. So, the guys from Miami have this fair in East Hampton. Now, why would anybody go to an art fair in East Hampton? I mean, all the New Yorkers there, they're going to go to an art fair in the summer, against that traffic? I mean, give me a break. I did it once. And I sold a $1,200 print.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Wow.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, exactly. You know, Art Miami, they had a very nice little fair there. And then

they decided, well, there's some more space. We'll expand it. And we'll call it Art Context, all right? And so, all of a sudden, from the nice fair, they took—they added all this stuff that really should be, left at home. And then the fair—so, now, you go into the fair and, in two minutes, you're totally lost. You can't see a goddamn thing. And they've taken a really nice little fair and made a real estate venture out of it. So, nobody—so, a few people do business. But most people don't.

Anyway, it's a—so, what's going on right now in the art world is that there is too much of everything. And—but the good news is that, at the moment, there appears to be a tremendous amount of money that Benny Sanders is talking about that is willing to invest in the cultural life of our country. [01:10:26] And be it renaming Lincoln Center, or whatever. So, you know, so, as—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, the patronage has certainly changed.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It seems that it has become much more top-down. It's a billionaire's club. It's—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —even in the way the museums operate. We don't need to necessarily name names, but certain prominent—well, we did name Alice Walton. But, also, the Koch brothers, and then certain prominent patrons from Latin America, who've done a lot to change the perception of art in a global sense, or hemispheric sense.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's very, very top-down now, and—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, yeah. I mean, it's—you know. And luckily, we're in a capitalistic society. And people like Marty Margulies who is going to do this fabulous Key for installation, and other people who are doing these wonderful, private museums are still doing it. And, I mean, they're beautiful museums. But there's certain questions as to, firstly, the tax implications. You know, I mean, how much of this stuff is really not 100 percent kosher? [01:12:09] All these private museums that are growing around the country. The question of perpetuity when something like Lincoln Center, Alice Tully Hall becomes Geffen Hall. There are a lot of issues that somebody like Bernie Sanders is raising that, ultimately, I think, will begin to impact on our culture, especially in the art world. Because this conspicuous consumption, one more little recession, and the conspicuous consumption is not going to be—it's going to be a big, dirty name, I think.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And I worry about that.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There's always been a lot of tension in the United States between those people who believe that art is a community resource versus those people who see art as being, sort of, the play things of the very rich. I think that's been always—

RICHARD SOLOMON: And so, and—because it has both aspects—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —very much. And—and it depends what looking glass you're looking through.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's not an "either/or" thing. But it's, actually, simultaneous.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But, like, talking about how the Met, in the early days, refused to open on Sundays for religious reasons. The real reason was it was a six-day workweek, and they didn't want the riffraff in the museum.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And when they interviewed Arnold Lehman this spring, he was talking about the Brooklyn Museum and all the flack that he caught for the new entryway. [01:14:08] And he made a point, too. He said, "Well, the Brooklyn Museum was started as a public—as a sort of peoples' museum." Except you had to climb 100 steps to get to the door. And then they took the stairs down, and it was an 800-pound bronze door you had to open. It was still obstacles. So, his aim was to make it totally accessible. And, of course, he, you know, he got

a lot of blowback against that from even a lot of artists who felt that, you know, the temple had been somehow compromised—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —desecrated by commerce.

RICHARD SOLOMON: There's no question about it. I mean, look, I think that it is not necessarily—well, let me put it another way. What you're—one of the great—the *Crimson* once did a parody of *The New York Times*. And, instead of all the news that's fit to print, they wrote, and they said, "All the news that fits, we print."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Now, my sense, basically, is when you read about these—the art market—the new prices, all this stuff. And we're talking, again, about, what, 20 percent, 10 percent, one percent. I mean, the art market booming, booming, booming. The art market isn't; the art market is healthy, but it's not booming, booming, booming. It is booming, booming, booming for a few artists, maybe 50—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know. But the publicity is such that, when you're having people who are middleclass people who are, basically, not doing better than—who are worried that their children will not do better than they did. [01:16:12] And you see things like that it's just playing into the Bernie Sanders kind of mentality of, "We got to change. We got to change. We got to change." This, you know—and so, my concern, basically, is that there's something troublesome—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —about what's happening in the art world today—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —both in terms of its public image and in terms of the internal aspects of it. And I––you know, my life expectancy isn't long enough that I'm going to have to worry about what the impact is over the next 20 years. But I certainly believe that it's adding to the agitation about the real wealthy people in this country and how they're using their wealth. And some people, like Bill Gates and people like that, have used their wealth very productively.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Warren Buffet.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And Warren Buffet, yeah. I mean, there are a whole number of—but they're not—that's not getting the publicity. What's getting the publicity are those people who are using their wealth to do things that might not be as attractive to the general public as—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, the excellent example is the new governor of Illinois, who has closed the state museum, and so forth, and is in the process of shutting other things down, who's, himself, a billionaire, a self-made man. Of course, he was elected, largely, by Tea Partiers, who are mostly high school educated tradesmen, who are, actually, the ones who are going to get screwed in the end.

RICHARD SOLOMON: [01:18:03] Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And they can't see it. But at what point did this whole idea of *civitas* part ways with privilege and wealth, to people who are in the working class feel that if they vote against someone like—okay, I'll say it—Donald Trump—that somehow that's a vote against their dream, their fantasy world, their superheroes.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, that's what it—yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's troubling.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, in any event, so, the nice thing about the print business, or the worst thing about the print business, is that most of these issues, we don't have to deal with. We're still—we're, like, the undercover part of the art world. And very few people write about the record prices that a Picasso print might have brought.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Wait a minute. There's the *Hundred Guilder* print.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. Well, that's a—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's Rembrandt.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly. That's another story. But, you know, and, you know, but it is—it is—I'll tell you where it's impacting the art—the print world. The artists are so busy turning out product that we can't get them into the studios to work on prints. They, you know—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's what you said earlier. And, actually, I'm having a, kind of, déjà vu here, because five years ago, I conducted an interview with Arnold Glimcher, who said—and I think I can quote him—although I think the interview is restricted because he said he was planning to—

RICHARD SOLOMON: [01:20:13] Yeah, he's—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —write a memoir.

RICHARD SOLOMON: ––going to write––exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But he said, "The market has killed the avant-garde," or something like that. Sort of, the market has destroyed, murdered, killed the avant-garde. In other words, artists are now forced to become industries. They can no longer be thinkers and innovators with the same freedom that they could when the economy was different for them.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. I think that's true. But there's also something going on that's really interesting. For example, we're working with an artist by the name of Kaws, K-A-W-S, all right? He's an artist who has really created an image for using both traditional galleries and social media. And we're publishing some of his prints with a tremendous amount of energy on the part of his "collectors," quote, unquote.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: We are working with an artist by the name of Shepard Fairey.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Shepard Fairey is an artist who created an image that is licensed. [01:22:00] And is having a very prosperous relationship with apparel manufacturers. We represent the prints of Keith Haring. Keith Haring has a tremendous licensing operation.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, there's a whole other thing happening in the print world and in the art world where the artists are now, people like Nara and, obviously, the other guy, the other Japanese artist. I'll think of his name in a second. But there's a whole other thing happening. And that is where art has become a vehicle for product manufacturing.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: We've been selling a *Doggy Radio* done by Nara. You know, it's fascinating product. So, it's—there's another thing happening in the art world, too, that has nothing to do with fine art.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: It has to do with, basically, much more about graphic design. And that's merging tremendously.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, it's more of a, kind of, populist, or more of an accessible—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —you know, a point of entry where somebody cannot afford to buy a Léger, or a Close, or whatever.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Or a painting by this person. They can buy a print by this person.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And it's reinforced because they've also seen that it's on t-shirts, or, I mean, it's—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, there was a show. The show that I saw several years ago at the Phillips of Christo and Jeanne-Claude of their Arkansas Canyon, or their Arkansas River project, which I gather is going forward. [01:24:21] And in the gift shop at, the Phillips, you can buy, obviously, the catalogue. But the—there's a ball cap, and there's a tote bag with Christo.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So—

RICHARD SOLOMON: And it helps funds most—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —a lot of their shows.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I mean, a lot of their—yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But, I mean, artists, half a century ago, who saw themselves as, sort of, avatars of bohemianism and poet-priests of some kind of quasi-religious thing called art. I mean, has that ship totally sailed, do you think?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, what I'd like to say, in terms of my understanding of the art world, is we all owe it to Duchamp. And after—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Merci, Marcel.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: And after he turned a urinal into a work of art he opened up a floodgate. That was just the beginning.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And I think today almost anything goes. And—and my biggest issue right now is to try to figure out if the artists are not interested in spending the time, or have the luxury of spending the time to learn a craft, which is printmaking—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —if they—if social media becomes the new way to market art, what does one do, in terms of redirecting one's energy to take advantage of this change? [01:26:31] And I have not really figured that out. I—you know, when I look at guys like Chuck Close and so many other people who we publish and many who are no longer alive, and who thought prints were something to do. I mean, Sol LeWitt, and Bob Mangold, and Dubuffet, and all these guys loved making prints. And that was fine. And we were a vehicle.

But, now, if that isn't happening what is the appeal? What—how do you—forget the collector. That's such a totally different situation. But how do you get creative people to create works of art for a new generation at a price point at which they can afford? How do you do that? And that's the real issues that I have not been able to figure out.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, I guess the million-dollar question is, "How do you get rich giving away art, making it accessible to everybody?"

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, look, what we used to say—there was a—"Feed the masses, eat with the classes. Feed the classes, eat with the masses." [01:28:01] And so, my sense, basically, is that my whole motto has been over—is to try to figure out something that would appeal to people who have an aesthetic interest of some sort —

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —and who have limited amounts of money.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Now, when I started the business, I thought $125 was more money than anybody would ever spend for a print. And, today, almost 50 years later, we cannot make money selling a print, basically, for under $10,000. So, because of all the costs of doing business, et cetera, et cetera.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And so, that's a different plateau. And how does that relate to 125? Well, it's probably maybe 125 is worth 5,000, but it's not worth 10,000.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And so, you're immediately looking at a different audience. And then next question is, okay, "What is that audience motivation?"

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And, "Is that audience motivation is still aesthetic, or is it now investment?" And if you look at what's going on in the overall art market, you would say, "More and more, it's less and less. Less aesthetic, more and more investment." So, how do you develop a works—how do you get artists? How do you get creative people to move into that direction in order to sustain yourself as a viable entity?" And I—I have about 2 percent of that puzzle solved.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [01:30:01] [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: —but that leaves about 98 percent. That's a big gap.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Also, it seems like the art world, which, like you said, was all in one loft one evening down on White Street, is now a global phenomenon comprising millions of people earning livings from the movement of art in some way or another, whether it's publishing or making art, selling art, buying art, exhibiting art.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yes. And you know, something, it's better if they don't see it. The most interesting thing—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: The most interesting thing—I mean, the most frightening thing in the world is—we just had a project that was shown on the Internet—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —at a price from 30 to $50,000. Okay? And within eight hours, we had sold it—we sold $1,800,000 worth of that project. Okay? Now—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Was this on eBay or something, or just online? No?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Just on our—you know?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: On your website?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. And you know, with social media back-up—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —okay?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Lots of promotion there.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, but not—no, I mean, very little.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Really? Well, that should tell you people are watching.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, that they're—but, you know—so it's interesting. So, if you can develop a name today that—which is really depressing that—I could never—if somebody offered me something from a transparency—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [01:32:11] Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —or anything else, I'd say, "Well, it looks very interesting, but where can I see it?"

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, who can buy anything from a slide or a transparency or something? I mean, you know—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: In the old days, I remember being at the Basel Kunstmesse in Basel with Darthea Speyer. Do you remember her?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Very well. She was—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Since she was a friend of my—aunt of a friend of mine, and I would go—anyway, I was hanging around with her and having a glass of wine. And a dealer from Philadelphia was there—Mark Rosenthal was there, and some collector, young collectors—

RICHARD SOLOMON: That was one of—Hope Mackler—was it—was Mackler one of [inaudible]?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Not Hope.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Okay.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mangold.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Okay.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay, so—and the collector shows up; beautiful trophy wife; guy with a, like, cashmere sweater around his neck, and very fit and tan. They sit down, and out comes this wad of four-by-fives. He says, "This is Kiefer; this is Dunn; this"—you know, it's, like, this whole—these—the—you know, this is, like, speaking about buggy whips or something today, because everything is on the phone or––

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly. Yeah, well, I mean, [inaudible].

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But why do you think people are confident buying online, whereas, you would not be confident buying from a four-by-five?

RICHARD SOLOMON: [01:34:01] Well, because they're a different generation.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I see. Makes sense.

RICHARD SOLOMON: It's a different generation. I mean I find it very difficult to buy anything online that isn't totally branded—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know, I mean—you know, I can't understand how anybody can buy shoes online. You know? I mean, it's just—I mean, I have enough time buying shoes when I go to a shoe store, finding something that—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —really fits.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know? Hey, I mean—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, you're talking about fit.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, there's fit, yeah. But—yeah, but—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: My wife wouldn't care. It's how it looks.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, but, I mean, you say—I mean—but this generation—they're—my—kids who work for me, I don't think they've been in a store for years.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: With all Amazon, online—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —whatever.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I mean, I—my office is right above Old Navy; I go in there all the time, but I mean—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: —I don't think I'd buy anything from Old Navy without having seen it, you know, and tried it on and all that. But it's a different generation. Oh, that––the boob tube, you know—I mean, we have confidence that, in a store or whatever it is, and if you don't like it, you can return it, but usually nobody returns anything. But in any event—so, the art world has changed dramatically in the 50 years I've been in it. I understand it less and less, but I must say that when I saw the Chuck Close show, and I saw the Rauschenberg show, I really was restored. In fact, at least I still can appreciate the artists of my generation.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: [01:35:58] I can't say the same thing for the artists of, not even my kids' generation, because they're 50 now, but the 30-year-olds. I think that so much of it is about animation, is about good design. I think graphic design today has taken over a tremendous amount as in—I think technological bullshit, manipulation, animation, comics and all that stuff—it's a different aesthetic.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, it's the Xbox. It's the—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's the—

RICHARD SOLOMON: And it's just—you know—hey, look, you know, you look around this house. I mean there's nothing 21st century about anything in this house.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And I had—which leads me to come to the following conclusion, and that is I listen more to my 36-year-old guy running my gallery in Chelsea than I listen to myself.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, there's a kind of leitmotif throughout this whole conversation which you've expressed in a number of ways, which is that there's a sort of slow or rapid erosion of people's capacity to pay attention. That attention span just seems to be shrinking and shrinking and shrinking and shrinking.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And attitudes about—attitudes about looking other—you know, I'll sum it up this way. Value today is not aesthetic.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: It's monetary.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And so, when you look at a work of art, the first instinct for 90 percent of your new—what I would call your new collectors—is its value.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [01:38:07] Monetary value.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And you know—and—now, that doesn't say that if somebody sees something they think is really ugly, they'll want to invest in it, but—so there has to be some aesthetic. But in terms of ranking 80 percent of your profit used to come from 20 percent of your items in most businesses. Right? So, all I'm saying there is 80 percent of the decision is value; 20 percent is aesthetic. So, it's an 80/20 rule again. Everything in life is 80/20 in any event.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, you were talking also about how there's a rise in the graphic novels, comic books, animation, game design, all of that, and that a lot of new art seems to be coming out of that. But that would seem to be subject to a different kind of economy, more like an entertainment industry economy, more like—I mean, I'm imagining back in the old days when people would cut 45s, single-play discs, hit songs, or hopefully

hit songs, and air them hopefully around the country on pop radios and go the whole Top 40 phenomenon and that's how artists would build a reputation like this.

