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ARTISTS' LIVES

Patrick Caulfield

Interviewed by Andrew Lambirth

C466/64

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F6302 Side A

[INAUDIBLE] I've got some... Do you know I had my 60th birthday...

In February, in January.

No no, end of January. And, people came, and Janet said there was only going to be fifty to sixty people coming. I said, that's OK, that's... I really wanted thirty. Anyway, she said, 'Don't worry,' she said, 'a lot of people simply won't come because people cancel,' and so on and so forth. And, anyway 90 people, nearly 90 people came, after, the morning[??] afterwards. And I looked at the hallway, and we had asked people to leave presents just on the hallway. There's no point in anything like opening every present. And, there were nineteen bottles of very good whisky, so which, and I've got lots left as you might imagine. And one, I think, now I can't move can I to show you because I'm trapped by this. But let me see that violin case on the sort of, it's a violin case, it's actually a rather solid violin case, but inside is a bottle of whisky and a bottle of water and a glass.

What an excellent idea.

One of the presents. What?

Who was that from?

A friend of mine who I've known since I was eleven years old at school, again. And when he came in, I thought, oh, because Janet had hired a jazz pianist to play on that piano you see, and I thought, God! he knows about it, he wants to join in. Because he... [TELEPHONE RINGING] Oh gosh, this is.....

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

Patrick Caulfield talking to Andrew Lambirth on the 27th of March 1996, in Belsize Square.

Patrick, you were talking about your 60th birthday. That takes us back in a sense to 60 years ago, when you were, right from the beginning, when, you were born where, in Acton?

Yes, I was born in Acton, South Acton, you have to be specific. Acton has got very different areas. South Acton, where I was born, was known as 'Bagwash City', because, as you walked along the streets where I was born, you smell the smell of damp laundry, because people used to do these...they were like...they looked like garages from the front but they were... It sounds as though I'm not talking to you. They were laundries, and in fact there was one my mother worked in, one of those laundries. Sounds a bit like Zola[ph] but it... Anyway.

Were they cottage, like a cottage industry, or...?

I suppose they were. I mean they were a small scale, but, they were cottage, but they weren't cottage in any cosy sense that a cottage evokes, you know.

But it wasn't in people's back gardens?

No. Well, my memory is quite, again as I have just been warned[???]. They were, as I say they were like, I suppose if you had a big enough space you somehow washed people's sheets and so on and so forth. I don't know how they did it technically, but it was...they were all like big garages really, so they weren't cottage industries in that sense, sense of scale.

Now what sort of house were you born in? Or were you born in a hospital?

I was born in a hospital. But the house we lived in was just two storey, semi-detached – no, row house.

Terraced?

Yes. And we just had the top flat.

And was it just you and your parents?

And my elder brother, yes

The four of you?

Yes.

And what did your father do?

At that time, I don't actually know what he was doing. He was working in a factory somewhere. Well there are two possibilities. He could be working in a factory, or he could be working on the railways as a labourer, you know, doing stuff with the lines, I don't know.

Those were the two occupations that he had?

Possibly at that time. He did different things. I can't remember actually.

What sort of factory, do you remember?

Oh no, I can't remember, no. It would have been vaguely engineering, you know, it would be working a lathe or something like that. I mean, I don't...

But locally, I mean around Acton?

Yes, oh definitely, yes, quite locally.

Do you remember anything about that flat, I mean the physical aspects of it, what the colour of the walls were?

No. The only thing I remember about it was, of being stung by a bee in there, which was... That really sticks in my...I mean, it stick in my mind, well it stuck in my arm or wherever, at that time. But it seemed very, God! very serious to me at the time. I mean, because, this was my first association with nature I suppose, stung by the bee. But, no, it looked on...I think it looked out onto a green space, scrubby sort of green space. It doesn't...the place doesn't exist any more, they're all pulled down and there are blocks of flats.

How long were you living there, do you have any idea?

It can't have been very long, because then we went up to Bolton, which is where my parents were born.

How old would you have been roughly?

I can't...I really don't know. About two or three years old I suppose, very...

So what is the first memory you have of living anywhere, not really there then, in Acton?

No no, it is the first memory I have.

Yes, the bee.

That...well I have that memory of the bee.

Yes.

Do you think it's too early to have a memory of the bee?

No not at all, but you don't have any sort of physical memories of the place, besides the bee, so it didn't make that much impression on you.

Well the laundries.

Yes.

I mean, I'm so confused. What age do you start to turn them around, about...?

Two or three, yes.

Yes. I remember there was a sweet shop round the corner that had chicken wire across the counter. I don't think it would have been across all the counter but it...why it was there I don't know, unless it was like a sort of, stop people stealing things.

Sounds like a very primitive way of keeping them out of the off-licence bit.

Exactly, it was a bit like that.

So what happened when you went to Bolton?

Well, I...well I suppose I eventually went to school there. And...

What was the reason for moving back?

I suppose in retrospect it must have been to do with the war. I don't think my family had anything really going for them being in London, I don't know what ambition they had being in London. I never asked questions of my parents, why they did things.

But...

You wouldn't have talked about it naturally?

No. Well, certainly not at that time, I mean never since. But as they were brought up and all their relations were in Bolton, they went back there, and, then my father worked, and this I do remember very well, he worked in the De Havilland aircraft factory, as an engineering job, and polishing propellers or something. And my mother worked in the cotton mills, which, I think they had done, my mother...both my mother and father worked in the mills when they were younger, when they were thirteen

actually my father, my father was thirteen, was working in the mills. And also, I don't know whether before, he worked for a short time only as, in the mines doing the, working with ventilation shafts. It was like the equivalent of a punkah-wallah. You had to keep the ventilation shafts... I don't know. I'm saying things that were only sort of vaguely recounted to me, so I can't remember them. I mean I can't understand it, I just have this memory. So they went back rather to the life I suppose they had had before in Lancashire, but one thing, it meant my father didn't have to go into the Army, because he was working in an industry related to the war, directly related. And I went to school I suppose, my brother and I went to school.

How much older than you is your brother?

Only a year.

So did you spend much time playing with him as a child?

Yes, yes. Yes, he used to beat me up occasionally. Fortunately he's still alive and a very good friend.

[BREAK IN RECORDING – TELEPHONE]

So, I mean what sort of home did you have in Bolton?

Well, the one we had in London wasn't very good, but Lancashire, it was absolutely Industrial Revolution housing. It was row housing, row upon row upon row of streets with, back streets, so it was like, the main street and a back street, the main street and a back street, long rows of houses, one up...you know, no, two-storey, like two-up two-down, and this yard at the back and the lavatory was at the end of the yard, as was the midden; the midden was where you put the rubbish. And there were little... Well the back street was cobbled. Actually the main street was macadam, and the back street was...you see, in retrospect it was rather attractive with cobbles, with grass sort of coming through. And it was just an enormous part of Bolton.

Was it all sort of very smoky and black, or...?

Well, I mean there were lots of very good...I always remember about Bolton, there were lots of tall chimneys, rather dramatic, but you really only see them collectively if you go up... It's surrounded by something like a sort of horseshoe moorland, and when you go up to the moors, which only takes, it was like a twopenny bus ride or something, you look...you're in wonderful heather land and drystone walls and marvellous countryside, you look down and there's the whole of Bolton with all these chimneys sticking up. So it's funny, such a...it's become such a corny image of northern living now, it's like something out of a movie. At the time it didn't mean anything to me, except I liked to go the moorland, but I used to like the town as well, because we lived near the railways, we lived near the reservoirs, there was always, it was a great playground really.

You played in the streets and went off with friends and so on.

Yes. Well, you didn't stay too far because every street had its street gang, and so, you didn't really go down other streets; you always walked on the main roads. It wasn't serious, it was just like a bit of bullying, you know.

What were the sort of colours that you remember there? I mean one always thinks of these industrial towns being so dark; I mean was it...because you could get out into the countryside, was it quite sort of bright, or not?

Well, the actual, you know, where one lived, because the houses were only two storeys high, you didn't feel quite physically... It was quite a big sky, you didn't feel physically enclosed. And you didn't have to walk far, and then you looked down onto other aspects, to the railway line, the power stations and everything. But they were sort of slightly lower down. And there were rivers and things going through, like, and it was obviously very polluted. But it was quite varied, it wasn't encompassing, it wasn't like you felt like something at the bottom of a pit or something, you know. The Industrial Revolution was so haphazard in its development that it both encompassed places and left places alone, you know, you get these bits of green land and stuff which just for some reason or other hadn't been built on. So it was very

various. And it had...and you could look out and see the moors, you know, around the town, right from the centre of Bolton, you could stand on the...and I might be making this up, I haven't been there for years, but I think you can stand on the town hall steps and see the moors in the distance.

It wasn't that, it wasn't that huge and sprawling then either?

Well not at that time, no. I think the actual geography of the moors, hills, probably contained it. And then of course it wasn't like polluted in any way by traffic or anything, as it is now.

Were there any cars?

Well, that's a strange thing. You see cars were like something other people had, those very rich people who one would never know, never meet. And we did a thing which was quite bizarre in retrospect, was to go to the main road, which was actually two streets away from where I lived, and sit there and collect car numbers, like people collect train numbers you know. So you can imagine there weren't many cars, and we just sat there waiting for a car to go by. I mean we used to have our milk delivered by horse and cart. It's amazing thing, one being born at that time, because we were still just sort of kind of hitting the cusp of the, between the 19th and 20th century, things were still there which had been going on through history.

Were there any kind of people selling their wares up and down the street, or anything like that, you know, with...?

Oh yes, yes.

Pie men or people like that, did you have that kind of thing?

There were, but actually I can't remember anything specific. There certainly were, people would come round the streets and yell, usually with a horse and cart, to do, provide certain services, I can't remember quite what they were.

Would you have had shops on the corner of the street and that kind of thing, do you remember?

Well, what we had on the street, practically... As I say, they were row after row of houses. In practically every street was a fish and chip shop, that was the focus of society that I knew, because of course I didn't go into pubs then.

Were there a lot of pubs there? I expect there were, were there?

No, not that...no, there weren't a lot of pubs actually.

Perhaps there wasn't the money for them.

Well maybe there were more in town than where we were. I can't...I don't think they were distributed as they are today for instance, like in London anyway. The fish and chip shops were the thing, place.

And did you get to eat much fish and chips?

Oh, I loved fish and chips, still do, still my favourite thing.

But would you eat it once a week or what?

Oh, I couldn't remember, but...

I mean was it a treat?

Easily once a week.

Was it a treat, or was it a staple?

I think it probably was a treat, because...it wasn't a treat, and it was like more economical than providing other food, then[??] I think I would have [INAUDIBLE] those all the time, so I didn't, therefore it must have been a treat. But you would just

go and get a bag of chips, or, if you were given enough money to get a bag of chips, I suppose that would have been something you would just eat anyway. I remember thing, later on when I went to school, proper school, we used to have these round breads and you cut them in half, well you tore them in half, and then you ate the middle and you bought some chips and filled them with chips, and that was...

Like a chip butty.

A delicacy, yes.

Would you have played indoors, in the home, in the house, or was it always out on the street?

It would be always out on the street, because there wasn't...there was nothing really you could play with indoors.

There wasn't room perhaps?

Well there was one empty room, because we never used the front room, and my parents never furnished it.

Oh it wasn't like for best, there was just nothing in it?

Well, no, it should have been but it wasn't because they didn't have any best to furnish it with, it was just an empty room. Well it had stuff in there, I can't remember, storage; it was like we used it as a sort of spare room. So, we always lived in one room.

And you shared a bedroom with your brother probably?

Yes.

So you lived in the kitchen really?

Yes. We had a scullery, which was where they have a boiler that you could heat up with a fire and wash things. No, my brother and I shared a room. And the very very few occasions that my parents went out in the evening, hardly ever, they would leave us with, we had a blackboard which seemed big to me at that time, on our knees, on the bed clothes, they would leave us with a blackboard, a bottle of lemonade or something, and some sweets each shared out, and we would divide the blackboard with a chalk mark, and we had our chinks, and we would do drawings on our side of the blackboard, and eat our sweets. And we would like, it was...I mean, I don't remember them ever asking us to clean our teeth or anything, I don't think we had toothbrushes to clean our teeth, we just... And we had these sweets, you know, it sounds like the worst thing for tooth decay.

Was that all right there, I mean you didn't have, presumably you didn't have anything like a babysitter or anyone to keep an eye on you?

No, you must be joking, no [INAUDIBLE]. Well there was no real danger for children.

No, but I mean it wasn't a worry to you or anything like that? I shouldn't think...

No, we were delighted, this was our treat, to be left with this blackboard and sweets.

Do you remember what you drew on it?

No, no.

One of the earliest Patrick Caulfields ever recorded.

No, it was good because you could rub it out as soon as you...and laugh at[??] our mistakes so to speak.

But in the house then you wouldn't have perhaps had any pictures on the walls or anything like that?

No, not that I recall. No, well, I was there during the war, and the only thing available to paint the walls was a thing called distemper, which...

Which was what colour?

Well there were only two colours. I think, as far as I remember the only two colours you could get, they were cream or pale blue, I think. It could have been...no it might have been a light green. I'm not sure. But, you know, distemper's a very dry, flaky sort of colour.

So that would have been the colour of the interior, would it?

Yes, mm.

So what do you first remember about going to school, and where would that have been, I mean at the local...?

Well, I was brought up a Catholic, I was baptised a Catholic.

A church school then?

Yes, it was always a Catholic school, and, well the first one I went to, I used to run away every day.

Run away?

Mhm, yes I used to run...

Why?

Either back home or to my auntie's house, and I couldn't...I couldn't take it, and I just, every time... And my brother used to have to look after me at play time so I wouldn't run away.

Were you that miserable?

Yes, I hated it, I was very miserable.

Was this your first experience of school at all?

Yes.

And how old would you have been?

I suppose I would have been school age, five or six. I don't know what it was in those days, yes, say six or something. The only thing that, and this sounds like a sort of artist talking, but it was true, they gave me these building bricks to play with, to make, and that kept me there, so I stayed.

Were they coloured or just plain wood?

They were plain wood, yes, as far as I remember. It's fairly...actually I'm talking to this rather than you, I wish I was talking to you.

Well the idea is that I don't say too much, so your voice comes out rather than mine. No, I know, I mean it is quite difficult, you get used to it I think, perhaps.

Yes. This is getting...

Good. But then, I mean to say, it was what, a little school run by the local priest, or dames, or what are they, what kinds of people?

Oh, God! I've no idea of the structure of education at that time. It was a public school in the sense that anybody could go there, and I was Catholic, which makes me think of a story of my father when he had lived in Bolton as a child, when he went to school, when, he used to spend half the day in the cotton mills and, or the mines, I don't know which, and half the day at school, and he alternated, sometimes you go to school in the morning, and work in the afternoon, and vice versa. And, one day he

was going to school and, I presume in the morning, and he, as he went to school he realised he had actually, he passed the school on his way to get to the school, he was going to... So he thought, well this is a bit strange, in his mind, so he went into the first school, and stood in line with all the other children. And apparently he made some remark which was overheard by the teacher, and he was caned, admonished in some way. But then he stayed at that school from then on, this school that he actually passed on his way to the school he was meant to be at, you know. That was the nature of schooling. So, I mean, my schooling was not much, not much, well, carefully organised than that really, it was just... It's always, like, the nearest school really, which was Catholic, had to be Catholic.

Was that important in your upbringing, I mean the religion? Were your parents devout?

Well, I think the only...you get devout... The most devout people in religion are the converts. They were brought up, they were Irish, totally, my family are totally Irish you see, and they were the first... The reason they were in Bolton was because, if you arrive from Ireland you land in Liverpool, and if you don't go too far you get to Bolton, and so, they were Irish Catholics. Well, being Irish Catholics, you never question the nature of religion; it is just what you are, there's no other possible religion. I mean, you can't imagine it. I mean, Protestantism is as far away from Catholicism and being a Catholic as religions that they wouldn't have known about at all in the world.

Hinduism.

Exactly. I mean, any world religion.

And was it fairly easy-going then in that case, was it just something that sort of was there, always there, you didn't question it and so it was part of life?

Yes, except you didn't...

Did you go to church?

Oh absolutely, every Sunday, yes.

But once, not sort of every, sort of three or four times?

No no, every Sunday.

Yes, but not every, not to every service?

No.

Sometimes you go morning and evening or something like that.

No, no.

Just once?

It was a dutiful thing you did once every week, which was a Sunday morning.

And would you have to dress up in your Sunday best or something, or didn't you have?

Yes, as much as one could, yes, oh yes. I can't remember what my Sunday best was.

And so if your parents did go out in the evenings, where would they have gone?

Would they have gone to see a film or something?

No, no. Well, I say no, actually I suppose they would have seen films occasionally, but mainly, if they ever went out it would be, I presume because I never accompanied them of course, was to a pub or something, or to a relation's house. They didn't have friends, they only had relations. They didn't have a social milieu or whatever to join.

Were there lots of...?

They just had their relations, and they would go to see their relations.

And there were lots of them?

Yes, lots of relations, yes, spread about.

Do you remember grandparents or anything like that?

Only remember a grandmother, and I can't remember whether it was my mother's mother or my father's. I think it was my mother's mother, who was like a sort of granite figure who sat by the hob with the kettle always boiling, you know, always on the hob, and really didn't kind of, sort of convey very much, to me anyway.

End of F6302 Side A

F6302 Side B

It's a crazy tie you've got there. You were wearing a funny tie when...

Malcolm Levene's.

Oh, oh very smart.

I wasn't wearing a crazy tie last night, it was a striped one.

I know, but it looked crazy in the light, and with your new beard, or maybe it's an old beard. I'm not sure, I don't remember you having such a...being so hairy. Is this going on the...?

Yes, I'm afraid so. My hair would have been shorter I think Patrick, and there was probably no beard at all. I sometimes grow it and I sometimes get rid of it.

I remember going with my accountant to see the, a member of the Customs and Excise or whatever the tax people are called, anyway, and, he looked more like an artist than I did. He had a beard.

An arse?

An artist.

Oh.

Sorry, I didn't pronounce the T then, I don't know why, I was a bit nervous about what you were doing.

Playing with the levels, don't worry about it.

I think, I won't worry about it. Right.

I was going to ask when your forebears as it were came over from Ireland to Liverpool, Lancashire.

Well that would have been my grandparents. My... OK. My family names, I am very...I'm very uninformed about this, and I just glean that they were, my, the four, you know, one has to have four family names, and they were McGuinness[ph], Daly[ph], Gill, and Caulfield. Well Caulfield was some Anglo-Irish name, and I mean one presumes that it came from when the Irish invested, sorry, the English invested Ireland, and a lot of the English soldiers got involved with Irish ladies and stayed there, married and so on. And so I think that family came from Sligo, from the middle of Ireland. I think the reason that, this is mere interpretation, it could be untrue, but it's probably likely to be true, is that the main troops in, English troops in Ireland were in the centre of Ireland actually, so they could cover the north and the south, and that would have been Sligo, well between Sligo and Dublin, so, that's what I think perhaps happened. So, however, all my grandparents were Irish.

Would they have been farmers or, do you think?

Well, I suppose so. I mean there wasn't much else they could have done.

I mean no tradition of music or something like that, or...?

Not to my knowledge. Well, music is in the Irish blood I think, in a strange way, and maybe one was a champion fiddler, I'd like to think so. I don't know. I love Irish fiddle music, so maybe.

So really you only knew one out of your four grandparents, you only remember one?

Yes, yes, one grandmother.

But lots of cousins and uncles and aunts and things?

Yes, numerous, so numerous I don't remember who belonged to who. I was taken to see my relations, a kind of blanket term, and I didn't know whether they were relations on my father's side or on my mother's side.

And you didn't have any particular friends among them?

Everybody was friends. You see, we didn't have friends, we only had relations, we didn't have friends. Except at school I suppose I might have had a friend. We...there was no expansion, you just do your relations, that was it.

So it was a fairly sort of circumscribed life really.

Yes.

But didn't perhaps seem so.

No, no, it just seemed quite, well obviously it was totally natural, it was what I was born into, and never, never would have questioned, possibly questioned it.

So you stayed in Bolton until how old?

Well, that's...I'm very bad about remembering any...this isn't going to be very helpful in this. But, I know I did my 11-plus exam in, when we went back to Acton, so I think I stayed there till I was about nine I think. It was after the war, I suppose one could work that out from my date of birth. Nine.

'45 isn't it, so...

Yes. Is that nine? Is that right? Anyway, yes, then we went back to a wonderful Acton from the delights of Bolton; somehow we missed out Monte Carlo on the way.

You didn't try somewhere else?

Where else?

Well, perhaps another part of London, I don't know. Do you feel that...

