



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Eli Broad, 2012
Jan. 30-April 16

Funding for this interview was provided by Barbara Fleischman.

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Eli Broad on 2012 January 30 and April 16. The interview took place at the Frick Collection and at the Broad's home in New York, NY, and was conducted by Avis Berman for the Archives of American Art and the Center for the History of Collecting in America at the Frick Art Reference Library of The Frick Collection.

Avis Berman reviewed the transcript in 2012. Swati Pandey, Director of Communications for the Eli and Edith Broad Foundation, reviewed the transcript in 2019. Their corrections and emendations appear below in brackets with initials (Pandey's appear under -EB). This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

AVIS BERMAN: This is Avis Berman, interviewing Eli Broad for the Frick Collection Library, New York, NY, and the Archives of American Art Oral History Program, Washington, DC, on January 30, 2012, at the Frick Collection.

Mr. Broad, I start this way with everyone. Would you please state your full name and date of birth?

ELI BROAD: Eli Broad; June 6, 1933.

AVIS BERMAN: I want to start briefly with Detroit. And I know you were not collecting there, but I wondered, in your family, what the interest in culture was, or if you had any mentors in that regard, or in music.

ELI BROAD: Well, I was born in New York City. My parents moved to Michigan when I was six years of age, and the only thing they were involved in, frankly, was the Jewish theater when they lived in New York. And some folk courses. That's as far as it went. I don't know if they ever went to symphony or opera, frankly. I don't recall that.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, was there an interest in reading in your house?

ELI BROAD: They did quite a bit of reading. Periodicals mostly, but some books.

AVIS BERMAN: And how about you?

ELI BROAD: At what age?

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, why don't we say, what kind of a student were you?

ELI BROAD: Well, I was a disruptive student in high school. When I say disruptive, I was always inquisitive, always asking questions, whether it was the mathematics teacher, English teacher, history teacher, and so on. And a lot of those teachers didn't like that.

AVIS BERMAN: Was there any teacher who encouraged you?

ELI BROAD: In college, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: And you went to college at—

ELI BROAD: Michigan State University [East Lansing]. Yeah. And then I did very well at Michigan State University.

AVIS BERMAN: And were you taking business courses?

ELI BROAD: I started as a pre-law major, but then I shifted to accounting and economics because I wasn't sure I wanted to spend that much time in school. I did graduate in three years by taking some summer courses. I wanted to get out in the world.

I did have one professor I liked very much, by the name of Walter Adams, who at one time—that after, he became an interim president of MSU. And I still remember the Samuelson text on economics very well [Paul Samuelson. *Economics*. New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2009; 1st ed. 1948]. He had us read Marriner Eccles, who was the first chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. I'm trying to think of the name of it. I think it was called [*Beckoning Frontiers* -AB] [*Beckoning Frontiers: Public and Personal Recollections*. New York: Knopf, 1951]. [...-AB] Eccles was the first chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, and that goes back to the '30s.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. And how did you meet Mrs. Broad [Edythe]?

ELI BROAD: Well, I was up in East Lansing. She was in the Detroit area, and I met her through a friend of mine who gave me her phone number. So I called, and her side of the story is that they only had one phone in the house, and her mother would get very upset if she wouldn't go out with young men. So we had coffee. So that's where we met, in Detroit, on a weekend when I was back.

AVIS BERMAN: Her parents were from Canada. And her maiden name is Lawson. Is she any relation to Ernest Lawson, the American Impressionist painter?

ELI BROAD: No, no, no. The name was Leposky, which they changed to Lawson, God knows when. Long before she was born. Leposky, L-E-P-O-S-K-Y. Others in the family did change their name to LePaul.

AVIS BERMAN: From what I've read, she was more interested in the arts, or had been exposed to it more than you had at the time.

ELI BROAD: Yeah, that's true. She was collecting prints and a few drawings. I was always traveling. I would come home; I'd see new things on the walls.

Before getting interested in the visual arts, I did get involved in higher education. I was a trustee and then chair of the Pitzer College board for a number of years. That's in Claremont, California. Then the governor appointed me to [the California] State University board, and I was vice chair of that board for a while.

My cousins have multiple degrees. Several of them are college professors. I'm the only one with a single degree.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, you seem to have muddled along.

ELI BROAD: It's worked out.

AVIS BERMAN: Great. And with Detroit, did you intersect at all with Barbara and Larry Fleischman?

ELI BROAD: I've met them.

AVIS BERMAN: But—in Detroit?

ELI BROAD: No, it was after.

AVIS BERMAN: Because, besides their own activities, they really tried to draw a lot of the young collectors, or young couples, in, to get them interested in the—

ELI BROAD: Yeah, we left Detroit in 1960, long before we became real collectors, which didn't happen till the early '70s, other than the few prints my wife, Edye, bought.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, and now I've read that she had said she had bought a few prints and drawings and then Betye Saar, very early on. And then something by [Georges] Braque and a [Henri de Toulouse-] Lautrec poster, she said, "until he recognized the names and got nervous." Now, what did she mean by that?

ELI BROAD: Oh, she's kidding around. I came back from a trip, and she had a large Lautrec poster. I recognized the name, of course.

I became interested out of curiosity through a person by the name of Taft Schreiber, who I met politically—even though I'm a Democrat and he's a Republican. He was very close to Nixon and Kissinger. So I'd go over to his house, and he'd show me his wonderful paintings, whether it was a Pollock over the couch, Giacomettis, Matisse, et cetera. So I became curious and interested, and he was kind enough to introduce me to a lot of dealers here and overseas. And that started this thing.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, the dealers he recommended that you see—were they all here in New York?

ELI BROAD: Yeah, most were in New York.

AVIS BERMAN: Were there places that you could buy or see things in the Los Angeles area?

ELI BROAD: Yes. Yes, there were. There was a private dealer by the name of Frank Perls, and we had a number of others. There were a number of galleries my wife would go to.

AVIS BERMAN: Which were—

ELI BROAD: Ferus [Gallery]. She reminded me that she didn't buy the [Warhol] Soup Cans for \$100 or so

because she thought I'd be upset when I got home. [They laugh.] Then she saw me buy one for \$10 million, about—it was 40 years later.

AVIS BERMAN: The only one, I think, at the time who bought a Soup Can from Irving Blum then was Dennis Hopper. And then Irving decided he had to keep them together, and then he went back and got it back.

ELI BROAD: Exactly—exactly –

AVIS BERMAN: So he probably would have been able to overpower her at the time, or am I wrong? [Laughs.]

ELI BROAD: No, it's true. And he, of course, sold it to the Modern [Museum of Modern Art, New York City].

AVIS BERMAN: Right; right. Now, there was also a man named Herbert Palmer. And I think he had—

ELI BROAD: I've met him. He had a gallery, if I recall, on La Cienega [Boulevard].

AVIS BERMAN: Right. No, I'm just wondering if there was anyone—if you were patrons of anyplace local when you first started.

ELI BROAD: A little bit of Marco—[inaudible]. [Possibly Marco Lere -EB]

AVIS BERMAN: And you decided in the beginning to buy School of Paris? Was that correct?

ELI BROAD: Well, the first thing of any import we bought was a van Gogh drawing. It was [from] Sotheby Parke-Bernet at the time, on Madison [Avenue].

AVIS BERMAN: What I'm trying to figure out is, your first collecting, what was the focus beyond that?

ELI BROAD: Well, we bought that work, which we loved and kept for a number of years. Then we bought a 1933 Miró that belonged to Nelson Rockefeller. Then we bought a Giacometti sculpture, *The Sixth Virgin* [of the bust of Annette -EB] [*Annette VI*], from Pierre Matisse [Gallery]. Then we bought several of Henry Moore's sculptures. And then we bought a 1921 Matisse ink drawing; I think it was 1921. A drawing of Henry Moore comes to mind. Those were amongst the earlier things.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Right. And was Taft Schreiber advising you at this point still, when you were buying these, or mentoring you?

ELI BROAD: He would come by often.

AVIS BERMAN: And what [were -AB] the most salient things you learned from him?

ELI BROAD: Well, he was a very different collector than Joe Hirshhorn, for example. He was a real hunter, and he would go after certain work that was owned by Leigh Block in Chicago or elsewhere, and he ended up getting it one way or another. And I think he was a real connoisseur. He learned his collecting from Edward G. Robinson, I believe, and some other actors. As you know, he was one of the founders of MCA [Music Corporation of America]—with Lew Wasserman.

AVIS BERMAN: Speaking of actors, did you get to know or have any sort of interactions with Vincent Price as a collector?

ELI BROAD: No, no. I think my wife bought something from Vincent Price. I may have met him, actually, but I don't know.

AVIS BERMAN: Because he also at some point, I think in the late '40s—this is before you got there—had been having little gallery activities in Los Angeles and had really been trying to get the scene going—as much as he could. But obviously, he had another career as well.

Now, how about Norton Simon?

ELI BROAD: I knew Norton.

AVIS BERMAN: What was he like?

ELI BROAD: I didn't know him all that well. I know more about him from reading about him than—who wrote the book on Norton Simon?

AVIS BERMAN: I think there've been a couple of them.

ELI BROAD: You're right—there was one more recent one. And then there was another one by Suzanne Muchnic, I think [*Odd Man In: Norton Simon and the Pursuit of Culture*. 1998].

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

ELI BROAD: No, I knew Norton. I was obviously very impressed with how he built his collection, and it was a full-time endeavor.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Did you learn anything from observing that?

ELI BROAD: Well, I'm sure I did. I mean, the quality of much of the work he bought was impressive. I remember there was one work I wanted to buy, a Lautrec pastel that he ended up getting. I think that was from [Ernst] Beyeler. Early on, we had met a lot of dealers—[Paul] Rosenberg here in New York; Beyeler. Even met [Henry-David] Kahnweiler in Paris, way back when—which was a treat. I knew André Maeght.

The next thing we bought—I didn't mention, we have four Miró sculptures. The first one we bought [*Oiseau Solaire (Solar Bird)* -EB]. The second one was interesting. We bought it from the Modern, before I was a trustee. It was called *Moonbird* [1944-46, enlargement 1966]. And the reason I sold it is they had one, and I think Nina and Gordon Bunshaft left them another one.

AVIS BERMAN: [Affirmative.] So were you planning on giving this to MoMA eventually?

ELI BROAD: No; no.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, okay.

ELI BROAD: No, no. They have two—

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, so you got—because Gordon Bunshaft had—

ELI BROAD: He owned the second one of the same six sculptures.

AVIS BERMAN: So they could deaccession the one that you—that you got.

ELI BROAD: And I couldn't do that. I'm a trustee now, so I couldn't have done that if I were a trustee at the time.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Right. Let's see, who were the other L.A. collectors that you were meeting as you began to branch out?

ELI BROAD: Well, Doug Cramer—I don't know when I started with—but Doug Cramer. There was Marcia Weisman, of course. Marcia and Fred Weisman; I've been to their house many times.

AVIS BERMAN: We're going to jump ahead on this, but I just wanted to ask you one more thing about Taft Schreiber. Why did he leave his collection to the Museum of Contemporary Art rather than LACMA?

ELI BROAD: He was not happy with LACMA.

AVIS BERMAN: Or his widow left the collection.

ELI BROAD: He was not at all happy with LACMA. I think he didn't care for one of the curators. I don't want to mention names.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, okay.

ELI BROAD: And I don't know if he liked the director at all.

AVIS BERMAN: So even over all of those years, because directors and curators change of course.

ELI BROAD: Yeah. And then he was on the board of Hirshhorn [Museum and Sculpture Garden], also. I was chair of MOCA. This was '79. His daughter was on the board of MOCA. Lettie Greenberg.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. So it would have been Lettie Schreiber Greenberg, right.

ELI BROAD: Yeah. Right. They left some very important work.

AVIS BERMAN: I guess the question was also for MOCA to decide, when does contemporary begin for them? And so I guess it was post-1945?

ELI BROAD: As you know, there are very different definitions of when contemporary began. Some people say it was when Mondrian did his *Victory Boogie Woogie*, which was '45 [1944], I guess. Others talk about the end of World War II. How long these definitions are the last, I don't want to know.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, that's exactly it, so—

ELI BROAD: So right now we're talking about 60, 70 years later [MOCA founded 1979 -ed.].

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, exactly. Or if at the time when, in 1979, if Abstract Expressionism was still contemporary or almost like classic modern by then. So it's a very fluid category, which is why I was asking you if, in the beginning of the founding of MOCA, if there was a sense of when the collection would begin.

ELI BROAD: Well, first of all, when we started MOCA, we didn't have a collection. And that was an interesting experience. I got the mayor, Tom Bradley, to agree to use the money to begin development for the arts and aggregate it to build the museum. So at one point we had money for a museum. We raised an endowment of \$13 million at the time. And then the first major collection we bought was the [Giuseppe] Panza Collection.