RICHARD SOLOMON: [01:39:57] Well, look, we all know that artists sort of reflect our culture—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. Of course.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —at any one time. Pop art; why did Pop art—because of consumerism and all the rest of the stuff at that particular '60s generation. Okay? So, now what's happening is the artists are reflecting the culture that they grew up in—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —and the culture they grew up in was a very much TV/computer kind of environment—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —and that's the overwhelming issue. There are certain artists who are dealing with social issues who—what I would consider the "think" artists. But the think artists are very much in the minority. It's really the artists who are reflecting the kind of influences that their life has shown, and—now, I have no idea what the hell is going on in art schools. I—every once in while I go do a crit at RISD [Rhode Island School of Design] or something like that. I have no idea what's happening there, but it doesn't seem like it's—they're having the influence that one would hope they're having. But I think that—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, as a person who's done time in the art schools, I can tell you that few of the people who teach in them are actually in the real art world. They're in the art-school art world, which is a different kind of reality, and I think that the real art world for which they're preparing their students doesn't exist. It's a—it's something that's seen from within the cloister; it's the outside world. [01:42:05] It's a lot of guesswork involved in the preparation of these people, I think. My assistant is a graduate of RISD, and I think she's been learning the differences between what she was prepared to expect and what she's found out here in the wild and wooly world of art.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. Well, you learn technique—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know, and if you're lucky, you learn from your peers.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And—but the question really is the question of faculty, and the faculty—you know, if you have faculty that continues to get invigorated with younger people—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —or you have a faculty that is getting older, and most colleges today have tenure, and—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's a thing that will always kill vigor.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yes, and I think that that's one of the problems today in art schools. You know, you think of Shepard Fairey. Shepard Fairey went to RISD. Okay, what did he do when he was at RISD? He was a bomb-thrower? I mean, he was a bomb—he spent more time getting busted than––"Oh God, and pardon me," and having to apologize to the mayor or somebody because he was a rebel. And you know—and probably the best thing that can happen to an art school is to produce rebels, but they're not producing rebels today, I don't think.

But I have no knowledge of it. I don't know what's going on. All I can say is that many of the young artists whose work I do not understand at all are bright as hell. [01:44:00] I mean, there are a lot of very bright guys out there making art. And my concern is maybe the smartest––the best artists are not the brightest artists. Maybe the best artists—and I've always had this theory that, you know—I mean, a guy called me this week—and this has to be edited out, but in any event, he calls me. He says, "Richard Tuttle. Do you understand a thing he has to say?"

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: And I said, "No." I said, "Nobody understands Richard Tuttle." You know? And I don't even understand his work, but everybody seems to understand his work. But I don't think he's ever completed a full sentence in his entire life. But now Richard Tuttle is an exception.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: He's a very, very bright guy, and he apparently turns out really interesting art, although I don't see it. But you know—but I've often said, you know, "Give me some guy who just doesn't know shit, and he just does it somehow."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: There's an inner voice, you know—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —and he can't explain it. He has no idea. All he knows is he has a vision, and he follows that vision.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Brian O'Doherty told me once that—and he knew Marcel Duchamp, who told him that the reason why he gave up painting is because in the French language there's an expression, "*Bête comme un peintre,*" which means "stupid as a painter," and he didn't want anybody to think he was stupid. And probably—

RICHARD SOLOMON: He was an interesting guy. He did—I—we first met him when he did the—went to Boston Museum school. He did that thing on TV—and then, of course, we represented him for a few years. But—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —he was a really bright, smart guy.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: O'Doherty?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [01:46:00] Oh, he's still around.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He's over in the Upper West Side.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, I know, but I mean—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, great guy—

RICHARD SOLOMON: —my relationship with him is––

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, you're not working with him anymore.

RICHARD SOLOMON: ––50 years ago.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. But there's another person who's a think artist—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and he keeps evolving, which is, of course, probably why—

RICHARD SOLOMON: But he's a much better thinker than he is an artist, in my opinion. He's a smart, smart guy.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, absolutely.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. Anyway, so much for that.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, just to try to connect the dots here a little bit, you're talking about how the younger artists are not as engaged in sort of the pursuit of an aesthetic in the same sense as, let's say, somebody a generation, two, three ago; a person your age, a person my age, whatever, who had some kind of an idea about what fine art was, that it was, you know, this serious poetic, quasi-religious undertaking. It—and a lot of young artists, I think, today—I mean, I see it. They're interested in careers. Their education is so expensive, like at RISD. I mean, the tuition is so high that these schools have to promise careers to these kids; otherwise, they would never invest in—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. Look, I go back to one thing. When Picasso was alive, nobody felt that they had to compete with Picasso. When Picasso died, everybody said, "Jesus, we've got to figure out something new to do. I

mean, Picasso's so smart."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: "What are we going to do?" [01:47:57] So, this new generation looks at the work of the past, and I feel they feel that the 21st century, the world we're living in, requires new thinking, forward looking, change of values; that, "We have to do something different. We've got to be different." And so, there's less of an interest in historic precedent artistically, aesthetically, and much more an interest in forward looking. And so, they're looking at their culture; they're products of their culture; and they're trying to be really creative. And the problem, in many cases, is that it is leading them in ways that are more graphic design than painterly. The movement of paint—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —is not the same as it was to the earlier generations.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Now, everything is a reaction to everything else, so, all of a sudden in China right now they're going—they're doing abstract art. Why? Because two minutes ago they were doing realism.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Now they're going––anyway, so skirts go up; skirts go down. And my sense, basically, is there's a fashion cycle in everything we do, and I think we're seeing a certain fashion right now and if you look about a couple years ago, there's Elizabeth Peyton and that whole group of younger artists who were doing painterly, kind of, realistic type of art.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: [01:50:06] And now you're seeing a movement towards—more in the graphic design area. And sure as shooting, there's going to be a Minimalist revival, you know, and as sure as shooting, all of a sudden, paint—smearing is coming back into style.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, another dealer told me that, if an artist wants to be successful, they should look at styles that were successful in the past and make a hybrid of them.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. I mean—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's a very calculated—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, and that's probably the most difficult thing in the world to do—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —is to—you know, Lucas Samaras one day said—he was teaching, and he said—I said, "Lucas, how do you teach?" He said, "Okay, get a pencil." I got a pencil. He said, "Get a piece of paper." I got a piece of paper. He said, "Okay, do something really important."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: I said, "Excuse me?" He said, "Do something really important." I said, "That's the way you teach? That's frightning—I mean, that's terrible. That is the most intimidating thing"—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, that was 1970 to [inaudible]—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Hmm? No, this was fifteen years ago.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: A year or so ago?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Wow.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. I mean, I wanted to kill the son of a bitch.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: I said, "Come on"—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Where's he teaching?

RICHARD SOLOMON: He was teaching at Brooklyn or someplace.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Brooklyn College? I don't know where he was teaching. But Lucas, of course—luckily, he didn't stab me. But I think the most difficult thing is to try to be original. Then you—all right, what's original? Okay, well, Picasso was original. I mean, where do you go? [01:52:00] Where do you go today? And that's—the challenge for an artist today is, how do you do something original, how do you do something important, and how do you stay alive?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, there's a difference between something original and something novel, and there's a difference between a thing that's important and something that's sensational. And I think those are very tough distinctions, and I think that's where the difference is between the sheep and the goats. Right?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, yeah. You know—and, look, I once almost got killed, because I was invited to speak at the New York Institute of Technology—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —out in Long Island. So—and I started off by saying, "Okay, you're probably not going to listen to another word I have to say, but I'll start off by saying the following to you: your mother is right; you should do something else with your life."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: I said, "The chances of your being able to be gainfully employed full-time as an artist and having a career that is a successful career are so slim today."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Always was.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, exactly. And that, "You should have no illusions that it's easy. It's not easy. It's terribly tough. And it's not too late, you know, to take your education and do something else with it. Not that your education is bad; not that—you know, this is a great experience for you. But think in terms of what else you might want to do that will give you success and fulfillment in your life." [01:54:01] I might as well have left the stage, because the hostility in that audience after that comment—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I'm sure the angrier people were the dean, the administrators—

RICHARD SOLOMON: No, no, no, the—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: The students?

RICHARD SOLOMON: The students were furious.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Really? Hmm.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Furious.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Interesting.

RICHARD SOLOMON: "How could you"—you know? And I don't blame them, but I felt that was the easiest way I could get off the platform quickly.

[They laugh.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Without tar and feathers.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, the—I said, "Are there any questions?" So, I said, "I really have nothing else more to tell you except how tough it is out there in the art world, and you know, I've been doing it for a while, you know, and—you know—but are there any questions?" So, a guy gets up, and he says, "Mr. Solomon, are you—because

of all those prints you've published of Nick Krushenick's, are you responsible for his career—destroying his career?" I said, "Where the hell did this guy get that one?' And I said, "Well, what do you mean?" He said, "Well, all these prints that you've published." I said, "Well, that's a very interesting question, and you're probably right. The problem is I didn't publish any of them. He did, and he wanted me to sell them, and I did. But you're probably quite right—probably he overproduced. He wasn't careful what he was producing"—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know? "And sometimes it can hurt you." Now, frankly, I don't think that the distribution was that great that it ruined his career. I think what ruined his career was he got carried away because he made so much money so fast that he didn't think he had to think anymore, and the work got to be lousy. [01:56:00] But I'll never forget that. In fact, I said––and was I lucky to be able to say, "Hey, I didn't publish a damn thing." As a matter of fact, we did the project in Germany with Editions Domberger, and I went over to—after about—he was there for three weeks, and I went over to Damberger. I get there, and Damberger wants to kill me. He said, "What did you do to me?" I said, "What do you mean, what did I do to you?" He said, "You—Nick Krushenick came over here, and he didn't have one thing on paper." And you know, it was screen-printing. You know, if you don't have a maquette, a screen print, you know—and he said, "He's gone through 250 screens, and we still don't have one edition." I said, "Not my fault. You decided you wanted to be the publisher. You know, don't look at me."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So, do you see any correlation between—again, trying to connect the dots—between the way younger artists are addressing their work, and the way the new mega-patrons are wielding influence? Do you see a way—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, I'll tell you, I don't deal with them. What I do see, though—what I see is the younger collectors—and I don't exactly how—what age I'm talking about. But I see them trying to spot the next new talent—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —trying to—you know, and so these guys go from selling a painting for $15,000 to spending—selling a painting for $65,000, and it happens within a year. [01:58:00] And I don't know what's driving that. You know—and then at the other end, which I have no knowledge of, you take somebody like Mark Bradford, who is selling paintings for $75,000, maybe, tops, and now, it's a million and a half or something. So, I don't—I just don't know what's going on. You know, I mean, we're about to show a young artist who's done some prints, and he's really a hot artist. Why? I don't know. I mean, why is he a hot artist? Well, probably the word is out that this guy is really a hot artist. And where did the word come from, and who started it?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, again, it's hemlines and lapels, right?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. And—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Hair length.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know—so—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Fashion.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know, unfortunately, I'm not going into the studios. Unfortunately, I'm not going into the—I'm not on the L train every day and seeing what's going on out there, and so I don't have—I have a third-person's idea—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —of what's happening. All I can see is what's happening in my shop and try to figure out the why.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, do you think the younger collectors are looking at people like Eli Broad or Alice Walton or any of these other major collectors who are building "your name here" museums or [inaudible]—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, the question is—let's talk Eli Broad. I mean, Eli Broad—when he started collecting—he was collecting with a certain aesthetic—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [02:00:04] Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know, and now the question is—he's got a museum. And is he collecting to be politically or artistically correct? I mean, what, you know—I mean, I don't know. I mean, why—is it—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Is it an encyclopedic kind of—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —kind of collection—

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know, just—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —as opposed to a personal—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. I mean, it changes—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —taste?

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, I mean, Alice Walton has been building a museum, you know. So, it's—you know, Jerry Speyer—good example—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know. I mean, Jerry Speyer wants one of everything.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, so what's going on? Yeah, well, he has a lot of buildings, and—good. I mean, he's got a lot of wall space, and he—certainly, he has a good aesthetic. He's a smart guy. He collects some really good stuff and probably collects a lot of crap at the same time.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know? And the crap gets weeded out, and that's fine. So, it's a different—it's really different. I mean, a good example: Dick Solomon goes to the Rauschenberg show, and he sees a Rauschenberg painting. It was part of the ad; it's a nude—a female nude, pink female nude. Small painting, about—would fit in that niche about. And he looks at it, and he says, "Gee, that's a really beautiful painting. I'd love to own that painting." But what am I going to take down in my apartment—what am I going to take down?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: What do I want to take down to put that painting in? And I say, "Oh, well, I guess, you know—well, is it—I mean, I'm not sure it's a good investment or not, but, I mean, you know, it's an atypical painting. [02:02:03] But I really like it. But if I had a place to put it, I'd probably buy it." Now, the real collector would buy it and put it in storage or move something out and put it in storage. So, I'm not a real collector, or I'm not a current collector. You know, my friend—a friend of mine, he keeps buying stuff. "Hey, what are you going to do with it? What do you need it for?"