I think my parents had a perspective which dictated where they went, and I don't understand it. Of course I was not in a position to question it, and I've really not questioned it since. I know we had one relation in Acton, who was my mother's sister.

And you think she stayed there while you went up?

I don't know, I don't know.

How did you get on with your parents?

Perfectly well, you know, I mean they kind of worked all the time.

Did you see much of them?

Oh, well, the pattern of life was, they went to work, I went to school. Yes, we spent every evening together. But actually we never talked very much. Funnily enough, now I think I talk too much because, we never used to talk, somehow it didn't seem necessary, merely because there was nothing to say, I mean nothing happened, and... We certainly didn't have conversations, you know, and we could put 'conversations' in quotes; we just communicated in a kind of really fairly basic way.

But surely you wouldn't have sat around in silence, around, in the evenings, would you? Or would your father have read the paper or something?

I don't know what my father... Yes, I suppose... Well if he read the paper it was probably the only thing he did read, because we never had books. I don't know really what...I just, life went on, I can't remember really. We never had any conversations, talking about things, abstract things or anything like that, it was just... And Mother would do the washing, and I would do the dreaded bag-wash. I used to carry the bag-wash down to my... For some reason I never understood I used to have to carry it

down to my aunt's house where it was picked up. I never understood why they couldn't pick it up from where we lived. So, this is back to bag-wash, it was funny but this was much later.

So the same pattern re-emerged back in South Acton when you moved back?

When we went back we didn't live in South Acton, we lived in North Acton.

Ah.

When we went back we lived in a worse place than we had lived when we were there. We lived at a main road where trolley-buses went by, so there were wires outside the windows for the trolley-buses. Next door was a pub; below us was a cobbler's shop, which sort of had a reminder of Bolton, because my father's brother, elder brother, he lied about his age and he joined the Army in the First World War, and he was blown up in a, he was on a machine-gun, which is like, called the suicide squad or something, whatever terms they used then, and he was blown up. He survived, there were three people, the machine-gun, but he lost a leg. And I was always fascinating when I was in Bolton to go and visit their house, because I would see one of his artificial legs hanging up. But he was... The ironical thing in the story, and this is a real story, when he came out of the Army because of having lost a leg, they had to rehabilitate him, give him a trade, because he wasn't seventeen or whatever age you had to be to be in the Army so he was a real, he was below the age you had to be. So, in order to rehabilitate him they taught him to be a cobbler, to do with making shoes. He only had one leg. And it was... [LAUGHING] So he was a one-legged cobbler; I'm sure it's not unique in that sense but it was so funny that they...well not...well... Actually he was a very, he was a marvellous guy, he was so charming and nice and amusing and lively, and he had a really... And he was a very lively part of my life as I remember. But, it was quite funny that he was made a cobbler. Anyway, we lived over a cobbler's in Acton, North Acton, right by the mainline station there, which is a Great Western Railway station. In front of us is the main road that the trolley-buses... Behind us was a little, like garage, you know, repairing cars, not a garage that sold petrol but you know... And beyond that was a railway, the mainline railway to the West. And, John and I, my brother, we used to have the back bedroom overlooking

the railway, and the biggest romance was to see the Cornish Riviera express going by with the little table lights lit up, you know, it was going to somewhere, to the west. And that's about it. Then my father worked, I think he worked on the railways a bit. He worked in factories.

And you went to school?

Oh, then I went to school at St. Mary's, which was in South Acton, the old way, to South Acton. So the seeking of a Catholic school. Actually that has been a bit of a problem throughout my life, seeking Catholic schools. But to just seek a school is bad enough, a decent, like reasonable school, but then you have to seek a Catholic school, and so I used to go to St. Mary's, very south Acton, nearly in Chiswick, just north of Turnham Green. It doesn't exist any more.

What was that like as a school?

Well, it was a strange place. It was quite squat, I think it was only one floor high with a kind...it looked like, more like a church, done in kind of soft stone grey brickwork, very soft because during playtime we used to carve holes in the wall, we used to actually carve cannons[??] in the wall; I don't know why nobody stopped us, but, we weren't being vandals, it was something to do, whenever we got, [INAUDIBLE] to be, and where you could carve stone. I mean, it sounds again like an artist talking, it wasn't, it was just, everybody. It was vandalism. And, it was mainly, you were taught by nuns, who just were maybe, I can't remember, a few nuns, but I think our main teacher was a nun. But it was a bit wild in some ways, because it was very Irish, this school, and there were two Irish brothers, I think there may have been three of them, and they kind of were incredibly vicious and would attack the teachers and things. And if one of them was accused of anything, the others would gang up on the teacher, they would actually, on one occasion I think they hit them with milk bottles, because we had those little milk bottles still. And it was...it was a peculiar place. I was quite happy there actually, it was really nice.

Did you learn much?

I can't remember any teachers who, when you say did you learn much, it was like, really, did you have a feeling of knowledge and nice people. I didn't really, I don't really remember any teachers who conveyed any feeling to me particularly. But it wasn't...it wasn't unpleasant. I remember one lesson we used to have. They had a...it was not a big school, it had a yard, called the yard, you know, which is the playground, which went on to the road, and because of the war there used to be railings there but they had been taken away because of the war. And so there was this low wall which would have had railings and then you could just step onto the pavement, which was always tempting to children to leave the school, because there were no barriers, and also there was no real feeling you wanted to be in the school. But there was an inner yard, and I remember one thing we did as a kind of sport, which, we did boxing. We had boxing lessons. I mean it was...you'd all put on these gloves. It was all we did, I mean didn't strip to the waist or anything, we just wore the gloves. And we were encouraged to kind of try and hit each other.

Not by the nuns?

No, no. [LAUGHING] Anyway...

So what age did that go up to?

Oh, I suppose... No well, I don't know, I can't remember when one was transferred from schools. I suppose eleven it would have been, about the time when you did our exams, then went on to the next place.

Another Catholic school?

No. At that moment Catholicism had to take a back seat because there weren't...I couldn't...there weren't Catholic schools on this level of education, such as it was, that I went on to.

So you went where?

I went to a place called Acton Central Secondary Modern, which was a really grim Victorian building. But this was quite near where we were living in North Acton. And, I can't remember, I suppose my brother was there. Actually I'm not sure he was. No he didn't, no he wasn't. He stayed on for some reason at the other school. Well that was another... In fact actually in the end I liked the Acton Central Secondary Modern because there were some really inspiring teachers there, very nice teachers. I mean, I feel sorry for them because I feel they deserved better than being in that place.

What were the subjects that you were drawn to then at that age?

Well when I went there, I was always hopeless at mathematics, I hated mathematics, but the unique element of Acton Central Secondary Modern was that they taught... It was like, if you...if you get good enough results to go to a grammar school you went there. In fact apparently there were worse places, I can't imagine how they could have been worse. But you did shorthand, shorthand was a course.

Very practical.

Well, of course it's not practical, who does shorthand any more? Technology's taken over that role. And like, well, at the moment we're talking to a tape recorder, you know, but they didn't have tape recorders. And, the other thing, if you stayed on till the last year, which I couldn't afford to do, you did typing. So shorthand... And they wanted, they were trying to create a kind of, a sort of class of people who worked in offices.

Clerks.

Qualify that. A group, a class, yes, of people who were trained to do shorthand and typing. As it happened I mean, I made two of my closest friends at that school. One of them was brilliant at shorthand. All the boys were hopeless at shorthand, and all the girls were much better. The girls always triumphed when it came to exams, except for my friend who was better than all the girls. It's a funny thing to remember but he was better at shorthand than all the girls. And he in fact, I'm still very much in

touch with him, and if we were sitting here, he could take our conversation down in shorthand. He was... Anyway...

What about art, at this stage?

Oh, well, I'm talking about the peculiarities of the place. Well they had the regular courses. No, yes, the art, I did very well at art, but...

For the first time? I mean had you had any teaching in it before, I mean when...was one encouraged to draw or paint or anything?

No, never, never.

So this was the first time?

Yes, but everybody did art, it was like, it was the relaxing time. Anything but mathematics, I hated. I did... OK, I was there for, till I was fifteen, and the things I did best were English and art. The things I enjoyed other than that really were history and geography, and some elements of science.

What about sport?

No. Well, I did have one little...I was...I won races in the middle distance running, you know. I could run. I could never hit or kick a ball or throw it, I just, balls, I just couldn't, couldn't deal with them. But, I just would run for a while when I was fit.

So did you get a chance to spend more time drawing than other things, or did you just have to do everything equally?

Well I don't remember thinking of drawing as an activity, I just... I used to do what was required, whether it was paint or whatever medium. What's the word? Yes, art was just like something that you had to do between certain hours in the curriculum.

So if you think back to that time, what was expected of you, what were you going to do when you left school?

Total blank, I don't know what they expected of me.

Did your parents expect you to go out and earn a living?

Well they did, because, I could have gone, if they hadn't expected, I could have gone on another year, but they couldn't afford, they wanted me to get a job so I had to leave at fifteen.

Did you mind that?

I did actually, I was... By that time I had got these two particularly good friends who I saw, see and know, and other friends, and I liked very much some of the teachers, we had some very good teachers, really interesting people. As I say I feel sorry that they were stuck with, not only the place but with us really. Well, I think we were, we grew very sympathetic towards them, but, you know, presumably vice versa, but... I'm forgetting what else.

No, I just wondered whether you, you know, you had rather regretted not being able to stay there for another year.

Well I did, I did regret it.

And you got on with the person who taught art?

Yes.

But that wasn't...well, that didn't appear to be more important than the other things you were interested in?

No. Well the person who I got on with the most, the woman...there was woman who taught art. It was a woman who ran our year who taught English, and it was she who

was totally inspiring, she was amazing. She was about six foot two, with a ginger moustache, very handsome though, and very commanding. And she was marvellous, she was just marvellous, everybody liked her really, but she was tough, you know. And she was always trying to encourage me to write. She slightly discouraged me to be get involved in the visual arts.

End of F6302 Side B

F6303 Side A

We were talking about your English teacher I believe.

Yes.

Who rather inspired you in a way, she was keen that you did some writing, but did you do sort of compositions and that kind of thing at that point?

Oh yes, I was, always was top of the class at writing compositions and stuff. I loved writing actually.

Did you ever seriously consider doing...?

Well as much as I seriously considered anything, yes, because, I didn't have a concept of a profession. I didn't...I vaguely thought of journalism, but I didn't know...it was...it didn't mean anything to me, because I had no knowledge and no instruction and so forth. I just like writing. Yes, I like, I'm quite fascinated with words and so forth.

Did you ever take it any further later, writing? Did you write any stories or anything?

No, I didn't.

Or poetry?

Well I won an award. I won an award for a poem I wrote.

While you were still at school?

Yes, I must have been, yes, I can't remember now.

Because I remember reading something recently which said by the age of twelve, not only were you good at drawing but also at word games, war games, puzzles and trick photography.

It's total rubbish.

Is it?

Where did you read it? You're joking.

It was in a profile in the Observer, published in 1986.

No, I mean, OK, I mean I think that trick photography, I don't quite understand. I played war games, but that was...gosh, that was late in life when, after I had finished at the Royal College and was painting. But, what was the other thing?

Word games.

Not particularly.

Puzzles, war games.

[LAUGHS] No, war games was the only accurate bit of that information.

And that's later on?

Yes.

All right, well we'll come on to that later. But I think this is, they were sort of bringing in various people, mentioned Peter Ward.

Well yes, he...

This is the chap you were at school with?

Yes, yes he's a very good friend of mine still, who...

Was he the violin case man?

No, that was the other great friend.

That was the other one.

He was a TV cameraman until he retired, he's now retired, and now he's written books on television and cinema photography, and recently I did an illustration for him.

For a book cover?

Mm?

Was it for a book cover?

The idea was, it was going to be on the cover, but the people who were publishing it thought it looked too much like an art book, so it's actually, it's actually in the beginning of the, like a frontispiece of the book.

So these hand-painted toy soldiers come in later then do they?

Yes.

Right. So...

Now where are we?

Well I suppose now you're at the point when you've left school, you're fifteen.

Oh, right.

So what happens, you go and work, you go out to work?

Well, I had this dilemma facing all the men of my age, boys of my age, certainly the ones who weren't in some privileged situation.

There wasn't a possibility of you winning a scholarship or something like that?

I didn't...I don't think I knew the word scholarship.

No, I wondered whether your teachers might have said something about it.

No, nobody had said it.

Presumably there weren't very many opportunities at all.

Well as far as I could see there were no, there were no... [Don't worry about that. It looks nice as it were.] No no, there weren't...there weren't any opportunities.

So there was no choice?

No, I simply left school and I got a job.

Doing what?

Well, the first job I got, I got as a, one of my friends got it as well, we took employment in Park Royal, which is North Acton, it's a huge industrial estate, which actually are more common now, that was an unusual development that was past Arrow[??], which still exists. And you walk around it, and if you walk around it as I say on a Sunday, it's like a ghost town, and it is just these huge units built one after another, but it was before they really architecturally got it developed. I mean, some of the units are quite peculiar. There was one, it was like a Wild West saloon, didn't sell liquor but it had like a, like a pot-bellied stove in the middle of it, and it was made of

wood, and that's where people used to go and have their lunch. Well, lunch is a posh word; they had something to eat midday in it.

Like a canteen or was it more like a café?

Yes, like a canteen. However, having said that, that came later. When I first hit Park Royal I had a job, and it was boring holes in cooker rings, rings of metal. You bored holes in the rings so that the gas could come out. So I was working this, boring this...

Where the jets would come out?

Yes. I was the person who bored with a boring plate[?]. I used to, you know, just mainly just bore these holes in this... And it was very depressing. I got told off because I arranged the rings in a kind of aesthetic way after I had finished them. It didn't seem to me to be an issue, because it didn't matter how you piled them up, but they didn't like the way I piled them up. That was really depressing. And anyway, my brother was working in the firm Crosse & Blackwell's in the West End, in Soho Square, and so he got me a job from boring rings to going to Crosse & Blackwell's, but working in their office. That was really amazing. I mean, everything I remember now seems to come from the Dark Ages, like, some nice things like having the milk delivered by horse and cart, but this is an amusing... I used to go from North Acton station to Tottenham Court Road station every morning when it was dark, walk through this alleyway which, every time I pass it now I shiver, to the back entrance of Crosse & Blackwell's, and clock in, and I would sit on this... What I would do was sit on this chair, which was on a railway line, like a railway line, and you propelled yourself with your feet, and you were in front of a desk, and a stamp, and you used to go between these files of cabinets, and you would go to the correct cabinet with the order that you were looking at, take out a particular plate which was a metal plate, put it on a table, the table in front of you, and stamp their name on the order form. Now, I don't know, I mean it's like I'm talking about something that somebody else did, because I can't remember why we did that and everything. But that was when...now, because you know, people always press buttons, they don't do things like that. It was the most...there were about, kind of ten, six, eight rows, I don't know, of these lines, and people going up and down. And everybody was in competition, well not in

competition, but you had to do a certain number of orders per day. I never ever met, you know, the ratio that was expected of me. It was amazing. I hated it. And I used to get back on the Tube when it was then dark again in the winter, you know, and go back to North Acton station. But, while I was there, there was a notice on the board, in the office saying would anybody like to apply for a job at the commercial art department; then graphic design was called commercial art, you know, which is I think a more accurate description still. And so I immediately applied for that, and I got an interview, and I left the job I was doing, which I wasn't good at, and the guy who ran the place, the department, didn't like me. And then I was in the commercial art department at Crosse & Blackwell's, which was like three people, three other guys and myself.

Did you have anything to show them that you had done?

I think I must have done, yes, yes.

But not like a professional portfolio perhaps?

No, I just showed them different drawings. But they didn't worry too much, because really I was like a cleaner-up and wash the brushes and, I didn't do anything. They weren't giving me anything serious to do.

You didn't do any drawing or painting then?

Well, they gave me things to do because they really didn't have anything to do. But the guys in the studio were very sympathetic and nice, you know. It was a tiny studio, and it was run by this old guy with a huge big bald head and huge black glasses, and he would make his own tobacco, and he would enthuse the office totally with this smell of treacle, because he put, he made his own tobacco and he put treacle in it. Actually it wasn't...I didn't find it terrible, but it was just, it was all-pervading, you know. And he was a kind of grumpy character, but not unattractive really. And all the guys were very nice. And I used to do stupid things like, if they had an exhibition of chocolates that they had produced, I would varnish the chocolates with a brush, I'd varnish them with a brush, you know. No spray varnish, you know, just... And then

they would sort of ask me to do designs for chocolate boxes which didn't exist to keep me busy, and, I used to do curious things, just to keep myself busy. I painted a pound note once, laboriously painted an imitation pound note, which from a distance of about, like, six feet, it would probably look real, but... Things like that. And you look out of the window and there was the office roof, across the little alleyway at the back, and there were the pigeons, and used to flick paperclips with our elastic bands at the pigeons and things like that. Or you might, you know, throw down pennies to the guy playing the spoons in the yard, you know, this guy used to come round and play the spoons in the alleyway below, and you used to maybe throw a coin down to him, things like that. I think this is a period in my life that endeared me to 'Bristow' in the *Evening Standard*, you know, Frank Dickens, who I subsequently got to know; I used to love his drawings, and I loved his portrayal of office life which, it was kind of mine really, my memory, you know.

Well it sounds almost Dickensian in some respects.

Well it is, yes, mm.

Did you have to work very long hours?

No, no it was regular hours, 5, you know...

9 till 5.

9 to 5, yes.

Yes. And during that time, I mean were there, what were your interests, I mean what would you do in your leisure hours as it were? Apart from chase girls.

Apart from what?

Chase girls.

I never chased girls. Scared of girls. No, I fancied some of the girls in the office but never said anything. No...

But you had been in a co-ed school so you were used to having girls around surely?

Yes. But it was like, you know, over there. Anyway, no, I...God! how could one remember the sort of interest one had?

Well I mean did you read, did you go to the flicks?

Yes, I did both. I mean I always read a lot. But I don't know what... You see, I remember periods of reading but I don't remember what the dates of these periods were. I know my first positive intensive reading was American literature.

Your arm's cutting out the mic a bit, I'm sorry. Sorry, American literature?

Yes. And the reason... Well, I don't know the reason actually I got into reading, but I know...

When you say American literature, who are you referring to really?

Well, I can't give you a list. Dos Passos, Steinbeck, Caldwell, Sinclair Lewis, Faulkner, Hemingway, Thomas Wolfe. I read them all. Mark Twain. And the reason I did that was quite a perverse one, because I couldn't bear to read English literature.

What, like Dickens?

Well, I thought it was like, too close to home. I wanted to read literature in a language I could read, which wasn't English literature. I've never read Thomas Hardy for instance; I've read Dickens of course. And, I mean there are not many English writers, and it goes on through my life, you know, I'm sort of coming back to them in a way, but, I just enjoy... Strangely it comes through with me to American film. I can watch a tedious American film which if the same plot, the same social circumstances were translated into an English environment, I couldn't bear, because

it's so close to life, and it has no exoticism and no original interest. You know, I can watch American films which are quite grubby, not very well made, but they're about trailer parks on the West Coast or something; I find, I just find it interesting, because it's something I've not really, I haven't experienced in real life. I don't want real life.

You want that distance.

I don't want real life repeated by somebody else. I've got real life; I want some element of fantasy.

So it is an escapism in a way. Or is it as you said, exotic, I mean the interest?

I don't think it's escapism; I think it's a way of, you get into things with a slightly fresh feeling, not... I suppose, I don't... maybe it is escapism, but it's not, you're not escaping life, you're just observing things from a different perspective. It's like another way of life.

But did you want, you know, did you want to go off to America for instance, did you want to escape London and its environs?

No. No I didn't. Well not particularly, no. I didn't have any... I know now, we're talking in a more abstract way about literature, so I don't know. I mean I have different feelings about going places at different periods of my life. I've been fairly hesitant about doing anything too dramatic in a way. You see I'm really just talking about American literature.

Yes.

And the fact that, strangely enough you see, it didn't seem strange at the time, as things don't, but now I think that it was rather strange that I became so involved. However, it was really good, and I still... I had a holiday in the South of France, we took a house in the Corbières region with my wife, you know, and family, and the house was a tiny place with outside lavatory which was like a brick hut with a hole in it, but it was charming, and it was...it's a village just above the coast of the Corbières

region; in fact I used to walk down to the sea to join my family, because I tried to work there. Anyway, the house was let by a teacher, a French teacher of literature or something, he had a collection of literature on his shelves, and they were mostly the Beat generation. By that time, by the time of the Beat generation, I had got very disenchanted with American literature, and I kind of, in my mind I refused to read all those guys, you know, from Kerouac upwards, about, you know, sideways, and, I felt, when I was then in this kind of closed situation, I picked up his books and I read two or three books, you know, Corso, Kerouac. Somebody who I really don't like came to the Royal College for a talk, I can't remember his name, a very pretentious person, I think. Bt anyway...