AVIS BERMAN: Exactly. And didn't you use most of the endowment to buy the collection?

ELI BROAD: No, no, no. Our first director was Pontus Hulten, and the first deputy director—chief curator—was Richard Koshalek. We had a number of interesting people—Count Panza, Dr. Peter Ludwig, Charles Saatchi, Dominique de Menil, and a number of others, including Robert Irwin, the artist, and I forget who else.

AVIS BERMAN: Marcia Weisman, of course.

ELI BROAD: Oh, yeah. Marcia was on the board.

AVIS BERMAN: And there was a William Norris?

ELI BROAD: Bill Norris, yeah. Bill Norris was chairman of the board. And what happened is Bill Norris was appointed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, and he let me know that he couldn't raise money. It's sad. I mean, he was on the board, and he chose the Court of Appeals.

AVIS BERMAN: Why didn't Marcia Weisman become president or chairman? Only because it seemed that she was the one who was—

ELI BROAD: Look, what had happened in Los Angeles is they were talking for years about building a museum. Beverly Hills, Venice, and nothing ever happened. Because they were very long at words and so on, and no one was going to put up any money. Marcia had been a big advocate for that for a few years. But it took getting the mayor give us the money to build it on Grand Avenue. And then the economy was delaying things in that development, we ended up with that building called the Temporary Contemporary. And we had Frank Gehry clean it up, and, in fact, had some very good shows there.

AVIS BERMAN: Were you responsible for getting Pontus Hulten to come to the—

ELI BROAD: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Can you elaborate on that?

ELI BROAD: Yes. Well, we got down to thinking—the theory was, we don't want it to be just a provincial museum, so let's fly over to New York. And we met a lot of people. It got down to two people at the end, Pontus Hulten and Martin Friedman. I concluded that Pontus Hulten, with his background in Stockholm [Sweden], Paris—I knew him from Paris—would be a big hit. In fact, the *New York Times*—I forget who it was—was more than surprised we could get Pontus to come to Los Angeles.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I guess that it would have been, at the time—would that have been Hilton Kramer or—

ELI BROAD: No, not Hilton Kramer.

AVIS BERMAN: John Russell, maybe?

ELI BROAD: John Russell. Yeah, John Russell was surprised. So Pontus came here, and he got these people on the board. Like Sam Francis, who was also a friend of his, went on the board.

Then what happened, I'd have to check the exact date—probably about 1982, I think—Count Panza, who would stay at our house, in our guest house, had a problem. His problem was the communist government in Italy wanted to tax any assets Italians had outside of the country. And I think his collection was all in Switzerland,

these 70 works or whatever number it was. The great Rothkos, the great Klines, great Rauschenbergs, lots of other good things. So he didn't have any money to pay the tax. So he went to Christie's and Sotheby's and got estimates.

But he really didn't want the collection broken up, so I negotiated a deal with him very quickly. I said the most we can pay was \$11 million, but we can't pay it now. "Plus, Giuseppe, if I give you the money now, you'll change it into lira. And what do you want lira for?" So we gave him a down payment—I forget how many million dollars; two million or something like that—and have seven years to pay the rest

Now, we did probably borrow that two million from the endowment temporarily, not that the endowment was good. And then the rest, we even had a provision that if we couldn't pay him, we could sell one work of art—for sale—which we never did. When we were thinking about it, at one point he got upset and started calling the *New York Times* and everyone, even though we had a contract. So one of our trustees—she wasn't even a trustee—friend of the museum—was so upset, she says, "I'll give you the money to pay him off." [They laugh.]

AVIS BERMAN: Who was that?

ELI BROAD: Laura-Lee Woods.

AVIS BERMAN: How wonderful.

ELI BROAD: You know who she is?

AVIS BERMAN: No, I don't.

ELI BROAD: She's a good friend of Lenny Draper. She comes from—I forget, some major, old-time oil company in Beverly Hills. So that gave us a collection of real quality, and it became a standard.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, yeah. Well, it had all the major Pop artists. I mean, it had the great Lichtensteins and Rosenquists and—

ELI BROAD: The Lichtensteins. You know, he never had Johns? He said, I couldn't afford Johns, which meant instead of—I don't know what he was paying for Raushenbergs—[inaudible]—I don't know what prices were then [laughs].

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, he started very early, so—

ELI BROAD: Oh, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: There's a very interesting oral history with him in the Archives of American Art and buying his first Franz Kline for \$500. Starting early is important.

Why did Pontus Hulten leave?

ELI BROAD: Well, Pontus is a socialist. I can't tell you why he left, other than he got tired of me taking him to the breakfasts, lunches, and dinners, cocktails, to raise money. He liked what he had over in France. Once a year he'd go to the culture minister, and it's over.

I don't know why he left, other than I guess it was—[inaudible]. I forgot what they were going to do in Paris, but they were going to have some major exhibition. I forget what it was already. So he left to go back to France. Those exhibitions never happened.

AVIS BERMAN: I guess I should also ask you why you left the board of the—about 1984—why you left the board of the—

ELI BROAD: When did I leave?

AVIS BERMAN: Well, you stepped down as chairman—or left—in '84.

ELI BROAD: Yeah. I think people were not happy with me on the board because I was, let's say, fiscally responsible at all. And you had a lot of people on that board that had never served on a board of any sort, and so on. But I stayed on as a trustee for a number of years—I forget how many.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, that's interesting because, obviously, no one knows better than you that the financial laissez-faire came back to haunt them.

ELI BROAD: Yeah, that was really unfortunate. The endowment, when Richard left, had gotten up to, I think, \$32

million. And if you take that—and if they didn't spend it—it might have been an endowment now of 90 or 100 million dollars. And of course, they got it down to five or six million by spending the endowment.

AVIS BERMAN: We left you off collecting Miró and Matisse and Henry Moore, and you obviously evolved or changed your tastes. Can you describe what your thinking process was about that?

ELI BROAD: It was sort of an evolution. I'm trying to think of those first—some things we bought early on. We bought a Motherwell, and we bought de Kooning drawing. We bought a very early Rothko, a transitional-period Rothko. We bought a Helen Frankenthaler, *Yellow Caterpillar* [1961]. We bought a Morris Louis *Stripe* [1961-62]. We bought—I can't keep track—we bought a Frank Stella metalwork. We also bought John McLaughlin.

And those were early things. Then I became interested in—trying to remember when I met Roy Lichtenstein.

AVIS BERMAN: I first just want to say, there must have been a sense of wanting to be more involved with the art of your own time.

ELI BROAD: Yeah, I think so. And I acknowledge that all great collections are built during the time when the artists are still alive and so on. It was more fun getting to know the artists and visiting their studios, rather than buying things from a dealer or at auction.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah. I think I have that Lichtenstein—have that marked, because I worked for the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, so, of course, I was very interested in that. Well, you acquired your first work by Roy in 1981, which was *Green and Yellow Apple*.

ELI BROAD: Right. Leo Castelli's small work, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: And then you remember being in the studio with him around 1986, but I'm not sure if you met him before or during.

ELI BROAD: I think we probably did. I'd have to look back.

AVIS BERMAN: What were you going to say about Roy Lichtenstein?

ELI BROAD: Well, Roy was really what I call a quasi-taste. The *Apple* was simple. But I'd go over to his studio; I'm trying to remember what it was then; it was before Washington [Street, New York City].

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, okay. So that would be East 29th Street or Southampton [NY].

ELI BROAD: We spent time with him in Southampton—him and [wife] Dorothy [Herzka] and also—so we started buying works from almost every show.

AVIS BERMAN: Had you begun to just look at his work a long time before you bought it? Because you said it was an acquired taste.

ELI BROAD: Oh, we saw it in museums and elsewhere. And it was different.

AVIS BERMAN: What was Roy like?

ELI BROAD: Roy was a wonderful person. I spent a lot of time with Roy. I think I was at the first Clinton Inauguration with him. I'd go to his studio; we'd go out to lunch. I forget that restaurant in the—

AVIS BERMAN: Florent.

ELI BROAD: Yeah, I think that was it.

AVIS BERMAN: That was the one—

ELI BROAD: And Dorothy's a joy also. We see her from time to time, so—

AVIS BERMAN: Roy was still around when you bought *I'm Sorry* [1965-66]. Did he ever talk to you about that?

ELI BROAD: I don't recall.

AVIS BERMAN: Right; because—

ELI BROAD: I don't recall—

AVIS BERMAN: —because Holly Solomon, of course, always said it was a portrait of her. But Roy didn't do

portraits, and I spoke with one of his assistants who was sent out to find comic strip—the blondes, who looked like Holly. But I always wondered if that was really true or not; if he had—

ELI BROAD: I don't know. I'd heard that also. I never did research on it to determine if it was her or not.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Right. I think he wanted to please her, but I think he did get it from a comic strip. [They laugh.] Who were the other artists that you got to know?

ELI BROAD: Jasper Johns, Bob Rauschenberg. And then, in 1982—the East Village days and all—we got to know Cindy Sherman. Bought her first work from Metro Pictures on Mercer Street, photo stills [*Untitled Film Stills*, 1977-80]. I don't remember when we first met Jeff Koons. I see him often. I'm trying to think of other artists of that period. Jean-Michel Basquiat—we had him when he was still working in painting and even inside his basement. There was something about that work appealed to me. It wasn't just graffiti. You'd see there'd been more thought into it.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, did you feel that way about the eruption of the East Village artists at the time? Was that a movement or a school you were interested in?

ELI BROAD: I wouldn't call it a school. The other thing I remember is there was no—there was just no rest on Sunday. They were open Sundays, so we'd spend Sundays there—at Meyer Vaisman's. I'm trying to think. Of course Keith Haring we knew well. Keith and Jean-Michel been to our house and so on.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, when artists would come to your house, I mean, what kind of—would it be a weekend, or would you schedule something, or what would happen, let's say, if Jeff Koons came or Jean-Michel—

ELI BROAD: They were in town, and we invited them over.

AVIS BERMAN: When did you decide that you were going to start collecting artists in depth? What was the thought process of that?

ELI BROAD: Well, we knew too many people that had a hundred different artists, one of each.

AVIS BERMAN: Postage stamp collection?

ELI BROAD: Yeah. It was like a postage stamp collection or something. And generally we didn't think the work they collected was very good. If we liked an artist, we wanted to follow their career, which is the case of Cindy Sherman. I don't think a year's gone by since we haven't bought a work.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah, you must have the largest private—

ELI BROAD: We do. We do. Hundred and twenty-some-odd works.

AVIS BERMAN: And possibly with Koons, too; you may have the largest—I'm not sure.

ELI BROAD: I think so. I know we have the most important works. We were very fortunate.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I think after a while artists are also either going to reserve or keep something back for you or sell to you directly out of this—you know, to let you have things from the studio, I imagine. It gets to that point, too.

Do you have a preference for being either in the foundation [The Broad Art Foundation, Santa Monica, CA] or your personal collection?

ELI BROAD: Well, the personal collection is earlier work—there's some overlap. We created a foundation because we wanted to continue collecting, and we already had—our walls more than filled. So we came up with the idea of having a wing at the library of contemporary art of artists who were not prominent prior to 1975—sort of the definition initially.

AVIS BERMAN: So that was your new definition of contemporary.

ELI BROAD: Yeah. And also, if we thought we could have the work at home, we'd try to buy it personally. But like Jeff's work, we only have two of his works personally the *Bunny* [*Rabbit*, 1986] and a *Life Raft* [*Lifeboat*, 1985]; all the rest is in the foundation.

AVIS BERMAN: And also, what about issues of fragility? Does that also determine where a work of art might go?

ELI BROAD: Not really. Maybe it should.

AVIS BERMAN: I read in the early interview that one reason you eventually sold the van Gogh drawing was not only to help buy a Rauschenberg, but also because it had to be in the drawer a lot. Has your philosophy about drawings changed since then?

ELI BROAD: My philosophy is that drawings have changed since—

AVIS BERMAN: Well, no, about buying drawings. Is that an issue anymore of having to deal with the conservation issues?

ELI BROAD: No. We're not drawing collectors. You know, if I were starting over, I'd probably collect drawings, because it's the essence of what the artists are really about.

AVIS BERMAN: But you don't—

ELI BROAD: We don't have many drawings.

AVIS BERMAN: And from what I've seen, it looks as if you—do you have any video?

ELI BROAD: We've got several video works.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. Is that recent, or is that something—

ELI BROAD: I don't know when we bought our first video piece, which is probably—Shirin Neshat—how do you pronounce it?

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah. Shirin Neshat—I think.