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There's a need—but he needs it.

RICHARD SOLOMON: He needs it, you know?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He needs it.

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, you know, where did I—come up and show me, where I should put it, you know? Anyway, so, it's—today's collector—who is today's collector? The $64,000 question. Who the hell knows?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, I think—may we hazard a guess that they are as diverse in profile as the art world has become? It's become this myriad of nuance and contrast and—like we're saying, Iraqi, Nigerian, South African, Indian, Pakistani contemporary art. It's all very nimble and fluid.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Now, the other—one other question is really interesting, and that is, when the Sculls started collecting art, that gave a guy who was in the taxi business—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —social status.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: [02:03:57] I wonder today whether that is as important as it was in the '60s. Do you think that the—that social status—public social status is enhanced today by being a collector?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I think it would depend. I mean, I'm not the person necessarily to ask, but I think that, if I were to hazard an answer, I would say it probably all depends on your line of work and how you need to be seen within the context of your milieu, whether you're a lawyer, a doctor, or a banker, or a—like, whatever you happen to be. I mean—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Right. So—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —same reason people get involved with philanthropy.

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, you're basically saying that—probably among your peers. It depends who your peers are.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And my only reason for thinking that it's the same but maybe just a little different is if you're seen in Miami at Art Basel—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —does it enhance your social status among your peers? In my sense, it probably does, and I think that the ability to say, "I was in—I went to Venice; that I was at Frieze; that I was at Basel; that I was in Miami," maybe even in Hong Kong, creates an acceptance among your peers of being culturally really in the know.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I think that's probably true. I remember going to the Biennale about 10 years ago. There's a curator from the West Coast; I ran into her. We had a glass of Prosecco, and she said, "Well, I've got to run. Somebody from this museum is going to be over at this installation in half an hour." [02:06:03] So, it was almost like the bird-watching competition where you have to, like, run around and see everybody and be seen. I mean, I'm sure that makes a difference.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, I just—it's probably unless you're really big-time.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Unless you're really big-time. It doesn't have quite the impact that it had in the '60s when the audience was so much smaller.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, another dealer told me a joke. He said, "There are two guys out in the Hamptons, and they're out on the deck of some cottage by the beach, having a drink. And one says, 'Oh, it's been forever. How have you been? Have you gotten anything lately?' and he says, 'Oh, yeah, I just picked up a wonderful, early *Mao* by Andy.' He said, 'How much did you pay?' He says, 'Oh, 2 million.' He says, 'Oh, I've got you beat. I paid 3 for mine.'"

[They laugh.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, this kind of—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, that—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —competitiveness—

RICHARD SOLOMON: For sure, for sure.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, it's really funny you should mention that, because one of the things that's really great in Miami is the conversation in the aisles. It is fantastic. "Oh, yeah, who did you see? Oh, yeah, where—what—oh, yeah, right, right, right. Oh, I just bought that." And the conversation is so funny that takes place among the—in the aisle.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know, of the one-upsmanship—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —of, you know, "I saw this; you didn't." It's really very funny. Miami is a—have you been to Miami Basel?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I mean, it is a scene like—you don't get it at the Armory; you don't get it in New York. Only in Miami do you get this fantastic social scene.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [02:08:00] Well, I think that was always part of the art world, right? From the varnishing days and opening days and—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah but—yeah, it was. Well, it was a lot different. You know, in the old days, if I remember correctly, there was less discussion about the value, monetarily, of the work of art. I mean, you would never say—I would never have said that I bought a Rauschenberg for X number of dollars to anybody.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, that would have been—you just—that would have been really gauche.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. No, I think that's true. I remember when I was at Yale, the MFA program at Yale, it's like anybody who tried to engage—for instance, we were—you know, I remember Al Held, Jack Youngerman, it's like none of these people would ever talk about the business of art. That's, like, something, uncouth to be discussed. You just didn't talk about that at all.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, yeah, you never––

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And now everything is like Antiques Roadshow. "What's the price?"

RICHARD SOLOMON: "How much did you pay for it?"

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: That's the first question somebody—you say, "I just bought a So-and-so."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: "What'd you pay for it?" You'd never think of saying that to somebody 25 years ago.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah—

RICHARD SOLOMON: It's a different world. You know, it's certainly more confusing, more decentralized.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, you're saying, also, that the rationale for setting a price is mysterious, that there was, at one point, perhaps, some kind of calculation. [02:09:56] You could say, "Paintings on canvas, this range; watercolors, this range; drawings, this range; prints, this range." Now that's all out the window.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Almost to the point where if it isn't priced high enough, nobody will take it seriously.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. So, you find—you make yourself a thingamajig that a person has never encountered before, and you take a shark, and you—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, I also worry—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —stick it in Basel.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I also worry about the art—I mean, frankly—and I—this is totally not part of this, because I am not in the contemporary, unique work business. But I really worry about the manipulations going on in the art world. You know, the auctions are so important; they get so much publicity that—how many real prices are real prices—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know? And so much—everybody is following today, you know. In the old days, dealers had all the information. If you wanted to know the price, I'm the only guy who knows it. Today, everybody knows everything.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And that's partly due to the technology and the access to—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —information.

[Side conversation.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: We'll have to resume this on Thursday. Thank you very much.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Sure.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay.

[END OF TRACK solomo15_1of2_sd_track01.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay. Well, Dick, would you like to say a few words just to test the mic. Oh, you know what? You've got the mic on under your tie. You just—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, that [inaudible] good place for it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah. Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: [Laughs.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You want the [inaudible] up. Okay.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Good morning.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: The transcriber will [inaudible] this banter into a full introduction. So—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Good morning.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Good morning. Can you hear everything?

FEMALE SPEAKER: Yeah. I can hear everything fine.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Okay, great.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: All right. So—

[END OF TRACK solomo15_2of2_sd_track01.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: We are now rolling. Just keep your eye on the bars and the—

RICHARD SOLOMON: So—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, I have to announce this.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Go ahead.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: We're talking with Dick Solomon on the October 29, 2015 at his home in New York. Good morning.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Good morning.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: This is James McElhinney.

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, what I'd like to talk to you about this morning is that my entry into the print business, and the status. I was a latecomer. Arne Glimcher, as I probably already mentioned, convinced me that it would be a good idea for me to come into—associate with him and print the artists—or work with the artists who wanted to do prints that were with The Pace Gallery. And in those days, it was a very nice group of artists for a publisher because they all want to do prints. And why do they want to do prints? Well, because in the '60s, with both Pop artists and hard-edged artists, there was a tremendous interest in printmaking. And that started, really, with June Wayne. The Ford Foundation gave Tamarind some money to teach lithographers how to make art. And that spawned a Gemini. And Ken Tyler and Sid Felsen started Gemini. And, at the same time—that's on the West Coast. On the East Coast, Tatyana Grosman opened her publishing, ULAE, Universal Limited Art Editions, in Islip, Long Island.

[00:02:00] And she was, basically, a lithographer and etcher. And she was an immigrant in this country. But a skilled craftsperson, and, also, a very charming person. And so, she got Jasper Johns and Rauschenberg involved in printmaking, and a number of other artists. And, at the same time, the Pop artists Leo represented were

working with Gemini out in L.A. And, at the same time, in New York, the Factory was going with Warhol. And there was a company called Multiples, which really was the major outlet for these prints that were being made around the country in, mainly, actually, Castelli artists. Artists affiliated with the people who were at Castelli. And so, I came into the business after all of that had started, probably almost 10 years before I came in full-time in 1970. And so, there was a, really, acceptance in those days of prints. And a very big interest in prints because so much of the imagery that was being made in unique work was being made, also, in prints. At that time, when I started in the business, I thought $125 was probably more money than anybody would ever spend on a print. And we used to do large editions of 100, 175, because we figured that it's the only way we could come out.

[00:04:08] We weren't sure that there was a market, but we figured that, you know, that that would be a smart thing. Well, frankly, we probably overproduced in those days. There wasn't quite that market. And, although I must say that Andy Warhol was able to publish editions of 250. And I think that's probably why we decided to do 125 or 175. That was probably the reason we did it. The biggest issue, at that particular moment—and I'll never forget going to a print council meeting in Chicago. The biggest issue was screen printing. Are they original art? I mean, there was more conversation about that, rather than about imagery. And, of course, the answer to that was, you know, technology is at the service of the creative. And, you know, who gives a damn whether it's a screen print, a lithograph, an etching, or whatever, as long as the result is pleasing to the artist, it is—and, also, obviously, to the public. Any event, so, what happened in those days is that they—prints were inexpensive and very popular, and many, many artists wanted to do them. It was a very different environment. Then fast-forward 50 years. Number one, the auction houses. The auction houses in those days had print auctions. They were charging a commission of, like, 10 percent.

[00:06:03] And most of the people who were buying at those print auctions were dealers. Today, with a 25 percent premium, and with the, the way that they are able to internationally promote, I would say that dealers are buying a very, very small percentage of what sold in a print auction. And the market has expanded dramatically in the—for the auction houses. At the same time, in Old Master prints, the—there was a very flourishing market—really, up through the '80s, actually, because material was available. Today, we actually went into the Old Master print business and finally got out of the Old Master print business because we could not find, even at auction or privately, work that we felt was comparable to what we might find at the Met, or at some other institution. That we could take the print up and compare this example to something at the new—in a museum collection. It just wasn't met—the material available. So, they—the old master print business—let's call that the Dürers, and the Rembrandts, et cetera—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —that business has dried up, pretty much. Very few dealers doing that. And the auction houses are basically controlling that business today, as they are in so many areas of resale.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [00:08:04] So, the auction houses are becoming the retailers, in effect?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly. And, you know, for many reasons. Mainly because there's so little material out there. And, frankly, most of the material in the Old Master is being done by secondary dealers with secondary material. Your really fine images are hard to come by. And, now, then there's the modern business. The modern business—I say modern, Picasso, Matisse, et cetera, Miró—that business has, again, gone primarily, now, to the auction houses because of the international market there is for those artists. And, again, materials getting more and more limited, availability more and more limited. But, as all of it now is resale, again, the auction houses have a much greater opportunity—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —in that area. So, today, where we are now is that the contemporary publisher—and my friends at ULAE are still in business. Ken Tyler has retired. Gemini is still publishing. Two Palms Press is a younger publisher. There are few university publishers. But what's happening now is the—if you look at the association, the IFPDA, the International Fine Print Dealers' Association, that membership is getting more and more publishers rather than dealers.

[00:10:05] That the number of print dealers has dwindled dramatically. The number of art dealers who also want to deal with prints has reduced dramatically. And the artists who are interested, or talented enough to make prints, has reduced dramatically. So, I would say that, as we sit here in the 2015, that the print industry, if that is what we might call it, is really not—has not had the growth potential that the other art forms, especially photography, have had in the last two or three decades.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That was going to be my next question to, kind of, explore the changing definition of, "What is a print?" You were speaking earlier about how there had been a discussion about serigraphy being basically a commercial medium. It wasn't a fine art. It wasn't—it didn't use a press. And it didn't use a stone. And it didn't use a copper plate. Therefore, it was not an artistic medium.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, it was a reproductive technique—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know? And I used to say, "Well, you know—and anybody criticized Picasso when he used transfer paper"—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know? But, again, I think we'll find—you know, I loved the idea when digital prints started. They called them giclée, and they had all these fancy names for it—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, right, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: [00:12:05]—to try to make them sound like fine art. Well, look, once they were able to develop pigments that were—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —somewhat stable. You know, hey, if somebody can do a reproductive print using a technology that produces an end result that is satisfactory to the artist and satisfactory to the client, those are two very difficult hurdles to get over. And then, if it gets acceptance in the marketplace, who—that's it. Now, what I would prefer is I would prefer to have an artist use the technology creatively to make something just for that print, just for that actual project, rather than take a painting and have it reproduced as a print. I mean, that, to me, is—borders on reproduction, and is one of the reasons why prints—the name, "print," the word, "print" is a pejorative in some cases.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: Because people think of prints as reproductions. Posters, whatever they are. But, you know, it's a [inaudible].

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, this gets back to the discussion 100 years ago about, "What is a painting versus what is an illustration?" Is Howard Pyle a painter? Is Norman Rockwell a painter? Is N.C. Wyeth a painter? Which ones among them were painters and illustrators?

[00:14:02] Which ones were only illustrators? The idea of, "Are you making the painting specifically to be photographed and then end up on the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*? Or does it also have a life as a painting after the magazine's gone?"

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, we had this conversation, really, even last night, about, you know—more and more, graphic design—you wonder whether many of the artists today are graphic designers rather than what you would call painters, if —

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know. Well, obviously, Andy Warhol was one of the great graphic designers. And I don't hear anybody putting Andy Warhol down because he was a—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —was a graphic designer. A number of the artists we're publishing today probably would fit into the classification of graphic designers. And that's always been around, you know, that kind of talent. But more and more today, the technology is really creating great opportunities. And, at the same time, great confusion?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You were talking last time about Nara, Murakami, and people like that who—but then, also, you could look at an artist like Robert Indiana, who did this one piece, which—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Perfect example.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —if you go to 6th Avenue, at any moment in time, you've got people lining up for selfies with *LOVE*—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —as the backdrop.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, well—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Or go to Philadelphia. There's one there. They're all over the country.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, and even if you look at some of the other artists, I mean, [00:16:02] you know, you look at somebody—I mean, this is going to sound ridiculous, but if you want to look at Al Held—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Uh-huh [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know? Well, I mean, it was structure. It was design, you know? I mean—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: His later work, yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Or Allan D'Arcangelo.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I mean, you can come up with all kinds of people that, you know—and that, and that is, sort of, boring to even to worry about that. It's—the end result is, "Is it a creative statement that resonates with somebody?" And if enough somebodies, then that person becomes recognized. And if it doesn't resonate with many people, then that person should find something else to do with their life. Or maybe become a commercial artist of some sort.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: But, you know? And you know, as I often say, "Skirts go up. Skirts go down." There's a fashion cycle in everything. And sometimes all of a sudden, somebody emerges who nobody paid any attention to 30 years ago.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Like William Kentridge.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. Well, yes. But that's a different story.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I mean, you know, he just—he, you know, he came out of—he had a long way to travel.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, yes.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And, but he's also—but I also—and he's a printmaker, okay? But he's, basically, a theatrical. I mean, his theater, his movies, his animations—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —are far better than his prints. I mean, his prints are okay. But that's the other thing, too. You know, one of the things about the print business—and you can't get away from it—is it's an autograph business. And, you know—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Interesting.