Ferlinghetti.

Mm?

Ferlinghetti? No. Poet or...?

No no, no, not Ferlinghetti. It's a poet here. No, he's a writer who has openly confessed to taking drugs, which seemed a big scandal at the time, who actually came and was invited to teach at the Royal College for a while. He wasn't a very good writer, but he certainly took drugs. You don't know his name? Anyway, I read all that stuff, and I really, suddenly I, I enjoyed reading it in the South of France, some years after it had been published, I don't know, in an objective way. So I sort of, in a way I got back to American literature that I had ignored, and I found it quite intriguing actually.

When you first started reading that kind of thing, were you also watching the movies, the American movies for instance, had you started going to...or did you have the money to go and see things like that, did you have the time?

No, what time are we...?

Well if we're still, we're going back to when you were at Crosse & Blackwell.

Puzzled. Yes, I would, of course, yes, I went to the cinema I suppose... The pattern was about once a week I think. I can't remember.

Well was there any type of film that you admired more than another? I mean were you drawn to Westerns or gangster movies or...?

Well, Andrew, you've got me there, because I'm a Western fanatic. I still...

But that, did that emerge right from the beginning?

I don't know. I don't know. I'll watch anything, but, subsequently, much more...I mean, I love Westerns. But they of course, you know, if you want a big cliché, they don't make Westerns like they used to, so it's, now it's very unfashionable, it's not just... [Please help yourself.] It's so totally unfashionable to admire Westerns, you know, and of course, because Indians have been given different names, and they're recognised as human beings in retrospect. But I think, the thing is that Westerns are only like any genre, other genre of film-making; when people go on, you know, ecstatically about a film that's currently on, like *Sense and Sensibility*, Jane Austen, I mean you know, that's marvellous, totally respectable I suppose, but it's another genre of film-making; people get dressed up in crinolines and they're portrayed against horses and stately country homes. It just seems to me another cliché of cinema that's developed; it's always been with us but it seems to be developed recently more, more so. I mean, but they're dramas. Now what's the difference between a stately home, with a hunter horse, than a ranch house with an American pony outside? It's just another drama. It doesn't need to be a cliché. I mean some very good dramas have been made out of this idiom of Western drama.

What would you say was the high point, if you say they don't make Westerns now like they used to?

I say that because they don't make, in my opinion. I think they, they do occasionally, it still happens, I mean, there have been some. I'm trying to think desperately now.

Do you like Clint Eastwood?

Well he made this film which strangely I thought was overrated, the recent Western he made which, the name, the title of which I can't remember. But I thought it was OK, but strange, I thought it was unnecessarily brutal, and it didn't really have...

Oh I know the one you mean.

...a lot of quality. It just... I thought it was, it wasn't... I thought it was so, it was very...it was good, but it was unnecessarily violent. I don't know quite why it...I can't quite understand it actually. Certainly wouldn't come within my category of a good Western.

Is this the one with Richard Harris in it?

Yes.

I know which one you mean. I've forgotten its title as well.

Mm, it's called *Unforgiven*?

Unforgiven, *that's it, yes.*

Well, the Richard Harris episode of course is another aspect of Hollywood which, can I talk about this? I mean this, frankly this *Braveheart*, just won the Oscar, I'm talking [INAUDIBLE], *Braveheart*, I've never seen the film but...

It sounds hideous.

The idea of the film. It's just like the other thing, it's about this Scottish, upsurge of Scottish nationalism or something, if you can describe it in those terms. I mean all it is is, is really the...Hollywood has totally anti-English, English, not British, attitudes, so they love films like that. That's why, you know, they support the IRA and everything, they just...they love films which are kind of against the English attitude, in movies. If you have a movie with no real plot to it, it's just made up, like, we'll do

this, we'll do that, we'll have a, you know, an explosion, and we'll have a political leader and, well, we'll make...we'll have a lovely beautiful lady who takes her clothes off and everything, but we'll have a villain, we've got to have a villain, OK, he speaks with an English accent. They always speak with English accents in films, in that kind of movie. Now Hollywood are totally anti-English. This is not like a pet thing of mine. People have written about this, the way that they go on, this anti... So, how is *Braveheart*...it's a nothing. I haven't seen the film, but I've seen enough of it. Apparently it's totally historically inaccurate. Firstly, there's a very big gap between them wearing this blue word[ph] and wearing kilts, apparently they didn't do the same things at the same time.

No.

Oh, sorry to go on... [LAUGHING]

Quite funny really. Was the person you're thinking of Timothy Leary by any chance? The one who taught at the College, the Beat bloke, or not?

Hang on, got to come back.

Got to go back to... There was one, there was a Beat writer that you read, it wouldn't have been Timothy Leary?

No no, no no. He's very well known, I mean he's...God! he was very...

And not Allen Ginsberg?

End of F303 Side A

F6303 Side B

So we've got you at Crosse & Blackwell. You presumably weren't exactly happy there, you didn't want to make your life's career there?

Well, the thing is that the situation, the reason I didn't worry about... I mean I was meant to make money and to help my family, but the thing facing me was National Service. So between leaving school at fifteen, I knew at the age of seventeen I would have to go into National Service.

Oh that's the age was it, seventeen?

Yes. Well, no, actually it could have been...seventeen or eighteen, but anyway... My friends who I was at school with and myself thought well, why kind of wait around, not being able to do anything, to start a life? Why don't we join up? If you join up, you get...first, the choice was naturally the Army, the Navy or the Air Force. Well, there's no way you can get into the Navy for National Service unless you proved an ability to learn languages, because you had to learn Russian in order to get into the Navy. Well I had no ability whatsoever, because we were badly taught French, in fact we were hardly taught it, we had an eccentric guy teaching French. So the choices were the Air Force or the Army. Well, everybody thought the Army was all right but a tough number, and you were unlikely to be put in the Army – I mean sorry, the Air Force, if you were just called up. But if you volunteered... There was a bloody war on. There wasn't a war on you know. I don't...the whole thing is ludicrous. I mean, what we did was lose three years of our life for a political move. Anyway, myself and my two friends at school, we all joined up in the Air Force, thinking that would be a slightly cushier number, I don't know on what grounds, but...

Was it? You don't know.

Well, we...I don't know, but it wasn't cushy, it was awful. First, it started off awful, because you had to do your basic training and it's really grim. Is this interesting to talk about this?

Mhm.

Because...

Where did you have to do it?

Well I did it in a place in the Midlands near Staffordshire called Cannock Chase.

Oh yes.

Which is a kind of, probably a nature reserve or something like that, full of hills of pine trees and stuff. And it was the middle of winter, and it looked like...I like to think it looked like Canada but in fact it looked like Siberia when we were there, because we were housed in wooden huts, rows upon rows of wooden huts.

I think it is a nature reserve, you saying that. Do you know a naturalist called Phil Drabble, who used to do the sheepdog trials on TV a few years ago?

No I don't know.

I think he lived and worked there, in a nature reserve, in Cannock Chase.

Well, I can imagine, because it was a huge area of heath land and pine woods. Anyway, but they had this huge huge camp with all these wooden huts, and it was in the winter. It was just like my idea of Siberia. I mean we used to have to go around in these big heavy overcoats and stuff. It was absolutely, very depressing. I mean a lot of guys at that time, not particularly there but in other places, who committed suicide you know, because they were faced with something that they couldn't take. I mean they were just bullied, bullied, I mean not like school bullying but dictatorial bullying, you know, in an age when they had hardly left home.

You weren't given any...

They were still children really. I mean I think of my children, I can't imagine going through the same thing, it's just amazing. But, nobody questioned, well, I was going to say nobody questioned, a lot of people questioned it, but hey didn't have much voice. You had to be a conscientious objector in order not to do military service, but however, then you had to do either hospital service or agricultural service. I mean you were actually in the grips of the Government, society, you know, we had no freedom, no more freedom than anybody in any other country, you know, where you think of a dictatorship. I mean it was... It was amazing. But what happened strangely was a good thing for me, because I was three years, it's less than three years, about two-and-a-half years, having to do something I didn't want to do. But I, in the end I got stationed north of London, in Northwood, and I used to go to evening classes at Harrow School of Art. And I was what's called a clerk personnel in this funny complex which is the grounds of an Edwardian manor house in a very expensive part, it's like the Beverley Hills of north London really, and it's all got mansions and a big road going up with trees from the town. And I used to go first twice a week then once a week to Harrow School of Art. Is this in the context of...?

Yes, it's very interesting. Who would have been teaching then?

Well, nobody I'd know. I mean I didn't know anything, it was the first time I had been to an art school.

And what were you actually able to do?

Well, first I booked in for portrait painting and life drawing. Well I stuck to the portrait painting for a little while, and then I realised... I don't know what I realised. I think it was just too much for me to make... I had to make a journey. I had to go, leave the camp. Leaving the camp isn't like locking your front door; you have to go out through the guard room, the guys check you out, you have to go in uniform. The guys in the guard room just love any little official activity, so they don't make it easy, they don't make it hard, but they just like it. Then you've to walk down the hill, it was always icy weather you see, when I was there it was through the winter. Well, no that's untrue, because, I wasn't there in the winter. I'm thinking about my... But I remember that it was...I remember the winter there. I can't remember...I can't

remember, I mean how, what periods I was at Stafford when it was Serbian winter there, and Northwood, when I got posted, which was... But, I remember it being quite sort of wintery there as well; maybe...

How long did you have to spend at Stafford?

Oh, that's the basic training. It was eight weeks. I mean it seems like eight years when you are there. You have to do things like, when...they wake you up early in the morning, you have to get out, and you have to put on something which, I don't know whether it's unique to the Air Force, you have to put on a collar. You have a shirt but you have a collar separate. The collar has two studs, one at the back and one at the front, and they are incredibly tight. And of course, nobody had ever worn a collar before, this is something from the 19th century. And so you had to struggle to get on parade on time to put your collar on. Apart from anything else just putting trousers and, you know... So you had to appear spotless. It was, it was desperate. No wonder people committed suicide, but... But actually, I'll tell you what, the resilience of people is also amazing, and strangely how people become leaders. Some of them, they're bullies usually, the leaders are bullies; everybody's frightened to talk against them or... However. No, I ended up in Northwood.

So after eight weeks you went straight to Northwood?

Yes. I suppose I did. I say yes, I think I did, I can't think when...no, I was posted, that was where I... I was what's called a clerk personnel, which meant I was just looking after the records of all the other people in the service, you know. Which was easy to do, but extremely boring. So I thought, well I'll stick here, because when I come out, get out of the prison, which is like, just like a prison, I mean I'd been given a prison sentence in which people get recompense for nowadays, you know, put in prison for wrongful imprisonment. Anyway, so I used to go to Harrow. But I remember the first time I ever drew a naked woman in a life drawing class. In fact I think it's the first time I had ever seen a naked woman. I mean I was there wearing my uniform, and I...I used to have to wear this hat: well I didn't wear it inside the art school of course, but you had to be dressed properly, you had to wear your hat. And you know this beret that's sort of, the rim of which used to, you know, tighten into

your head. And everything, the uniform never fitted, it was like, it's typical of...like the pants, the trousers would come up under your armpits with braces, they weren't braces[??]. I mean the other thing was that if you didn't have the braces, they would be half-way down your legs, you know, [INAUDIBLE]. And I remember, the first woman I drew, I didn't know... Forget women, could have been a man, I didn't know how bodies deteriorated in the way they obviously do. And this woman, oh! she was quite extraordinary. I mean she looked like a Michelin figure, you know. I couldn't believe it. Anyway I would sit there for, whatever period it was, drawing this woman, and then go back to the camp.

Were you given any tuition, I mean how to do it, or were you just left?

Well, I think so, there was certainly something, yes, I can't remember, yes there was somebody present obviously.

So how long did you do that for?

I did that all the time I think that I was in... Well, I actually can't remember, but quite a long time while I was in Northwood.

Well it sounds like a couple of years then.

Well it could have been, yes. I built up a lot of work. And then I had this thing where the camp was so full that I could live at home. I lived at home, which was the famous Acton, and which was quite nice, but I had to travel back and forth in my uniform, and I painted at home, and I did some paintings and stuff. So I built up over those years, because I really had no choice other than to work, I built up a bit of work.

What sort of paintings would you have been doing then?

Well there were various. Some were like sort of slightly surrealist as far as I... I knew nothing about art I must say, but, I did some very realistic paintings as well. I just wanted to see if I could paint, you know. It's a kind of natural thing, you know,

you just like to see if you could paint something that looks like something, so I did, I seemed to be quite[??]...studied, kind of realistic painting.

But you must have felt that you had some talent for it, or some feeling for it, otherwise you would have been writing short stories or poems maybe?

No, I think... It's very difficult to remember what you felt in a particular period, but I think that I realise that I would like to go art school because, having spent some weeks boring holes in gas cylinders and whatever, gas rings, boring years at Crosse & Blackwell, I thought, well, this is better than nothing, you know, and that was it. And so I stuck at it, I thought I'd build up a portfolio, try and get to art school, and that's what I did.

How easy was it to get in? I mean did you qualify for a grant?

Well that was a bit of a problem. I couldn't... Because I was in Acton I could only go to Ealing if I had a grant, it was two of the boroughs that give you a grant. I didn't want to go to Ealing, because when I was at the Central School my friend, my faithful friend and I...

What's his name?

Laurence Anthony[ph], Laurie Anthony[ph], of the violin case. We used to go once a week for a few months to Harrow – no, sorry, Harrow, Ealing. OK, the only art school I could have gone to and given a grant was Ealing, because I was living in Acton. So, I didn't want to go to Ealing. And...this is getting rather tortuous but, life is just like, it's not one straight line. This friend of mine who joined the R.A.F at the same time was in Hong Kong and he met this other guy who has now become a very good friend of mine, and he went to Chelsea you see. And he said, 'You should go to Chelsea.' I thought, yes, Chelsea. I mean that's where artists are, you know, that's...I now that much about art. Go to Chelsea. However, first I tried for the Slade, I had an interview at the Slade. All the stuff I had done while I was in the R.A.F and at home, you know, stuff. And they asked me what artists I like, and I didn't know the names of any artists. And strangely enough this one artist, he cropped up the other day in my

reading, which is the Italian artist, Campeli[ph]. I discovered he wasn't Italian. I just read this the other day. Now, how could I possibly have read this? I did. That is an assumed name; he was actually something like German or Austrian or something, he had put on this name, Campeli[ph]. Do you know his art at all, his work?

No.

I know, he's obscure, but he's not that obscure.

Well I've heard the name, but I can't put any...

He's actually... In this instance I think I should have made a record, because reading about this person, he did these kind of cherubic stylised faces, people, at the theatre and things, in a kind of very sort of matt paint, like fresco kind of effect. And they were very charming, and you know, not totally unoriginal. Anyway, I didn't get into the Slade, but I remember Bill Coldstream was one of the people who interviewed me. It's quite amusing because many years later I was on the external assessing committee with him. So, what I did, I moved from Acton. I think you'd need about... I moved to West Kensington. I took a bedsit in West Kensington. The first time I had really left home, apart from being put in digs by the R.A.F.

How could you afford it?

Ah. I must have been more sensible. I actually saved up. Because I got my...

You got a wage.

No, the thing is, when you do National Service you get paid. If you join up you get paid. You get paid more if you join up than if you do National Service. National Service I suppose is like paying a jury or something. So, I actually... And didn't spend the money, because I couldn't...wasn't allowed out of the camp very often, and nothing to spend it on, and so I actually saved money. And the reason I saved money is, I thought I would like to get my parents out of these council houses and buy them a... This sounds like, I mean, but that was the truth, but it didn't matter, I was...

Very sweet, very sweet.

I was just actually saving money. So when I came out I had what seemed at the time like, you know, a bit of money. So what happened, I kept myself going for, I don't know, two weeks, two months, in this bedsit, and then I got a grant because I was living in the area of Chelsea.

The Kensington area.

Yes. And which was West Kensington.

Was that an ex-service grant or did that not apply?

No, no, no grant. No, there was one thing. When you left being a regular you still got paid for about two or three months afterwards.

To tide you over.

Yes. It was a kind...yes, right. Which again you wouldn't have got if you had done National Service you see.

So it was actually a shrewd move on your part, to become a regular?

Well, it was shrewd but it was like, you had no choice. I mean, well, you had choices but, it made sense. You weren't... You were put in a position where you were making choices, but you were put in a position where you [INAUDIBLE] have to ask to be put in in the first place. Anyway, so, I ended up at Chelsea, which I totally, totally don't regret. And when I went to Chelsea, God! I thought I was really on the pig's back. I couldn't believe it. You went in there, and we started in the graphic design part of Chelsea, and when I went to Chelsea, all you had to do was take your work.

Who was examining it?

Well, who was the examiner? Well, there was the most wonderful guy ever who, as we're talking I probably won't remember his name, but he was the Principal. Nobody examined it. I mean, the nature of art schools has changed so dramatically to a boring kind of academic nature. You just went in, you took your work in, and you saw the Principal. If he liked it, he said, 'Yes.' That's all, it was just him and you.

Did you apply for a specific department as it were?

I can't remember applying. I mean we, I can't remember.

Because you're saying that you went into the graphic...

I don't remember paperwork.

No.

I just went there, met the guy, looked at my work, he said, 'This is better than the people in the third year,' and I got in. And that was, well, it was marvellous. I mean, it was like a kind of freedom. Because there were all these wonderful girls at Chelsea, there were all these girls who were doing finishing school, rich girls just doing their finishing at school at this place. I mean the most glamorous, some were like, really like models, you know. They were all sophisticated, well, within their terms, and their age. And I couldn't believe it. And you went there, you know, you went there in the morning, then you were having coffee at 10 o'clock, and I thought, God! you know, hadn't even[??]you started the day. And quite quickly I realised I was in the wrong place, I shouldn't be doing graphic design. Although I quite enjoyed it, but I knew that all the nice girls and all the action was on the other side, it was the fine art. And so I switched to fine art.

But did you think of the graphic side of it as being possibly a way of earning money in the future, or wasn't it...

Well exactly.

Was it that planned?

No no, I always thought, well always thought, I mean I thought... Whenever I thought about perhaps being an artist, I thought, well, I'd be a commercial artist, which is, as I say, what... I thought, I can't be one of those real artists, whatever they are. So I applied to be a commercial artist, and I quickly realised that it was more interesting to be the others, the other artists, a fine artist. So I moved.

And how long did you last in the graphic bit?

I...now I can't remember. I'm not even sure whether it was a year. I think I switched pretty quickly to the other part of the school. From then on, God!

You were there from '56 to '60. '56 to '60, which could be taken as four years. I mean was it a three-year course?

Oh four years. I was there four years.

But was it a three-year course or a four-year course?

No, hang on. I...there was a thing called...

Foundation.

No. Everything was different then.

Intermediate.

Yes, that's right. I didn't...did I do the Intermediate? I don't think I did. I can't remember now whether I did it. I did the main thing at the end, what was that called then?

Higher National Diploma. H.N.D., not the H.N.D.?

Well...

I don't know, I'm not very clear on it myself I'm afraid.

No, it doesn't...anyway, you could check that out, but... Yes, it was whatever the exam was at that time. But you did, you had to go through an intermediary period and produce some work, and I can't remember whether I went through that or not now. But I did the course and the exam and everything at the end. But I had a great time there I must say, at Chelsea. It was a nice school, a very nice school.

Can you remember any of the people that were teaching?

Well, the main people who taught me were the Coxons.

Oh, yes.

Yes. Man and wife. And...

Raymond and Edna?

Yes, yes. And...

Was Robert Medley there then?

Possibly, but I don't remember, you know. People came in and out, you know, it wasn't...there was a basic staff. Fred Brill was perhaps the main guy who taught us, Fred Brill, who subsequently became the Principal.

It wasn't Williamson or somebody who was the principal was it?

Yes. It was Williamson who got...he was the most charming, marvellous person. He used to have... And they had this thing. It was an old-fashioned art school in, if you think about it, because they used to have the Chelsea picnics every summer, the staff

and the pupils would all go. It was either to Cookham or the other riverside place, slightly further.

Marlow? No.

No, not Marlow. Anyway...

Henley?

No, not Henley either. But on the river, just beyond Cookham there was another place. And we would all go. It was quite magical actually. I'm not saying that in a dreamy way, it really was very nice for the students, you know, it was really nice. And, it's not written into any curriculum any more, you know, from the London Institute.

No.

The London Institute. I mean you were there five days in Wormwood Scrubs. [LAUGHING] No, that was a lovely school, and the people I met there and everything who I...you know, quite a number of whom I keep in touch with still. It was a revelation, yes.