ELI BROAD: I think we have got two or three of her works. And then I don't know how many video works we have. Probably about eight or 10.

AVIS BERMAN: Because in looking, you were—and, obviously, from the '80s on—so on top of things that I just noticed that there weren't, for example, a lot of the video or the TV—the pioneers like Nam June Paik or Joan Jonas or some of those people. Maybe now. And I wondered if you were originally more slanted towards, say, painting and sculpture than, say, video.

ELI BROAD: I watched it. We weren't out there in the early video days.

AVIS BERMAN: And I sense there was a growing rapprochement with Conceptual art, but please correct—you know, please discuss how you felt about that at the beginning versus how you may feel now about Conceptual art.

ELI BROAD: How I feel about video today?

AVIS BERMAN: No—Conceptual. Conceptual art. I'm not sure—I mean, you have Baldessari and some of the other ones, but I wasn't sure if that was something that was meaningful to you in terms of art movement.

ELI BROAD: It is. I don't remember when that started. We started thinking in terms of building a collection that would someday be in an institution. So if you just start thinking about that, you think, who are the most important artists, whether they're your favorite ones you'd want to have at home or not. We were not that early with Ed Ruscha, who's now a good friend. We were not that early with Warhol. The turning point on Warhol was when Kynaston McShine did that retrospective ["Andy Warhol: A Retrospective." Museum of Modern Art, New York City, February 6—May 2, 1989, and traveling]. And then it sure caught on because I saw all of it together.

AVIS BERMAN: I think that was '89, possibly?

ELI BROAD: I don't know when it was.

AVIS BERMAN: The Warhol retrospective at MoMA.

ELI BROAD: We only owned one Warhol prior thereto, a painting I bought at an auction—of Chairman Mao.

AVIS BERMAN: What artists do you think that you missed?

ELI BROAD: Many. What'd I miss? Well, I missed some of the great things, that people like David Geffen bought. I was not, in those days, willing to spend what he was willing to spend. Like for the *Target* [Jasper Johns, 1955]. Which was a mistake.

AVIS BERMAN: Do you think if you'd been willing to spend it, you would have gotten it?

ELI BROAD: Leo was selling it, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: When did you and how did you become a client of Leo Castelli?

ELI BROAD: I don't know. I met him; I can't tell you when—was our first purchase at—was it the Lichtenstein *Apple*—I don't know.

AVIS BERMAN: When did you become, shall we say, an important client for Leo? Did that take a while to ascend?

ELI BROAD: Yeah, a little while. Yeah. We'd get to New York more often. [Inaudible.] No; the restaurant on Houston [Street] he used to go to—[Da Silvano -EB]. Then he went to other places, but that was sort of a ritual, once a month, to have lunch with Leo.

AVIS BERMAN: I'll look up the name. I can't remember that myself. I guess you must have bought something major to catch his attention, and he decided you were serious.

ELI BROAD: I'm trying to think what we bought from him. Oh, we bought several Johns paintings from him, probably three or four. A lot of Roy Lichtenstein.

AVIS BERMAN: So what was the process with Leo? Once you were a regular, would he write or call and say, I have this? Or what would be the process of—

ELI BROAD: He would do it on occasion, but we'd see him once a month and catch up on things.

AVIS BERMAN: And, well, you mentioned, of course, Metro Pictures, Leo Castelli. What other galleries were important to you at that time?

ELI BROAD: The building on 420 West Broadway that included Sonnabend. Castelli. Charlie Cowles was never of interest.

AVIS BERMAN: I think André Emmerich was in there, too, for a while.

ELI BROAD: Yeah, André Emmerich was there before he went to the Fuller Building. Bought some things from him.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. I guess the—well, of course, you mentioned Frank—

ELI BROAD: And then you had Mary Boone opening across the street.

AVIS BERMAN: Who did you say?

ELI BROAD: Mary Boone, across the street.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, of course. All right. And of course, an important artist in your collection is Eric Fischl—and was that always through Mary Boone?

ELI BROAD: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Why did Fischl's work appeal to you?

ELI BROAD: I thought it had a certain edge to it. It had a certain edge—certain emotion—that I don't see now.

AVIS BERMAN: He had something that was kind of coming out of this American tradition of materialism, of this anomie of American life. And it got academic, I think, a little bit later on, but he had something that—I mean, it wasn't just because it was representational, that was like someone like Hopper or Eakins, but he had this discontent with the materialism of American life that was in there, which I think is a tradition that a lot of artists have.

ELI BROAD: I'm trying to think—I'm not sure we'll leave that to American life, which is—[inaudible]—*Bad Boy* [1981] or some of the other things.

AVIS BERMAN: I guess it was trouble in paradise, paradise being the suburbs. That's maybe a way that he—

ELI BROAD: Okay.

AVIS BERMAN: That's what I would say. That everything is not so great on the surface, let's put it that way.

Here we're talking about the '80s, and you're really becoming active as a collector, you're a clear cultural force

in Southern California, and you are not asked to be on the board of LACMA.

ELI BROAD: I was once on the acquisition committee, the painting committee it was called. But once I went ahead with MOCA, they thanked me for my service.

AVIS BERMAN: And they didn't think you could be on both museums, or was that—was that considered hostile—

ELI BROAD: I was not a trustee of LACMA.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, but they never—

ELI BROAD: Well, there were some people who thought the city wasn't big enough for two museums.

AVIS BERMAN: At LACMA, did you just find it was—was it too conservative, do you think, too, at the time?

ELI BROAD: It was old-establishment Los Angeles from Hancock Park and the like.

AVIS BERMAN: Did you find at the time, then—did you experience anti-Semitism?

ELI BROAD: Not really. I never felt I've experienced anti-Semitism.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I just meant in terms of the museum—

ELI BROAD: I mean anywhere.

AVIS BERMAN: That's good. I just meant in terms of the museum boards, because that always happened in New York.

ELI BROAD: No, they had persons aboard that were Jewish. Dick Sherwood comes to mind. A number of other members of the board were, including Arthur Gilbert—

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, that's good. I just was wondering, because when you said conservative, old-line, I just wondered if some of them were too WASPy or—you know what I mean. So, well, that's good to hear.

Did you begin to have a professional relationship with Irving Blum at some point?

ELI BROAD: I'm trying to—my wife met Irving Blum, as I mentioned, before I did.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, with the Ferus.

ELI BROAD: Yeah, [from -AB] Blum-Helman in New York I bought a few things. Donald Sultan, for example.

AVIS BERMAN: What did you just say?

ELI BROAD: Donald Sultan.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, of course.

ELI BROAD: And who—I bought a Lichtenstein from them.

AVIS BERMAN: But nothing from the Irving Blum Gallery when it was in California? Okay.

ELI BROAD: No. No.

AVIS BERMAN: And I think now he's on your—one of your boards or on—

ELI BROAD: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: And what it is—

ELI BROAD: The board—I've got too many boards, as you'll see in there in this, on here.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Oh, okay.

ELI BROAD: But the Broad Art Foundation has a board. I created a separate board from the museum. The museum is called The Broad but the real name is Broad Collection. Irving Blum's on that board. Let me think of the other members. Irving Blum, Bill Bell, who's a great collector and friend; Bob [Robert H. Tuttle]—our former ambassador to the Court of Saint James—

AVIS BERMAN: I can look that up.

ELI BROAD: [Laughs.] Driving me nuts. Bob –

Then I put the head of the symphony, who was next door to our building, Deborah Borda, who used to be temp[orary] head of the New York Philharmonic [Orchestra]. I'm trying to think who I'm missing here. Howard Marks is on the board. Jay Wintrob, on the board. Mike Chow is on the board. Bob Tuttle was who I was thinking about.

I picked people, other than Deborah Borda, that knew something about contemporary art, were collectors or were pretty knowledgeable, and really were not that close to any museum.

AVIS BERMAN: That's a good idea.

Oh, I just realized I should have asked you, in New York, about another person—Henry Geldzahler—if he influenced your thinking at all.

ELI BROAD: I only met him once. I didn't know Henry well.

AVIS BERMAN: What about the Met show "New York Painting and Sculpture," which was about 1971 or so ["New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940-1970." October 18, 1969—February 8, 1970]? Did you—that was a real landmark.

ELI BROAD: I don't remember it, frankly. I really didn't get into—[collecting contemporary art -EB]—until about 1973 or four –

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. I just want to make sure that I'm not missing something. And at that same time, in terms of the MOCA, having artists on the board, how did that change the perspective of how things were done?

ELI BROAD: I'm not sure it changed much. Artists are not great attenders. We've got Baldessari on the board now; we have Ruscha on the board. We have Barbara Kruger on the board. I found artists are not really attendees to many board meetings; that's not really their thing.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, what is the function then, for them to be on the—

ELI BROAD: Well, why have them on the board?

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah.

ELI BROAD: We want to be supportive of the museum in nonmonetary ways. We have events: we like them to be here.

AVIS BERMAN: All right. What was Sam Francis—what did he contribute to as, you know, an artist in a nonmonetary way, shall we say?

ELI BROAD: Well—of course, he had his studio and so on. I'm trying to remember if he even attended—might've attended one or two meetings.

AVIS BERMAN: How about Robert Irwin?

ELI BROAD: Irwin attended more than two meetings. And I still remember when we had our first meeting, he came dressed in a suit and a tie and so on. I said, "Bob, I thought you'd come in costume." He said, "This is a costume." [Berman laughs.] We've got several of Bob Irwin's things.

AVIS BERMAN: But it's interesting because both of these artists are somewhat, shall we say, odd? Sam Francis is kind of a man of mystery to me. I can't figure out what—he was very prominent, yet very private—but was influential with printmaking and in all sorts of things.

ELI BROAD: Another artist we got to know pretty well is Ellsworth Kelly. In fact yesterday, on the way back from Washington [DC], we stopped to see him for a couple of hours.

AVIS BERMAN: He's a wonderful artist—and so thoughtful and a great body of work. Do you have the later—have you been able to collect his work from the '50s on up?

ELI BROAD: We do not have enough early work. Maybe we will remedy that someday. You know, the earliest work I have I think's from the '60s. *Red, Yellow, Blue* [1963]. And then we got *Blue Curve V* [1972]; I forget what year that is. And we've got—[inaudible]. [The earliest Kelly works in the collection are: *Green Blue Red* [1963],

Blue Red [1968], *Green Angle* [1970], *Blue Curve V* [1972], and *Blue Yellow Red IV* [1972]. He's probably referring to the first three. -EB]

AVIS BERMAN: The Paris work is terrific, and, oh, I think a lot of that's already in museums.

ELI BROAD: Paris work?

AVIS BERMAN: The Paris work. The Paris work.

ELI BROAD: Oh—yeah, it is. It is. It is. He has some, but I'm told—he's got quite a place, by the way.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah, I have been there. I did a little—

ELI BROAD: You've been there?

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah, once for the Archives of American Art I did a little show of his work. He did works on paper, and his papers are good, too, so we borrowed it. It was wonderful to work with him.

ELI BROAD: Yeah. We want to get back there because he just has a lot of work that he doesn't let dealers look at until—

AVIS BERMAN: Has he been out to see the foundation?

ELI BROAD: Yes. He actually hung—I think we have five works, and he lent two. And it took him two days to hang some works—he's such a perfectionist.

AVIS BERMAN: Because I would imagine that it would be very agreeable, if not seductive, to artists to come out and see not only the work, you know, its depth, but that the commitment has been made. And so—

ELI BROAD: And we don't sell. We'll exchange things on occasion.

AVIS BERMAN: So once something's in the foundation, it's there?

ELI BROAD: Yeah. Or a personal collection, we don't sell. The personal collections are all going to go to the foundation.

AVIS BERMAN: And how did you decide that, make that decision?

ELI BROAD: Well, we always saw what we have as—our children are well taken care of—they do not have a real interest in art. So what do you with it? We have a foundation that's got enough money to do other things in education and medical research [The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation]. So you want to end up having a collection that's a public collection—shown in public institutions.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. Are you disappointed that your children aren't interested in art?

ELI BROAD: No.

AVIS BERMAN: Do you think that you had a natural eye as a collector, or—

ELI BROAD: I don't have a great eye. I don't think I do, not like Charles Saatchi. I know Charles pretty well. And we bought a number of—Charles Ray—great work. That's his collection we bought from him, including the *Fire Engine* [*Firetruck*, 1993], if you recall.

AVIS BERMAN: Sure. Saw it at the Whitney.

ELI BROAD: And—yeah. And we bought his entire collection. If you go back and look [at] what work went through his hands, it's incredible. And he's put up some interesting shows in London over the years. Still doing it.