RICHARD SOLOMON: [00:18:01] I mean, Dürer was a hell of a printmaker. But he was basically a painter. And he was only doing the prints to sell his paintings. And so, as I tell most of those people who say that they're just going to be printmakers. I say, "That's a tough way to go because I don't know very many artists who are printmakers who've become important." [Coughs] Excuse me.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: We've got a few, like, Leonard Baskin or—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, there's another story entirely, but—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —Lasansky, or—

RICHARD SOLOMON: [Laughs] Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: But, I mean, yeah, but these guys who are printmakers. You know, it's very difficult to get the attention. And I think that Kentridge would not be getting the attention that he gets as a printmaker today if those animations weren't so extraordinary.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, and his work with the opera. Like, we are about to go see—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, that's what I mean, exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —*Lulu* on the 9th. So, so—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah. And, after all, if you go to an exhibition of his, the work that's on the wall are actually the frames that appear in his animations, anyway.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Now, there are instances—and I don't want to name names, but there are instances where an artist is an important artist, but his graphic and his prints are far superior to his paintings, or her paintings. So there are times when an artist does both, had a reputation, or has a reputation as a painter or a sculptor—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —but that the graphic work is far superior. That's few and far between, but it does happen.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, what is your aesthetic compass when it comes to looking at prints? We've got all kinds of printed matter out there. In fact, there's a company with that name that has a book fair in L.A.—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Coming up, right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [00:20:04] —and New York. And there's a lot of marginalia and things that fall within—between the cracks of the major taxonomies of art. You've got a lot of people making postcards, or mail art, or whatever, books, and so forth.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Right. Well, when I—what I'm about to say will probably—if anybody ever reads this or hears this—will either choke or laugh. But when I was in the supermarket business, we had a guy who made our potato salad, our coleslaw, and all the rest of the stuff.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And he came up to me one day, and I was asking him, well, "How do you decide, you know, the recipe?" He said, "I never salt to my own taste." And that stuck with me my entire life. And so, my sense, basically, is I'm a publisher. I'm a dealer, a retailer. And I've always wanted to have a variety of imagery and talent, so that I wasn't pigeon-holed. And that was one of the great things about The Pace Gallery, as it grew up. It didn't have a single aesthetic. It wasn't like Emmerich, who was Color Field exclusively.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: It wasn't like Castelli, who was Pop.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: It was a gallery that had a Lucas Samaras on one end, and a Rothko or Agnes Martin on the other. And so, I've always felt that I could judge quality, but not necessarily have an aesthetic point of view. And sometimes 80 percent of your profit comes from 20 percent of your items.

[00:22:00] And that's in every single business. And so, hopefully, I've been right 20 percent of the time.

[They laugh.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, apparently, you have been. No, so, you're not trying to promote a particular aesthetic at any given time. So, if you—I mean, what would inspire you to take a flyer on an artist's work?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, let's go back for a second. And when I started in the business, the idea was that we were going to publish Pace Gallery artists. Now, those artists that we started to publish, many of them have now passed away. Over the years, I've published—we've published in excess of 140 different artists. And very—you know, probably, at least half of them we did one project and that was it. And so, what you do, basically, is if you find somebody who you think has some talent, and who has some kind of marketability, in terms of your—our business. You take a flyer. You bring them in, and you have them do a project. Now, one of the things that, over the years, that we figured out is that it's a lot riskier to have an artist who you've never worked with come in and say, "Do an etching. Do a list. Do that." What we've done, now, is—over the last 10 years—brought in artists and have them work in monoprints, do monoprints, and get the sense of both, let them work with our printers, and work with us. And then put some things out in the marketplace, and get a sense of whether there's a

synergy there, both creatively and from a marketing standpoint.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [00:24:08] Mm-hmm mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And so, you know, so, we're always looking at talent. And, today, I must tell you that I use the eyes of my 36-year-old director down in Chelsea, rather than Dick Solomon's eyes, because I think that there's a way of—an aesthetic today that is much more driven by the computer—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —animation, and things like that. And if I were to stick into this 20th century aesthetic that I have, I probably would be out of business quite shortly. So, my sense, basically, is that now it's—for some of the—my other publishers, they're still doing 20th-century artists. They are probably facing the same problem I was facing, and then decided to move on. A couple of the publishers have begun to work with some of the hotter, younger artists.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]

RICHARD SOLOMON: And they will—they're fine because they don't—they're just starting from scratch. But it's much more difficult today, as I said earlier in our conversations, to get the artist who is pushed by their dealers to have paintings for every art fair and exhibitions. It is much more difficult today to get their attention, to get them into the studio.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And I can't tell you how many artists have been dying to come back, but they can't. They don't have the time. I can name a half a dozen who we know will want to come back, but they just are under too much pressure, and they just don't have the time.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [00:26:06] Or inventory.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, they, yeah. I mean they're just—the demand is so great.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I mean, it comes down to that. I think that, from the outside, a lot of people—even a lot of people who are, sort of, on the edges of the art world, however you want to define it, have a whole other idea about how it works. It's some kind of a meritocracy, it's some kind of a star chamber cabal of art critics and curators who decide who gets laurels and who doesn't. But it's much more complicated than that, it seems.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, it's, also, right now, they—you know, it was very difficult in the older days when—to hype an artist. I mean, you could pay a P.R. person and, maybe, get Hilton Kramer to write a decent review. And that was difficult, but, you know—or get—get the press to pay some attention. And, you know, you could be relatively successful going in that direction. Today, with Instagram, and Facebook, and all of the methods of communication—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —and hype, that if you're really good, and you really understand the system, you can create demand. And you can—I mean, you know, you can create rock stars. And certain dealers have figured out how to do it by international presence—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —by, you know, promotion of—well, I would say that the artists themselves are even more creative in that regard than the dealers.

[00:28:14] I mean, I think some of the artists—and I don't want to name names, but we all know who they are—have created this by the—some of the most outrageous things they've created, gives them all kinds of press.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And, you know, it's the Donald Trump effect. I mean, if Donald Trump was out there saying intelligent, non-controversial statements nobody'd pay any attention to him. But because he's out there clowning like a lunatic, the press—the press has made Donald Trump. I mean—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, and he's been very adept in how he played it. Of course, he's a—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Of course.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He's a celebrity. He has his TV show. He's got the ginger colored funny hairdo. And he's a caricature.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And—but he's given the press the opportunity—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

DICK SOLOMON: —to make him a rock star. And that's happened, to a certain extent, in the art world.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, you look at, let's say, 100 and, you know—a century-and-a-half ago—what Thomas Nast did to "Boss" Tweed, Donald Trump's stolen a march on the cartoonists. He's created his own cartoon character, and he's it. And people, for some reason, are just—love watching him.

RICHARD SOLOMON: It's—look, you know, the only artist I'll mention is the *Shark Tank*. I mean, you know—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Hirst, yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you put a fish in a shark tank and make [inaudible]. Great. If that doesn't get you worldwide publicity, what the hell? I mean and that's brilliant. I mean, you know? And Damien Hirst has really created for himself an image—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —that of, you know—and then team him up with a dealer, and you've got a really sensational promotional vehicle.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [00:30:13] Well, and going and doing spin art and billionaire playgrounds in the Caribbean, or wherever. So, I mean, it's all part of that.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. And the ability, today, with multimedia, the media, the globalization of art. It's so much easier today to make a wave, not a ripple. And, you know—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Somewhere, I saw there was an article about a show of Old Master self-portraits. And they referred to them as selfies [laughs]. So, history's getting retrofitted to modern argot and, sort of—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, listen, I mean, the rabbi in her sermon used the word, "selfie." Now, I mean, now, if there was anything, you know, a slang kind of thing that, I mean, who would have [inaudible] selfie? I mean, what kind of a nonsense is that for, I mean, a picture? I mean, there—but the vernacular has changed dramatically.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Just let the phone ring for a minute. It might be distracting to the transcriber. So, just returning to the—the subject of the print itself. While you might not salt to your own taste, I mean, what's your own personal measure of quality?

RICHARD SOLOMON: It varies. [00:32:02] It varies. For example, if I had my way, everything we'd do would be an etching. I think [inaudible], and aquatint and dry point. And the etching medium, to me, is still the most exciting medium in printmaking. And, yet, I'm thinking of getting out of that area entirely because it is not really cost-effective anymore, and the artists don't want to pay attention. They don't want to learn the technique. And there's just so much you can do without the artist participating. The artist's hand is so important. Yes, we can do a lot without the artist, in terms of certain imagery. We can—we can make an etching without the artist. All they ask of the artist is give us a work of art with, do it. But that's—the real use of the etching is the hand and getting the hand to do it. And there are very few people who are really great draftsmen today.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, and, to me, black and white is the best, except it doesn't sell. Nobody wants black-and-white prints anymore because they're not decorative. Now, there are few people who—we have a young fellow, a Spanish fellow, who has a hand like Picasso, a Goya. [00:34:03] I mean, the guy's got a good hand. So he's done a book for us on Don Quixote, all black and white. Brilliant. Fabulous. Can't sell it. But it's spectacular.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, today—today, more and more, we're doing prints that are—have more of a decorative thing, you know? But, again my aesthetic goes all over the place. I mean, you walk—you're here in my home, and you know that. I mean, I go from, on the right, something's pretty damn decorative, to, behind you, pretty much, pretty much minimal. So I'm all over the place. To me, it really—there are two things, I think. Firstly, I'm a sucker for personality. And so, if I come across an artist who has the kind of personality that turns you on, from a

creative standpoint—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —and from just as a human being, and you develop a rapport with that person, probably—when I was a kid, I used to say to myself, "I'm going to look at the art. I don't want to know anything about the artist, you know? I don't want to be influenced by the personality." That's—I just want to look at the art." Well, I should have found another occupation, I guess, if that was what, you know?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, you know, so, yes, you can't—you have to be—and, sometimes, it's a great disappointment, you know? You have a—there's another artist who, I think, is absolutely spectacular artist who, I think he thinks I'm a, not a—not somebody he wants to spend much time with.

[00:36:04] And so, sometimes, you have a disappointment because the—your personality gets in the way of doing something that you wish you could do. But I think it starts, really, with looking at the artist's work, then follows up with whether you're able to develop some kind of synergy. I mean, right now, I met—I've always—I've never really understood Jenny Holzer's work. But, recently, I've started to understand it a lot. And I finally got an introduction to Jenny. And we hit it off really well. And if I can finally get her into the studio, which she really wants to do, but she's got a million and one other commitments—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know? And so, here I am, you know, in my 80's, discovering somebody who's been around my whole art lifetime. And, all of a sudden, hey, it just, you know—where—how come now I'm just finding this person out, you know? And, hopefully, something will work out, you know?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, when she first exhibited those scrolling texts—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and, really, poetry, that was contemporary technology. You'd go to Times Square and you would see the—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —you know, the headlines. Now, it's past its sell-by date. So, it's the old technology. It's become more artistic because of that, perhaps.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And then—and then, well, and those monuments that she had—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know, and those sayings. And she said, and so, you know, maybe it's because we're also working with Shepard Fairey, who is making these political comments. [00:38:07] And so, maybe, all of a sudden, my mind has become more literary than it was 30 years ago. But I don't know. I mean, who the hell knows?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, everybody's always evolving. And, certainly, if you're not, as you said, salting to your own taste when it comes to what you show, what you represent, what you publish. You're going to take your own advice in other ways. You're going to allow yourself to develop and evolve. I think—if I may be so bold—it's probably wiser to be on a trajectory than to occupy a position.

RICHARD SOLOMON: [Laughs.] Well, yeah. I—well, and, you know, and the converse. I mean, some of the stuff that we're doing right now. I mean, I do not understand. You know, I am told that this is a very talented person or persons. And, you know, okay. You know, let's see what happens. Would it be something that I would be interested in? And—but the interesting thing was—well, so, this guy comes into our printmaking studio. And he does some things that I think are absolutely crap. I mean, it—the worst thing I ever saw. I mean, well, it reminds me almost of Dubuffet, you know, when I looked at the early crayon drawings. Anyway, but they were really awful. And I was so—well, just cool it. Just cool it. Just wait and see. And that was about six weeks ago. And I was down at the studio this week. [00:40:01] And, you know, hey, "That looks pretty good, you know? That—hey—okay. Maybe you were right. Maybe this guy does have some talent."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, you know, you never know. And so, that's why I tend, right now, not to be too positive.

Because I'm not so sure that my aesthetic, or, my judgment, is that great now that we're in the 21st century.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Ah. Well, I think it's safe to say that if you want to understand something, you have to work with it. I teach drawing. And I tell people, "The reason to draw is not to make pictures of things, but to teach yourself what you're looking at." And you get into a process. Maybe if you don't understand it, it's—but are willing to commit to an exploration of it, that's enough, right?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, I mean, it takes a—you got to go with it. I mean, again, if I knew what I was doing, I'd be dangerous.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, I mean, my sense, basically, is that—you just—some things are going to be very successful. And some things are going to be modestly successful. And most things are going to be unsuccessful. You know, it's the 80/20 rule. And you just keep going, and you try to figure out how to stay one step ahead of the—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —the pack. And—but it is a—the concern I have, getting back to the print business, is that are we, as an industry, becoming antiquated or peripheral to the whole art world?

[00:42:16] And how do we—what do we do to get into the mainstream? And that is my biggest concern.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, it seems like the print world would be a great place for people of—younger people of modest means to interact with the art world. They can afford to purchase a print, where, perhaps, a painting would be—

RICHARD SOLOMON: But we have to talk—what we've been talking about for years is two things. Firstly, what is a print—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —okay? And so, very—where do you ever see anybody talking about original art? The word, "original" never comes into a description of a print. And the whole process, it never—there's never a real discussion of process.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, people don't understand it. What is, to say, is cheap. It's cheap. It's less expensive. Good place to start. It's cheap. And today, you know, with everybody so investment-oriented. And so, everyone wants something unique. That so, the fact that it isn't unique is one problem. But the fact that it's—it is also original art is something that nobody talks about. And, as I said earlier, I think, I have, you know, I've been involved in the print organization for years. And we, next week, we have a print fair.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: What is a print fair? I mean, I mean, what is a print fair to a 35, 30, 25-year-olds, 30-year. What's a print fair?