End of F6303 Side B

F6304 Side A

Patrick, I was going to ask you about, as I see it's been in the newspapers, about E.J. Power, because I gather your painting that was in his collection is going to go into the Tate.

Yes.

It says that he was a great and rather important collector of modern art. Did you know him personally?

Yes I knew him very well, he's definitely one of the, perhaps the only collector I've really...collector, that range of collecting who I have known personally, you know. I really don't know often where my paintings go to, but Ted I knew extremely well. I was very fond of him.

When did you first meet him?

Well, somebody was asking me that. I can't quite remember. It may be, I remember that Alan Power came to my diploma show at the Royal College and he bought I think four paintings.

Who is he, the son?

Yes. And it may be that I met Ted after that, when I would have been with Robert Fraser I suppose. But I actually can't remember exactly when I met him.

Do you remember when he bought a painting then, first bought a painting?

I think that would probably have been from Robert Fraser, but again I can't remember the date.

But it was quite early on?

Yes. Yes.

I mean how many things did he acquire of yours?

He had, well at least four and possibly more, I'm not sure.

Big things?

Some of them were big. Mostly they were quite large, yes, and so, he had one small painting of rooftops, coloured, sort of flat black line colourful painting. But he continued up...well this painting that the Tate have got now, I think, it's Eighties I think.

'85-86.

Yes.

It says here.

Mm.

Interior with a Picture.

Yes.

Can you describe that painting? What were you after?

Well I started by copying a picture which was a 15th century German, I think, painting on wood, and it's, the painting's about candlelight. It probably has some symbolism which I am not aware of, but it had salt in the painting, and wine and bread, and an egg and a candle. So I liked the idea of using...as a lot of my work was about artificial light, and I like the idea of having a painting from this very old painting which is about the effect of artificial light, in this instance a candle. And that was a starting point, and then I sort of built some fictitious interior around it to make it seem

fairly...tried to fit it in some way, you know, to make it look comfortable in this interior which I had devised.

So it wasn't based on anything you had seen, you had invented it, the interior?

Oh yes, yes.

Is that often the way with those paintings of that period?

Yes, that's the way I've been working for ages. The painting actually I worked, I did from a reproduction in colour, a colour reproduction, but...

Is it quite close, or very close?

Well it's very close, except that I enlarged it from the reproduction because the reproduction is smaller than the original, which is quite understandable. It's not a lot smaller but it's...I thought it needed the weight of the original size, so I squared[??] it up with cotton, because I didn't want to draw on the reproduction obviously, if I was going to copy it. And I drew it larger, and then I copied it. It took ages.

I bet it did. When you say you drew it, did you draw it in pencil or paint?

Yes.

In pencil?

Yes. I did a copy of it in pencil.

Yes, a straight copy.

Mm.

Right.

But I don't have any mechanical instruments that could enlarge or anything like that, so I had to do it by the old-fashioned squaring[??] up.

Wonderful discipline, but a hell of a hard job.

Yes, it was agony actually, but I was really pleased when I had got, I actually did it. I couldn't get it quite as detailed as the original, because the original was on, it was probably gesso on wood, it was definitely on wood anyway, and it would have been a very flat surface.

Different kind of smoothness.

And it would have been done in oil I think, or maybe tempera. In fact when I mentioned this, somebody made a joke about, quite amusing, to be done in egg tempera as it's a painting of an egg, but, I can see that the detail that was in the painting, I could only get close to, I couldn't actually imitate it, because it...I was working on canvas, which is a much rougher surface than with acrylic. However, it was quite convincing. Is that OK?

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

I thought he might have bequeathed some work to the Tate, but of course this was done in lieu of death duties. But I am very pleased that it's gone there, and I'm rather looking forward to seeing the other works that went there from Ted's collection.

Did you used to go and, go round to his flat or whatever and spend time with him?

Yes. Yes I saw him there sometimes just by myself, and he was a great whisky drinker, so we got on extremely well. As it turns out of course his family's Lancashire Irish like mine, so we had something in common, except unfortunately I'm not a multi-millionaire but...

How did he make his money, was he a self-made man?

Yes. Oh it was quite interesting. He was in the First World War and he was in radio or radar, I'm not sure whether it would have been radar that early. Anyway he was in the, he was a technician, and he learnt about radio, and when he left he started making his own radio sets, and then he gradually went into business and he ended up being, not ended up, he really made his mark as Murphy Radios, who were a very good company, distinguished designers. And through the design of the radios he got interested in art. He's totally self-made, he didn't know anything about art. And he was passionate about art, but he wasn't one of those sort of collectors, perhaps, I shouldn't mention names but some collectors you feel they say, oh 'I'll have three of those,' you know; he really was careful about what he bought. But very far-sighted. The story is that he, Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* was in Picasso's studio for ages till it was, it sort of came on the market, he sort of kind of hid it I think, I'm not quite sure, and Ted was after that at one time, when it came on the market. Unfortunately he couldn't raise enough money.

So he started collecting quite early on?

Oh yes, yes. Between the wars I suppose.

And did he have anyone advising him, or was it all his own...?

I don't know. He was a very gregarious person, and he liked meeting people, so he would pretty surely have got involved in an art circle of some kind and which would have included I imagine critics and painters and, you know, people who write on painting, so he would have had, not exactly advice but he would have had I think a lot of knowledge fed his way, I imagine. But he was a remarkable character, very strong, and...

Where did you see him? I mean did he live in London or in the country or what?

Oh he lived in London. He lived, he had a flat in Grosvenor Square. In fact it's actually two flats that had been knocked into each other, so he had quite a good showing space, not very big. The walls weren't that high.

Is that where he had everything?

Yes. But he used to, he used one room which he rarely showed to anybody where he actually just stored the paintings in a dark room, and he would hang selectively when he felt like it, he would put different paints up, and he would often have a painting of mine up for a while and then he would switch round to something else sort of... I think he always had a Brancusi up somewhere. It was always a joy to see his stuff, you know.

I mean did he have an enormous collection or just a sort of moderate one?

You never knew, because it was always kept, you know, in a room, in a storeroom. It was impossible to gauge.

And did he collect other people of your generation, other artists like you?

Well, of course Howard, who is part of this...

Bequeath, whatever.

Yes. Yes, Howard. Oh gosh, I can't...I can't off-hand name other artists, but I'm sure he did. He probably, I think he probably had somebody like Patrick Heron for instance, very possible that he would collect. But I don't...I don't quite know.

And did you, I mean did you see him regularly?

I used to see him about once every two or three months I suppose. And went to dinner with him, and he came to dinner with us, you know, and used to have drinks. Oh of course, he was a very good sort of catalyst for meeting other artists, and particularly American artists. I met Barnett Newman a couple of times at his apartment, with his wife Annely[??] Newman, and he was a charming character, a real character.

Do you like his work?

Yes. Yes, I had sort of, slight reservations but I found that he was very alien to things I was interested in, but I did respect him greatly. He was quite a theorist, even though what he did, he really sort of talked himself out of doing things in a way with the theory side of it. And that's why his work tended to be so minimal I think.

And, I mean did, does his son collect on the same scale?

Not really, no. He tried to. He's slightly, naturally enough, a bit overwhelmed by Ted, and he tried to collect, but, he was somebody who wouldn't really stick at things for a long time, he would move his interests. He was always interested in art but he would be doing other things as well, like he took over the Gate, what's now the Gate cinema in Notting Hill Gate, I think when it was the Classic, and unfortunately didn't make a go of that, so he moved on, and he tried to help to sponsor films, and he's done all sorts of things, you know. I mean he still collects paintings I think but he moves around a lot and so I think he off-loads work.

What about other collectors, I mean you say, did you know any others like that? I mean, the only ones I can, I've got noted down, is Sidney[ph] and Frances Lewis, who are they?

Oh yes. Yes, they're a couple who live in Richmond, Virginia. He runs a mail order company, a very big one, called Best Products, and they are both remarkable characters, again they're very enthusiastic. They've got a big collection, and particularly they have a collection of Tiffany lamps is one of their passions. And he is very interesting in that he, in order to run his business they have to build these big warehouses where people go in and they look at the stuff, like, in storage, and they have a list, and they say that they want a certain item and it comes down the chute or something. So, these buildings that are usually very boring, because they're just warehouses, they're not shops, but he had this architectural group to do him some extraordinary buildings, one which looked as though it was a ruined building of all these bricks falling down and everything, and in order to get into the building the corner of the building moved away during the day, and then you were allowed to get

in. He was quite extraordinary in that way. I mean considering the rather boring business he was in, he was quite adventurous, as much as he could be.

And you had, did you see them over in the States or did you know them here?

Yes, I went to Richmond, I visited his house, stayed in his house actually a couple of nights. But always when he came over here he stayed at the Connaught and we always would go to dinner with him.

Have they got a number of your pictures?

Yes, quite a few. They've given one I know to the...they funded a wing of the Virginia Museum, which is in Richmond, very near their home, and they gave one of my paintings and other paintings to the museum, to their collection. But they've got quite a lot themselves still I think.

What about anyone else, can you think of anyone else in that sort of league?

No, not off-hand.

Because collectors don't tend to get talked about unless they give their sort of collections to big, to museums, do they? I mean it's a sort of, a branch of the art world that's not necessarily very well researched, unless it's sort of, [INAUDIBLE] or someone at the National Gallery.

No, that's true. I suppose nowadays the exception would be Saatchi, who is talked about a lot.

Yes, but he's made his own museum in a sense hasn't he.

Yes. Well I...I mean both the Lewises and Ted Power, they weren't really interested in being publicised as collectors. I mean they liked to meet the people and they...and the Lewises would, when they came to London they would go, they would get a car and they would go round the numerous studios in the East End and see people's work

and everything, they had terrific energy for looking at work. Made you feel ill to think about them.

Are they still doing that?

Well, hopefully. Unfortunately Sidney[??] had something, he had to have an operation on his leg and he doesn't move very easily now, so, I haven't, they haven't been over here for a while, so, I haven't seen them.

OK, well that was just because it came into the news I asked you that. We have to go back chronologically, we're back to Chelsea Art School, and I was wondering if you made any friends amongst the artists, or, in fact amongst the girls that you met at Chelsea.

Yes, well naturally enough, it wasn't a big school, the painting department wasn't very big, and so one knew everybody really. Of course you knew people in your own year perhaps better than others, but it was quite a sort of close community. Although... I don't think that, perhaps any of the artists really made a, fellow students really made a reputation, a big reputation as artists as far as I can remember.

And you didn't get particularly close to any of them?

Well, girlfriends of course.

No, but I mean people that you kept friendly with.

Oh I see. Well, occasionally I do see people, yes, I was at Chelsea with, for various reasons really. One person who went there just before me I met, I had just finished National Service and he had finished National Service, and he was in the R.A.F as well with a friend of mine, an old friend of mine in the Far East, and it was he who went to Chelsea and suggested maybe I should try to get into Chelsea, which I hadn't really thought about. I may have said this in the last thing, but I had to go to live in Kensington in order to get a grant.

So did you fall in love as well when you were at Chelsea?

All the time, yes.

All the time?

Well, it was a bit of a finishing school for rather nice women, young women.

But, so there wasn't any special girl, you just, all of them Patrick?

No. Well, no, I used to have relationships with, would have one steady relationship for a period of time.

It sounds a bit like serial monogamy.

[LAUGHS] Something like that, yes.

But no one you wanted to stay with for the rest of your life?

Well that's the way it turned out. But I'm still friendly with females who I knew then, I see them sometimes.

But they didn't stay in the art world? You said they used it as a finishing school?

Well, but they always continue working, but inevitably sort of, modern, modest scale, you know, they don't have, don't gain wide reputations or anything, but they certainly continue working, and showing sometimes. So...

What kind of work were you doing at that point?

Well I started off, I don't know whether I said this, I started off actually in the design area, yes. Well, I just did everything that was required, you know. I did life drawing and painting; I did still life drawing and painting; I did, like, out of school sort of

work, you know, like free thought. And used to try out everything. I suppose that's what you do as a student.

I mean, you hadn't...you said that you hadn't really been aware of art history or painting really before you went to Chelsea.

No.

So, I mean was it a huge great period of discovery for you?

Well not in any dramatic sense, no, I just gradually got to know about things. We used to have quite ludicrous art history talks which were ludicrous but rather endearing. I mean you used to get Julian Trevelyan, and another teacher called Rob, and they would take it in turns to work the epidiascope. So one would work the epidiascope and the other would give the lecture. And I remember one time they had a photograph of the door of a cathedral in Italy and Julian, or one of them said to the other, 'Oh yes Julian, there's a really, really nice little ice cream shop just round the corner from there, you know it don't you?' [LAUGHING] That was the kind of standard of the art history lectures.

But were you influenced by any particular artist at that time? I mean I have a note here saying, 'The influence of Jack Smith'.

Yes. He was the most, absolutely the most influential at that... He came...

He wasn't teaching there?

Well, I had been there at least a year, maybe more. I was there for three years, I think. But he came probably in about the last year I was there, but until he came I didn't feel I had been taught anything. He was a marvellous influence.

But what sort of work was he doing? Was it still Kitchen Sink or was he moving away from that?

No, he was doing some very interesting work at that time. He had a big show at the Whitechapel, and it was to do with, it was still lifes with a kind of effect of light crossing them. Not in...a bit like lines across a television set, you know, but not as diagrammatic as that, much looser, and thick paint, but a feeling of solidity and light, usually in kind of browns and whites, very low key colour. But they were really remarkable.

I don't think I've seen any of those.

Really? Mhm, oh he had...the Whitechapel show was of course a big show because it was a big space. And a lot of the work was of this nature. I can't remember, it must have been also retrospective I think. But he was a great influence.

Did you start to paint like that?

No. No, I was doing very, I started doing very flat paintings of blocks of flats and things, but very stylised and not, nothing like social realism, they were diagrammatic sort of images really.

Why blocks of flats?

Well I lived in a sort of, you know, out of suburbs really, and not...well, initially in Acton, and then I moved in further. But this kind of imagery had stuck from my teenage really, this urban, suburban imagery.

But it wasn't urban dereliction, it was quite sort of...?

No, no it was really to do with sort of colour, like the pink brick and green window frames and things like this, and the white concrete and grey concrete.

And how long did that sort of phase of your development go on?

Oh I think it probably went on, well it doesn't sound very long but it is when you're a student, about six months I suppose, towards the end of my stay at Chelsea.

And before that you had been doing sort of everything, had you?

Yes, I did...I did sort of tachisme, as it was then known, or action painting, I was never sure which was which.

[INAUDIBLE] painted the canvas?

Well I actually set fire to a canvas, I nearly set fire to the art school actually. I didn't realise it was going to go up in such a ferocious way.

How did it happen?

One woman said to me, 'Do you realise that that could have gone out of control?' And I said, 'I thought, well, it was out of control.' [LAUGHS] But, no I set fire to it just to see what effect it would have on the hardboard, see what it would look like. But I didn't realise that I had put a lot of paraffin on and, I thought it would just be a little flame. It sort of whooshed up.

Was the painting any good afterwards?

No.

You didn't try that again?

No, certainly didn't. No, I did all sorts of things. I did some... I'm trying to remember whether I did... I think it was at Chelsea I did these paintings of wooden trestles. I made wooden trestles like garden trestles, and painted them with battening, square, inch-square battening, and I painted them different colours on different sides of the battening. So they were three-dimensional reliefs really. And then I cut out objects and stuck them on out of hardboard. They were quite, very crude.

Would they have been on the wall?

Yes, they were hanging on the wall.

But you would see both sides of them?

No, you couldn't see the back. You could see three dimensions, you could see three sides, but not the fourth.

And they were kind of abstract were they, or not?

No, well they...they were just, they were grids.

But you had other imagery on them?

But then I would cut out something like a bowl of flowers and paint them, and stick it on, on the grid, so they weren't, they were neither... They were like, they were sort of like found objects really, you might see outside of a restaurant or something, or as part of some advertising.

Is that where the idea came from, do you think?

Probably, yes, I can't really remember.

Because it sounds as bit like the sort of thing you did later, when you painted those structures later, didn't you?

Yes, I painted grids up later, yes.

Was there a gap between making them in three dimensions and painting them, different work in between them making them in three dimensions and painting them, those structures? Did you do something else in between?

Actually I just can't think whether... There would have been a follow-on but I don't know how neat it would have been.

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I've not got a very good memory you see for...

Not sure whether it's Chelsea or the Royal College, that you did those. Well it's about that period isn't it.

Well it would have been, yes, about the period I, the changeover. Only be talking about months really.

I've also got written down here that you were a bit of a Le Douanier Rousseau primitivist at Chelsea. Where does that come from?

Yes, I did, I did some sort of, rather neat, neatly painted surrealist kind of images of strange men in suits, standing by cannons or standing on bridges, that kind of imagery, and sort of long shadows and...

That sounds more like de Chirico or Magritte.

Yes, it is actually. Yes, it's not Rousseau really, yes, it's just...

And you have that up for your tachisme.

Yes, it was just another thing that I did, you know, that as I say, I think that's what you do as a student.

You try everything out.

Yes.

Yes.

Because you don't know what you're doing really, in the end, I didn't know, did have anything really positive going till the second year of the Royal College really.

There's one more thing that I have down here, that 1959, the New American Painting exhibition at the Tate.

Oh yes.

Would you have been struck by that?

Absolutely, yes, in fact, of course, yes, I did some paintings of factories in north Acton, in a meticulous brick-by-brick way, which was like, rather like some of the American paintings I had seen.

Like who?

Oh I can't remember names now, but...

What, Wyeth and people like that?

Well you know they had this kind of Social Realist school of very detailed painting of urban, that is about urban decay, or at least the harshness of urban landscape, and that's what I was trying to do, and I very meticulously painted corrugated iron and metal chimneys rusting and things like that.

And that lasted what, again towards the end of your...?

I don't know how it all fits in really.

Well if it was '59 when the show was, and you were at Chelsea until '60, it would presumably have been your last year of time.

Ys it would, that's right, yes.

And I also have here that you were struck by Philip Guston's work. Is that right?

Well, that was quite a lot later wasn't it, Guston, wasn't it?

I don't know.

The Whitechapel. I remember seeing Guston at the Whitechapel and... Yes, I thought of the American painters who... You see this show that you just mentioned, wouldn't have had Guston in it would it?

It came right up to date as far as I remember. It was a whole survey of the new, when it says New American Painting, it would have been Guston, abstract Guston, not late Guston.

No. Oh not late Guston, I know that, no. No, I think really I wasn't particularly, I didn't particularly focus on Guston until he had the Whitechapel show. Although, actually maybe I...it's quite difficult to remember. There were so many influences that one absorbed to a certain extent and then went on to something else.

I mean who would you...can you remember who your chief influences were at that point? Just at the point when you were about to go to the College was there anything? What sort of work... I mean how did you get to the College, did you just apply?

Well I applied one year and I got an interview, but I didn't get in. And then the next year Lawrence Gowing said, 'You should apply again.'

Who did you interview with then?

Who?

Yes.

Oh there was a number of people. I remember Carel Weight was the head of the painting then, and people like Ruskin Spear, and...

Buhler and all that.

Buhler, yes, exactly, that group of people. Anyway I tried again, I was a bit reluctant to try because I thought I had had enough of art school really, but...

What alternative was there for you? I mean, or did you think of any other colleges for a start?

No, there wasn't an alternative. In fact I'm glad I tried, because I don't know what I would have done otherwise.

You didn't think, oh I'll go and do this, that and the other? You didn't think, I'll travel or I'll work or I'll...?

I can't remember. I probably had some, some airy-fairy notion, maybe a romantic notion of just painting, I don't know. But anyway, Lawrence really got me into the College, I think he just, he, I think he twisted their arm, you know, somehow. Because when I, after my interview he said, 'How did it go?' I said, 'Well, it went all right.' And he said...I said, 'I'm still not sure I want to go.' And he said, 'It doesn't mean we have to have another cocktail party.' [LAUGHS] So he really got me in I think, which was...and I was, I was very pleased I got there in the end, but I... I felt having done National Service I felt I was getting a bit to old to be a student still. Of course I wasn't really, but at that time I felt I was.

And what was it like to go to the Royal College after Chelsea?

Well it was more, you soon realise you were in amongst fellow students who were also fellow competitors, which you never really had at Chelsea. In fact I suppose Chelsea, one was a bit sort of top of the rung, top of the ladder, you know, in a kind of...and soon you were up against all these guys who had come down from the north, you know, determined to make it. But they were all a good group of people. But the reason I wasn't in the year of, where there was all that fuss with Allen Jones and David Hockney and Kitaj, it was because that's the year that I didn't get in. I would

normally have got in that year. I was in the year below, which, again I'm rather pleased that I was, not, you know, in the year below and not with that group.

Did you spend an extra year at Chelsea then?