AVIS BERMAN: So when you say you don't have a great eye, how do you compensate for that? I mean, I think you may be a little modest, but given your premise—

ELI BROAD: Well, I think of a given artist's work; I can select the better work. But if I'm looking at a new artist—I don't feel like I discover artists before they're shown in a museum or once or twice in a major gallery.

AVIS BERMAN: I see. So in other words, you will see it fairly soon, but the aesthetic qualities might not make themselves felt to you before anyone else?

ELI BROAD: Although we were fortunate with Basquiat and Cindy Sherman, and I guess Keith Haring, early on.

AVIS BERMAN: Do you think Mrs. Broad has a better eye than you?

ELI BROAD: She's pretty good. Yes. I don't know if it's better or equal or whatever.

AVIS BERMAN: In terms of what you're buying, how do you—do you agree or disagree—I mean, do you make joint decisions on the buying?

ELI BROAD: Sometimes. If it's going to go in our house, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: And if it's going in the foundation?

ELI BROAD: Sometimes. Joanne Heyler's been with us for 20-some-odd years, and before that, we had a woman by the name of Michelle De Angelus.

AVIS BERMAN: And does Joanne go out, and is she looking for work for you?

ELI BROAD: Oh, all the time, yeah. She and an assistant curator, yeah. But again, it's not like the '80s, when we were looking for new artists. We've had a couple of younger artists: Adrian Huntley, Mark Bradford. I'm sure there are lots of others out there, though.

AVIS BERMAN: So the pace of the collecting has slowed down?

ELI BROAD: The dollars spent have not slowed down, but yeah, [the '80s were –AB] a very active period.

AVIS BERMAN: So at this point, would you say that you're trying to add to people you already have?

ELI BROAD: Yes, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Or expand the breadth?

ELI BROAD: Yes. The most recent things at the last auctions—we bought a big Murakami sculpture. At Miami Basel, we bought a big new work of Kara Walker.

AVIS BERMAN: So I guess I would say, expanding the commitment to the artists that you already have, although you are adding some new ones, occasionally.

ELI BROAD: Yes, yes. Exactly.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, when you said you didn't sell, I mean, you must have sold some of the Color Field and Abstract Expressionist works you had.

ELI BROAD: What I did is I managed to exchange them for things we wanted.

AVIS BERMAN: The Motherwell, for example—

ELI BROAD: I'm trying to think what happened to the Motherwell. I don't recall.

AVIS BERMAN: Or things like the Frankenthaler, I guess—you know, things like that. Is that because those artists were living at the time, or is that a larger philosophy of how you do things?

ELI BROAD: Say again?

AVIS BERMAN: Well, when you exchanged, as opposed to selling, was that because the artists were still alive when you were doing that, or is that a larger philosophy of how you do things?

ELI BROAD: Well, there are obviously tax advantages in doing tax-free exchanges, especially of work which appreciates dramatically.

AVIS BERMAN: What, to you, are the most satisfying aspects of collecting?

ELI BROAD: One, I love going home and seeing the works we have, which we change from time to time. Right now, we've got the Koons *Bunny*. We've got three Jasper Johns paintings at home. The Red Rauschenberg is at home, several Lichtensteins—three, four, five—at home. And then we have about 11 Twomblys at home.

AVIS BERMAN: I was asking about the satisfactions, and you said, first, going home and seeing those. And then—

ELI BROAD: I can't imagine living without art. Let me say that. And, you know, there's some ego satisfaction in having a collection that people think well of.

AVIS BERMAN: Do you enjoy the chase?

ELI BROAD: Yes, to some degree, but I've got varied interests. So I'm not like Norton Simon, who is spending all his time on the phone all the time.

AVIS BERMAN: Do you have patience for waiting for the right work?

ELI BROAD: I think so. One example of patience is the David Smith *Cubi* [XXVIII, 1965] we bought. It was, I don't know, 16 years earlier, there was one that the Shirleys [Jon and Mary Shirley] bought, and I was the other bidder on it. I'd been looking for one forever and saw that initially at the Fort Worth museum [Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, TX] and thought they owned it. And one day it's for sale at Sotheby's.

AVIS BERMAN: Speaking of Texas, was Raymond Nasher—were the Nashers people that you know?

ELI BROAD: We knew them fairly well. We traveled with them here and there.

AVIS BERMAN: And what were they like as collectors in action?

ELI BROAD: Well, obviously, he built a great collection, a great sculpture collection. I always found him a very, very nice person to be with.

AVIS BERMAN: Were you ever competitors for anything?

ELI BROAD: Not that I recall.

AVIS BERMAN: I want to talk a little bit about your dedication to making—to seeing the potential of the Los Angeles area for being an art capital. And when did other people—or how were you able to persuade other people to share that vision?

ELI BROAD: Well, it evolved. I like to say Los Angeles is one of the four art capitals of the world, together with New York, London, and Paris. And I say, well, if you look at the performing arts, no one has a better symphony or symphony hall than we do. We've got Placido [Domingo] running the—

AVIS BERMAN: I'm hearing him tonight.

ELI BROAD: Oh, yeah, that's right. He's a good friend, by the way.

And we did the Ring Cycle [Richard Wagner], which we—[underwrote -EB]. It's an all-time record cost for the Ring Cycle, I might add.

AVIS BERMAN: It's still a great thing to do when you feel—

ELI BROAD: Edye loves the opera, so I do it for her. We have more theatrical productions than New York does, spread out. Then you know what the other institutions are. And in contemporary art, no one has more museum gallery space for contemporary art than we do in Los Angeles, between the L.A. County Museum, the Broad Contemporary Art Museum, between the Hammer, the three venues of MOCA, a few other places. And we've got great art schools: UCLA, Art Center College, CalArts, USC, and others. And you've got more and more professionals coming here, whether it was Annie Feldman first and a number of others, both directors and curators.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I just wondered if people were skeptical when you—you laugh?

ELI BROAD: I remember I was at a panel with David Rockefeller at Art Basel Miami six or seven years ago, and I told everyone that Los Angeles is the contemporary art capital of the world, other than commercially.

AVIS BERMAN: And what did the other panelists say?

ELI BROAD: They listened but shook their heads.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, and there were all sorts of things, like Gemini [Gemini G.E.L. (Graphic Editions Limited), Los Angeles, CA] out there. There were all sorts of interesting enterprises.

ELI BROAD: Yeah, the problem we have had is the film industry throws a blanket over everything. People think the Academy Awards, the Grammys, the personalities in the entertainment industry, and so on, and they think of Disneyland and the beaches. But I think that's starting to change.

AVIS BERMAN: When you say "throws a blanket," do you just think that that's all that people think of, is L.A. as a one-art—

ELI BROAD: They think of all these things in the film and entertainment industry, and they associate Hollywood and all that. So we don't get the number of cultural visitors—New York, Paris, and London get 10 to 15 million a year. Ours is growing, but it's only about three million a year.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, you're saying they just don't associate Los Angeles with art because the film industry is so dominating?

ELI BROAD: It's the number one—if you had to, say, mention things about Los Angeles, I'm sure the film industry will come up and be on top.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, exactly. Well, also, I would think, though, there are more and more people in the entertainment business who have become art collectors—I mean, who have gone beyond decorating.

ELI BROAD: You have a few. I'm not sure who has the greatest collection. I know I was with Brad Pitt when he bought a Luc Tuymans—not a Luc Tuymans—I'm tired today—a Leipzig-school Neo Rauch at Art Basel.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I think she has many collections, but Barbra Streisand has always been a collector.

ELI BROAD: Not that much of art. I've been to her place. She's a collector of everything, and it's—I was fascinated with all her professional commitments, what she has done collecting things. And if you haven't been to her place, it's incredible.

AVIS BERMAN: No, no. I haven't, but I know she has furniture; she has paintings.

ELI BROAD: She doesn't have that many paintings, but she's got everything—a true collector.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, and of course, Steven Spielberg has evolved into a collector of American art. I mean, he's well known because they've had the shows.

ELI BROAD: I'm trying to think—what does he collect? I don't know.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, he has American art—mostly pre-1945. And then he's got a sideline in Norman Rockwells because they tell stories. As a matter of fact, there was a big show at the Smithsonian [American Art Museum]. He and George Lucas sponsored a Norman Rockwell show, so they have some. I mean, they're the ones at the museum shows.

ELI BROAD: I've not been to his place in the Hamptons. It's been awhile since I've been to his place in Los Angeles.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, and of course, Steve Martin is well known as a collector, too.

And are there many people in the entertainment community who translate into museum philanthropy?

ELI BROAD: I haven't seen much of that.

AVIS BERMAN: Why do you think that is? Because they certainly have the means.

ELI BROAD: The entertainment industry and the film industry—they keep to themselves, pretty much. They'll donate time, but I'm trying to think of anyone that I knew that—forgetting Lou Wasserman, who was a friend—that have written big checks for anything.

AVIS BERMAN: And I guess that's probably, in the past, what maybe held L.A. back a little bit, because there is this large, wealthy community, but they wouldn't support the museums.

ELI BROAD: They don't participate in many civic activities. On occasion, they do. Lou Wasserman did.

AVIS BERMAN: Just, I wonder why that is.

ELI BROAD: They've got their own world there.

There's some exceptions: Sherry Lansing's an exception. She's not a great collector; she's got a few things with Billy Friedkin. But she participates in that community.

AVIS BERMAN: For collecting, for good collection, obviously, we've talked about depth, and we've talked about quality. What are the other criteria, do you think, for collecting?

ELI BROAD: Well, for our collecting now, we're looking at artists who we think will be viewed importantly in the future. Collect in depth. Continue to try to improve the collection.

AVIS BERMAN: I had asked you about regrets or mistakes, and you said not paying enough for things. Are there any other things you would have done differently?

ELI BROAD: I think of Jasper Johns—[inaudible]. Well, fortunately, we were able to have quite a collection of Jeff Koons's work, and we continue to collect. But if we had to go back and buy some of the things we have, we couldn't afford them. As you probably heard, the *Bunny* supposedly was bought by Qatar.

AVIS BERMAN: Excuse me?

ELI BROAD: Qatar, for, I don't know, between \$65 and \$75 million. That blows my mind.

AVIS BERMAN: Which leads me to a question: have you found it difficult because of competition now from the Russian oligarchs and some of the Arabs in areas that you want to buy?

ELI BROAD: Not to a large degree. We wouldn't have collected Lucian Freud or Bacon or a few others. I know Roman Abramovich and Dasha. I've been to some of their homes in Moscow. Of course, most of their good art is in London, not in Moscow.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, their other homes.

ELI BROAD: I think we're really not going back in time.

AVIS BERMAN: But would you have liked to have collected Bacon or Lucian Freud?

ELI BROAD: No, no.

AVIS BERMAN: And why not?

ELI BROAD: It just didn't appeal to me.

AVIS BERMAN: Among the Russian collectors, what are some of the most extraordinary objects or collections that you've seen?

ELI BROAD: Well, Roman and Dasha bought a number of interesting things, including Murakami, for example. Victor Pinchuk's a friend of mine. He's got a great collection that he's put together in recent years. It really started, he claims, when I saw him, when he saw the *Tulips* [1995-2004].

AVIS BERMAN: The Jeff Koons *Tulips*.

ELI BROAD: And he said that really impressed him, and somehow, he bought the artist's proof. So he collects that. He collects Damien Hirst, I believe. Murakami. I'm trying to think who I'm missing.

AVIS BERMAN: Kusama, maybe?

ELI BROAD: If he does, I'm not aware of it. We've been to his place a number of times.

AVIS BERMAN: What other collectors do you feel that you have influenced directly in seeing your collection and taking off from there?

ELI BROAD: I don't know.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, you were on the board of MoMA for a while.

ELI BROAD: I still am.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, and have you made significant gifts to MoMA in terms of works of art?

ELI BROAD: No. I've made major contributions to MoMA, like for about \$15 million.

AVIS BERMAN: And has that museum influenced your thinking at all, or how has MoMA's history or how it's governed at all made a difference in terms of how you view things?

ELI BROAD: Well, it probably has the best board of any museum in the world. It's very well run in my view. The quality is, I think, without peer.

AVIS BERMAN: What makes a great board?

ELI BROAD: A great board, ideally, are people of wealth that are collectors. And they've got that on the board.

AVIS BERMAN: How much input should board members have in curatorial matters and selecting shows?

ELI BROAD: They shouldn't have any. I'm on the painting acquisitions committee, and we generally approve, like, 95 percent of what the curators want to buy, which is probably too high a percentage. Mimi Haas chairs that committee now. She's a good friend. The MoMA trustees started with David Rockefeller, Sr., who had done a great job.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, the Rockefellers have always been amazing stewards of what they have.