[00:44:03] What? An art fair? Ah, that, I understand. So, instead of being a print fair, maybe it's an art fair of works on paper, you know?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And then, not only do you have an opportunity to have it mixed with drawings and other stuff, but it has more sex appeal.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, they did that last spring. There was a works on paper fair down on the East River.

RICHARD SOLOMON: It's called, "On Paper?"

JAMES MCELHINNEY: "On Paper," right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Mm-hmm [affirmative], yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Interesting.

RICHARD SOLOMON: It was an interesting show.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, it was.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, unfortunately, it was more of an East Village kind of show—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know, which was too bad.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, it was in a place where a lot of people weren't going to go if they weren't there already.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, yeah. And it, you know—but, so, okay, guys, okay, you know—if somebody already is getting away from the word "prints," doesn't it tell you something?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well—

RICHARD SOLOMON: But when you have an organization that where I'm one of the younger people—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know [laughs]. Yeah, I mean, and the other real problem today is, look, you're a dealer. I will, maybe, consign to you. But, basically, I want to sell you my prints, all right?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: But Pace Gallery will loan you a painting, or the artist will give you a painting. No money up-front, right?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And [inaudible] the dollars, you know? Would you—do you want to take—do you want to get $2,000 for a sale, or do you want to get $20,000 for your sale? It takes the same time. You want to convince a young person to buy a print or a painting? What are you going to do, right?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Good point.

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, the problem today is that there are very, very few print dealers, number one. [00:46:06] Because people like ourselves—if you look at Barbara Krakow, Mary Ryan, Pace Prints—we're all going into the unique work in order to enhance our audience. And, you know, and the print—the guys who used to do prints—they don't want any part of them anymore. They're just unique work. So, it's—we're going through this really big marketing change—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —in the print industry.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, there was just—not to—and, you know, you've—you know, cover your ears if you want. But I remember the late Thomas Kinkade would, you know—who did, basically, you know, the giclée prints of his, you know, like, glowing hamlets. And he would come in and make, like, one mark on the print and say that that made it a unique image. I mean, so, is it a struggle, still, to try to separate the fine art print out from, sort of, you know, the herd of wildlife art and cowboy art and all of that stuff that has the taint of commerce upon it?

RICHARD SOLOMON: It's not difficult for those of us who are in the business. But it's very difficult for those—for the consumer—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —to understand it. I mean, look at *The New York Times*. *The New York Times* has all these ads of these prints they're selling—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —all right? What are they? They are posters and reproductions.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And they're called prints.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, so, the word, "prints," is really it's—it doesn't mean anything.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [00:48:03] Mm-hmm [affirmative]. It's, like, the word, "collectable."

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, well, yeah. It's a—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. Remember the Franklin Mint?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That kind of—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly. You know, and it's really—it's a—we've got a serious problem. We aren't facing it. And I think that, I mean, it's interesting. We're going to the print fair next week. And it'll be interesting to see what happens, to see how many of the dealers are sneaking in works, non-prints, monoprints.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Monoprints—

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: with—

RICHARD SOLOMON: —monoprints is, you know—I mean you paint a—you paint on paper, and you, maybe, use a little of this, or use of that—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: But, you know, so—so, I think that we're confusing the issue, as well. And, you know, I mean, I think a mono—what the hell is a monoprint, you know? Is it a little dab? Is it a little dab—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —or not? Funny story, though. One day, LeRoy Neiman is in the gallery. And I said, "Mr. Neiman, I've always had—I've always wanted to—I've always had this fantasy that I represent you." And he turns to me, he says, "Not too late, young man."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: And when I looked at—when I looked at his ability to give $5 million to Columbia to start a print program there, or a publishing thing there, I say to myself, you know, "You feed the masses and eat with the classes. You feed the classes and eat with the masses." And LeRoy Neiman was able to understand how you mass-market— [00:50:07]—and how you take a painting and reproduce it as an edition. And, you know, and you go on TV and at football games and stuff like that.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I remember he used to that. And I think LeRoy Neiman is probably one of the great early promoters. Learned how to do it much before guys like Damien Hirst and all the rest of the stuff.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No, but he was there at the same time as Warhol. He got—if I remember correctly. One of his big legs up was *Playboy* magazine because he did—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —you know, the [inaudible] on the joke page, the girl with the black stockings, and the big hair.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And it—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And that was—

RICHARD SOLOMON: And fights.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: He did some fight scenes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I mean, so, he—yeah. But he learned how to promote himself.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: He—TV and all the rest of the stuff. I mean, he was a piece of work.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, what—I mean, I know a lot of serious artists sort of scorned him as a hack, you know? But he was a—he was no hack.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I revere by—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know? And it—the greatest compliment is that Malcolm Morley did a print called "Beach Scene." And if you didn't know it was Malcolm Morley, you would be—swear it was LeRoy Neiman.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Really?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Great.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I mean, it—and that has always been one of my favorite prints. But I thought LeRoy Neiman was brilliant.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, he—and, you know, he cultivated that kind of eccentric image the way Salvador Dali did with the—I mean, another kind of moustache, and another kind of—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, he also took impressionism—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —and he turned it into photojournalism, you know? And it was a brilliant idea in using sports, you know, and sex. And what could be smarter? I mean that was about the smartest combination you could possibly ask for.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [00:52:09] Two of the biggest sellers in the entertainment world: sports and sex.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And, you know, so, to me, you know, when all is said and done, you know, I admire as much as I admire Andy, and Bob Rauschenberg, and people like that. I really admire LeRoy Neiman for what he was able to accomplish as a print publisher and as a printmaker. He—he left us all—and, now, somebody listening to this is going to say, "That Solomon is a madman. What the hell is he talking about?" You know, but you've got to give the guy credit.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, maybe—when was LeRoy Neiman born? We must be creeping up on his 100th anniversary. Maybe—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Oh, he's gone.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, I know he's gone.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But, I mean, I'm wondering when he was born. Because, perhaps, somewhere in the country, there'll be an exhibition or something. There was a—you know, George Lucas and Steven Spielberg both are big Rockwell collectors. There was a big show—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —in—a couple years ago—the Smithsonian.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, well, yeah. It's a—I mean, it's amazing to me that—but probably where the show will be, at the baseball museum, or the football museum, or something like that. It probably will not be at the Met, or at—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know, or Alice Walton. I mean, I don't think—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: No, no.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —Crystal Bridges is not going to show LeRoy Neiman, which is too bad.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: It's just too bad because it's a great body of work.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, it's refreshing to hear you say [laughs] all of this. [00:54:02] Because he's, you know, outside of the canon for a lot of people. But then, now, in the digital age, the canon has expanded immeasurably. And it's a lot harder to abide within the old taxonomies of what's fine art, and what's not. So, could you share just a little housekeeping on how you got started? When you, you know, when you were speaking about Tamarind, Gemini, and other publishers—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —when you decided that you were going to leave the grocery business, or the supermarket business, and go into the print?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, I had a—I had a stop in-between. I left the Stop & Shop in 1967, and got a job, and ended up being the advertising manager of Clairol. And—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —while I was there, Arne, you know, had me do this project with Lucas Samaras. And we did a couple of others, and he couldn't sell them. So, I came into the business in 1970. And then figured that we had a great opportunity. We bought the List Art poster business. And so, we had about—we had a Trova portfolio. We had a Samaras album. We had a Sven Lukin portfolio. And we had 40 posters. And so, that was the beginning of the business. And then I did projects. But I did projects where I jobbed out the work. I just, you know, and I was not a publisher, per se. I was a publisher, but not a printer. And then we had a very—two very big—three very big breaks.

[00:56:05] Jim Dine came with the gallery. And Jim Dine was a fabulous printmaker. And he considered that if he didn't make a print a day, it was a bad day. And so, he came in the business. Chuck Close, a young guy, came down from Skowhegan, where he'd just been fired, and convinced Chuck Close to do these paper projects that. And then Chuck Close said to me, he said, "You got to hire this guy." So, I did. And then—this was 1970. So, this is—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Now, these were the—

RICHARD SOLOMON: —five years later.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —pulp, you know—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —the colored pulp?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Pulp, exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, we're now talking five years—'70 to '75—of really doing additions outside with other people. Our biggest single artist in those days was Jean Dubuffet and Louise Nevelson. In any event, so, we were sort of getting a little traction. And then, Jim Dine came with the gallery. Then Chuck Close came with the gallery. And then, Agnes Martin came with the gallery. But the important—two important people were really Chuck Close and Jim Dine. And then, so, and Jim had a couple—worked around with other people. So, initially, I didn't have to do anything. But after a while, Jim sort of said, "Well, you got to set up a press." And so, we moved to Spring Street from 23rd Street. And we set up a papermaking operation, an etching operation, and a couple of

other things, and wood-cutting operation.

[00:58:12] But what, then, would happen was that Jim Dine said to me that this fellow, Aldo Crommelynck, who I met in Paris—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —had split with his brother.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And so, that was a big deal. And that—so that really—so, that lasted us through the '80s. And that was terrific. And, meanwhile—then I said to myself, "It's kind of limiting just to be publishing Pace Gallery artists. Why don't I go and look for other artists?" And I did. And we started publishing other artists. And, as I say now, 40 years later, there are 140-some odd artists that worked with us.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, when you got started, actually, printing and publishing, did you model your operations after Gemini or any of the others?

RICHARD SOLOMON: I think I probably modeled it a little bit after ULAE. And ULAE had set up a system where they had exclusive dealers. And so, I set up about six or seven dealers around the country who were obligated to buy one of everything I published. And that lasted for about 10 years—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —until I started publishing artists that they weren't interested in, or they decided that enough's enough.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: What were some of the best experiences you had working with artists during that early phase of the business?

RICHARD SOLOMON: [01:00:00] I think the most rewarding experience I had was with Chuck Close, whose talent was just so amazing. I mean, he was not the easiest guy in the world to deal with. But, I mean, he wasn't a bad guy. But he was—he was an artist.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: And, you know. And Jim, in those days, was relatively easy to get along with. Louise, of course, Nevelson, was the best. I mean, she became really a close friend. And, I mean, you know, what happened with all these guys is they became, sort of, family, you know?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: I mean we travel together. And we'd, you know, my mother would go shopping with some of them. I mean, it was one of those crazy things where, you know, it was like family. And even Dubuffet, I mean, who was incredible. It was so wonderful to visit and to be with. And so, those, you know—so, those were—the most rewarding days were those days when these artists, who were very secure, and very good, and very productive, and very happy. And then things changed, you know?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, as you began to develop your eye, as you began to feel more confident about what you were doing in the art world, working with these artists, working with these editions. Were any one of these artists, were there any specific, sort of, a-ha moments, or epiphanies that you had, or lessons learned?

RICHARD SOLOMON: [01:02:12] You know, it's interesting. You don't remember the good as much as you remember the bad—

[They laugh.]

—you know? You remember the times when it didn't work out.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: So listen, it's—over a course of time, artists change, and conditions change. And sometimes the relationships end on an acrimonious basis. But, most often, they just end. You know, either—the more difficult thing, actually, is when an artist passes away. And then the whole problem becomes of dealing with heirs and dealing with the lawyers, and estates, and stuff like that. And then, the joy of being—well, having a relationship with the artist changes. And it becomes much more of a business kind of relationship.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And that's not what you really want. That's not the fun of the business. The fun of the business is to share the excitement and the interest with the artist.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Are any of your artists—not to—I mean, I—you don't need to answer this in detail. But are you aware if any of your artists have made any kind of provision for the establishment of a foundation, based on their legacy, their estate?

[01:04:04] It's a question I ask because, you know, about the Aspen report. And there's a lot of—a lot of people are approaching the point where they're going to be leaving behind great wealth. Like, Rauschenberg has left more than $2 billion worth of assets.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. And then, of course, you—we have the fights. And, you know—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —the fights start. And because, look, the most—the worst thing was Louise Nevelson. I mean, Louise Nevelson, what she did is she set up something called Sculptor-Tech because she was guilty about not having done right by her son. And Sculptor-Tech was a corporation. Her son was the major stockholder, or owner, or whatever. And he—Sculptor-Tech got all the revenue, and paid Louise, I think, $50,000 a year, and her costs, et cetera. And the IRS said, "Wait a second. This is a scam to avoid inheritance tax." And they went after. And so, five years of litigation took Louise Nevelson out of commission for about five years. And, in that time, people began to forget about Louise Nevelson.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And, you know, and it's just now we're building back the business of Louise Nevelson.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, Rauschenberg. You know what's happened there, that it's a big fight between the trustees, the foundation—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —and the rest of the stuff. And the fees that they would charge. You know, I think I gather that Jim Dine is—giving a lot of his prints, for example, to museums, and stuff like that, at this point.

[01:06:02] Chuck, you know, the good thing about Chuck is he doesn't have that much left of his own art. And most of it's sold. But—but I do know about Chuck, who was recently married and divorced. But I—so I'm sure that he's done some estate planning now.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, Agnes had a foundation and all the art went into the foundation. So, yeah, I'm aware of that. And look, those of us who are collectors have the same problem. You know, we can't just—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's an interesting point. No, I mean, I—I've had a conversation, a number of conversations, with a mutual friend who is involved with one of these artist's estate foundations and was lamenting the small number of ones that are about to come online that are actually going to be helping artists. It's going to be mostly about just celebrating the legacy of the eponymous career of whatever the foundation is called.