Yes, I think I was four years at Chelsea, I'm not sure, was it...

Four, yes.

Was it four?

56 to '60.

Mm.

So you spent an extra year at Chelsea?

Yes.

And that was OK with grants and everything?

Must have been, I don't, I didn't support myself. Well, in terms of fees and...

So who did you get friendly with at the College?

Well people in my year, the artist who has really remained consistently in the British public eye is John Loker, he was in the same year as me. Others have continued to paint I think, but none of them really have had a lot of recognition; John Loker is probably the only one I can think of.

What...did you have any kind of relationship with the people in the year above, at that point?

Yes, quite, yes, I mean, I knew Allen Jones you see. Well of course, no, I'm sorry, he wasn't there, they threw him out, when I got there they had thrown him out. But I knew him when he was at Hornsey. But then I got to know Derek Boshier very well and other people in that year.

How did you know Allen?

Allen Jones?

Yes.

Well because this friend of mine who, it's rather funny but he was in the National Service with the guy I was at Chelsea with, and he went to Hornsey, he didn't get into Chelsea so he went to Hornsey, and there was Allen, Allen was a fellow student at Hornsey. So, I used to visit Hornsey to see my friend, and I met Allen. And we had one thing in common, we started, well I started an interest in war games and he had a collection of model soldiers and things, so we, that was a point of contact between us.

When did that start?

The war games?

Yes.

Well the interest started when I was – it sounds a joke really, when I was in the R.A.F, but not, nothing to do with the R.A.F, it was just that there was an actor friend of mine on the station and he devised a war game, and he got me interested in playing this with him, and it sort of went on from there, in sort of fits and starts, and got slightly more and more involved, and started buying actual lead figures, and having proper landscapes and stuff. I started by making wooden soldiers out of dolly pegs and things.

And where would you do this?

When?

Where?

Ah, well, wherever I had space.

It must have been...I mean, the more elaborate it got, the more space you needed presumably?

Yes. Well eventually, when I was married we moved to Cornwall Crescent in Holland Park and we used to have, we lived in a pretty derelict house that we had bought, or we were buying, but we couldn't afford to do much to, and there was a big top room, and I set up a board there and I made landscapes and gradually got more and more figures. Used to have sessions.

Oh was it...I mean you and Allen?

No no, Allen by that time, I didn't see him very much. No, it was another friend of mine, who was a teacher painter, and we shared this enthusiasm. It was just he and I used to play.

What's his name?

Brian Westbury.

But to go back to the College, who was teaching you?

Well it's funny, you felt that nobody was teaching you much in the first year. You had to do a lot of life drawing, life painting, which I didn't particularly mind. Except, you know, one had done it a lot already. I don't know whether I told you in the last, previous interview, when I did my N.D.D. at Chelsea, that we had to do a life painting or life drawing, and I did two life paintings in different styles.

No no, you didn't say that.

In the period you were meant to do your life painting. And I did my life drawing with my left hand purposely because I wanted, I thought, I was getting so blasé with pencil that I thought I'd make it difficult for myself. So...but...

It sounds a bit like sort of, just a bit showing off Patrick.

Oh it was indeed, yes I know, it was showing off.

Were you kind of the star there then?

Well I won, yes, the prizes at the end, drawing prizes particularly. Yes, that was...

So you were drawing in pencil?

Yes, basically, yes.

And you had to do what, two paintings for...? You did two paintings, but you had to one?

No, we had to do one. But we had enough time you see, they weren't very big. I was showing off, but...

So what styles did you do them in?

Oh, one was fairly sort of post-impressionist free, and the other was rather more carefully painted, more sort of Renaissance.

And they were figure paintings?

Well nude.

Yes.

The paintings were nude, yes. It was the same model.

Which one did you prefer?

I don't remember. But I sold one of them afterwards. Well somebody came to the school, they were making a film, I don't know whether it was *The Horse's Mouth*, or the Hancock film. I think it was *The Horse's Mouth*, and they came... That's right, they came to the school and they got some students to act as extras, and they just, they just wanted to look round and see what they could pick up, research, you know, on... And one of the people who was poking around bought one of my nudes, or these two nudes that I had painted for N.D.D.

Brilliant.

Mm, it was lovely, for me.

Did you have sort of end of term degree shows which you tried to sell work at and that sort of thing?

I don't...I don't remember we did. I don't think we did at Chelsea. I don't think that was... I suppose we must have done. I don't remember particularly selling or...I don't remember it being a high profile thing, it was just...

No.

...something I suppose you did. It was dominated by exams really. I didn't do the Intermediate but I did the N.D.D., and I think you had to put your work up for that.

What about something like the Young Contemporaries, did you...? Perhaps you didn't go in for that when you were at Chelsea, it was only later.

It was later, yes.

When you were at the College.

That's right, yes. Oh because I think the *Young Contemporaries* was dominated by, well it was dominated by the three colleges, the Academy, the Slade and the Royal College, and they alternated who would run it each year. That was really a kind of, beachy thing, sea[??]. That was competition. It was quite amusing actually, the way people used to vie for space and everything in the gallery. It was quite healthy though, I think, to have that.

Well it became quite important for people talent-spotting the next generation of painters didn't it really.

Well it did, it did in that, there weren't many alternatives then. It's of course so different now, young artists can get shows; if they've got any push or talent they get shows with not too much difficulty. There are venues; there didn't used to be venues, there was nothing really. The *Young Contemporaries* was the only public showcase which you only could have when you were a student of course, but at the end of your, well not at the end, no, during the period you were a student. After that it was, it was a bit of a blank, there weren't many places open. But the galleries were all a bit sort of rarefied I think, there wasn't the spill-out, you know, the kind of, the fringe places.

So you don't think you were taught very much in the first year. So what happened in the second year? A bit more?

I remember the teacher I rather liked, but he didn't really teach me very much, was Robert Buhler, I remember he came up to me once, I was doing something, he said, 'If you continue doing that,' he said, 'you'll end up like me.' [LAUGHS] So... I don't know what it was I was doing.

This was intended to put you off was it?

Yes. No what happened actually you see, I don't know how it happened, it happened gradually, but in the second year I began to work in the bedsit where I lived.

Is this in Kensington still?

No, no this...oh no, that was ages ago, no this was down in Battersea. I shared one of these mansion block flats with about five other students, and I had my own room, and gradually I became, I pretended to be at the College and less and less I pretended, and I spent all the time painting in Battersea, and I would just go to the College maybe to show my face some time during the day, if there was something like a lecture or something, and maybe I would just go in and spend the day there in front of an easel doing nothing, you know, but just to sort of see friends.

Why did you not want to work there?

Well, very obvious reasons really. I preferred to work on my own, I couldn't work there. It was too, the space was incredibly cramped. I shared a space with, well it turned out, one of my best friends there, but it was about eight foot square, this space. And everything, you could never keep things clean, and you couldn't do anything meticulous there. There wasn't...everything was dirty, and you kept falling over things and sort of, kind of dirty easels and, it was totally against really doing anything pristine or considered. And that's what I was wanting to do you see, I wanted to work flat with gloss paint, so that you know, gloss paint didn't run, you just work on the flat.

You mean on the floor?

You couldn't have done that there, there was no table to do it, and it would have just got dusty and people would have come in and, you know, balanced a coffee cup on it or something. So I realised that I couldn't really work there. So therefore of course I didn't get people so-called teaching me. But I was happy, and I did what was required, and they seemed to be happy in the end.

Where did this idea of working with gloss paint, house paint, kind of creating the kind of image that you were interested in, where did that come from?

I did a feeling of a kind of, of a wall, you know, something very solid looking; not solid in a three-dimensional sense, because I painted flat, but hard, sort of hard

surface. I think I was surrounded by painterly painting and I wanted to get away from that I think. So I suppose I just perversely did something opposite, you know.

I mean do you remember any influences, things that you might have been looking at that made you think, yes, that's the sort of thing I want to do?

Well I always quote this same thing, it seems very [INAUDIBLE] than it is, but, between the period... As I won some prizes at the end of Chelsea, between Chelsea and the Royal College I went to Greece, in fact it was my first trip abroad, I'd never been abroad before, and I...

Whereabouts did you go?

I went to lots of places in Greece. I went to Hydra before it became the San Tropez of Greece, it was quite undiscovered, and actually the people there were not really friendly. The ones in the restaurants, but the women, they were like, well there's recently been that film, Cacoyannis's film, *The Girl in Black*, about this woman who is persecuted for having an adulterous affair on a Greek island; I think it might have been set in Hydra actually, but that's the nature of that place, you know, that you can see. I think this woman was killed, I'm not sure, no I can't remember. But it's that really threatening women in black, you know, little old women. I mean *The Girl in Black* was a young woman of course, who had the affair. Anyway that's... But anyway, one of the places we went to was Crete, and I saw Knossos, the Temple of Knossos, and I bought postcards there, and the postcards were quite amusing and very decorative, quite unlike Egyptian wall paintings in that they were...they were freer, more decorative and less heavily confined by symbolic representation and... But of course I didn't really realise that these postcards were very crude copies of the actual murals.

Drawn by somebody else.

Yes, some...somebody, a hack producer of postcards I think. But they lend themselves rather intriguingly, and they seemed to have black lines around

everything. I think that was merely the way of making an image, it wasn't representative of the actual mosaics as they were.

So they didn't take photographs of them?

No. Well they possibly did, I don't remember that. I was just taken by these painted, these reproductions, however they were done, I don't know, and... So I...I picked up on that quite a bit, because they were flat, very colourful. And I liked the stylisation and everything, so I suppose, and the decorative quality.

Was there also an influence from your, when you had been studying sort of commercial art, graphic art, at Chelsea?

No, no.

Nothing like that?

I didn't really study, I mean I hardly studied, I was there for a term, and really I learnt nothing there.

When you went to Greece, did you travel on your own or did you go with friends?

I went with about six girls.

You and six girls?

No, there was one other guy. It was actually Edward Bawden's son.

Richard.

Yes. Do you know him?

No, I do know of him.

Yes. But otherwise it was all these girls, most of, all of whom were very attractive, and most of whom were blonde. Of course when we hit Greece, these Greek islands, I mean they caused mayhem, chaos. When we got to Hydra we were taken up by a group of men. This was the most extraordinary thing. I don't know whether, maybe this shouldn't be... This group of men, who were also very handsome, but they're homosexuals, there were about five or six of them, but they took up with the girls because they were decorative, and because they were foreign, and because they were bored. And we had some very strange adventures with them, and... Well there was one French guy who wasn't a homosexual, he wasn't with them but he... Oh, and a Swiss artist who I have known since called Samuel Buri, lives in Basle now I think. And we all became friends, it was quite a... It was just the Greeks who were homosexual, the other guys were quite the opposite. This is a long time ago, I don't really...

But had you teamed off with any of these luscious beauties?

No, not...no. I mean what...

Were they from the art school?

I had, I was friendlier with one, which really suggests that I came with them[??], but, who I see now quite often. I don't know whether I should be mentioning names in this.

You don't have to.

No. But, no she's a very good friend of mine now. She's a fabric designer.

But were these Chelsea students then?

Yes.

All these people, yes.

Yes. Well, no. I'm now getting confused. No, some of them were, well they might have been just starting like me at the Royal College, because some of them were at the Royal College. For instance one was Pauline Boty, do you know the woman who...

Died young.

Who died, yes. Who was very very attractive, you know, she was a stunning kind of, a film star.

Looks like it from photographs, yes.

Yes.

And that film, Pop Goes the Easel she was in.

Yes. She was like a sort of film star good looks, and... But as I said, they were all very attractive. But I didn't, we were just together, you know, it was... I was glad to have company because I had never been abroad before. I didn't speak any languages, not that French would have helped in Greece even if I had had it. But I loved Greece, I really did love it, and when we went there I realised that it was really, before it was overwhelmed by tourism. I mean in Athens for instance you would, men would wear hats and white shoes like Chicago.....

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Yes, well, you know how Athens is now very polluted with traffic. Well then, the only, basically the only cars you saw were taxis, and they were either grey Mercedes, which came from I don't know where, all the same model, or old American cars which were beautiful, I mean sort of, in lime greens and sugar pinks and chrome, and bumpers, and everything, which had sort of strange engines in them. But they just kept them going. And whenever we got a taxi we wouldn't...we would...we certainly wouldn't get one of these grey Mercedes, we would wait for what we thought was the prettiest taxi and hail it, you know, and we didn't get in the first one we saw. And of course that's all changed, because everybody seems to have cars now, unfortunately for the Greeks, the Athenians.

Where would those American cars have come from then, America?

Yes, initially. Well they would come to Greece between the wars I suppose. I don't know how they got there, they certainly did. And then, it's rather like I think the situation in Cuba now where they keep their cars going because they can't afford to replace them, and they're just, they're very expert at repairing old cars and keep, you know, keeping them on the road. The same in Uruguay, they did that in Uruguay. So anyway, it was, there were so few cars really comparative to today, so it was quite pollution free. And one was allowed to walk around the Acropolis, you know, like touch the pillars and everything, and the Caryatids, that small building, they were there, they were real, now they're replicas I think. And people were unused to tourists, to foreigners quite.

You couldn't get, you weren't faced with a lot of aggression though?

No. No, on the islands, as I say some of the old people were very suspicious, but not to the extent that it was at all disturbing or.. We didn't want to cause any fuss or anything. But they did get worried when we shared a house, like all these girls and us guys, you know. I think they, they kept...they would try and peer in the windows and things.

See what you were up to.

Mm. I think they got rather disappointed, they would have been, you know.

So you went there, what, in...twice?

Well initially it was between Chelsea and the College, but I've been back since, about, four or five times I think. The first island we went to, which I have really fallen in love with, is Samos, which was, the reason we went there is simple. We got on the boat that went east across the Aegean, and we rebooked[??] it, and the last island it got to before it turned round to go back to Athens, and that was Samos, which is only, well you can see the Turkish coast from Samos, and it's quite a large island, very interesting in that it's a sort of microcosm of, that little world is going back[??]. It's got mountains, pine trees, grapes, rocky sort of desert-like beaches, and lush sort of, like rain forests. It's just amazing, jungle kind of features. It's just, it's an amazing island.

When did you go there?

Well the first trip I went to...

Oh right, I see.

Yes, which would have been what, '59 I suppose was it, or something.

'60 I should think, yes.

Yes, no sorry, not '59, no. Yes, '60. Anyway...

So that was a bit of, that was an influence in a sense, these postcards from Crete?

Yes, very, I mean it was a funny one, I mean, hardly a sweeping experience, just a sort of trivial thing.

And what was the response by the tutors and so on, when you showed the work, which they presumably hadn't seen, because you were working at home?

Well, I don't know that there was any collective response. I think really, they'd been a bit bludgeoned, fortunately for me, by the experience of the previous year, where they had a few rebellious characters. For instance, Allen Jones they threw out, which was silly, but they stuck with others, and they were all doing their thing so to speak, and it was a bit different from what the College was used to. David Hockney was an example, you know, he was doing something that was a bit, a bit odd. So...

Did you know him then?

Yes, yes. I wasn't a great friend of his but we were friendly like one is generally, but nothing specific. But, no, so what I did wasn't so.. I think they had slightly ceased to worry, they were trying to accept these things.

So there wasn't much of a response? Well did you expect a response?

Well I knew what I was doing was a bit unexpected.

Yes.

But I think I liked that really I suppose because, as I was working on my own, I was a student, I did want to get a response, really, and you're working in the dark very much so, and so when I took paintings in I, you know, I was pleased to get any response, whether it was negative or affirmative. The response was usually from the students, one was more interested in what one's fellow students thought than what the staff thought.

Well how did it go down, I mean presumably no one was doing work like that, so how did it go down with them? I mean what about with particular friends of yours, like, I don't know, Boshier for instance?

I don't know whether...it was more people in my year rather than Derek Boshier. Well I used to enjoy doing something that surprised them. Another show-off characteristic isn't it. Like we did when we were given this, I think it was a summer composition but I can't remember, which they used to do then, and you had a choice of subject matter. It was *Figures in a High Wind* or *Supper at Amaus*. And so I did a kind of combination of both, I did a...I did Christ on a horse, which maybe he did ride a horse one time, but his face covered so you couldn't see it was Christ, I mean you couldn't see he had a beard or anything, but it was an Arabic kind of setting, with palm tree, and him accepting fruit from a plate offered, which came from, the idea came from a Delacroix painting, similar, somebody offering fruit to a rider, or something, some food or something. And I did a kind of design which I thought of as like a date box round the edge which was like little formalised palm leaves. So it was a bit different, you know, and I expect you can still see it at the Royal College common room, senior common room.

And you weren't sort of criticised for doing something like that?

No, no I think they, I think they just, they didn't want to say anything.

They didn't see the point of it?

Mm?

Did they see the point of it?

I'm not sure, honestly, it's difficult to remember what...what they thought.

So, you then, presumably it was just about that time that you started putting work in for the Young Contemporaries. Was that The Engagement Ring that you had had then, in The Young Contemporaries?

Ah, that was my last year I think that I did that.

Right.

The Engagement Ring, mm.

I mean you were at the College from '60 to '63, yes?

Yes.

And I've got a note here saying that you travelled to Italy as well as Greece. Is that right?

Now, well, when we first went to Greece, I hitched back from Brindisi to Paris, through Italy, through Switzerland, through France. It was terrible.

On your own?

Well I was with some people at the beginning, and then we split up, and I ended up meeting Richard Bawden in Paris again and then we went to the Channel coast, and we actually had to borrow money to get from the Channel. In the end we were like, absolutely whacked, and we got some money for a train fare to London.

Did you have to hitch because you had run out of cash in Greece?

Well, yes, and of course, the nearer we got to Paris, the less money we had. I can't remember how we existed actually. I remember I walked into Paris and I had, my shoes had holes right through them, in fact I used to put postcards in my shoes to give me some protection. I just had a French duffle-bag and a blanket, that was all.

Travelling fairly light Patrick.

Yes, absolutely, yes, I know. It was a desperate struggle to get back.

And I suppose you didn't think of going to the consul or anything like that and borrowing?

Well I can't remember whether we tried anything like that. I think we...I've a feeling we might have done. I really can't remember now. It wasn't a bad thing to do I suppose you know, because never having been abroad, really what one used to..we used to sleep in barns and things like that.

It's probably the age to do it at isn't it.

Yes,. I wouldn't do it now.

And, I mean, would you have seen much culture as it were coming back through, I mean you wouldn't have had time would you, probably, you just probably wanted to get back; you weren't looking at churches and art and stuff?

No, not really, no I wasn't.

I mean you weren't savouring the glories of the Italian Renaissance?

No, not that I recall. It's funny, I'd have to really sit down and think about that journey back, I can't quite remember how I managed to do it.

You didn't work anywhere?

We got lots of lifts, you know, people were quite good.

Yes. You didn't work any sort of casual labour or anything?

No. Well it was, that would have been difficult, because we had a limited time.

So basically, coming back to the College, you were spending all your time in your bedsit painting. You'd come in a bit. What sort of social life did you have?

Oh quite good, the usual student social life really, like in the bar at the Royal College. Oh we started a weight-lifting club, you know, I was quite keen on that. We set it up in the basement of the, where the student canteen was, which was at the corner of,

gosh, the main road, Gloucester Road is it? No, Cromwell Road, Cromwell Road, and the road that goes down to South Kensington, that's where the, there's a big house, that's where the student canteen and stage and bar and everything was. And we used the basement for this weight-lifting.

How many, just people from your year, or...?

Yes. It was...well I think we were all more or less from our year. I think there were about, it varied, never more than six of us. But one of the guys who ran it was a, had been a body-builder you see, he was quite an enormous character, so he would sort of tell us what to do and look after us. And I don't know where we got the weights from but we had a set of weights. So we used to do that in the early evening. And then we would crawl up the steps to the student bar to have a beer, desperate for a beer. So it wasn't like a health club, you know, it was just, it was one of those perverse silly things, you know.

How long did that last?

Oh quite a few months, you know. Mm.

And did you go out to films and so on?

Oh yes, of course, yes. Used to spend time in pubs, people played darts, and the sort of dissolute things you do. Still do.

And was it a sort of, a mixture of students, I mean, was it just a sort of bunch of lads?

No, it was all...it was just about four or five guys in my year who sort of stuck together, you know. And...

And were these also people that shared the living space with you, in Battersea?

No, that was... God! I can't remember the sequence of events. I think that... No they weren't... They were people from Chelsea, the different areas of my life I shared this

flat with. People I think who were still at Chelsea, a couple of girls, and some of them weren't art students, you know, who shared this place. It was a mixed group, and you moved in when there was a vacant room, and then you moved into the back of the block, the mansion block of flats, apartment, flat, and as you became more senior in the hierarchy of, how long you had been there, then you would eventually get one of the front rooms looking onto the park. It was quite funny.