ELI BROAD: Did you ever read the book, *Good Old Modern: An Intimate Portrait of the Museum of Modern Art* Russell Lynes. New York: Atheneum, 1973]?

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, sure.

ELI BROAD: I have it in my apartment, here.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I wrote a history of the Whitney Museum. I read *Good Old Modern*, and I said, "I want to do this about the Whitney." I never had the polished prose style of Russell Lynes.

ELI BROAD: [Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art] Tom Campbell is sort of a friend. And what he's going to do at the Whitney [when the Met takes use of the Whitney's Madison Avenue building -ed.] will be very interesting.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, exactly. What do you think they will do?

ELI BROAD: He claims it's not just going to be for contemporary art. As you know, he hired someone to head contemporary art, Sheena Wagstaff. As you know, Gary Tinterow is now in Houston [director, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston]. It will be a very different place with Tom versus Phillippe [de Montebello, Met director 1977-2008], which is good.

AVIS BERMAN: Absolutely. And are you involved with the Met?

ELI BROAD: Not in any official capacity. I belong to the director's council or something like that. And I see Tom because he gets around. He was at Miami Art Basel, and I see him in a number of places throughout the world.

AVIS BERMAN: Have you ever been involved with the Guggenheim Museum in any way?

ELI BROAD: No.

AVIS BERMAN: Because that would almost seem to be kind of a natural in some respects.

ELI BROAD: Well, I know the people there.

AVIS BERMAN: And in California, did the Getty [Museum] ever make overtures towards you?

ELI BROAD: No, no. They're all friends.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Also, I don't know how many boards one person could be on.

ELI BROAD: Well, I'm a life trustee of LACMA, MOCA, was a regent of [the] Smithsonian for five and a half years and the 18 museums there, the board of MoMA, et cetera.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, right. I still have other questions because we have not gotten into the last 10 years yet, but that clock is slow.

ELI BROAD: It's 4:10—I mean, two minutes to four.

AVIS BERMAN: Exactly—and you have to leave at 4:10, correct?

ELI BROAD: Yeah, about then; yeah.

[END TRACK broad12_1of2_cd_track01.]

AVIS BERMAN: This is Avis Berman interviewing Eli and Edythe Broad for the Frick Collection, New York City, and Archives of American Art Oral History Program, Washington, DC, on collecting on April 16, 2012, in their apartment in New York City.

I listened to our first tape yesterday, so I know what we didn't [get done -AB] because, otherwise, we both would

have forgotten about it.

So, I want to pick up a couple of threads from last time. What we had started to talk about were dealers of importance to you; we had talked about a few of them, like Leo Castelli and Mary Boone. I just wanted to go through, in terms of your collecting, a few other ones. And let's start with James Corcoran.

ELI BROAD: We knew James Corcoran. We did acquire a Jasper Johns Crosshatch painting from him.

EDYTHE BROAD: He's still alive.

ELI BROAD: Pardon?

EDYTHE BROAD: You said, we "knew"—he's still alive.

ELI BROAD: Yeah, I haven't seen him in years. I can't think of anything else we bought from him.

AVIS BERMAN: Would you go to his gallery, or would he talk to you or—

ELI BROAD: He had quite a gallery in Santa Monica, if I recall. It's been many years. We'd go to his gallery, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: Because he had a lot of—through his father-in-law, he had a lot of Pop art.

ELI BROAD: He did. He did.

AVIS BERMAN: He had good channels. And so, to your knowledge, you just bought the one piece?

ELI BROAD: I remember going to his gallery in Santa Monica, but I can't remember anything else.

EDYTHE BROAD: Wasn't there one in West Hollywood?

ELI BROAD: Okay.

EDYTHE BROAD: No?

ELI BROAD: I don't know.

AVIS BERMAN: And the next one that we should start out—and I'd like you to talk about him from when he was a pup, and you watched his growth—is Larry Gagosian.

ELI BROAD: We go back—what, 1970—

EDYTHE BROAD: When he was in California, or when he was just starting?

ELI BROAD: Just a minute—1976, before he even had a gallery. And there were some posters, in fact, and then some prints. Then he opened a gallery [1980, Gagosian Gallery, Los Angeles, CA], and we've seen him have some great shows. I remember David Salle there, Eric Fischl, Jean-Michel Basquiat, so on. And then I don't know what year he bought this place on West Broadway [New York City] on the second floor, started dealing there. Then he had, let me think—his first gallery here was on—

EDYTHE BROAD: Almont [Drive], was it?

ELI BROAD: No, was it 31st [Street]? Don't know.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I would ask you, when he was in California, what were the marks of his enterprisingness?

ELI BROAD: He was able to get great art. He had good artists, as I mentioned, whether it was Salle, who was very hot at the time, whether it was Eric Fischl, Jean-Michel Basquiat, a number of others.

EDYTHE BROAD: He worked hard, and he would just call a lot of people. He wasn't bashful.

AVIS BERMAN: And I guess that had results, or did people resent that? Or how were his methods received?

EDYTHE BROAD: I think people responded to him when he was there.

ELI BROAD: Oh, yeah, yeah. You know, and since then, he's obviously grown into—

AVIS BERMAN: He's the king.

ELI BROAD: Emperor or king or whatever.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, right. Now, in terms of your relationship to him, it seems to me that you two buy the art yourselves, but he is sometimes referred to in the press—and maybe you can refine this to me—as an advisor.

ELI BROAD: No, not any more so than any other dealer or person. I know the press does that. We buy a lot of art from him because he has the artists we're interested in.

AVIS BERMAN: Of course. And so why—in other words, what does "advising" mean to you, or why do you think that that is in there?

ELI BROAD: I don't know why they described that.

EDYTHE BROAD: Why does the media do anything?

AVIS BERMAN: Well, it's true, but I just was trying—I just want to set—

EDYTHE BROAD: We've socialized with him. We like him. We think of him as a friend.

ELI BROAD: We've stayed at his various homes.

EDYTHE BROAD: You know, we spend time together.

ELI BROAD: Sure, when we're together, I'll ask about this or that, from time to time—tell him to take his dealer hat off and—he's got a great eye.

AVIS BERMAN: He does. Can he take his dealer hat off?

ELI BROAD: Sometimes, yeah. Sometimes. Sometimes, no.

AVIS BERMAN: What do you think are some of the best pieces you've gotten from him?

EDYTHE BROAD: The Twomblys. We've got—the collage was the first one. And I don't know how many of our Twomblys came from him.

ELI BROAD: Nina's [Sundell] painting came from him.

EDYTHE BROAD: That's a fabulous painting. That, I'd have to check.

ELI BROAD: The Roma painting came from him? I don't know. Of the 15 or 16 we have—well, we've bought three sculptures from him over the years.

EDYTHE BROAD: And the early Kelly, *The Three Panels: Red, Yellow, Blue* [1963]. That was an early Kelly.

ELI BROAD: Was it from him? I don't remember it.

EDYTHE BROAD: Yes. I don't know. We have bought a lot from him, but you'd have to ask somebody at the art foundation. You're getting us when our memories are [laughs]—good thing you're doing it now.

AVIS BERMAN: You're doing splendidly. There wouldn't be a second interview if you hadn't.

And I want to ask about him as a dealer—not right now. I want to ask you about how you came to associate and what your relationships were with Jeffrey Deitch when he was a dealer.

ELI BROAD: We knew Jeffrey. We weren't a great client of Jeffrey's—respected what he was doing down in SoHo. Had some great shows, great events in Miami Beach every year. He advised a lot of different people, more so than us, whether it was Dakis [Joannou], as you know, in Athens, or other people. He was one of the three dealers that had the Celebration series [1994-] of Jeff Koons, so we were involved with him. And it was in London—can't think of names. Max Hetzler, Jeffrey Deitch. I can't think of the other London dealer who represented [Anthony d'Offay]—

EDYTHE BROAD: Nice man. We bought our Andrew Lloyd pot from him.

[Cross talk.]

I can see him with that nice—but I can't think of him.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, so you bought a work by Koons from Jeffrey?

ELI BROAD: Well, Jeffrey teamed up with Max Hetzler and a London dealer in representing him. And we bought

Balloon Dog [1994-2000] from the three. In fact, we paid for it before it was even being fabricated. It took us six years to get the work, by the way.

AVIS BERMAN: Why was that?

ELI BROAD: Jeffrey's a perfectionist.

EDYTHE BROAD: That was early, early on, getting someone to do the metal and the finish to Jeffrey's standards. No one knew how to do that, so in the beginning, you know, they had to learn the process, I think.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, so who were you saying was the perfectionist?

ELI BROAD: Jeffrey Koons.

AVIS BERMAN: Jeff Koons, but not—so it's not Jeffrey [Deitch]?

EDYTHE BROAD: No, I think everybody was, but Jeff Koons, the artist, he couldn't quite get what he wanted from the—what was their name—the people making it. I'm sorry, I'm being so bad—Carlson—was it Carlson Brothers?

ELI BROAD: Yeah, it was Carlson.

EDYTHE BROAD: I mean, you've seen the works. They're pristine. Well, I don't know, I guess it was hard to finish something that big.

ELI BROAD: Let's go ahead.

AVIS BERMAN: I just had wanted to finish, shall we say, that little unit. And then we had begun to discuss MOCA. And so I wanted to pick up a couple of more questions about the Panza collection. Were there other competitors for the Panza collection?

ELI BROAD: Yes. What happened is Panza was on the board of MOCA. He also stayed at our guest house whenever he came to Los Angeles. They had a communist government then, and they wanted to tax any property that Italian citizens had outside of Italy. He had all this stuff in Switzerland—I think in Geneva—and he couldn't afford to pay the tax. So he visited Christie's and Sotheby's, and was heartbroken—wanted to keep it together. So we talked about it, and I said, MOCA doesn't have the money, really, but we'll see what we can do.

So I got a negotiation with him and offered to pay him \$11 million over seven years, with two or three million up front. And I convinced him that it didn't make sense for him to get all the money because he'd have to convert it to lire, and you know, lire would go down in value by the day. So he was happy with that. There were others. I don't know any other institution—I knew some collectors that would have liked to have bought it.

AVIS BERMAN: Did he have any qualms about having it in California at that point?

ELI BROAD: No, not at all.

EDYTHE BROAD: He was happy.

ELI BROAD: He loved California. He loved MOCA.

EDYTHE BROAD: He bought a lot of California artists. He bought some California artists every time he would come.

AVIS BERMAN: And really shortly after that, you left MOCA?

ELI BROAD: No, I was there for five or six years.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, well till—but there was a point that—again, this is what I read, so correct me—that you became unhappy that they weren't showing the collections.

ELI BROAD: Well, yeah. The only problem I had with the museum, really, was Paul Schimmel. He didn't want to show the permanent collection. And I said, "Paul, we've got this great collection of work. People that come to Los Angeles would like to see it." Finally, in recent years, when I got re-involved, we agreed that half the museum would be for the permanent collection.

AVIS BERMAN: What was his reasoning for not showing it?

ELI BROAD: He wanted to just do exhibitions. He wanted to run a *kunsthalle*, really. He'd say, oh, we're going to show part with this show and part with that show, and so on.

AVIS BERMAN: And how did the rest of the board feel about that?

ELI BROAD: I think Paul's a very convincing person, but the rest of the board, I think, would have liked to have seen the permanent collection shown—the great works, [the Rauschenbergs –AB], the Rothkos, the Klines—and a number of others.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, did the fact that he wasn't showing what was the permanent collection discourage other collectors from giving work because they thought it might not be shown?

ELI BROAD: They did well in receiving work from other collectors. I'm not sure it had a big negative effect.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, did he show parts of the Panza collection in shows?

ELI BROAD: Yeah, from time to time. But two years would go by, and I doubt if you'd see all the work, or even half of the 80 works.

AVIS BERMAN: And how did Count Panza feel about this?

ELI BROAD: I don't recall. I don't recall talking to him about it.

AVIS BERMAN: I'm just wondering, though, after he had given it, if he had qualms or had an objection to that.

ELI BROAD: I don't know. I don't remember.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. Then you weren't involved for a while, and then you came back in, in 2008, to rescue the museum? Or was there anything before that?

ELI BROAD: I was a life trustee—I'd attend meetings, on rare occasions. Then the museum got into difficulty, as you know, and I thought it was important to save MOCA. So we made a challenge grant of \$15 million for the endowment, and we said, we'll give three million a year for five years for exhibitions. And we wanted others to follow suit.

AVIS BERMAN: And how many others did?

ELI BROAD: A number of board members did.

AVIS BERMAN: Do you feel the challenge worked?

ELI BROAD: Somewhat, yeah. Yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: Was it ever fulfilled the way you wanted it fulfilled?