RICHARD SOLOMON: The problem, really, is that you set up a foundation and you have these trustees. And the trustees are usually buddies of yours. And they're usually about the same age and, you know. And then there's no easy answer to the legacies and how you figure out what you want to do, and how you want to be remembered. [01:08:04] And, you know—and the judgement of so many trustees is relatively suspect. My sense, basically, is there's a lot of politics involved. And not, necessarily, a lot of great judgment.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: It's tough. I mean hey, the best news is you—well, look, the Rothko Foundation, you've got—I mean, you know what mess that was. And then, you know, then heirs. I mean, you know, if you don't have any heirs, that's one thing. If you have heirs, that's another problem. You set up a foundation and you screw the heirs, you know? I mean, it's, so, it's—anyway.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, then, the problem is a lot of the heirs just, sort of, sell off the artwork whenever they need to pay a bill.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, let me say only—let me only say one thing. And that is, "It's much easier to deal with the artists than it is with the widows."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I can imagine.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, because the problem is that an artist knows that he can make some more.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: The widow knows it's an infinite, finite number, not an infinite number. And so, the finite number—and then everybody gets to try to figure out how to do it. And then you have the dealer saying, "Well, we need this." And then, to the other person, say, "Well, what happens if I sell everything, and I go in the nursing home?" You know, I mean, so, it's a quagmire.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, let's go—let's resume our conversation on that happy topic of prints. [01:10:07] So what motivated you to move outside of the gallery? What was the trigger that caused you to wake up in the morning and say, "I need to be working with more people?"

RICHARD SOLOMON: Two things. Firstly, you can't go to the well all the time. And so, you need product.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And so I can't keep saying to Dubuffet, "Make another print. Make another print. Make another print." So, you got to leave a little. All right. So, you have production facilities, and you have galleries. And you, sort of, look—and you're saying, "Well, how am I going to utilize my facility? And how am I going to fill the walls in between publications?" So, you end up—[inaudible]—you end up—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You're wired up good.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, yeah. Okay.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Let's pause for a minute.

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JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay, we're resuming.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Okay. So, the—so, all right. So, that was the initial thing, and then, unfortunately, artists pass away. And so, you can't do posthumous editions, and so, you have to replace those artists with other artists.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And then, the Pace Gallery's changed. Pace Gallery, the Arnold Glimcher Pace Gallery is now the Marc Glimcher Pace Gallery, and a number of those artists don't want to do prints, and a number of those artists, I don't want to do prints of. But—and we've tried. I mean, some of the artists, we've—some of the artists at Pace Gallery, we've done one or two projects with. But take somebody like Lucas Samaras. You know, Lucas Samaras, we did a number of projects with him. They were not successful. So that's an artist who—you know? And so, over a period of time, you just evolve into—and you see an artist, you're, "Hey, this guy—interesting, cool guy."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And then, all of a sudden, somebody new comes in the gallery, and then, you pick that one up, like Bob Mangold or somebody like that. And then, somebody like Kiki Smith, who's all over the place—you publish Kiki Smith for a few years and then, she disappears. And so, you need to replace Kiki Smith with somebody.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, how did you find artists to work with? Did you go to some of the galleries that were—how should I put it—your subscribers? You earlier said that at one point, you had an agreement with a number of dealers around the country who—

RICHARD SOLOMON: [00:02:02] Never used them.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —were afraid to work—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Never used them. Basically the one artist I forgot to mention was Sol LeWitt. And Sol LeWitt was a fabulous human being, one of the nicest human beings I've ever met. Didn't have—he came to the gallery late in his life, and I didn't have as much of a chance to interact with him as I would have liked, but every interaction I had was fabulous. Wonderful artist, just the nicest, greatest human being. Anyway. So it—you do exhibitions; you go to exhibitions; you have people working with you who have a contact with an artist, who like an artist. We open up a gallery in Chelsea, and we realize that we want to have younger artists for Chelsea. And so, some of the people like Shepard Fairey —

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —and how I know some of the people like that, we get in touch with because we see them at Deitch or someplace and you say, "Hey, look, this looks like an interesting guy." And so you go after him. There's no—once in a—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Is there—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Once in a while, an artist will recommend you should work with this person.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And you know, it—close the door—close the—what is it? Closed the doors, they're coming in the windows? You never know, you know? You never know how it's going to happen.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So was there any kind of a conversation between you and Arne Glimcher about this, or are these two completely independent?

RICHARD SOLOMON: [00:04:00] When I started in the business and I would install something, Arne would come down and change it totally. Arne has a fabulous sense of installations and stuff like that. In the last 30 years, I don't remember him changing any of the installations, and in the last 25 years, I'm not sure how many times he's been on our floor. So, I would say that even though Arne and I are close, personal friends, his involvement in the business over the last, at least, 25 years has been very, very small. Once in a while, being helpful, if I've asked him to be.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: Introduce me to somebody, an artist, if I—I asked him to be. But generally speaking, he sort of says, "I got to"—you know. "The reason I brought you in the business in the first place is because I don't want to be bothered with this nonsense." So, I think that he's got his plate full. And he says, "Good luck."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So that the business—I mean, the—what is actually the corporate relationship between the gallery and the business?

RICHARD SOLOMON: I'm a controlling interest in the business. I have—my business school roommate and good friend is a small owner of the business, and Arne is a small owner of the business. So, I—yes, it's basically my business. [00:06:02] And you know, and then I started Pace/MacGill with Peter MacGill, and I have a controlling interest in that business. But I have the same relationship with Peter MacGill that Arne has with me. Peter runs his business—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Got you.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —totally.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay. Helpful to know. So, what do you see as being the prospects in the future for, you know, the print business?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, I think that a lot is going to have to do with process, and a lot is going to have to do with where we, as an industry, position ourselves. If we continue to ignore what's––the atrophy that's taking place in—among the dealers, if we continue to ignore the lack of interest by artists in making prints, there will be a problem if we somehow, enough of us, begin to understand the opportunities in—with technology and with promotion, maybe the trajectory will be more positive than I anticipate it is—would be currently.

The IFPDA just hired a public relations agency. [00:07:59] The—we had a retreat in which we discussed various issues. And if I've ever been on a treadmill before, I was certainly on one at that retreat, because of a day worth of talking around and around and around and not ever facing the issues. So, I don't know. I mean is this public relations agency really going to tell the people what they should know, or are they going to just take the

leadership—take the lead from the leadership? And unfortunately, the leadership, as far as I can see, doesn't understand what's happening in the world—in the print world.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But how do you see what's happening in the print world?

RICHARD SOLOMON: As I've said—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —I think that we're marginalized. We're totally marginalized. That the photography is in the mainstream art fairs. All you have to do is go to Basel and see where they put the print dealers. They have very few print dealers and they put us in Siberia. You know, the—and we can't get into many. We can't get into Frieze. There are more fairs that print dealers can't get into than there are fairs that they can get into, and the fairs they get into, as I was saying, you—you know, it's like being in Siberia.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Are you doing anything in Europe? Do you do Maastricht or any of those?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Maastricht—that's not—that's too expensive, I think, for the old––David Tunick has been doing it with Old Master prints for a number of years.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: But—and the contemporary print dealers do not do. [00:10:00] We do Basel, Basel. We can't get into Frieze. We can't get into FIAC.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: In Paris, yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: In Paris. We do Hong Kong. Again, in Hong Kong, we're on the second floor at the end of the––with the caboose. And if the people manage to stumble down that far, through a maze of crap—lot of contemporary, local galleries and stuff like that—they can find the print dealers, who are segregated. We're not—print dealers are not integrated into these various fairs.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Who's making the decision to marginalize the print dealers or to put them near the restrooms or whatever, in these [inaudible]—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, in Basel, it's—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Who's making the decisions?

RICHARD SOLOMON: In Basel, it's the new leadership of that fair, compared to the old leadership. The old leadership used to put the print people in a position—see, what they don't understand is that when somebody goes to a fair, an art fair—travels to an art fair and they buy something, it's like what I said in the galleries. I said, "I just"—"Let them buy a catalogue. Let them buy anything," because once they bought something, you're—you've got a client. And if you go to an art fair—you go to Miami, you go to Hong—you go to Basel, and you have come home with something in your hand or made a purchase, or you go to an auction and sit there all day and don't do anything, you've wasted your time—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —especially if you're a dealer, you know?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [00:12:00] Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: You had nothing to show for your time. What they don't understand, what these guys—these promoters don't understand is that prints are an entry point, as you point out, you know—generally speaking, affordable to anybody who comes to the fair—or, should be, you know?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: I mean, except those that go as spectators. But if potential collectors come to the fair, it—the price point should be attractive to anybody. And the way that publishers are publishing today, they're publishing really good product. You know, by first-rate artists. So, there are opportunities there, but they don't understand it. What—they're much more status conscious, and they think having these flashy galleries out front make it more important for the overall fair, for the clients going there. Now, they're also facing the dealers who want to have—these big-time dealers who want to have prime position. So—but they don't balance it out. And so, that's one of the biggest single problems we have to overcome. And if they continue to marginalize us—for example, I'm going back to Basel this coming year, kicking and screaming. My guys really, say, "Okay, one more

time." Last year was my one more time, and they screwed us totally. And so this is it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You mean Basel in Basel—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Basel, Basel.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —not Basel—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Basel.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —in Miami. Yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. And Basel in Miami, which—we're in an aisle all together, you know? And the—on one end of the whole place, you know? At the back end of one end of the place. [00:14:00] You know? So, yes, they have a big sign that says "Editions," but if you do Basel Miami and you walk down three or four aisles you're exhausted. So, by the time people come to our thing, if they come at all, they're the walking wounded. You can't see anything if you try.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Wow. Yeah, it is really enervating because it––like you were saying Monday, it's an assault on the senses. It's this instant ADD environment. You've got these crowds of people, these conversations in the hallways, or in the walkways.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, and––but—at the same time it's a hell of a lot of business being done.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And we did a hell of a lot of business last year. And you know, but you always say, "Hey, come on guys, lighten up here." Let—you know, "Let's put us in the ball game," you know? It's like the roaming fielder in the old days, you know? The guy who couldn't catch the ball. You put him out in the outfield, so—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, it's like, left field or something.

RICHARD SOLOMON: He was a the 10th man—right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: No, he was the 10th man. And so, we're like the 10th man.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Wow. So, one of the trends that's under way now, as you're probably aware, in trade publishing, is that some of these large houses—like—like Random House, so forth—have created divisions for self-publishing. And I think one of the things we alluded to the Printed Matter fair at PS1 is, a lot of the exhibitors there are self-publishers. [00:16:04] And it seems to me like one of the impacts of technology is that anybody who can understand how to use InDesign or LuLu or whatever can print books, can do on-demand publishing. Have you ever considered working with people like that, people like the—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, the—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —the artists who are publishing themselves in partnership with—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Certain artists—well, Jim Dine always published himself.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: We just distributed. And that was a great relationship because—and what he—the reason he did that is he didn't want interference, in terms of the creative process. He did not want us to tell him what we were willing to print, what we were willing to publish, what the edition size was, whether he was doing too much or too little. So, he would go and just publish, and—I mean, he would just print, and he would send the prints in, and we would sell them. And the ones that we didn't think were so terrific wouldn't necessarily see the light of day, and he didn't care. He just wanted to do what he did, and we would send him a healthy check every year—a very healthy check. Now, I'm not concerned about those people who were doing that because one thing is printing and publishing; the other is distribution.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: [00:17:58] And I think that––and if an artist wanted to self-publish and we thought we could distribute it successfully, great, you know? Make a deal. Let's do it. But I think that the younger artists and some of the artists who are self-publishing are finding that they're going to have a very good inventory.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.] That they're going to be living with.

RICHARD SOLOMON: As we do. I mean, you know?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, right, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I mean, I—you know, I've got to tell you that, of the—as I say, probably of the 140 artists that we've published, we probably have a great inventory—if we haven't given it back to them already—of 60 percent.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know? And I mean, some of the artists that we've published, we've not—I don't think we've sold one of.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Sell and—what do you do with work like that? Do you, you know, give it away to libraries and stuff, or—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, the first thing I do with it is give it—half of it back to the artists immediately.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: The next question, what do I do with the half that I have?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And I haven't figured that one out yet.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, I mean, you know, you were saying that at the moment, Jim Dine was giving work to a lot of museums around the country. I mean, what—I'm not in the line of work that you are, but it would seem like if you were to have an inventory that wasn't moving, maybe donating pieces, if they would accept them, would help to promote.

RICHARD SOLOMON: See just—you just had the big IF—the big IF.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I mean, museums today are getting smarter than they used to be. [00:20:04] I mean, we don't' get any tax advantage of doing that.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: But the—I mean, what I did do is we published a whole bunch of Chinese artists, and I decided to give both Harvard and Smith the—this collection of one of every Chinese artist we've published from the get-go.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: Right? And I did that to get them into—and they accepted it, obviously, because they didn't have any Chinese contemporary prints—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —at the time. And today, being a little bit more sophisticated than they were five years ago, maybe they would not necessarily accept all of them.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Uh-huh [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: But—but probably, they would, just because they didn't want to offend us. But so much of what we have that doesn't sell, I think would be very difficult. So, the question is, can we give them to hospitals? Well, you know—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, the hospitals will take some of it, but some of it, they won't take.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, so it's interesting, you know? I've often said that well, "You wrap a salami in it and send it off to your boys in the Army," you know?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, so that's how Ukiyo-e prints got here. It was used as packing material for porcelain.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly, exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, Katz's down in the—downtown used to have a slogan during the second World War, "Send a salami to your boys in the Army." And so, I've always said, "Well, we'll send—we'll wrap it up as salami"—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Wrap it up in the funny papers.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —"send it off to your boys in the Army." [00:22:02] Yeah, so it's a real question, and you know, you have a—you sort of feel a fiduciary responsibility not to trash the stuff.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And at the same time, you know, you—it's a very difficult thing to say to an artist, "Take your prints back; they don't sell." You know, what's nicer to say is, "You know, we still have some inventory of your prints, would––you know, let's split the"—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —"remainder," and, you know, anyway. So, I haven't—I have two years left on my lease at 18th Street, and if we move, I assure you that there's going to be—I would think that the machine that destroys works of art will be active.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, dear.

[They laugh.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, because some of the stuff just isn't saleable, I mean, or give away—I mean, when I say "saleable," I mean marketable, and for nothing.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's an interesting problem to figure out what to do. It's interesting because I know that, yeah, 10 years ago, most art museums would accept most gifts if they were reasonably interesting works of art. Now, you need to make the gift with an accompanying subvention to pay for its perpetual care and feeding or—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —some such.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And you know, and who—if a project really doesn't have any salability, it probably doesn't––you know, you can save the world a lot of trouble by, you know—we don't need more trash. [00:24:07] We don't, I mean we don't need—we can recycle—it—I think recycling might be a very good idea for a lot of this work—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, especially works on paper.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You know, you could have an edition, a future edition, which you could advertise as having been printed on recycled art.