Did you have one of those?

Yes, I ended up with, that's actually where I did most of my, in fact that's when I started working there, because I couldn't really work in the other room very well, it was too small.

Where is this, somewhere, Prince of Wales Drive or somewhere?

Yes. It was called, in fact it was called Prince of Wales Mansions, they're all different names, but that happened to be Prince of Wales Mansions, Prince of Wales Drive. It was a good time. Well all my student days were very good, as they usually are, unless something terrible happens, they were very very enjoyable.

Were you...I mean were you looking at any artists in particular? I mean one is constantly told that you were probably looking at people like Léger and Gris; I mean did they come in at that point?

Yes I think pretty well, yes, they did. Well those two names, I think, I suppose I was really initially more interested in Léger than Gris; Gris came a bit later. Léger is more obvious, you know, more, stronger, you know. A more powerful artist obviously, because he dealt in big scale works, compared with Gris, you know. So I found his work very compelling and still do. I can't think of any particularly obscure people I was interested in.

Why had you chosen to use house paints?

Why? Because they were...it was alien to what was going on around me, as I said, in that, I felt that it was...I felt a lot of work was rather scruffy, you know, I wanted to kind of neaten it up and not get away with something that was vague, and therefore maybe possibly mysterious, possibly interesting, and possibly nothing. So...

Was it a deliberate idea to avoid the evidence of brush marks?

Well as much as possible, but...

You don't like all that gestural kind of...?

No, absolutely. I didn't want to sort of, didn't like soft focus painting, you know, if that makes any sense really.

You wanted it all to be precise and sharp?

Yes.

Highly defined.

What you saw, you got, kind of thing, that was the idea. Very frank. And also decorative, I wanted it to have a sort of decorative feeling about it.

Wasn't that a sort of naughty word, decorative?

Well, it was, exactly, that's why I wanted to do it.

So you were being deliberately subversive?

Yes, not in any sinister way, but yes, I suppose I was, yes. It's another aspect of my showing off you see. But I just wanted to be different I suppose, and at that time it was; it's not hardly, you know, it soon melted into familiarity.

But did it strike you as being a good ploy to be different in as much as you would have a particular individual marketable thing that you could...that you could, you know, interest the public in buying?

No, I wasn't thinking like that at all. I was actually pleased to do something that I really enjoyed doing, I felt that was positive. Because I was waffling around when I first... When I went to the College I felt less sure of what I was doing than when I ended up at Chelsea, because as I say, at Chelsea I was, you know, like, doing very well, and even though I wasn't sure what I was doing, I felt I had some support sort of thing. The first year at the College I was really messing around doing very rubbishy, nothing sort of... So when I eventually got on to this crisp kind of straightforward figurative imagery, I felt I had got something, you know, I was very, relatively pleased, and it wasn't merely to be perverse, I just got something I felt that I could...it seemed right. And also, as I was just saying, it wasn't original in that Léger could have been easily a precedent for this sort of thing. His things were bold, not woolly, very strong, linear, figurative, but not in a kind of a representational perspective sense, but in a decorative way, without being mere decoration as it's called.

It's often sort of suggested that it's a style that's very much influenced by the sort of thing a sign painter does.

Yes.

I mean were you aware of that kind of thing? I mean, you didn't model yourself on a sign painter did you?

No. Well, I realised that initially I hadn't the skills of a sign painter. I think I've just about caught them up now.

What do you mean by that?

Well the ability to do things, do things that's required of you, you know, you want to advertise a car, an apple or something, you know, not, no, a car is a bad example because I never painted cars. But just being able to sort of render things well.

You mean a high degree of technical proficiency?

To also project, project images, you know, to...

In an advertising way do you mean?

Well, in a way that's immediately understandable, yes, I suppose advertising is part of it but it could...if you take advertising as being like, you can say a pub sign or something, you know, it's very...that's perhaps not a very good example, but...

Well so many pub signs seem to be not very good.

That's true. That's very true. Though the good ones are good.

But few and far between.

Mm. You see, as you obviously realise that, I can't really remember why I did things. I suppose there are many reasons and they're all a bit confused in my mind and they... I mean I suppose that's why it's rather reassuring when you actually do some, actually pin down an image and actually do something, you know. You think it's...it's not conclusive, naturally, that's the age-old story about painting, is, you've got to get it right next time, you know. But at least you've done something, you know, and however varied the sources for this image are, they've come together actually in an object. And it's just, just takes in the whole confusion of one's life, kind of rationalised in one point, you know, where you actually do something. And you realise strangely that it's characteristic of oneself. It's not that you are seeking to do something, as I was jokingly, you know, saying, like, to impress people, or certainly not to make a saleable object. It ends up being one's nature in a way. But that's not very clear either, and also not entirely fixed, you know, that develops as well, not...you know, not dramatically I don't think but, you know, gradually. So, I mean all the things I was saying, you know, about, like things I've seen and things that influenced me, it's not any one clear line of step by step thinking, or

accomplishment; it's all chaotic really, as life is, and you just, as I say, bring it together as best you can really.

End of F6305 Side A

F6305 Side B

....because you've got to deal with what's coming up, also the culmination of three years' work I suppose.

I know. Well, yes, and you put up a show. It's funny that, the shows were not like shows today, that you nearly always showed more or less where you worked, which as I say, as I described earlier, was very cramped. So, I think you maybe painted the walls or something, I don't remember painting the floor. The students are amazing now, they paint the floors, they paint the walls, they paint the windows, I mean everything. And they put up...and they're always incredibly professional, I admire that. They even have catalogues. Well it was never like that of course, it was really just, you had as much space as you could viegle[ph] out, you know, get...everybody was competing for space. And make it look presentable, and put the work up. But, going back to Alan Power, I was really thrilled, because he bought, I think he bought four paintings. I sold about, maybe six paintings, I can't remember now.

And this was at the end of year...?

This was my end of college show.

It wasn't the New Contemporaries, the Young Contemporaries?

No no, no, it was in the show.

And he came and bought how many?

I think he bought four, but I may be wrong.

What sort of...?

Dick Smith bought *The Engagement Ring* at my diploma show. However, the paintings were £40 each, £40, they were four foot square paintings, you know. I mean that *Engagement Ring* was subsequently sold, not many years later, to the De

Beer people for £16,000. Of course this is why artists should get money from resell like musicians do, you know, [INAUDIBLE] royalties you see. I really think they should, but, there we are, it's not likely to happen in Britain. So they were modest sort of... Though it was lovely for me though, it was a lot of money for me at that time.

What did...do you remember the ones that Alan Power bought?

No, I can't remember now.

So when would the Young Contemporaries have taken place? Not at the same time presumably, but during that last year?

Well I went to the *Young Contemporaries* I think every year, every year I was...there were three years I was in the *Young Contemporaries*.

You must have been producing an awful lot of work for you then. Because you paint quite slowly.

Well, no no no, you couldn't put more than, they don't take more than a couple of works in the *Young Contemporaries*.

No, but then you also...

If you got two works in, you were lucky I think.

Yes, but you can't count those in your diploma show as well can you, it must have been different work?

Yes, but I don't think I sold at the *Young Contemporaries*. Again it's difficult to remember.

I thought Engagement Ring had been in the Young Contemporaries you see.

Oh, well maybe Dick Smith bought that from the *Young Contemporaries* then, that's possible.

I had a feeling that that was the case with that one.

But, I was working fairly regularly, and, I mean I don't think I... As far as I can remember I don't think I borrowed work to show in my diploma show, I don't think that would have been acceptable really. I just had enough to put on the wall; it was just a demonstration really.

Were you working quite hard do you think, during that period anyway?

Well probably like everybody does, you work a bit more intensely prior to an exhibition. I know the whole of these Space studios I visited subsequently, I would go there and they would be quite silent, but prior to the John Moores send-in there would be a sudden burst of activity, you know. I think artists actually need some impetus, they can't just work all the time like in a vacuum.

Did you win any prizes or scholarships or travel things or...?

At the College? I don't think so. I can't remember there being any.

So what was, you know, what was the future facing you?

Oh, well, it was all right. Because, Lawrence Gowing, who had got me into the College, immediately offered me a job teaching at Chelsea when I left, so I had no problem at all.

So were you a bit of a favourite of his then?

Yes. He was marvellously supportive, he was fantastic. He was a marvellous guy.

Did you like him very much?

Yes. Difficult to know, because he lived in a different world to me socially.

Did you spend any time with him in that sort of milieu?

Not particularly, no, not that I recall.

Roger de Grey described him as a bit of a, I mean he was very fond of him, Roger, as a bit of a thug in some ways. Would you agree with that?

Oh, he was very overpowering. How anybody can use a disability to their advantage so well as Lawrence did, with his spluttering stammering voice. Of course, it was marvellous for him, because nobody could interrupt him because you didn't know whether he had finished speaking or not, they couldn't say anything. Everybody used to sort of, sort of literally have to hang around waiting to see whether he had finished what he was saying. And of course being quite tall as well, he managed to dominate situations very easily. Anyway he got, he gave me a job immediately, so, and it was...I only had to do two days a week at that time, it was good pay. It wouldn't seem as good pay now, but it was enough to live on.

And that was painting you were teaching was it?

Ostensibly.

Did you have any good students?

Well they all seemed good to me. I don't know, I mean I can't tell you names that perhaps would mean anything, but... No, it was very difficult at first, because some of the students were older than I was, and I felt totally inadequate to teach, but it seemed a good way of earning a living, or getting a living. I earned it or not, I'm not sure.

So you couldn't say the teaching was something you enjoyed necessarily?

Well no, I felt very nervous about it, it took me ages to get used to the idea. That's another story, teaching.

Why?

Well, it went on for nine years, I think I taught at Chelsea, and it changed very much, became more like a social club.

What, the art school did, or the teaching staff?

The teaching staff. I think it was a good school actually, it had a...we were quite irresponsible, I was quite irresponsible as a teacher, but I think the general atmosphere of the school was really conducive to kind of people doing things, and there were lots of good students throughout that period. And the staff and students got on extremely well, mostly. But it did become, at the end it became a kind of drinking club. I used to, I worked out that I would spend more money going to Chelsea than I earned in the same day.

In a bar?

Well, bar and taxis and meals and things. Yes, mainly drinks.

What, with people like John Hoyland and people like that?

Yes, that's where I met John.

Is it? Teaching?

Yes, at Chelsea.

Well we'll come back to that later in the course of it. So what was our sort of personal life at this point? Were you married, had you met your wife?

Well, I met her at Chelsea, I was teaching her.

Right, so, you had gone through the College without being trapped by anyone.

I wouldn't call it trapped.

No no, I was joking.

Mm.

You hadn't had, you hadn't sort of met anyone you wanted to marry?

No. No, that's...

But you had been very promiscuous?

Normal.

What's normal Patrick?

I don't know. [LAUGHING] Well I thought I was normal.

You had had a number of girlfriends?

Yes.

And then you went to teach at Chelsea. Where were you living, were you still living in your Battersea digs?

Ah. No. I can never remember when I changed things, but I actually moved to Notting Hill Gate. No, OK, initially I was, yes, I was still in Battersea, yes, I was, because I remember, I used to walk across Battersea Park to the art school, I used to walk to the art school in the mornings. Yes, I did eventually move to Notting Hill but I think that was quite a bit later. Yes, so initially I would go to...oh, I lived at Battersea, I walked to art school. I'm just remembering, when I first started there, for some reason or other I used to go, at lunch time I used to go to Chelsea Baths to have bath in the public baths, and I was wondering why that was.

Cheaper.

No. I mean, that I didn't have any bath where I lived.

Well...

Maybe I... I think at Battersea we had, we had a bathroom, yes we had a bath. I can't...

But did you have to put money in it?

No no. You did when you went to Chelsea Baths. Well I did anyway, I used to go often to have a bath. Gosh, unless this was when I was a student of course. I'm very confused. But I was quite sort of healthy and I used to go, I used to go swimming sometimes at lunchtime at Chelsea, so... It seems unbelievable.

And you didn't have a separate studio, you were still painting at home?

Yes, I was still painting in Battersea.

Did you find it difficult to keep any momentum up after leaving the Royal College?

I actually can't remember it being like any kind of transitional period. I don't know what incentives I had particularly; well I just, I suppose I kept working.

Did you have an offer of an exhibition anywhere? I mean when did you start to show with a gallery?

The first exhibition I had was when I was at the Royal College I think, I shared this... Gosh, this is getting very confused. I need a sort of... Anyway, I had a funny exhibition with a friend in Islington Green, a gallery in Islington Green, that lasted for a brief time.

Did you sell anything from there?

No, no. But, no the thing that... I remember Bryan Robertson coming to my place at Battersea, my then, you know, my then one room, and offering me an exhibition at the Whitechapel in the *New Generation* show, and I suppose that's the real thing that probably kept me going. Because then I had probably been teaching for about a year-and-a-half or something.

And when did you...so when did you meet your wife?

Well, when I was teaching at Chelsea; I don't remember whether she was there when I first started teaching or not, but, I don't think she was actually. But she was in the fabric department eventually. [PAUSE FOR THOUGHT] I mean I'm getting confused. That's right. She was a painting student when I sort of taught her. She said the only thing I said to her was, 'You should have more colours.' She had a rather sort of limited palette I seem to remember. But eventually she went in for fabric printing, and went to the Royal College, did fabric printing at the Royal College.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

We didn't get married until, like the end of her, at the end of her time at the Royal College I think it was, I'm not sure.

So you didn't live together or anything?

No.

And when you were... I've got Shepherd's Bush here. When were you at Shepherd's Bush?

Ah, well, I lived in St. James's Square which was Holland Park really, it's on the edge of Shepherd's Bush, for a while.

That's when you got married wasn't it?

No. I lived up the road from there, in what was really more Notting Hill Gate when I got married, but I was already living... When I got married I was already living in a flat, sharing a flat with another guy, and he left, and when we were married we lived in the flat, we lived in the whole flat. It was only three rooms, two, one tiny room, tiny kitchen and bathroom, over a dry-cleaner's in Clarendon Road.

And when did you get... Sorry, what was your wife's maiden name?

Jacobs.

And what's her Christian name?

Pauline Jacobs.

Pauline Jacobs. So you got married when?

Good question. I can't remember.

You can't remember?

No.

Oh Patrick, you must be able to remember that.

No, I can't actually. I know I was 32, so one can work that out, but I don't know.

32? 1968.

It seems a bit early doesn't it.

Well you would have been teaching five years by then.

Yes, OK, that figures, mm.

That's quite a long time.

Mm.

So that five years was divided between Battersea and then up in Notting Hill?

Yes, yes. Yes I think we all, I'm not sure what happened, I think we all had to move out of Battersea I think.

I've got here that you did a thesis on art and photography.

Oh that was my, yes, N.D.D. was it, or...yes, it was one of the things one had to do.

Was it interesting?

It was all right.

So the Whitechapel...?

I just read a lot of stuff and more or less, you know, reiterated it; I didn't make up anything. Hardly an insight into art and photography.

The Whitechapel New Generation show is 1964.

Yes. That I do remember.

Oh well, that's... So, before that there were no shows, but after that?

Well after, when that happened, Robert Fraser took me up you see, that was... So it was quite fortunate you know, after the College Lawrence gave me a job, and after the Whitechapel, Robert Fraser took me up.

How many shows did you have with him?

Gosh, I couldn't possibly remember. Used to have one every two or three years, but I wasn't with him all that long in the end, because of course the gallery collapsed. I don't know.

Half a dozen, three?

More like three, three or four I think, mm.

And did you...I mean did you begin to sell well?

Not dramatically well, but... I did sell, and he got me a show in Milan, you know, with Marconi. I went over to Milan with him.

Was that good? What are you laughing at?

Well, that story is another, is a real story, that would take... My trip to Milan, my show, with Robert Fraser was just crazy, crazy.

Why?

What happened? Well partly because of Robert Fraser. Well, as I say, it's a long story, I don't know if we could...

How long? We've got about ten minutes on the tape, you can do it in that.

Well, I'll give you an inkling of what it was about mainly. Do you know Marconi's gallery in Milan? No. Well, he's a lovely guy, he was the son of a frame-maker, and he decided he wanted to have a gallery. He had inherited the frame business, you know, they made these wonderful, elaborate, carved frames, under-carving and everything, gilding. And, I don't know how Robert Fraser had the connection, but he got this show for me at his gallery. And I know I was living at Clarendon Road, because Robert said he would collect me to go to the airport. Well, he arrived late to

collect me. So we got to the airport. You know, I'm not very experienced at travelling. Robert seemed to know, was so assured, but like crazy as well. Well I think we actually got the aeroplane we were meant to get. However, I noticed that Robert sat, Robert next to me but a little way along the aisle, and I could see him, and all the time his leg was going up and down and juddering and juddering, juddering. And he seemed very strange. I thought, maybe he's frightened of air travel or something. Oh, that wasn't the worst thing. An announcement came that there was something wrong with the plane, we had to turn round, go back to Heathrow. So we went back to Heathrow, and we waited for the next plane. We got on the next plane, and we were in the air, and there was the...my private view was going on, and no way were we going to get there in time for the private view, which was the whole purpose of the trip. And so we arrived in Milan late at night. And next morning I suppose we went to the gallery and saw the show and everything. Then Robert said he was going to go to Rome, did I want to come with him? And I, as I said earlier, I had been abroad before this time, but I totally feel a bit sort of vulnerable, and I thought, you know, he was going to look after me and deal with stuff, probably money as well, I don't know, I can't remember. So I said, 'Yes, I'll come to Rome with you.' So we went to Rome, and we met up with this group of people who were just like out of *Dolce Vita*, I mean they were sort of... Well, we spent a night in the home of this guy who was one of the stars of an Italian movie, what was it called, *The Three Brothers* or something. Anyway he had become a successful film star and he lived in this house right in the middle of Rome, which was like an old bit of a castle, sort of turreted place, it was quite amazing. You walked into the front door, it was all marble, round room, marble floor, and a pedestal one side of the room with a gleaming motorbike. And he went up this like, sweeping spiral staircase. He had lived there since he had become a successful film star, with his mother who lived somewhere, we never saw his mother, she lived at the top of the house. Very Italian that. We spent the night, well I drank but they all smoked drugs and stuff, or had drugs, and I never ever had them, I didn't know what they were about. And of course I realised that, in retrospect that his nervousness on the aeroplane had really been that he was either coming down or he was in, you know, he was like, the drugs were wearing off or something you see, you know, obviously in a very agitated state. Did I tell you about my first experience with smoking drugs? Oh that was quite ridiculous. It was not this time, it was some years before, when we were sitting in a room of

people smoking, well I thought they were just smoking cigarettes, I didn't know what drugs were. And somebody passed me this cigarette, and I thought, that's strange, you know, I was nearer the ashtray than they were, but I thought it was rather strange to... So I put it out in the ashtray, you know. I thought that's what, why they passed it to me. I didn't realise I was meant to smoke it. Anyway that was the level of my naivety. And so we spent all night in this person's house, and at dawn we all got in one or two cars and drove down to Ostia, and then we walked along the beach in single file in the mist of the dawn, just like in *La Dolce Vita* somewhere. Maybe they were trying to imitate the film, I don't know. I was just going along like somehow a victim of... And we arrived at what looked like a native hut with straw, made of straw and everything, and what it was, it was this film star's beach house. It wasn't very big, but when you went in it had a tiled bathroom and everything, although it looked like a native hut, house. Then I spent all day really just on my own. I was with these people, but I might as well not have been, I was like on my own. I got very, terribly sunburnt, I mean in an awful way, really terrible. So I ended up going back to Rome and then getting on a, I think I had to get on a plane... No not...maybe it was back to Milan, I can't remember, or back to London anyway. It was awful. And when we drove back from Ostia, I remember Robert Fraser driving in these narrow roads and he was driving like a maniac, and it was just lucky that one survived this whole experience. But I realised, I didn't know then that that was Robert's normal kind of way of life, and totally alien to me. It was a relief to get back.

I expect you were by the sounds of it. I mean, you mentioned, I mean, that you thought you were naïve. Do you think you were quite naïve then at that sort of time, or do you think everyone was?

Well, I don't...gosh. I don't know, because, if I was mixing with these people who were quite relaxed and smoking pot or whatever they called it, I suppose they knew what they were doing, and, I never thought about it. Nobody ever sort of introduced me to smoke. But then I was already really well into drinking alcohol so it didn't seem necessary to discover another drug. And also alcohol seemed a bit more sort friendly, people.....

End of F6305 Side B

F6306 Side A

.....talk to you about the paintings that are going to be in your new exhibition in March isn't it?

Well 26th of March, yes.

Yes. This one is called Fruit Display.

Yes.