ELI BROAD: No, it's been partially fulfilled. MOCA, since last year—in '08, I guess, then had attendance of 147,000. Last year, it got up to 400,000. And we all had quite a job recruiting people for the board, getting a new director, and doing a number of other things.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, you were in a position of being, it seemed, almost the only one—I guess the question is, why didn't more people step up to the plate?

ELI BROAD: Well, a number of people did step up to the plate—not to the extent I thought they should, but they stepped up to the plate.

AVIS BERMAN: So what you're saying is, maybe enough people did, and didn't give enough, as opposed to not enough people?

ELI BROAD: Well, both, probably.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, also, in the middle of this—was this in the middle of your challenge that—what was this about, this merger between LACMA and MOCA?

ELI BROAD: Okay, when MOCA got in difficulty, one of the options they were looking at was the possibility of a merger with LACMA. But that was really LACMA's director's doing, and that would never have worked, because LACMA runs deficits. They have \$380 million of bonded indebtedness, and so on. In fact, they wanted the MOCA board to give them \$15 million. And we questioned whether they would have possibly kept Grand Avenue open.

AVIS BERMAN: Was there anyone on the MOCA board who thought it was a good idea to merge with LACMA?

ELI BROAD: One or two probably did. I felt, and most of the board members felt, it ought to remain an

independent contemporary museum.

AVIS BERMAN: How were you able to stop this?

ELI BROAD: They made a decision. They had two options. They could have done a merger, or they could have gone ahead with what we did. And they chose what we were offering over that, and feel good about it.

AVIS BERMAN: So in other words, you thought, or the board thought, that the collection would just be absorbed and the building—I mean, was that what everyone thought would happen? How suspicious were you?

ELI BROAD: I clearly did believe that MOCA would take the collection and say, we don't have any—

EDYTHE BROAD: No, LACMA would take the collection.

ELI BROAD: I mean, LACMA—don't have any money to operate additional facilities. And I think the board realized that at the end.

AVIS BERMAN: How long did that sense of deliberation—[of this problem being there -AB], I guess I would say—how long did that period go on?

ELI BROAD: Sorry, what period?

AVIS BERMAN: Excuse me, I should be clearer—this little duet with LACMA, how long did that go on?

ELI BROAD: It wasn't that long—a couple months, maybe. I don't know when I wrote this op-ed piece for the *Los Angeles Times* that said, Save MOCA. If I had to guess, it was about October [2008]. I don't remember, precisely. And we ended up doing it all prior to Christmas.

AVIS BERMAN: Did you have a sense of other groups in Los Angeles getting behind you in terms of this? I mean, how important did MOCA become to Los Angeles after possibly seeing that it might go down the tubes? I remember Roberta Smith wrote a great article in the *New York Times*, and I don't know how much else or what other press—I just wondered if the community was galvanized.

ELI BROAD: The community was galvanizing—the art community was, and the artists were, and so on. They were all galvanizing, but they didn't have any financial resources. But they had a number of meetings and rallies and so on that we didn't attend. But we're glad we got all that support.

AVIS BERMAN: And then what was the process of finding a new director and deciding who or what was needed?

ELI BROAD: As you may know, what happened at MOCA—between the former director, Paul Schimmel, and others, they managed to start spending \$26 million a year and running big deficits and taking money out of the endowments—which was not unlawful; it's improper. So what happened when I got involved?

I said, I've got to get someone in there that's respected in the city that can really turn this around financially and administratively, because art people—typically, that isn't their strong suit. So I got Chuck Young, the former chancellor of UCLA, who everyone in the city respected, and he went there and did a great job in right-sizing the institution, reducing the budget to about \$15-\$16 million a year.

And we didn't start looking for a new director rapidly because we wanted to make certain that everyone in the art world understood that MOCA was here to stay. In fact, one of the things we did during that period—we had a big lunch at the Cipriani in Venice [Italy] for all the people from the art world, several hundred.

EDYTHE BROAD: Actually, when the Venice Biennale was on.

ELI BROAD: Yeah. Then we had a dinner in Basel for people. We're going to show him what—we started calling them—[MOCA-n you]—forget about the past. We showed them the great collection, all the great shows we had, and so on. Then we started looking for directors sometime thereafter. I was not in charge—I didn't head it. We interviewed about 13 people, and we said, we need someone that's a populist. We want someone that's going to get the public's attention—the broader public. And of all the people we met, we thought Jeffrey, as an impresario, could fill that bill, and has.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, did Jeffrey put himself into these 13 people because it wasn't—

ELI BROAD: I'll tell you how it happened. I called Jeffrey, who I'd known; said, "Jeffrey, I want your ideas for who could be a great director." And we talked and talked, and I said, "And by the way, have you ever thought about being a museum director?" And he answered; he said, "I never thought anyone would ask me that." And he loved the idea. He started life as a curator, then at Citibank, et cetera. So he became very interested quickly.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, full disclosure: I haven't seen Jeffrey in a long time, but I knew him as a child. He lived four houses away from me.

EDYTHE BROAD: You're kidding.

AVIS BERMAN: No, no. And his brother and my brother were best friends. As a matter of fact, my mother died recently, and Jon, Jeffrey's brother, came to the funeral. So it was very—so Jeffrey, even as a kid, always had a vision. Kids are unfocused. He had focus. And of course, he was very smart. So I'm not an anti-Jeff—I'm neutral for the interview, but I'm not an anti-Jeffrey person.

ELI BROAD: Well, Jeffrey does a great job with everyone in the community, and so on. He needs help administratively and financially. That's about the thing he wants—

EDYTHE BROAD: That street art show was amazing that he did—

ELI BROAD: He put together a great show.

EDYTHE BROAD: He put together a great show in, like, what—weeks!

ELI BROAD: *Art in the Streets* [April 17—August 8, 2011]. He put it together, like, in three months. Normally, it takes three years to put a show together. He got two guest curators for \$10,000 each. It was an incredible show. It attracted 200,000 people.

EDYTHE BROAD: Which is a lot for L.A. for contemporary art.

AVIS BERMAN: Let's go back—he said, "I thought no one would ever ask me." And then after he said that, I mean, had you thought about Jeffrey originally, or you were just asking him for ideas?

ELI BROAD: I and others were looking at some unusual people. We thought about—my mind's blank today—the director of the [Fondation] Beyeler [Basel, Switzerland], Sam—

EDYTHE BROAD: Why can't we remember his last name? What's the matter with us?

ELI BROAD: Getting old. Sam Keller. We thought he would be great. But he had just taken a job and was loyal to Ernst Beyeler.

EDYTHE BROAD: And also, his family was there, and they were happy there.

ELI BROAD: Whatever. So we interviewed a lot of people who we thought outside the box, including some people at auction houses—and Lisa Dennison, for example.

AVIS BERMAN: She, of course, had been at the Guggenheim.

ELI BROAD: Right, right.

AVIS BERMAN: And as far as you could speak about it, did Jeffrey have special requirements or conditions?

ELI BROAD: Not really. I didn't negotiate the contract with him, but it was a big chunk for him closing down his business and so on and so forth—moving to Los Angeles and all that.

AVIS BERMAN: You know, when you live here for so long—even though you go all over, you're not used to the car and the house and all.

ELI BROAD: He's driving now. He has a house now.

EDYTHE BROAD: He's driving now, and he has a house now.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, right.

ELI BROAD: He's doing well.

AVIS BERMAN: Did you discuss, or did he discuss with you, "Well, you know, I'm a dealer."? There was the great screaming that was going to go on. Did you expect that?

ELI BROAD: Yes, to some extent, but it was clear we agreed that he couldn't be dealing, and so on. He had several things in process. We said, "Well, if you can finish those by a certain time, that's fine. But you're no longer in the dealing business." And he understood that.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, of course, of course.

ELI BROAD: There were a few people out there—critics and so on—that were concerned with hiring a dealer to become a director.

AVIS BERMAN: But dealers, as you well know, they do a lot of the spadework for the new art.

ELI BROAD: Look at what Gagosian does in this town. He shows exhibitions of museum quality two or three times a year. So I don't know where you—

AVIS BERMAN: You were saying that Jeffrey needs help administratively and financially. I would have thought, because Jeffrey has been a successful businessman, that that wouldn't be a problem for him.

ELI BROAD: It's not a big problem, but remember, he never ran a big staff. We've got a lot of people in the museum. He now has a very good chief financial administrative officer that's working with him.

AVIS BERMAN: When Jeffrey talked to you, what were his ambitions for the museum that impressed you?

ELI BROAD: What impressed me was all the things he'd done over the years and the fact that he was friendly with many of the artists in the collection. We were just impressed with his background. And he understood what the job would be like—both showing the permanent collection and having great exhibitions.

AVIS BERMAN: Is there still carping about him now, or do you feel it's died down?

EDYTHE BROAD: I don't think so. I haven't heard any.

ELI BROAD: No, I don't think so.

EDYTHE BROAD: I don't think so.

ELI BROAD: I haven't heard any.

AVIS BERMAN: Is the board pleased?

ELI BROAD: Pardon?

AVIS BERMAN: Is the board pleased at MOCA?

EDYTHE BROAD: We're not on the board.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, right.

ELI BROAD: Yeah, the board feels very good about Jeffrey.

AVIS BERMAN: Is Jeffrey making acquisitions, or is it mostly shows right now?

ELI BROAD: He's doing shows, and he's getting people donating works. I forget how many works were donated last year to the museum—quite a few. I don't remember the number. I saw it in a press release. And he's also got in some corporate sponsors for the museum.

AVIS BERMAN: And did MOCA have many corporate sponsors before?

ELI BROAD: Some, some. But I know he got Mercedes-Benz doing something for \$600,000, and a number of other firms.

AVIS BERMAN: And did Jeffrey—in terms of staff, did he bring in people from—

ELI BROAD: He only brought one or two people with him.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, so I have now done MOCA. Now I want to ask you about—and also, if there's something that you would like to add about MOCA, [from -AB] watching it over the years.

EDYTHE BROAD: Well, but Eli's more involved. I'm really not. I've never been on the board.

ELI BROAD: Look, going back to when it started, Los Angeles was not one of six North American cities that had a modern contemporary museum, which didn't make a whole lot of sense with all the working artists we had there. And probably, if you went out to the Whitney Biennials, they'd have—30 or 40 percent of the work came from California.

People had tried to start a museum before, whether it was Marshall Weisman and others—but they were, frankly, long on wanting to do it, but no one had the resources. I got involved in a strange way. I got involved with somebody by the name of Bill Norris, who was appointed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. He probably told me that—

EDYTHE BROAD: He couldn't be the chairman.

ELI BROAD: —no, he couldn't raise money, being a circuit court judge. So it was an exciting time because, one, I made a deal with our mayor to take all the money developers were spending on art, aggregating it, to get a free building. And the mayor—Tom Bradley—said, I'll do that, but I'm not giving you any support money, so you've got to raise some endowments. And we raised \$13 million from 600 people, and that's how it started. And at one time, we were promised the Weisman collection, and then there was a divorce and that didn't happen. We have a few works.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah, didn't it end up in Minnesota or someplace like that?

ELI BROAD: Fred has, at the University of Minnesota, a gallery [Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art]. He also has a small gallery put together at Pepperdine University [Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art, Malibu, CA]. And then it's got a home, which is at Quayside Museum [Frederick R. Weisman Foundation of Art, Los Angeles].

AVIS BERMAN: Right, and you said the judge, his name was Bill—

EDYTHE BROAD: Norris—N-O-R-R-I-S.

ELI BROAD: Yeah, Judge William Norris, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, you mentioned Tom Bradley. Has the current mayor been supportive of the new MOCA—I mean, are the L.A. mayors, by and large?

ELI BROAD: None of the L.A. mayors are great art aficionados, shall we say. Tom Bradley—I remember when we had a press conference at the then-Temporary Contemporary—he couldn't believe that we could take that building and make a museum out of it. Then we had—after him, we had my friend, Dick Reardon, who was very supportive but not a collector, either. Now you have Antonio Villaraigosa, and before Antonio, we had Jimmy Hahn. We've been through six mayors since we've been here.

EDYTHE BROAD: They're not nonsupportive.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, they don't have to be art aficionados, but if they—do they, by and large, see it's good for the city, and that should be their—

ELI BROAD: Sometimes they had to be convinced that it was good for the city. I remember Jimmy Hahn, when he was mayor, called me in. "In your interest," he said, "we can't afford to keep the department of cultural affairs going. We're going to cut it out." We descended upon him at meetings. We got my friends from Americans for the Arts—Bob Lynch and others—[inaudible]—to show him why it was a bad idea, why the arts were a major part of our economy. But to this day, we don't get any city monies for the arts.

AVIS BERMAN: None of the museums?