[They laugh.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That would add value.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly.

[They laugh.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, Sid Felsen, I interviewed for the Rauschenberg Foundation, and what was—you know,

he's a very kind of not super chatty guy—

RICHARD SOLOMON: That's an understatement.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But, so the first conversation I had with him was very much kind of trying to get a momentum going with the dialogue. And how that ended up occurring was I went back to the foundation and I discovered—David White said, "Oh, you know, Sid—he has hundreds of photographs of Bob working on various different projects," you know, Gemini. So, I went through the photographs and I picked out, like, 10 photographs, and they were conversation starters.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, he—he's a lovely guy.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, he is. No, absolutely, a great guy. And that was the key, and then all of a sudden, the floodgates opened.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, with Sid—I mean, once you get Sid going, but he's—he—well, you know, whereas Ken—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —Tyler was just the opposite.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [00:25:53] I didn't have an opportunity to speak with him, but my question to you is, as the publisher, have you kept any kind of journal or did you take photographs, or you know, is there any kind of personal byproduct of your interactions with these artists? I mean—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, I have some photographs, you know? I have photographs of them at various times. And the best photograph I have—the best photograph—is, about a year ago, we're in Los Angeles and I call up David Hockney and said, "Can we come over?" "Yeah, come on over." So, I'm wearing jeans and a blue sweater, and we arrive, and he's wearing jeans and a blue sweater.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: And we take a picture together and we look like we got dressed in a uniform.

[They laugh.]

It's the funniest thing in the world. Yeah, look, we've traveled a lot with these guys. We've spent a lot of time with them. I have some photographs, but we've been at—we've been cruising the Mediterranean with Agnes Martin; we've been running around with Louise to exhibitions all over the country. We—Ernie Trova is an artist who was very important to Arne at the beginning of his—of the gallery, and—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —a wonderful artist.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: The *Falling Man* series, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly. Wonderful, wonderful guy. And he got, I think it was 25,000, maybe more, for—because a pharmaceutical company had used the *Falling Man* sculpture in a TV commercial without clearing it. [00:28:05] And so, we got—this was—these guys had been doing—I mean, this is ridiculous—they'd been doing this for about three months.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You mean the crashing around upstairs that we're hearing?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, the construction.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Anyway, so the—so, he gets about, I forget, about 25, $50,000. So, he says, "Okay, we're going to the Beverly Hills Hotel." And so, his—he and his wife, Ann, and Milly, and Arne, the six of us go out to the Beverly Hills Hotel for five or six days. We go to the Hollywood Racetrack. I mean, we had, you know––it was the greatest, you know—the most fun on somebody's else's nickel that I've—we've had in a long time. We—so, we had a lot of interesting relationships over the years, most of—I used to follow Jim Dine around the world. So, we––it's been interesting. Not as—I have not ever been as involved with the artists to the extent that Arne has.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: I've always had a tangential relationship with them relative—except, probably, Ernie Trova. But that doesn't mean I—once, I'm driving with Agnes Martin, and she's squinting. I said, "Agnes, have you ever had sunglasses?" She said, "No." I said, "Well, come on, let's go into town, and we'll get it." So, we go to the five and dime and I buy three or four different sets of sunglasses. [00:30:00] I said, "Look, come out, we'll be driving. Try them on; see what they—what you think."

So, I get back to New York and Arne says, "Agnes called." "Oh, yeah?" "She says you were really cheap. She says you bought her sunglasses at the five and dime." I said, "Come on, Arne. She never had sunglasses before. I was just trying to test to see whether she did it." I said, "But you know, Arne, I have a sneaking suspicion that it's more than that. I think she has a cataract problem." And sure enough, she did.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And she went in and she had surgery. Once, I was out with Agnes and we had done a project with Aldo Crommelynck.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And I'm not sure if I told you this story, but we—so, I'm always nervous with Agnes because she changes her mind. And so, we had this breakfast at Arne's, and we show up with this proof that we did of one of her drawings, and—that Aldo had taken and turned into an aquatint. Anyway, "Oh, it's beautiful," she said. Okay, fine. So, we go into an edition. And knowing Agnes, I said, "Come on, Aldo, we're going to get on a plane. We're going to take the prints out and get her to sign it," you know? So, we get out there and she looks at it, "I don't like it." I said, "Agnes, what do you mean you don't like it?"

She says, "I don't like it." I said, "Agnes, here's the BAT that you signed and here's the edition. What don't you like?" She said, "I just don't like it. I don't like the idea that he translated my drawing." Okay. So, I said, "Look, Agnes, this is very embarrassing. You know, we did this." Okay, so she signs it. So, she said, "Okay, now, let's take a drive." Oh, Christ. I said, "Where are we going today?" Said, "Up the mountains, and we're—we have to go back from Taos to Albuquerque to get the plane, and we've got about five hours." [00:31:59] And so, I'm driving up a—up the mountains, like, 60 miles an hour, I mean, just to try to get this over with.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, we get back to New York and Agnes says to Arne, "I don't like the print. I want them to destroy it." Okay. So, we take the bandsaw and destroy the print. So then, she says, then—so, then, Flora Whitney—Flora—what was her name—anyway, asks Agnes to do a print for the Whitney. So, she says to Flora, "Well, just take one of my drawings and reproduce it, and I'll sign it."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, I then said to Agnes, I said, "Agnes, if Flora Whitney and the Whitney will sell this for their benefit how about, instead of Aldo doing this, why don't you send—make—send me four drawings and we'll make offset reproductions and you'll sign them?" "Great." So, that's what we do.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: So, okay. So, then—I forget the guy who was running Tamarind at the time—so we sell this thing as lithographs. They had the name of lithographs. They're photo lithographs, but [inaudible]. So, this guy calls up and he says, "You're nuts. Those aren't lithographs." I said, "You're right, they're photos." He says, "They're reproductions." I said, "No, they're photo"—I said Agnes—it's what Agnes wanted to do. I said, "Why don't you call the Whitney and tell them the same thing?" Anyway, so, that's how we—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: That's how we dealt with Agnes Martin. And so, you have all these crazy things that happen, and while you're trying to run an intelligent business, and things change dramatically.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [00:33:59] Well, we were talking about Hockney last time, and that wonderful show in Chelsea he had—with those charcoal drawings—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —and that video, and then, the large laser prints that are wonderful. How do you define those works? Are they prints, are they paintings? Are they something in between? How do you define them?

RICHARD SOLOMON: I define them the way the artist wants them defined. I mean—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Good.

RICHARD SOLOMON: It, you know, you––you know, to me, they're all prints.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And to Pace Gallery, they were all paintings, you know?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: This was a discussion, I know, that was had early on, when iPads came out and Wacom tablets, and a lot of artists were talking about digital painting. And some wag said, "Well, wait a minute, you know, in order to make a physical manifestation of this digital painting, you have to get the file, get a big enough file. You have to get a big enough printer, and then you have to hit "print." It doesn't say "paint," it says "print." So, why aren't these prints? So, this is an interesting question.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And so, the answer, basically, is it's up to the artist—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —to determine. Right now, they have an interesting thing—this chap who I know has commissioned somebody to make a hologram, and it's a beautiful hologram. They're four photographs, or holograms, of Chuck Close. [00:36:02] And his portrait, and various side views, so on and so forth. And so, I'm saying to myself, "Well, what are they?" I said, "A sculpture?" Is it a—is it a multiple?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Is it—I mean, what the hell is it? Is it a photograph? I mean, first thing, I don't know who the hell would want it, but—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: —but, I mean, but, I mean, you know—what is it? So, I think that—I think what's going to happen over the next few years is that the definition of what's what is going to be in such flux that we're going to confuse the hell out of the market, the collector—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know? But you know, more and more, it's going to have to do—it'll probably end up being about price point, you know? I mean, if something is, you know—we have a—we did a project with Dubuffet, a screen print on canvas, edition of, I think—I forget, now—maybe 10? Which we sell for $200,000. It's a screen print taken from drawings on canvas it's about six feet by three feet, four feet.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, so, it's a painting. And you know, we're selling it as a print. Now, I guarantee you that, if that was done today, Arne would insist that it was a painting. [00:38:00] You know? And especially because it's now $200,000, you know? I think it would have—if it was $7,500, he wouldn't give a shit.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know? So, my sense, basically, is that I think price point is going to be the determination of classification.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, the difference between a monoprint and a—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Painting on paper [laughs].

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —a press painting on paper, an imprint painting—you could call it whatever you want—would be that, okay, a monoprint goes up to $10,000. And then, over that, it becomes—there's another word for it?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, look. I have two—on 26th Street, on the fourth floor, is the Jacob Lewis Gallery, and on the third floor is Pace Prints. All right? If I take the—if I took what we just did in our paper pulp printing operation and bring it upstairs, you know, either—maybe mount it on canvas, or not put glass on—in front of it I could easily sell it as a painting on paper.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know? But if I keep it downstairs, it's called a monoprint.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Got you.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know? So, I mean, it—terminology, right now, is we're footloose and fancy free. I think that we're more and more confused by the process.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: [00:40:00] We have a—Mutu did a project with us that—I mean, we're selling it as a print. It's no more of a print than—it's a collage, all right? It's totally a collage. And if I—if it wasn't done at Pace Prints and I wanted to bring it up to Jacob Lewis Gallery, it would be a collage.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, the technology really has changed the field. I mean, you've also got this—the 3D printers. So, what does it produce, sculpture or print? And then, you also—we talked about last time, the Bill Gates—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You know, having the monitors hanging on the wall. Now, you can go to Best Buy; you can buy—I mean, you could buy, like, a 70-inch plasma screen for a thousand bucks.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, I'll tell you what I'm doing—about to do.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: There's a group in Japan called TeamLab. They create very interesting artwork, what I would call, basically—it's a form of animation.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, it's colors that change and things staying––it's the closest thing to—the closest thing to describe it is really animation.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And it's going to be on a lap—on a tablet. You know? And I'm going to market it, you know? Well, let's see. [00:42:00] I don't know what the tablet is going to cost but—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Couple hundred bucks, yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, exactly. So, all right, so, what am I going to—what am I going to sell this for, and what am I calling it, and why would anybody want it, you know? But they get a lot of money for the one that's that big.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know? So—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, I see. Yeah, so it gets back to price point. It gets back to what it costs to experience this however, and it's based on the hardware.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah. And the point I'm making is that maybe, if it was off on a monitor this big, Glimcher would say, "Wait a second, that's not a multiple anymore."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's a painting.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: Or because at that size, right—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —we're getting 75,000, right?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: We're, now, at 7,500 or 15,000 or whatever it is.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know? Who cares? So, again, it's price point.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And it's also—what the hell is this? You know? Is this a print, is it a multiple, I mean—are you the publish—I mean, what's going on?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So maybe, the salvation of the print industry will be that the future prints will be things without any taxonomy; they'll be outside of some pecking order, and they'll just be what they are, and they'll be based on—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, and probably the smart thing to do would not be to have a gallery called Pace Prints. Okay? Right now, the Pace name is a very good, big name, I mean—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —you know? [00:44:00] It's—and Pace Prints has a certain stature, and we've been in business for a certain number of years. And so, there's an authenticity to Pace Prints, which we've taken advantage of. We've, I think, got enough of an identity away from the gallery, so it—the—so, it's sort of, the gallery is rubbing on and rubbing off, to a certain extent. But maybe if we're going to really do—we'll do what Barbara Krakow has done, Mary Ryan has done, and they'll sell prints, they'll sell a thing, you know, it, you know, and it—as a publisher, okay, we'll continue to publish. But we'll be publishing for a certain price point and we'll have another price point, you know? And we'll do what Arne didn't want to do at the beginning, is to have prints as part of the Pace Gallery. You know, if––I mean, it could have just as easily been a print department in Pace Gallery.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, we could have just––it didn't have to have a—well, actually, we started off calling it Pace Editions.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And then, I realized "editions" sounded like a publisher of books.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And "prints" was, in those days, a better word to use. But, so, it's interesting. So, what will happen five years down the line? I suspect that we will be doing less publishing, using less traditional methods, and more integrated with unique work in various media. And—and God knows what the name of the company will be.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.] [00:46:00] But it'll be somehow appropriate to the product and the inventory, you know?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, I mean, that's why we started the Jacob Lewis Gallery, so that if worse comes to worse, we can flip.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Who's Jacob Lewis?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Jacob Lewis is a young guy who came to work for me from West Virginia. He came to work one summer as a printer intern, then he came full-time as a receptionist. I found out he was dyslexic, so that wasn't going to work, so we made him a salesman, and that worked. And so then, I—when I opened Chelsea, I sent him down to run Chelsea as a print operation. And then, last year, I decided that we should try to cut into the unique business. And so, I took the fourth floor—I'd had two floors at—Pace Prints had two floors. So, I took the fourth floor and changed it into the Jacob Lewis Gallery. And so now, some of the artists that we've been publishing, he now represents.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And we're hoping that some of the artists he will represent will publish and we'll start the

Pace Gallery idea all over again.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Got you.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And then, eventually, possibly mold Pace Prints as a publishing entity, but not as a retail entity.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Got you.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, and—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So, it would just be the production end of things?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And so, maybe, yeah. So maybe Pace Prints does—it does—but if—so, instead of the monoprint becoming a monoprint, or maybe it's—maybe, you know. [00:48:03] So, maybe the—we don't do monoprints anymore. Maybe we do painting on paper.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There you go. So, I know that a number of the auction houses have established partnerships with things like eBay. Is that anything that you would ever entertain doing?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, Paddle8—you read, recently, Paddle8 has gotten into the things with some of the leading galleries, taking a position, a financial position there. We will start a commercial site—we have a website, Pace Prints—it's a decent website, but we will—we're starting a transactional site that will have two things. Firstly, it will deal with some of the merchandise, or some of the prints that I felt might not be moving out of the shelves—stores fast enough.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Might be recycled?

RICHARD SOLOMON: If what, my—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: —recycled—recycle department, yeah. So, we're going to do that. We'll see how that works.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: So far, the internet has not been a—much of an advantage for us. And I don't think it has in the art-–I don't think much—very much art has been sold over the internet, except by the auction houses.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, they get eBay below a certain price point—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —I think.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, I meant, but—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's a low price point.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —but the major thing with the auction houses, with the internet, has been as a—tied into the auction itself.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: You know, they have not been particularly successful.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Like, you know, the bidding online and—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: —all that.