Which has got...it looks to me, I mean I haven't seen the original picture but it looks to me as if it's got quite heavy impasto round what could be a mirror, to the right.

Yes, well, it's...yes, it's meant to represent a wall panel really, right round[??] a mirror.

Right.

You know, where you have a, sometimes have a wall light been stuck in the middle of a wall panel, that sort of thing it's meant to represent.

And that would be a sort of beading round the edge would it?

Yes.

And it is in fact what, it is...?

It's from the tube, yes, squeezed.

And it's oil is it?

Mm?

You're painting in oil at the moment?

No no, all acrylic, I haven't painted in oil for years.

It says 'Oil on canvas' on the back.

Oh odes it? [LAUGHING]

That's why I said that.

Oh gosh.

I thought you worked in acrylic.

Well, I'll tell you what, that's extraordinary. Have they all got that? That's bad.

No, it says acrylic, this one.

Acrylic.

Acrylic. Maybe it's only this one that's oil.

That's extraordinary. Well, you're not going to reproduce... Can you...if they decide to change and reproduce that one, can you point out to them that they're all acrylic, you know.

I'll just write on it.

Yes, you can. Have you got anything that will write on it?

*Yes. So you've got, that's the wall panel, this sort of oval, with the light inside it.
And then there's this rather extraordinarily realistically painted...*

Fruit.

Fruit. Which is in quite juxtaposition, I mean contrast, to the sort of bold shapes of the shadow and the light isn't it.

Yes, well they've all...this is...it's very much a series, it happened like that, just... I didn't make a prior decision, but I just started in one way and I thought, I can't...I spend so much time thinking what to do, I think, what I'll do is start with the same premise for every painting, which is to have a source of light in the top right-hand corner, and I start from there, and I work backwards, right, rather like the opposite to the way one writes, from left to right. I work from right to left in all the paintings, you know, getting, building up from, logically from what I've done, you know, like a jigsaw sort of thing.

And do you plan it out beforehand, I mean do it in rough.?

No, no.

So you're actually doing...

No no, I've a vague idea. I start with a light and then I build from there.

How do you know it's going to get to work out, I mean in terms of the overall design? You just carry on until it does?

Yes. And it sort of, it...after a while it sort of nearly becomes inevitable what you do. When you've got about two-thirds of the way across then the possibilities are limited and they dictate themselves.

But what I mean is, it seems to me, I means it's rather wonderfully spare in a way; I mean you've got sort of great big empty areas and then this extraordinarily realistically painted, well I mean it is isn't it?

Well, yes, I bought that fruit from the shop and set it up.

Did you?

Yes.

You actually did it from life then?

Oh yes.

And how long would that have taken you?

Oh, quite a while. I can't remember. I never sort of count and things.

No. But I mean, that bit?

But the pineapple changed colour while I was painting it, and it went from green, being slightly green to being more yellow and more brown.

And those shadows that are cast from the fruit, particularly the wonderful pineapple top, I mean do you see, do you set up a light source like that so that you can see it, or do you paint it?

No. In fact the shadows are quite unlike the actual fruit. They are really sort of decorative shadows, they're not...they're not totally accurate to the fruit.

Are they spray painted?

Yes, because I like to keep them simple, and...so I just like, as I say, a decorative...

But this one which is quite extraordinary is called...

Room, it's just called Room.

Oh yes. Has got this absolutely extraordinary sort of combination of shapes. I mean right down the middle there's this sort of red and white sort of, I think they're like sort

of triangles aren't they with a sort of lampshade again casting its light. I mean, as an abstract shape, I mean it's most remarkable.

Well I wanted to sort of, I wanted the plant to be quite realistic, but I didn't want it to be like, too realistic a picture; I wanted to kind of deny that. And the red is just a kind of, the room, it's the red of, the warm kind of red of a room. A lot of the paintings have got red in, sort of I think of as an interior colour.

What is that plant?

I can't remember, it's a very common house plant.

You also painted that from life?

Yes. We've still got it, it's downstairs.

And the rest, I mean the yellow of course is light again isn't it.

Yes. And you see what I've done is, abstract, what you call an abstract shape, the red, I've actually made a shadow of it you see, so, which sort of makes it look a sort of, gives it a kind of reality that it hasn't, it wouldn't have.

What is this to the right?

No, if you look... The cream colour at the top right has got a shadow of that.

Ah yes, right, yes. Yes.

Which is a sort of... Whereas the other is the plant, which is that, it's a fairly accurate shadow of the plant.

Yes.

And so both the plant and the abstract things have got their shadows you see, so that kind of denies the abstract quality to a certain extent.

Yes. But it is quite... I mean it's quite stark isn't it in its sort of, in its sort of geometric qualities, this one.

Yes. I mean that was, of this, apart from the big yellow one which was the first painting I did, that's the first of these square paintings I did.

This is the big yellow one you're talking about?

Yes, I did that...

It's called The Register?

Yes.

What I think most intriguing... Sorry, what were you going to say about this one?

I was simply saying that that, the biggest and the first painting I did, and you see, it hasn't got a light in, but, you see the corner is cut off.

I know, that's what's most intriguing about it.

Well that's meant to be where the source of light comes from, the black.

Right.

So, do you see, again all the light's coming from the top right-hand corner, although it isn't actual light.

And what does the...oh The Register is what, signing the book here?

Yes, and with the pen, you see, ready to sign it.

A hotel register?

Yes.

And what is this thing here?

That's the back of a chair.

Ah, this sort of, again an oval form. You like oval forms don't you?

Yes, well that's not...that's actually more representative of a Victorian chair.

Chair back. And that's a sort of leg is it?

Yes, that's the leg of the chair, mm.

And so what are these bits?

Well, they're all shadows of objects in the...a desk with a, it's got a knob you see, and a shadow of the pot that's holding the flowers. And then where the chair is, is a kind of space, slightly round the corner, where there's another shadow there.

So is that the table leg then or the chair leg?

The chair leg.

It's a shadow isn't it. And...yes. I mean it's a really sort of remarkable picture I think, because you sort of float this oval in, in a huge field don't you, in a way, and it's like a cheese with a bit cut out of it.

Yes. Well it relates slightly to a painting I did called *Study* which has got an oval with a bit cut out of it; it's a much smaller painting.

But then it's almost as if the bit cut out is then added on at the side, at the right.

That's right, yes. I mean it, in a sense it is, but there's no, quite, no logic in that. You see that bit on the right is meant to be the shadow of the, the desk where the reception, the book is.

Yes. So what... How do you start a picture like that though, with that top right-hand corner?

You see I can't remember now, because that I did some time... I did an oval, I think that was the first thing I did.

'93 this one isn't it.

Yes.

You started off with that yellow oval?

Yes. And then I think I put the two... The black bit coming out there and the black at the corner, I think so, and then I started building up inside the oval. It's meant to kind of give a sort of sense of focused light.

Yes, it's like a spotlight isn't it.

Yes.

Yes, absolutely. I just think it's rather extraordinary. There was something I was going to say and I've completely forgotten.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

How do you get these amazing hard-edged lines, do you use masking tape or something?

Well, you can't get hard-edge with masking tape. I have sometimes used masking tape but I always have to re-do it. I use it just as a quick convenient way of making a line and then I have to touch it up to make... Of course it always bleeds with masking tape.

Does it?

Yes.

What, it goes underneath it?

Yes. Unless you want that effect, which some artists have used, but I don't.

So how do you get your lines then?

Well I just take time over it really.

Really?

Fiddling and fiddling away.

And does it take for...I mean, you work sort of quite slowly really don't you?

Yes.

Must be amazingly, to get it done as accurate as that, amazingly difficult.

Well I'm not obsessed by it being really immaculate, but I just want it to look comfortably straight, you know, to do the distance that you can view the painting from.

What is the ideal distance, or does that depend on the size?

Well whatever...it does, yes, it depends on the viewer as well a little bit.

Yes, how big they are.

How good their eyesight is, yes.

But again this has got a sort of very representationally painted vase of flowers.

Yes, those are things, that 's painted from life, yes.

Do you ever use photographs?

I haven't done any, no, not in any of these. I used to.

You used to in the Sixties or so.

Yes. But it depends what I need. I'm not against using photographs, but I, if I've got the, if I can get the object, then I prefer to use the object rather than photographs. But if I can't, if photographs seems to be the only way, then I will use a photograph.

And do you, I mean do you...?

I mean I bought that pen for instance from a shop.

The one on the...?

The stand.

Yes, on the stand. And have you got a clock like that?

No, I made that up.

What about space in these pictures? I mean, do they exist on a flat, on a level, on a sort of plane, or is there, do you think there's recession going on in here, or is it all on one level? No it isn't all on one level, because that goes back doesn't it.

Yes. No no, there's meant to be recession. Usually the lamp, the lamp on the right is very much in the foreground, right foreground, and then things tend to go away from it.

There doesn't seem to be so much in The Register, that seems to be flatter in a sense, do you think?

It is, things are more isolated, they don't link up. They're only linked up by the oval, whereas the others butt against each other, you know, the colours and everything.

Do you...I mean is that how one creates depth through the juxtaposition of different colours, so one comes forward and another one goes back?

To a certain extent, yes, but also a kind of slight hint of perspective, mm, that sort of, not just colour.

You're placing your objects, that you can sort of see that one is in front of the other.

Well I work...most of these paintings are to do with verticals and diagonals, and the diagonals all suggest a perspective you see.

Is that because you are fascinated by verticals and diagonals?

By what?

Is that because you are fascinated by verticals and diagonals and the way they work together?

No. The reason... Oh gosh. I don't... Horizontals tend to sort of make the thing too still.

As a dynamic.

Diagonals seem inevitable, and horizontals don't seem necessary. Also I try and avoid when I come to the edge of the canvas having one of the verticals parallel with the edge; I like to sort of tip it a bit, so that...

Like that one.

Yes.

Which is called Hedone's?

Oh that, yes, that's quite funny that.

Hedone's?

Well, when I was in...I had got through about half this painting, and I thought, really this painting is about a two-tone wall. And then I thought, we went to Pompeii earlier this year, and the walls are like, they're like, I mean they're much more elaborate than that of course, that's just a simple... But they are, they tend to be red, there's a thing called Pompeian red. And I thought of Pompeii. And then I put that vase in you see, and so the name... Then I read in my guide book, I was reading that there was one of the bars or, stroke brothels in Pompeii before the volcano, and it was run by this woman called Valeria Hedone, and Hedone is Greek for pleasure, hedonist, you know, hedonist. So then I imagined that this, because it has food in, this was her bar, and so I've called it Hedone's. So you say like, it's Hedone's place, you know, shall we meet up at Hedone's? So, I mean totally contorted.

It also sounds like Adonis as well, you know.

Yes it does, yes.

Doesn't it. Adonis or whatever it's called.

So it's a very weird kind of tortuous thing I went through, but I didn't... Why I wanted something very ambiguous is because I didn't want to call attention to the

meat, I don't want to call it three steaks or chump chops or whatever they are, I wanted to make that a kind of incidental part of the image.

Yet it would be a very different picture without them wouldn't it, I mean if you just take the meat out.

Well it...yes.

What it does is, it provides a focus.

Can I just look at something, I'm just curious. Oh, is this...has this got a surround? Because it doesn't go to the edge here. Is this...I don't understand this, is that a...?

Well I thought that was what you were talking about. Yes, it's cardboard.

Yes, but because...

Card. Should it be bigger than that?

No, because this...this can't be the edge here, because this doesn't go to the edge, it goes right down to here. So, is there a bit of...?

Yes, there's a bit of black towel round it.

Oh, sorry, I just...oh yes, that's right, OK. No no, I was worried that they had just clipped it. They hadn't, it's not clipped.

No, but it gives the impression that that...you're right, it gives the impression that that is the edge.

But anyway, if it's reproduced it would be reproduced without that thing round it, won't it? I mean it will be done properly, presumably.

Yes. But it would be a different picture as I say without the meat wouldn't it?

Yes, well it gives it more of a feeling of place. It's rather like a sort of kitchen or something, I thought.

So, I mean you're using the sort of highly painted reality to bring a sense of reality in a sense to it, aren't you?

Yes, to give it a bit of edge I think. I don't want it to be an abstract painting.

You make it much more specific, your sort of anchorage[??] in reality.

Yes. Yes.

In a way. I mean, aside from that, I suppose you could say otherwise it's rather a wonderful play of patterns isn't it.

Well that evolves, one thing leads to another, you know, and the shapes kind of start to dictate themselves, and then, but they somehow inevitably relate, it's quite strange how they do.

I mean this sort of, vaguely sort of heart shape down here, at the bottom right, is rather extraordinary.

Yes, that's meant to be the light from, directly from the lamp above.

From above, yes, but it is a rather extraordinary shape isn't it.

Yes. That evolved over a time actually, it started differently.

And the way you achieve these different levels as if the wall actually does move, or as if the painting does, as if it were, you know, painted on a panel, on different level panels, you get that...

Yes.

I mean that's very trompe-l'oeil, and all this sort of thing here, isn't it?

Yes, I started to introduce a bit of shadow just to give, to kind of work against the, sort of seeing these shapes as abstract shapes.

Do you think you are becoming less abstract as a painter? Do you think you never have been very abstract?

Mm?

You've always had an abstract aspect to the work.

Yes, well it's all been formalised, I like to think of it like that, and I think of the sort of shapes being a bit, rather symbolic in a way rather than representative, you know, they're...it's...I'm trying to sort of use a language of shapes which convey what I intend to convey, but are not done in an atmospheric sense. By the way I bought those three chops, those steaks I mean, and did they look terrible after three days painting them! [LAUGHS]

I was going to say, did they go off?

Yes, oh yes. I used to walk in the studio and it smelt like an abattoir.

Well Sutine used to do this didn't he, I know, he painted the actual things, the landlady would complain because it was rotting, you know, the meat was rotting.

Yes.

Fantastic. It doesn't take you longer than that though?

Mm?

It would be awful if it went on for weeks.

Well it...I think it took me three days, yes, which was, I was quite pleased about it, I could have taken...I have done meat before that's taken a week. I don't think I'll ever do meat again.

Someone like Euan Uglow, painting a loaf, it took him years; it was actually eaten, the inside was eaten out by sort of little wriggly things and so on.

Oh God!

He had to fill it with plaster, to actually keep the same special length, because it was such a long thin bread, you know, a flat round thing. You don't have problems like that?

Well, no, I've never...

In the height of summer you would have flies in there wouldn't you.

Well exactly. I mean I did paint this, not long ago, well it was the last one of...

That's the most recent one?

Yes. And it was winter of course, so it helped a lot that it was cold.

The other one that we have here is called Happy Hour, which I think is rather beautiful.

Mm.

And it's got this wonderful exit sign on it. This is really a sort of, the most amazing reds and... What colours are they? I mean do you invent the colours or do you mix them or do they come straight out of a tube?

I try not to mix colours too much. I have to, but... In the centre they're sort of very strong orange, the strongest that I could get. And that glass, you could actually see me in it.

The wine glass?

Yes.

Well it's that sort of very Flemish or something isn't it, sort of 16th century Flemish or something.

What, [INAUDIBLE] yourself in it?

Yes.

Well it only happened by chance you see, because I was sitting between the wine glass and the window, so I could see my, the shape, it's only a shape, it doesn't really indicate anything. But it is me. And as it happens, it's right in the very centre of the square I think.

But that, that sort of, it might be considered a device that, you know, the painter putting himself in, I mean, a sort of deliberate kind of, sort of symbolic thing, but you're saying that it just happened because you happened to be there?

Yes.

You didn't put it in for a purpose?

No. But I was quite pleased at the end that it was... But, because it's not, you can't see it as a person, it's just, I know it's me.

Yes, I mean it's a very highly, highly sort of defined piece of, you know, you can see the light reflected and there's a shadow against it, and that's you.

Yes.

I mean if you...the juxtaposition of that glass painted in that fashion with these sort of rather more schematised bottles, I mean is rather remarkable, because you don't know whether the bottles are the part of a decoration painted on the wall, like a frieze or something, or whether they're supposed to be real in a sense, in inverted commas, whatever real is. Is this, this is supposed to be, is it supposed to be a kind of depiction of a bar or the idea of...?

Well, yes, I saw it as a sort of, a kind of wine bar really, yes.

And so would those be real bottles?

Well you can see it as you wish. I sort of saw them as real bottles.

But you wanted to set up that kind of ambiguity?

But I didn't want to paint lots of real bottles, because, well, it would have been too cumbersome really, both painting and as an image I think. And I like the idea of the glass being realistic and the bottles being vividly formalised.

So do I. I mean it's a wonderful ambiguity that you set up. And what...I mean this is just, this is just light is it, falling down there on the left?

That's, yes, that's light coming from the, where the exist is, you know, it's a sort of, but it changes colour as it comes in.

It looks like violet or something, have you used?

Yes, sort of, yes, it is.

Just like that. And then there's...what colour do you call that wonderful sort of, well it's a green but I mean...?

Yes, it's rather perverse, because I got the shape of an upside-down lampshade, but I just try and give a...I mean light can come in all sorts of shapes, you know, with different circumstances, and I thought, well, that green was more luminous, and say I'd done yellow or something, it wouldn't have been as luminous.

Particularly against the red.

Because it's the only green in the picture, it's got more drama, you know.

And these sort of, like the edge of an awning or something, these shapes aren't they.

Yes, that's, over the bar is one of those indoor awnings that they have in some places, you know, a kind of decorative feature.

And that is a projection of it upwards and that's a projection of it downwards.

Yes, exactly.

And that's it?

Yes.

In the middle.

Yes. But there's an imaginary projection.

Yes.

Because it's imaginary projection[??].

It's funny, it's quite flat in a way isn't it.

Well, if you see it, it...

But then of course it looks as if it goes in there.

No, if you see it, it doesn't look... Because, the way the exist sign is, it actually goes right back.

This is a problem with just looking at it, I'm afraid, from a transparency Patrick. I would like to have gone to see them before writing the piece, but there, we couldn't do it.

No, where the exist sign is, you see I imagine that there's a sort of screen there in the foreground, a wooden screen, and if you were leaving you would go round that, and there would be a door to the right, you know, round behind where the exist sign is.

Yes.

So I see that as going, as like quite a deep space for that image.

Right. It's great, I love it. And what's this one called? Rust Never Sleeps. It's an enigmatic title Sir.

Well, I'll tell you what happened. You see those, those are actual blobs on the canvas, do you see them? Yes. They are actually three-dimensional.

Do they cast a shadow? No.

No, no I painted...

You painted those shapes, so you've painted a whole load of...what are they, what did you do them with, just dropped onto the canvas, acrylic?

Well what I did, I had to, first I had to get a...first I did, I drew out the circles, and then I drew them onto the canvas. Then I had to have the canvas like straight on, flat on the ground. Then I had to put a platform across the corner of the canvas, and lie on it, so I could reach the furthest dot. And I poured it through a plastic funnel, the paint,

into each little, into each circle, you know, slowly, kind of going from one to the other, and then let it dry.

Fantastically laborious.

Sometimes it went wrong and I had to wipe it off and start again, you know, but, they're mostly fairly round.

And then did you paint over the top of them?

Yes, then I painted the red over the top.

So, what, you did it on brown first?

No, just white, it's white on white.

It's white. Mm, right. Gosh.

It was a bit painful I can tell you.

Yes.

A bit nerve-racking actually.

And what about this row here?

Those are blobs of paint, they're poured as well, but they're not so thick, they're quite flat really. They're meant to be like upholstery tacks.

Yes. I mean they're sort of gold aren't they.

Mm.

So what is...explain the trifle?

Well, I was in the middle of the painting, and the Grand National was run, and I always, I don't follow horses normally but I always saw the Grand National, and I was looking through the runners, and one of them was called Rust Never Sleeps, and I thought, what an extraordinary name for a horse. And so, I bet on the horse, and a couple of others. It was the only horse in the race that had to be put down; it fell and broke its shoulder, he was put down, so I thought, I must call this painting *Rust Never Sleeps*. And because it suggests...and all these are meant to be in night time, these paintings, and this is a kind of, sort of, like an insomniacal, if that's a word, painting, you know, of somebody. And then I mentioned it to Marco Livingstone[ph], and I've got to ask him, because he said, 'Oh that's the pop song from,' from some singer, called *Rust Never Sleeps*. I didn't know that.

I didn't either.

So it's all very ambiguous. So I've got to ask him when I see him next. He's meant to be writing my foreword for this, my catalogue, and I'm going to ask him where it comes from. I mean even as a song it's quite extraordinary.

It is. As a notion it is.

Yes.

So this is a...is it a bar? It's just an interior.

No, it's...it's an interior but it's a kind of public interior. It's not a domestic, because it's got these, you know, these sort of upholstery buttons on the wall, which means it's a bit flash, you know, it's...you don't... a normal domestic interior doesn't have that.