EDYTHE BROAD: No, LACMA does.

ELI BROAD: LACMA gets county money—40 percent of their budget comes from the county.

AVIS BERMAN: I want to go to the Broad Art Foundation, but first I want to ask you your definition of "venture philanthropy," because it's a phrase that—I don't know if you coined it, but it's used.

ELI BROAD: We may have coined—I don't know if we coined it. Look, what we do is, in many years, not dissimilar from venture investing. And it started not in art, but, say, in a fund for bowel disease, where there were lots of investigators out there—Ph.D.s and M.D.s—that had ideas but couldn't get NIH [National Institute of Health] funding. And they needed money. So we had a program that's some 12 years old, where we made 200 and some-odd of these grants. We think it's like—it's venture philanthropy.

EDYTHE BROAD: It's giving seed money before anyone believes in them, though, really. It's taking a bit of a risk.

ELI BROAD: And most of the things we've done in philanthropy are not simply writing checks, whether it's in education, the arts, or science and medical research.

EDYTHE BROAD: We make an investment.

ELI BROAD: And we look for returns on the investment, whether it's improved student achievement, whether it's scientific and medical discoveries and such—in the art, bigger and bigger audiences. So we see it as an investment and look for returns—nonmonetary returns.

AVIS BERMAN: Social or aesthetic or cultural or spiritual or whatever. Now let's talk about the Broad Art Foundation. I think was that your idea originally, Edey?

EDYTHE BROAD: The Broad Art? No. No, I wanted to keep all the art at home. We ran out of room, and he wanted —

ELI BROAD: This goes back, what, 27 years, I think. I lose track of time. Our walls were filled at home. I saw a lot of the young art being born and being put in collections in Japan, Europe, and elsewhere. The museums typically didn't have adequate money for acquisitions. So I came up with a thought: "We want to continue collecting. Why don't we create a foundation to buy art of artists who were not prominent prior to 1975 and make it into a lending library?" It's been very successful. It's at over 8,000 loans to 450 different institutions.

AVIS BERMAN: Was there a model that you were following when you started this?

ELI BROAD: No, no. I don't think anyone was doing that.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, when you started, how did you envision it?

ELI BROAD: The foundation? That it would build a collection, and it would lend it to public institutions so that as broad as possible a number of people could see the work.

AVIS BERMAN: So it started with, shall we say, runoffs from what you had already bought in your own collection?

ELI BROAD: No, no. We do have some duplication. For example, we have 130 works of Cindy Sherman; 110 are in the foundation. A lot of the work in the foundation, we don't have in our personal collection. We have our arts forum.

AVIS BERMAN: What are some of the, I guess, changes or shifts as you've gone along, and as you've grown, and you've gotten more systematic about this? How has the foundation evolved?

ELI BROAD: Well, at first it didn't have any quarters, so it was really in our curator's home. Then we got this building, which you may be aware of. It just keeps growing.

EDYTHE BROAD: We started with one person.

ELI BROAD: Now it has a staff of six, seven people, storage facilities in five different places.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, so it isn't even in the one building anymore.

ELI BROAD: No, no.

AVIS BERMAN: And you are still adding to the—

EDYTHE BROAD: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. That's what happened. It sort of turned into an addiction. And we, like, don't really want to stop. Some of the pieces that we bought were so large you almost couldn't put them in a house.

ELI BROAD: Some of them were of size or subject matter you didn't want to live with.

EDYTHE BROAD: Some of those really would be hard to have in our house. Some of those Leon Golub torture scenes. I don't know if you want to wake up to that in the morning. But we thought they were important.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Also, that was certainly early, and you certainly bought—I saw the catalogue for the show—you certainly bought a lot of work with social and political commitment in it.

ELI BROAD: That's correct, yeah. We were very active in the early '80s during the whole East Village scene and so on, where there was Koons, Basquiat, Keith Haring.

EDYTHE BROAD: It was fun because the things weren't as costly as they are now, so you could afford to buy things, and if it didn't pan out, it wasn't the end of the world. You know, you could take a lot of risks.

ELI BROAD: And you wonder whatever happened to some of these artists, like Peter Hsu, for example.

EDYTHE BROAD: Someday, they'll do a retrospective, and we'll find out.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. He'll be part of the movement, and you just might need one or two. You might not need 20. Now, on some of these, do you deaccession some of the ones that you've gotten that begin to look less—

ELI BROAD: We have not deaccessioned. On occasion, we've traded. Now that we're going ahead with the Broad that's under construction, we're viewing the collection, and we are deaccessioning a number of things. We're not selling hardly anything, but we're giving them to museums that want them, including LACMA, MOCA, and a number of other museums, and in some cases, to universities or colleges where the artists went to school. Because if you have the number of works we have, you realize you're not going to be able to—if we don't think we're going to be able to lend or show the work for the next five, 10 years, why just keep it in storage?

EDYTHE BROAD: We also like to have a body of work by an artist. We don't like just one or two things. And there's some artists that, like, we don't have so much. They didn't disappear, but they sort of aren't doing much at the moment.

AVIS BERMAN: Or there was a great idea and then— you know, there are very few artists that you could collect from close to start to [finish -AB]. Really a handful, maybe. I think in every period, that's always the way.

EDYTHE BROAD: Yeah, but that was the whole point: to have a body of work by an artist, not just one or two things.

ELI BROAD: You've got the catalogue, right, of the show 10 years ago?

AVIS BERMAN: [... -AB] This is the one I have.

ELI BROAD: Here, let me give you one. You don't have this?

AVIS BERMAN: No, [because -AB] you know what? I gave it to the Frick because they didn't have it.

ELI BROAD: Okay. Well, take another one. But if you look back here, they have lists of all the artists. Let's see if I can find the right page for it.

AVIS BERMAN: I actually have—I photocopied those, so I do have the list.

ELI BROAD: They had a page that showed all the artists in the collection. And it's from 10 years ago.

EDYTHE BROAD: But she has a copy of that—

[Cross talk.]

ELI BROAD: Well, whatever. And I guess what they were showing is—the works in the exhibition were in this orange color. I thought it was—I was looking for something else, and I remember—

AVIS BERMAN: You're looking for that big, boldface one.

ELI BROAD: Yeah, here, yeah, yeah, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, that's it. Yeah, I have photocopied that. But that is terrific.

ELI BROAD: We had a lot of artists—too many. Whatever happened to Michele Zalopany, for example, or Robert Yarber?

AVIS BERMAN: You know, it's something that's true, because artists normally—they don't quit. Artists don't retire, so you do wonder.

Now, of course, I'm sure there are hundreds and thousands of artists who want to be in the foundation, and you're probably inundated with images. So how does it happen that an artist who you have not collected will be selected?

ELI BROAD: Well, typically, we won't select someone just because they come to the foundation. We were more aggressive in the '80s, and we would visit artists' studios more often than and visit all the galleries in the East Village, SoHo at the time, and even some in California. We would want to see some work shown once or several times.

We were really not in the truly discovery business. We're not like Charles Saatchi, who would buy work at the art school and so on.

AVIS BERMAN: But I just wondered if someone at the foundation may review what used to be slides, or now,

something else, and say, "Oh, this looks interesting," and go see it, or is it mainly just the more hands-on of going to galleries first?

ELI BROAD: Typically, we'll go to galleries and museums first. It's rare that we'll buy an artist that doesn't have a dealer or hasn't been in a museum show.

AVIS BERMAN: You have certainly had some collaborations with some of the most important architects today. And I wanted to start out—since you were a homebuilder for so long, how did that experience prepare you for museum architecture?

ELI BROAD: I don't think it's related in any way. I've always loved architecture. When you're a merchant builder, and you're building for low-cost housing, you build not what's great design but what the public wants.

EDYTHE BROAD: And at a price they can pay, so that when the—

ELI BROAD: Well, we've always been interested in architecture, going back to our first home in Michigan, before we moved to California. We've been involved with lots of different architects, as you may know.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, that's what I was asking, because I know it's obviously more utilitarian when you're a homebuilder, but I wondered if, when you got involved with museum architecture, there were any surprises along the way for an experienced guy dealing with architects.

EDYTHE BROAD: By then, we had worked with architects for our homes.

ELI BROAD: Well, there are always surprises when you're doing museum architecture, especially when you're dealing with architects, whether it's Frank Gehry or Liz Diller, who did a great job. It's very different—or Zaha Hadid.

AVIS BERMAN: I'm going to get to the Michigan State University, but I thought I should do some of the other ones first. And because it was so interesting about Renzo Piano, how you did—or first, actually, Koolhaas and his project for L.A. County. Do you regret that that project—now, I realize it was bond issues and money—do you regret that that project could not happen?

ELI BROAD: Well, what happened is, I was involved there, and we interviewed six architects. It got down to, really, Rem Koolhaas, who made a brilliant presentation—he was brilliant. They didn't want to do that. The problem was we'd have to close the museum for three years. You couldn't build it in stages. And after a while, the museum staff came to the conclusion this is just not going to work.

EDYTHE BROAD: It was really lovely, though. It made a lot of sense as a plan.

ELI BROAD: It was interesting. I don't know if you know what the plan was. Do you know what the plan was?

AVIS BERMAN: Everything was going to be demolished.

ELI BROAD: Other than the first Pompeian floor, or whatever he called it, and then he'd build this huge, tentlike structure. It was fascinating, but the more they looked at it, it couldn't be built in stages. The money wasn't there to do it all at one time. And there were serious questions about the materials proposed, and so on.

AVIS BERMAN: Is there a way—I realize this is clearly site-specific—is there a way to revive that, to have that somewhere else?

ELI BROAD: I don't know.

AVIS BERMAN: I mean, all architects have unbuilt projects, but—

ELI BROAD: Well, when we chose Liz Diller, we got down to two finalists: Koolhaas and [Diller Scofidio + Renfro - AB]. So we have a high regard for him. He's a great architect.

AVIS BERMAN: I agree, and a great thinker, too.

ELI BROAD: Oh, yeah.

EDYTHE BROAD: He's building something for Miuccia Prada in Rome, I think, isn't he?

ELI BROAD: I think you're right.

AVIS BERMAN: From what I've read, it sounded as if you were the only one who picked Renzo Piano for BCAM [Broad Contemporary Art Museum].

ELI BROAD: No, what happened—we were prepared to give \$50 million for a building, or part of a building, and when we chose the Koolhaas scheme, I said, "I thought we were giving money for a house, and now we're getting a condominium instead." But we were willing to do that. It didn't happen. A year or two went by. Nothing was happening.

Renzo would not compete, nor would Frank Gehry. So we went to see Renzo in Paris and said, "We really want you to do this." He said, "I've got too much work. Why should I do it?" We said, "Three reasons: One, we've got the money. Two, we love your work. Three, you only have to deal with me and the director." And we spent a lot of time with Renzo—

AVIS BERMAN: Right, how did the rest of the trustees at LACMA feel when—

ELI BROAD: They were delighted.

EDYTHE BROAD: They were getting a free building by Renzo Piano.

ELI BROAD: Well, the other thing that happened is [that -AB] Renzo said, "I won't do your building without doing other things," so we came up with a grand scheme.

AVIS BERMAN: And the rest of the board went along with the grand scheme, too?

ELI BROAD: Yes. Well, the director did, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: And did you think about having Frank Gehry for doing the BCAM?

ELI BROAD: Doing BCAM? No, we decided to go with Renzo as our choice.

EDYTHE BROAD: Well, neither one of them—

[Cross talk.]

And we had Disney Hall [Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles, CA, opened 2003].

[... -AB]

EDYTHE BROAD: No, that happened, and it was 15 years, wasn't it? Disney Hall—because it languished. And Frank claims it got better because it cooked.

AVIS BERMAN: [...-AB] I'm not Mike Wallace, but as devil's advocate, there are a couple questions I really want to ask you.

ELI BROAD: Oh, please do.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. It's that you removed your collection from LACMA—

ELI BROAD: No, we never removed a collection. We never promised it. We never promised it.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, because again, this is in the press, that you promised—

ELI BROAD: The *New York Times*—we always said that we want to put it in the foundation. Whatever museums want it, they can have it, as long as they show it. We never changed our mind. We have given 65 works to LACMA, by the way.

EDYTHE BROAD: In the beginning, when we had a much smaller collection, we had said that one of the things we were thinking of when we weren't here anymore is possibly giving our art to one or more institutions. But then it got very big, and no one could kind of—they would take it, but they wouldn't show it.

ELI BROAD: When I talked to Glen Lowry, I said, "If I gave you a collection, what would you do with it?" He says, "You shouldn't give it to me because I'll only show 20 or 30 things. The rest will be in storage."