RICHARD SOLOMON: But I think that that's kind of worked. As I say, we have been very, very unsuccessful trying

to make our site transactional. It's really an informative site, not a transactional site.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Got you, got you.

RICHARD SOLOMON: [00:50:00] And so, we're going to have an anonymous site, I think called "Editions Inc." or something like that.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's where you can—

RICHARD SOLOMON: There, we'll work on an interesting concept of marketing today: scarcity and immediacy. Putting something up for two weeks and then taking it down and saying, "You have two weeks to get into this thing," and—and trying to develop some—a scarcity, a kind of energy, a marketing energy, and maybe that will work.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's an interesting idea. So, offering it—well, I mean, this is, I think a lot of retailers use this with, you know, the discount coupons and that kind of thing.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, yeah. Well, this is going to be, "Hey, this is a special price; it's up for two weeks."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: "Here's an advantage and you know, this and the"—you know? And then, shut the site down for a few weeks, and then, come back with a little announcement, "More to follow," and "Stay tuned," and so, and you know?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: And try to do something to energize our presentation.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Also, as people check in, as they log onto your site or whatever they need to do, then you're able to capture more information. You're able to build a mailing list for emails blasts and that kind of thing.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, the thing that's been most interesting is, in the last several weeks, we have sold about $3.5 million worth of prints. And basically, divided into two offerings, and in less than—one offering took less than six hours, and one offering took two or three days. [00:52:01] But—based on hyping certain new editions. And so, it's going to be interesting to see whether we can continue that kind of an activity. But that's what's happening today, the, the—it's amazing that the investment idea has gotten down to the younger generation.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And to the—but this last project, we were selling something from 30[000] to $50,000, and we sold it in eight hours.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Wow.

RICHARD SOLOMON: There were 50 of them. So, it's crazy. I mean, you know. So, we'll see.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, what advice would you give to a young person who might be inspired by reading this interview to, you know, jump into the business, who has a passion for prints or a passion for art?

RICHARD SOLOMON: I think find a mentor. Find the most successful person in the business and go to work for that person and learn the business from a successful person. You know, you think that—my whole life has been, really, trying to attach myself to people who I consider to be really good at what they did—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —and to learn from them. And you—once you've learned enough, then you feel like you can go on your own. And I mean, for me, I came into the business not knowing a damn thing. I mean, I knew I had an eye. I knew something about art. But I didn't know how to be in the art business. And I teamed up with a guy who I thought was a real pro.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [00:54:00] Arne Glimcher.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Who was also, I think, trained as an artist. So, he—

RICHARD SOLOMON: Oh, yeah. He went to Mass. College of Art and he was definitely an artist. And his first—his success was selling his professor's art—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —while he was still in school. And—and then, as I said to you earlier, I used to help him and do installations and stuff like that, and I really learned—and I learned from other people, too—learned how to see and understand art. But the most important thing is to find a mentor.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Who were a couple of your other mentors?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well at—Stop & Shop. It was a fabulous company.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And I got an opportunity there and that was great. And then, when I went to Clairol, it was this incredible company with a great copywriter named Shirley Polykoff, who was terrific and, I mean, sometimes, it's not necessarily one person, but it's the climate.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: It's the environment, and the—and you have to measure up or you get fired, or you'll—anyway. But, so, that's my—and the other thing, too, is that, I hate to say it because it's really terrible, but kids come out of school today, and they have to take jobs for nothing. But I would say to anybody, don't be afraid to take a non-paying job because, if you're working for the right person and you're good, you'll end up very quickly having a full-time job with that person.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: [00:56:00] And almost everybody that has worked for us has come, initially, as an intern or as a very low-level person.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And you know, we've hired a few people from the outside, but most people have come—come up as being interns.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Has the rise of the new technology affected the structure or the size of your staff? I mean, do you have—well, how large is your office? I mean, how many people work for you?

RICHARD SOLOMON: We have about 35 people—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —working for us and yeah, I—well, the complexity of business today is the most difficult thing. And the complexities of everybody's life has become—so, you have, in many cases, more people because of—well, a good example: one of the guys who works for me, a key guy, is a single parent. You know? And I would say he doesn't work a 40-hour week; he probably works a 30-hour week. I have a number of people in my company who are—also have younger children and so they're away a lot with one problem or another.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: And so you're—we're a little staff-heavy as a result of that. I think that we probably could have—we probably don't need to have a 57th Street gallery anymore. [00:58:02] I think Chelsea is where the action is—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD SOLOMON: —and certainly, where the young people are. And so it's going to be interesting to see what, over the next two or three years, or five years, how our business changes. And technology isn't necessarily making it more efficient. Technology—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You're right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —is making it more complex.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Because, yeah, because I've—we've observed this, certainly, in the not-for-profit world, is that because of technology, a lot of people think they can multitask effectively, and they actually can't, often.

And that—

RICHARD SOLOMON: But you've got more things to do.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I mean, for example, just the internet.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: I mean, there was the internet. Big deal. So, you had a website. Big deal. I have one person who spends all their time on social media.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: That's a full-time job now.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Social media. I have one person who spends their entire time on the—working internet, other stuff on the internet. I have one person doing photography, because all of these things—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: —require another step—other steps.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, the whole acceleration of the process, too. For instance, if you received a phone call after lunch, no one would expect you to reply until the following day, perhaps. Everybody's got a full calendar, right? But now, everybody expects an email before the end of business.

RICHARD SOLOMON: When the fax happened, I thought I was going to kill myself.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: I thought that was the greatest—I didn't know how I was going to deal with somebody able to deliver me something and I had to respond to them in writing.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [01:00:02] Right.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Am I right? I mean, I thought it was the end of the earth.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

RICHARD SOLOMON: Okay?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, as a way to wrap up, how would you—how would you like to be remembered, or what—how would you characterize your contribution to the print world?

RICHARD SOLOMON: Well, it's really interesting. I think that—I think that my contribution has been more in terms of my relationships with my fellow dealers, the artists, my staff. I think that—I think we've run a business that has had a focus. It's had a professionalism; it's had a constant variety and change. And so, I think that for a guy who's not a technician, as my colleagues—many of my colleagues—as more of an administrator, I think that Pace Prints will be remembered as being a—one of the leading factors in the print world in the last 50 years, with a consistency of quality and of change.

[01:02:06] And you know, I think that I've contributed a lot to the organizations I've been associated with and I've run a creditable business with a lot of very talented people who've worked with us. And so I think that I would consider myself having made a success out of the business, far greater than I ever anticipated it would take us. And I pinch myself every time I think of the extraordinarily talented people that I've been able to work with, both artists and publishers and dealers. It's been an incredible experience for a guy who thought he was going to spend his life running a supermarket chain. So you never know, and as he says, "It ain't over until it's over." And hopefully, it ain't over.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: If you come to a fork in the road, take it.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Exactly. [They laugh.] I love––I—[inaudible] it's the best. It's the best. Well, thank you.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, thank you very much. It's been a great pleasure talking to you.

RICHARD SOLOMON: Yeah, thanks. We had fun. Yeah, it's great.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Thanks.

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2019 Addendum written by Dick Solomon

QUESTION: You mentioned your involvement with Old Master prints. You also had a Modern Master Print Gallery, could you discuss this further.

ANSWER: It seemed to me that there was little reason to restrict ourselves to contemporary prints. Pace Gallery was offering Picasso paintings why shouldn't we also offer his prints. I happened to mention to Judy Goldman that I was thinking about setting up a modern master print department. A couple of days later, she told me that Alexandra (Sasha) Schwartz, the Associated Print Curator at MoMA and the curator of the prints in Bill Rubin's major Picasso exhibition might be interested. That was roughly 40 years ago. She is still running that department although on a reduced scale as it is increasingly difficult to acquire inventory and compete with the auction houses

A few years later, young Italian, Carlo Bella, came to Pace Editions looking for a job. Sasha Schwartz felt that she needed an assistant, so he was hired. Over the course of the next couple of years as I became more acquainted with Carlo, I said, "Isn't your Mother in the old master print business in Milan." With his affirmative answer, I asked him whether he thought that he could run a Old Master Print Gallery for us which he did successfully for roughly the next 10 years. We decided to close that Gallery when it became apparent that the quality of the prints that were available on the market were not of sufficient quality to compare to similar prints in museum collections.

QUESTION: You mention Primitive Art. How did you get into that area?

ANSWER: When I had been in business for a few years, I began to be concerned that the contemporary print publishing might be too narrow a field and I had met a person at Ruder & Finn, an art oriented public relations firm, that I thought might be helpful in developing a strategic long-range plan for the business. They indicated that many of the current dealers in primitive art were getting old and there was a possibility of diversifying into that area. Being a complete art world neophyte, I went to PB 84 and bought several works of African Art and brought them back to the gallery, thus entering the African Art business, I thought!

Shortly thereafter, I got a call from a young man, Bryce Holcombe, who told me that he had decided to come to New York to work in a gallery. He had an interview with Andre Emmerich, . and mentioned his interest and expertise in African & Oceanic Art. Emmerich told him that he wasn't interested but gave him some suggestions including calling the Pace Gallery. He called Arne, who said "call Dick." That was the beginning of our currently very successful Pace African & Oceanic Art Gallery.

Bryce initiated the African Art department with a magnificent exhibition, *African Accumulative Sculpture.* He successfully built the business until he tragically died of AIDS. He was a very charismatic and energetic figure in the African Art world. He had an assistant Lisa Bradley who carried on the business after his death, but with not the same energy and aesthetic. The Old Master Print business was obviously declining due to the difficulties of acquiring inventory of sufficiently high quality. When Carlo Bella decided to move us out of that aspect of the print business, he became Lisa Bradley's assistant. It became evident that he was far more capable that she, and, after several years, Carlo replaced her as Director of Primitive Art, now called Pace African & Oceanic Art

QUESTION: How has your African and Oceanic business changed over the past 40 years?

ANSWER: The change has been dramatic in that the audience has broadened while the collector base has diminished. What used to be a business primarily directed to collectors at price points of $15,000 to $35,000 is now dependent on a very selective group of collectors whose interests are in the range of $250,000 to several millions. Whereas collectors of modern art were attracted to the aesthetic of African & Oceanic Art, most of today's contemporary art collectors lack that aesthetic interest. The field is basically limited to those collectors who continue to have a very broad and discriminating collecting aesthetic.

QUESTION: Besides your having served as President of the International Fine Print Dealers Association, you also were involved in the same capacity in the Art Dealers Association of America.

ANSWER: Yes, I was, and I am still very involved, and strangely my involvement started in a similar way as it did with the IFPDA. Somehow, I found myself running the ADAA/Henry Street Art Show as head of the ADAA's Art Show Committee. At the time, they were paying an ADAA member art dealer to work with Sanford Smith & Associates, the professional manager of the Fair. I decided we did not need to pay a member to represent the ADAA's interests as long as we had Sandy Smith's organization. The ADAA Art Show Committee, chaired by me, took on his responsibilities at no cost to the organization. As it turned out, I became the de facto head of the Art Show for several years. I guess I had more viability than I thought in that role as well as a member of the ADAA's Board. Without suspecting it, I became a dark horse candidate for President of the ADAA.

Late one afternoon, I got a call from Jim Goodman, the President of the ADAA, asking me if I would be interested in becoming President. I was convinced he was pulling my leg. I told him to cut it out, but he persisted, and I said sure, figuring there was no way that would happen.

The next day, to my great surprise, it happened.

QUESTION: How long did you serve in that capacity.

ANSWER: My term was three very long years. I was elected President, but I was not asked whether I had any preferences in the selection of the other of the Associations officers. Unfortunately, they turned out not to be very supportive. One member of my "cabinet" spent the entire 3 years of my tenure campaigning for my job which he finally got to the detriment of the organization.

In retrospect, I am especially proud of two accomplishments as President.

I was able to convince the Board to hire a fulltime Executive Director and staff and establish a separate office.

I also worked to personalize the organization in a number of ways including holding events for member galleries' staffs. I enlisted Jeffery Loria, then both an art dealer and owner of the Miami Marlins, to host about 100 ADAA adults and kids to a Mets/Marlins baseball game including a visit to the Marlin's dugout. We also took a smaller but similar group to the Circus.

Frankly, I think that I was responsible for heading the ADAA in a much more productive and effective direction. I continue to attend ADAA Board meetings and have no problem expressing my opinions.

QUESTION: In your earlier remarks about the competitive environment, you mentioned the competition from photography encroaching on the opportunities for the expansion of the print business. Yet you were instrumental in creating the photography gallery, Pace MacGill. How did that come about?

ANSWER: That's an interesting story. In the late seventies, I did a photography exhibition in an adjoining Pace Gallery space on 57th Street in conjunction with the Light Gallery. It was a fantastic exhibition with many of the top names in photography. It was called *Sharp Focus Realism,* a name I had borrowed from an earlier Sidney Janus exhibition. I thought it was a brilliant title which Kramer paned as being inappropriate.

In any event, I just felt that photography as a collectible art form was about to explode. As it has turned out, I was right.

A few years after this exhibition, I hired a former Light Gallery intern, Susan Paulsen, as the Pace Editions' Registrar. One day she mentioned her boyfriend, Peter MacGill, had left the Light Gallery as its Director to become a private dealer. I met him through Susan and convinced him to open the Pace MacGill Gallery as a partner of Arne Glimcher and mine. The rest is history and Susan has been Susan MacGill for almost as long as Pace MacGill has existed.

QUESTION: You seem to have a very stable organization.

ANSWER: When I look back at my 50 plus years at Pace Prints, I think that what gives me the greatest satisfaction is how lucky I have been to have associated with such an incredible and loyal staff. I would never

have imagined that we would currently have over 30 employees and have published prints and multiples by almost 150 artists. In every area of the business from our Gallery Directors to their support staffs, our printers, and our administrative staffs, we have numerous people who spent most of their careers at Pace Prints. Over the years, we have witnessed incredible changes and challenges that they and we have navigated with a gratifying amount of success. We continue to face basic cultural, aesthetic, economic, and technological changes that challenge our abilities to constructively adjust. The good news is that we have the skills and attitudes to continue to adapt as we have for the past five decades.