AVIS BERMAN: But most museum collections—I mean, Hirshhorn—they don't show all of his collection. In other words, any collection—I mean, the Lipmans, Howard and Jean Lipman, gave the Whitney a great collection of sculpture. I don't think there are museums that can show an entire collection of anyone's work all the time.

ELI BROAD: We can't even show our entire—we can show 200 or 300 works at most.

EDYTHE BROAD: That's why we went, we really want the work to be shown. It's good work.

AVIS BERMAN: This is what was in the press, and this is what I'm trying to straighten out. I read that, a month before BCAM was going to open, you withdrew the collection, saying—

ELI BROAD: No. No, I don't know who assumed we were giving the collection, but I met with a *New York Times* reporter. And he said, "What are you doing with the collection?" And I said, "Well, what we've always thought of doing is keeping it in the foundation and lending it to other institutions, starting with LACMA."

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. But it sounded as if LACMA thought—

ELI BROAD: I don't know what LACMA thought. I can't imagine any director or curator thinking that.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, so what their expectations were—you would have the building and you would lend—

ELI BROAD: We would lend art to it.

EDYTHE BROAD: We'd put our art in it.

ELI BROAD: Which we did.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And did they expect your art would be in it all the time?

ELI BROAD: Well, that's a whole different story. The reason we gave the money for the building is we expected that three floors would be—we'd be able to show our work.

AVIS BERMAN: And will that happen in the future?

ELI BROAD: We wish it would happen, but remember, we were dealing with the one director who I made the deal with. Michael [Govan] had other ideas.

AVIS BERMAN: What were his—

ELI BROAD: Like right now, we only have a small number of works there.

AVIS BERMAN: What were his ideas?

ELI BROAD: He didn't like the idea that two-thirds of the building would be dedicated to our collection.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, this is the opposite of what's in the press then, in other words. What did he want—all of it or a small—

ELI BROAD: No, no, he—when we opened, we had two floors. That was great. Then he got stuck and had another show—in essence, removed the work—and so on.

EDYTHE BROAD: Some of the work.

ELI BROAD: Second floor, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, well, that's interesting because the issue always came out as, you didn't want to leave your work in there, or keep your work in there; whereas it sounds as if it's a different story.

ELI BROAD: No, we've always been willing to show the work there. And at one time part of the inducement for us to pay for the building was they'd show our work on two floors.

AVIS BERMAN: And so now, that doesn't happen.

ELI BROAD: It doesn't happen. You're correct.

EDYTHE BROAD: There's a lot of our art there, though. There's a fair amount of our art there.

ELI BROAD: Oh, yeah. On the third floor.

AVIS BERMAN: Is that the work that you have given to them, or is that work—

ELI BROAD: No, it's work—

EDYTHE BROAD: No, that's from the foundation.

AVIS BERMAN: So what's lent is on the third floor. Okay, that's very interesting. Well, it's like anything else, you know. Everything seems a certain way until—it's like what you read, even in the *New York Times*—now, we're not

talking about Rupert Murdoch stuff. We're talking about the paper of record.

EDYTHE BROAD: One person writes something, and a lot of times, other people just repeat the story. They don't always call and ask.

AVIS BERMAN: Correct. Well, that's what you end up having. So that's why I'm asking you. So I think this is very valuable.

And now I want to ask about the Michigan State—the Broad Art Museum that's going to be in East Lansing [MI]. Now, how did that come about?

ELI BROAD: I'm a graduate. I wanted to give back. We gave money, in many prior years, to the business school and graduate school of management. And in working with the president, she and I thought the museum needed a new museum.

EDYTHE BROAD: Well, originally, she just thought she would ask for—they wanted to refurbish what they had. And it wasn't very good.

ELI BROAD: In the middle of campus. But then she came up with the bright idea that we've got this building we want to tear down on the edge of the campus, facing the city of East Lansing. And why not build a museum? And I liked the idea. And there, we had a competition. That was an interesting competition because she started out saying, "You've got to be respectful of all of our red brick buildings." They ended up choosing the most contemporary design possible—Zaha Hadid. And then she said, "Well, this will get us into the 22nd century."

AVIS BERMAN: So it was, red brick be damned, after a while. I've looked on Zaha Hadid's website, so I know what the building looks like.

ELI BROAD: It was an interesting experience. We're just donors here. The university did a great job handling everything.

EDYTHE BROAD: Yeah, I think that went really well. We never heard any problems or complaints.

ELI BROAD: Pardon?

EDYTHE BROAD: We never heard problems or complaints. They're very organized there. They handled it.

ELI BROAD: But what happened is the university was smart. Whenever the architect made a presentation, they would videotape it, and they'd ask questions. "Can this be built for \$36 million?" And the answer was yes. At one point, it got to be \$100 million. It finally got down to somewhere in the 40s.

AVIS BERMAN: So you had to supply extra money?

ELI BROAD: No, I gave them some extra money, but I didn't supply the difference. They raised other money.

EDYTHE BROAD: It's going to be special.

AVIS BERMAN: What are the biggest differences between this and some of your other museum projects?

EDYTHE BROAD: It's smaller.

ELI BROAD: Well, it's a very different building. The other museum projects, we were interested in just primarily having great gallery space. This—they don't have a great collection. We're going to give them some work and lend them some work, and so on, but they wanted something that would be an architectural attraction, where people would want to come to see the building.

AVIS BERMAN: A destination.

ELI BROAD: Oh, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: And was the point of having the museum for them to collect more contemporary art?

ELI BROAD: Mostly. It will be up to the director, Michael Rush. Do you know Michael?

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I certainly know how heroic he was when he was at Brandeis [the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University –AB].

ELI BROAD: He was a great choice for Michigan State.

EDYTHE BROAD: He'll do a good job.

ELI BROAD: Yeah, he was a good choice.

AVIS BERMAN: He has had a solid reputation for years, not just at Brandeis. But he rose to the occasion, to say the least. He really did.

ELI BROAD: He sure did.

EDYTHE BROAD: That was not pleasant.

AVIS BERMAN: No, no.

ELI BROAD: So we look forward to the opening. It was supposed to open in May, but lo and behold, some of the glass that came from Germany didn't fit. So I said, "Open it in June"; and she said, "No, I want to open it when students are on campus." So it's September now.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, that will be nice. And has Michael discussed what the focus will be?

ELI BROAD: He's talked to our foundation director. I've talked to him on occasion. He wants to do something, quote, international, which he's doing. He's hired several good people—one from the San Francisco Museum. I forget where the person came from. But it's not something we're on—we're donors. We're not hands-on in any way.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Is that frustrating for you to be less hands-on?

EDYTHE BROAD: No, no. [Laughs.]

ELI BROAD: If you think of all the things on our plate, whether it's in the arts, education—

EDYTHE BROAD: Education, science, medicine.

AVIS BERMAN: Is it kind of a relief to have grown-ups in charge?

ELI BROAD: Oh, yeah, yeah.

EDYTHE BROAD: Very much so, very much so.

ELI BROAD: Yeah, we're very happy to have Michael as director, and the university did a good job getting it built.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, did you find it a surprise that they were able to bring this off?

EDYTHE BROAD: No, the president is wonderful, Lou Ann Simon. And also, that's the Midwest. That's not New York or California. They don't go for this business of, well, it's going to cost this much, and then it turns out to be three times as much. That's not that part of the country. It's sort of like, excuse me?

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah, I agree. Well, it must have been kind of fun to be—were you born in Michigan?

EDYTHE BROAD: I was born and raised. Eli was raised but not born there. You know that part of the country—

AVIS BERMAN: Did you go to Michigan State, too?

EDYTHE BROAD: No.

AVIS BERMAN: Was there anything that you objected to that they fixed or—

ELI BROAD: Where? At Michigan State?

AVIS BERMAN: At Michigan.

ELI BROAD: No, no.

EDYTHE BROAD: It was a pleasure. It was just a total pleasure.

ELI BROAD: No, we looked at the plans, and so on. There's another graduate you may know—Edward Minskoff—do you know him?

AVIS BERMAN: No, I don't.

ELI BROAD: He's a developer here. He's a graduate. He gave several million dollars also, and he was very helpful because his business is construction of high-rise buildings. So he volunteered some of the people that helped the university.

AVIS BERMAN: That's great. They had the old museum. Are you refurbishing or doing [anything with that? -AB]

ELI BROAD: They're going to use that mostly for storage and some student shows.

EDYTHE BROAD: It's a very nondescript building.

ELI BROAD: And small.

EDYTHE BROAD: And small.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Now, how about members of the art history or the studio program—the faculty at Michigan—the art departments at Michigan State? How do they feel about this?

ELI BROAD: They love it. Everyone in the university—they're excited about this, to the point where they wanted to have three days of celebration.

EDYTHE BROAD: I think it's beyond their expectation that they would ever have anything like that.

ELI BROAD: Whenever we had a press conference or whatever, we have hundreds of people—

EDYTHE BROAD: Oh, my God, the governor shows up for everything. I mean, it's a big deal there.

AVIS BERMAN: There's not a lot of hope in parts of Michigan, and so this brings hope.

EDYTHE BROAD: It's a big deal. Everytime we go there, it's like—

ELI BROAD: Pardon?

EDYTHE BROAD: I think of every time we go there. It's like there's a whole—dinners, and everybody wants to show up. You know, really, I think about the news conferences. The governor was there.

ELI BROAD: I was there.

EDYTHE BROAD: I think every official, you know, anyone—I mean, it's a big deal.

ELI BROAD: It's a big university.

AVIS BERMAN: But it [isn't -AB] every day there that something like this happens.

EDYTHE BROAD: No. And it's also—what it is, it's really something—a beautiful piece of architecture. It's like a little jewel, I think, set in—it's very different from everything they have there.

AVIS BERMAN: Would you like to work with Zaha Hadid on, I don't know, another project or anything?

EDYTHE BROAD: Zaha? I like Zaha.

ELI BROAD: I don't know. The first time I saw—see, we visited London when we were looking for architects for LACMA and visited her office, and I couldn't understand what she was doing, frankly, in her sketches, which ended up being the art museum in Rome. What's that called?

EDYTHE BROAD: I know we were just there, but I don't know what it's called.

ELI BROAD: The MAXXI.

EDYTHE BROAD: I like working with architects, though. I think if we did another project, we'd probably look maybe to another architect. It's fun to work with them. They are interesting people.

AVIS BERMAN: [...-AB] You can articulate something, and it can happen.

EDYTHE BROAD: I think they're much more creative than we are.

ELI BROAD: Very quickly, the architects we've involved in one—Charles Gwathmey, at Pitzer College, when I was chairing that board, did several small buildings. Then at Cal Tech, we get James Ingo Freed—who did a great building.

EDYTHE BROAD: Our house is Richard Meier. Another house is Frank Gehry. And with Zaha Hadid.

ELI BROAD: Then I was involved in Grand Avenue with the arts high school [Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts, Los Angeles, CA], and we got Wolf Prix to do that.

EDYTHE BROAD: We're just checking them all off.

AVIS BERMAN: I was going to say, it looks like you're kind of like the mini-Pritzker [Architecture Prize].

ELI BROAD: And Morphosis [Architects, Inc.] did the new Caltrans building downtown [Caltrans District 7 Headquarters].

AVIS BERMAN: Who did?

ELI BROAD: Morphosis, which is Thom Mayne.

EDYTHE BROAD: Well, and a lot of them were done very budgetary, too. I think we got a lot of bang for our buck in them. And they would have loved to have done even more. But it's nice to have a building, better than just an ordinary building. If you get a good architect, you get that. They have to work a little harder.

ELI BROAD: No, I'll tell you what happened. The governor, who is Gray Davis—they wanted to build a new building, a large building for California Department of Transportation downtown. And he wanted them to have a good piece of architecture, so he sent me the RFP [Request for Proposals]. You never get an architect to do that.

So I ended up with the thought of, Why don't we have a design competition, but the architect has to partner with a developer and a general contractor, and it's got to be a fixed price of X dollars, because the governor made clear there was not going to be another penny spent. So then we said, there's a competition. So we got Thom Mayne together with the developer and Clark Construction, and they did an amazing building for very little money.

EDYTHE BROAD: And they had to compromise. Like Thom, the architect, would say, "We need this. You can't give up on that." And the developer would say, "That's too expensive. What else can we do?" Really, and they did—the three of them worked together, and an interesting concept, and they came in on budget because the governor wasn't going to pay for any more.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, sometimes it's enjoyable to be a little bit ingenious about these things.

ELI BROAD: It was a very different way to operate things.

EDYTHE BROAD: I think all government projects should be that way, frankly. And then you wouldn't have the overruns.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, thank you very much. I really appreciate this.

[END TRACK broad12_2of2_cd_track01.]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]