No.

It's more like a club or something like that, you know.

But there are no glasses or bottles to indicate it's a bar, specifically?

No.

There's a plate which could be an ashtray, yes.

Yes.

And I suppose this semi-circle is a sort of table of some sort is it?

Yes.

And this, there's partitions and so on. And then the flowers of course which are the ones... And then did you start again from the top right corner?

Yes. Well first I...

You did that.

Yes, I had to do the...well I had to put the lamp in, and so that when I did the blobs they didn't run into the lamp, they actually somewhere cut off, I had to cut them off at the...

Oh so the lamp went in first?

Well the way it was going to be went in[??], you know, so I knew what I had to do with the blobs.

And then of course on the left-hand side you have all these rather wonderful shapes which indicate the curtains and so on.

That's right.

All to do with light again aren't they. And is that a...

That's, yes, that's curtains with light, with that sort of soft, like night time light coming in from what is like a sort of street light or something.

And these, whatever they are, what are those? Flowers?

I don't know what those are. I bought two bunches and stuck them together to make a display.

Are they in a...?

They're both in pots but you can't see the pots, I didn't paint the pots.

No. But I mean you don't anticipate a vase being there, pots, on the side, on the side table or something.

Well I don't like to put [INAUDIBLE].

But that sort of, must be on a table.

That's right. Well it's holding up the vase sort of thing. I don't like putting the vase.....

End of F6306 Side A

F6306 Side B

It seems like they're a sort of combination of the specific and the non-specific.

Well they have spatial ambiguity, but I sort of, I have to kind of read the space even though I don't indicate it, you know, so it seems to have some logic, although it's...

It's probably logical to you.

It's fairly logical but sometimes I kind of twist it slightly, you know, for effect really. Because, yes, I don't carry the logic too far.

No, it services the picture rather than dictating it.

Yes.

But they're all in interiors Patrick. You haven't done any landscapes.

No. Have you ever seen a landscape?

I've seen some outdoor pictures as it were.

Well I've had, I've done pictures with trees in occasionally, but not very often, no.

No, I mean, I was thinking of, maybe actually, isn't the Greece Expiring on the Roads of Mitalongi[ph] or whatever it is, a sort of outdoor picture?

Yes, but then it's copied from a Delacroix.

I know.

It doesn't look outdoors. I mean it's quite...

Not really. I suppose there are none, no landscapes?

No, there aren't really. I did a painting, but it's really like a wine label of a vineyard with a chateau in the background, with all the vines painted. But really it's more like a, because it's a black and white, it's more like a print, printed wine label, black and white wine label.

What is it that draws you to the interior above all?

Well I don't live in the country, I don't really... I think I find landscapes much too intimidating. I wouldn't know how to tackle it. It's interesting, reading this Picasso book, he hardly painted landscapes, I mean unless you think of his Cubist landscapes being landscapes, but they're not at all in any realistic sense, but he didn't paint many landscapes, in any of sort of representing reality.

No, you get figures in a sort of exterior setting, but I mean it's very sort of, it's not...

Stylised, yes.

Yes. Like a beach or...

Yes, but it's just a kind of horizontal sea, blue and sand and sky.

But you don't even do that. Hang on, there's an outdoor one I can think of with sea in it, isn't there, from the Sixties?

Well I did a photograph, copied a photograph of the Chateau Chilon[ph] in Switzerland.

That's one.

Yes. But then that's hardly, I mean, it's totally, faithfully copied from a photograph, it's not as though I went out and saw it.

No. So you think it's pretty [INAUDIBLE] already, i.e. like in a postcard or a photograph, then you can...you'll deal with it, but otherwise not?

Yes.

You're not like Mondrian who hated green though?

No.

Used to pull the carriage curtain shut if he was travelling by train because it was too green, in the country.

No, I'm not...

You use green in your pictures.

Oh yes, of course, in the interiors, yes. But, I don't...

Do you think that the interiors, the rooms define the people who inhabit them?

Well they're usually meant to be sort of public places rather than domestic.

So they're anonymous in a sense.

Yes.

But not symbolic?

Not actually symbolic of anything. I mean when I said earlier symbolic, I didn't mean symbolic in a kind of, the literary way; I meant that they're...maybe symbolic isn't the right word, I meant that...

Emblematic?

Yes, of light, and light describing...

Form.

Interior, yes, the shape. So that I suppose it's not symbolic really, it's not a good word to use. Except that I find that the actual lampshades have a certain slightly symbolic quality, because they don't, they're not really real at all, you know, they're totally flat, and I, as I was doing this, I thought of them as like postage stamps up in the top right-hand corner almost, you know.

Very good. And are they all much the same size? Although this one is bigger than the others is it not?

That's the biggest.

The Register.

Yes.

It's 108 by 84 inches.

It's quite big that one, I can't remember. How much does that make it in feet?

Seven foot.

Wide?

Yes.

Yes, by nine foot high is it?

Something like that. Yes it's nine foot high.

Well that's the biggest by far. The other square ones are all six foot three square.

Why did you choose a square format?

Well, it's funny, it came about by accident. I ordered some stretchers from Halifax, this guy I know in Halifax, and I ordered them on...

It's a long way to go to get stretchers isn't it?

Well he used to be in London and he moved to Halifax.

You've used him for a long time?

I've stopped using him now, but, because I've got another system, but... And I rang him up and asked him for these stretches. I think I rang him up, yes I must have done, and he sent me them. I only asked for two square stretchers and he got it wrong, and he sent me four. Well I said, I'm not going to send them back to Halifax, so, I mean I had to pay for them of course, but I...and I thought, well, I can use them. And so I had all these square stretchers quite unexpectedly, so, that's how it evolved.

Some of them seem to be 76 and one-eighth, 76 and a quarter, 76 and an eighth. 76.

I don't know who measured them. I'm sure they're accurate, but...

That's funny, because this one, Fruit Display, doesn't look as if it's a square. It looks as if it's wider than...doesn't it?

Mm. I hope they haven't clipped that. Yes, it is a square.

Do you think that's the effect of the way it's been, you've structured it, across the middle as it were, making it look wider?

Yes, I think that's probably right. I mean because the two...

Well it's an optical illusion but...

The two ovals are very much on the edge, and they seem to be a long way from each other.

Yes. I mean there's this sort of, not central but just off-central vertical, which is a bit like a nose isn't it, a nose with two eyes.

[LAUGHS] Yes, you could say that.

Yes. Why... You didn't always paint in acrylic, did you? You started...

Oh, well, I've painted in acrylic for years, yes.

Right from...you used to [INAUDIBLE] or something?

I mean I started with, yes, house paint when I was a student.

And has that lasted, by the way?

Acrylics weren't very common then you see, I think they were hardly known, it was more an American thing at the time. It has... Well, God! I mean some of those paintings in enamel have lasted, I'm touching wood as I say this, lasted incredibly well. And I went through a period of painting in matt oil, oil paint, decorator's oil paint, but I think that was the worst period really in terms of lasting, because being matt, service is very vulnerable. I don't know how many paintings I did that way, but that was...

What, do you mean that they absorb dirt, or that they just show every mark, every patch[??]?

Well they could easily scratch. And then I went to acrylic I think, and I've been painting in acrylics since, I don't know, sort of, early Seventies.

It sort of came in in the mid-Sixties didn't it, I mean people were being asked to try it out.

Yes. There are people switching back to oil, but I find acrylic is perfect for me because it's so flexible and dries quickly, and...

But if you paint slowly, which you do, presumably you don't want something that dries quickly, do you?

Oh yes. It's only the ideas that are slow.

That sounds funny. The actual application isn't slow then?

Well I can make alterations very quickly you see, that's the thing. If I do something and it's not right, I can re-paint it or re-shape it or whatever is necessary.

Do you do much of that?

Oh yes.

Reworking?

Particularly now, in the way I work now. I used to work where everything was worked out beforehand and traced out and everything, but now I need to be able to change all the time.

Would you have made a sort of detailed drawing then first, or would you have done it onto the canvas?

What, in the past?

In the past.

I used to do a drawing, then I would square up a piece of polythene stuck, which was stapled to the canvas, then I would transfer the drawing to the polythene. Then I would trace the drawing onto the colour of the canvas, and then just more or less work from there, not making a lot of changes, you know.

So do you think this, your new...how long have you been using this new method?

God! it's very difficult to say. Quite a while now.

What, sort of six years, or ten years, or...?

Well about...it sort of more or less coincided with me stopping using the black line, you know, which I didn't do overnight, I did it gradually, but as I did that it became more and more an exploratory way of painting, you know, not... It's actually much more interesting working this way than the way I used to work, when I drew everything out, because that's quite tedious, that whole process.

Well you've done it once, you've done it twice, you did it three times [INAUDIBLE] isn't it.

Yes, yes, right you have to...

[INAUDIBLE] drawing, then you screw it up and then you transfer that to the canvas.

Yes, I know.

You're doing the picture three times.

Yes. Sort of.

Sort of, yes. I mean this sounds much more interesting in a way.

Oh it is, yes, yes.

But also much riskier. Is it riskier? I mean, do you get...do things go very badly wrong?

Well so far I haven't found it that way, but as I say I can make changes, so if I make what I think is a wrong move I can go back over it to a certain extent. You can't keep painting and painting on, but you know, there's...

How far can...I mean, can you take it off, the acrylic, or does it dry so quickly that you have to paint over it if anything goes wrong?

You can't take it off, no, you paint over it.

And then there must be a certain level of how many times you can paint over it, otherwise it shows too much.

Well, it...

[INAUDIBLE].

Yes, it can get very shiny.

Because you use texture very specifically don't you, I mean, if you build something up it's for a purpose within the picture, so if you've got too much building up because it was covering up a mistake, it wouldn't be there for the reason of having a texture, would it?

No. I don't mind a certain, like, in these paintings I get sort of lines where I've come up to a decision and I'm not going any further, then I just carry on and it leaves a sort of line. But I don't mind that, because it's all in the paint, and it sort of suggests other things if you really want to see it that way, you know.

Is it not visible in the transparencies, but would be visible...?

Oh it's visible in the...yes, not overtly, you know, you have to look at...

But it's like a sort of, the archaeology of the picture as it were?

Yes.

This is where you changed your mind, or came to a decision. That's good.

That's right, yes.

And you liked that for the people, you like people to be able to see that?

I don't...

Or you don't mind?

I don't make, I don't focus on it, I don't put people to focus on it, but I don't care that it's there, you know, because it...it does sort of suggest another structural element, you know. It's very slight, the line, you know. And you have to be, you have to get the painting in a certain light probably before you even see it. I mean a painting properly lit should look fairly even, should.

Do you, I mean do you imagine your pictures or do you make your pictures for a domestic setting, or do you think that the size of them makes them more museum pictures?

Oh no, I...well I don't always do large paintings, but the reason I do them as large as they are, which is not very large actually by modern standards, is because they have this feeling of, as they are interiors, that you could enter it, you know, they're big enough to feel that you can enter the interiors.

You want life-size [INAUDIBLE].

Yes. And every, and the very realistic bits I paint are all sort of more or less actual size of the objects I painted, I copied. So even though that, you know, brings a light

onto the surface, I mean there is a suggestion of recession through other means, but still the objects I paint are life size, so, that's not kind of practical, that's not realistic, but it's, I want to give the objects as much weight as they can possess, you know, without exaggerating, I don't exaggerate the size.

So, if you painted a smaller picture it would be of a pipe[??] or a bunch of grapes or something?

Well it could...no, it could be one of the details on the big paintings, you know.

But you wouldn't do a small picture of an interior?

No, definitely, no, not the... Well I couldn't, I mean I wouldn't be able to include [INAUDIBLE]. You know that what I paint is in an interior, but there's no feeling of that space as being a space.

But how do you...I mean what...how does a picture start? I mean do you just sort of sit there and think, what on earth am I going to paint?

Yes.

It must be terrible.

I know.

Enormously frustrating.

Look, I mean this is, this is typical of all artists I presume, I mean you know, I remember Peter Blake says he, you know, he's got all these ideas he can't get round to. Well I've never had that, unfortunately. I've always had to struggle to find something. And that's why in this series I started, I thought, well if I start with something in the top right-hand corner, then it will mean that I will have to do something else there, and then something else there, and so on and so forth.

So it really does build up into a sort of a creation doesn't it.

Yes.

It's all quite organic actually, that sort of process.

I suppose so. I think...

Or instinctive rather than...

Like a sort of jigsaw puzzle process, you know, fitting things in. And often I don't know – well I always don't know what, starting, right, what's going to be on the rest of the canvas, you know. I sometimes don't know if I want to introduce a surrealist object, which I have been doing; I don't know which, what it will be often.

And how do you decide on that then, when it comes to the time that you need one? I suppose it might be something you see in a shop or...?

No, I think...

[INAUDIBLE] interior that you might imagine it.

I think, you know, there aren't many... I mean the most curious choice of object was that pen and holder, but then, it related to the theme of the painting, but normally I would choose rather timeless objects, like flowers or food, or fruit, you know, or maybe a jug or something that didn't have any particular connotations, you know, which is great[??], general [INAUDIBLE].

Do the pictures date to any particular period? I mean are they of now, or are they in a sense timeless more, or are they Seventies, or, is there anything that you particularly like, you know, any particular period?

Well not particularly. I used to, in the Seventies I used to paint paintings which were rather about interiors of the Fifties and Sixties, but now I don't really have any interiors[??].

Do you think they're more timeless now?

Yes. We've got...well, yes, but they introduce old things, but then you get old things in contemporary interiors. Like, this hotel I stayed in in Cornwall is quite well known, on an island where, it's a sort of art deco interior, it's rather, it's a lovely place in a way, but I think they made the mistake of buying lots of art deco furniture, and so...

Too much?

Well you don't...in the period of art deco people who had furniture of the period that they lived in would also have had older pieces actually, they wouldn't just have art deco. So it does look a bit, a bit strained, peculiar, you know, to have all art deco, and some of it not very good.

No, because it becomes more like a museum piece rather than an actual thing that had been lived in.

Yes, exactly, yes.

And your pictures are more of public places but that are real, I mean that they have to have a convincing quality to them rather than stage sets.

Well, they tend to be bit theatrical I feel somehow.

Do they?

Not intentionally, but one can read that to a certain extent, you know. But they are meant to be real places, although they are totally imagined.

But they're sort of based on a lifetime's experience aren't they Patrick? I mean, don't you kind of collect naff places in a sense?

No, I'm not...I don't collect things at all.

No, but I mean in your mind.

Yes, I suppose so.

I mean you quite sort of enjoy going to these kind of interiors, don't you? Or am I imagining that?

Yes, of course I do, yes, I mean, I thought when I went to Iceland last year that I found some, like naff interiors, something interesting there, but surprisingly there wasn't much. But...

Do they not go out at all, they all stay at home and get drunk, the Icelanders?

Oh they go out, yes, there are quite a lot of bars and...

But they're not...they're not particularly stimulating, for you?

Oh, well there was nothing very surprising, let's say. I was surprised not to be surprised.

They're rather ordinary.

Mm, yes. But you know, we obviously stayed in a hotel, and I find hotel interiors quite fascinating. I mean they have incredibly repetitious formats. When you see one of these, the brochures, and you see the bed with the two lights, two tables both, you know, both sides, and maybe the lights in the same place, and a picture on the wall above the bed. And the whole thing.

Have any hotels bought your pictures to hang in their foyers?

Not that I know, I don't think so. No.

Charles Saatchi must have...

They don't spend much money on...they buy in batches of prints don't they.

Yes, I think that's correct. Charles Saatchi must have bought your pictures first though some years ago. I know he's bought some recently, but...

Well, I...

Have you noticed?

You see I don't always get told where my paintings go to; I get told that they're sold them. But he did buy a painting, I'm not sure of the date now, which was called *Glass of Whisky*, and I don't know what else he's got in his collection of mine, but...

He's got at least, well, there's two in one of the books on the Saatchi collection, Glass of Whisky and another one, and I can't remember the title of the other one.

Oh, well I don't know.

If not three.

Oh.

And that book was published at the beginning of the Nineties, so I assumed he would have bought them in the Eighties.

Yes.

Late Eighties.

I think he may have bought some older paintings of mine, I don't know. I mean he didn't necessarily buy them at the time they were done, he could have bought them, somebody could have re-sold them.

Yes. No I just wondered if he was planning to put on, you know, put them on show and have a little Caulfield display.

Well, there's a possibility of that, but Leslie...don't print this, because...

No no.

Leslie doesn't want me to mention it.

No. No, it would be great though wouldn't it, if it did happen. No, I won't mention it.

But it wouldn't be for a while, particularly because I'm having a show in March you see.

Yes.

And I definitely didn't want him to do anything before then, because I wanted these paintings to be for this show, even though he's bought them.

Yes. There's only one that isn't sold isn't there?

I'm not sure actually. The big oval, yellow oval isn't sold I don't think.

Well I think it's an absolutely remarkable painting, but I can see that, I mean apart from the size of it, I mean it's quite a radical painting I think.

Well it's not cosy is it?

No, it's not. It's quite radical I think.

I can see people not warming to it.

But you don't paint pictures for people to warm to, do you?

Not...no, I never consciously have, but...

What do you paint them for?

I'm not sure.

Because you wouldn't know what to do if you didn't paint?

Well exactly. Well it's become my way of life and my living, so... And it's quite satisfying, although it's agony having to do them, and once they're finished, sold or shown or something it's...

A great sense of..

It's quite satisfying.

A great sense of relief.

Mm.

But then if it's agony, why do you subject yourself to it? Because you have to, you have to paint?

Yes, pretty well. Yes, both for practical and I suppose emotional reasons.

Emotional.

Yes. But, I mean I don't have like, things I must paint. I don't kind of get inspired or anything, I just, I think about what I've done and the possibilities of what I could do.

Is it like sort of variations on a theme in a sense, like this series I suppose? Although they're not...you wouldn't say that they were, you know variations on a theme at all, because they're so different.

Well what happens you see is, when I finish a painting it goes to the gallery, so I never have another painting in the room, I don't, I never have the last painting in it, so I can't refer back, and I don't...and I've not seen these paintings even in a photograph since I did them. So I'm looking at them quite fresh now. So I'll be curious to see how they all hang together, because they've never been together, well in my...not as far as I'm concerned they haven't.

So when you think, when you're sort of thinking what you are going to do, in a sense you're setting yourself problems to solve?

Yes.

It means you have to invent the problems, then you have to solve them.

Yes, it is a bit like that, yes.

I mean do you actually like putting paint on canvas?

Sometimes.

When?

Well if I feel things are sort of coming to fruition and things are coming together, then I'm starting to enjoy it, doing it; it's a painful beginning. Also sometimes when I start one of these realistic areas, I think, you know, it's going to be a bit of agony.

But does it give you considerable sense of achievement when you've done one of those realistic bits?

Yes, it does actually, I think. I think, God! thank goodness that's out of the way.

But also you must think, great, I can still do it.

Well that is a funny thing, that one does live in fear, you know, that maybe this time you won't be able to do it. I think, I suppose artists must feel like that.

Oh yes, otherwise it would be too easy. I mean if you could just, you know, I think it's got to be a risk business to make it valuable, the end product valuable.

Yes.

Otherwise you could see that it's not been risky for the artist, it doesn't work.

Mm.

I mean I think that comes across.

Well I suppose yes, I suppose you do find painting that's a bit facile in that sense, that risks haven't been taken.

Yes, I think you do, quite a lot of it.

Mm.

Do you think there's anyone else around who is doing painting that's akin to yours?

I sometimes think of that.

Or do you think you're really a sort of...on your own?

Well, it may be that there are people I don't know, but I don't actually know of anybody who I would in any way equate with my work. You see people still seem to assume that I do black lines around bright colours, and you do get some people who

actually work, some, my attention's a bit drawn to some people who work in that manner now. But of course it's not like, it's not like the painting I'm doing now.

No. What made you dispense with the black lines?

Oh I thought it was too restrictive actually in the end. I'd done it long enough, you know. I couldn't think of an alternative though, way of describing things without doing the sort of, lots of modelling and so forth, because the black lines describe everything, the perspective and the shape and so forth. So I didn't abandon it entirely, I started to, firstly I introduced more realistic elements in, but not...but rather a, not in an atmospheric way, they were just like, as part of the painting as much as the flat area, which gave me something to do which is nothing to do with black line. And then I...I can't really say, just, it happened very gradually, and, I just had to find another language.

But you were reinventing basically what you were doing then.

Mm?

You were reinventing what you were doing; as you say you had to find a new language.

Yes.

It must be quite a radical step to take.

Well, it took me a long...yes, I think that's why I stuck with the black lines for so long, I...I didn't think I...I didn't quite know what a new language would be. And it took a while to sort of get rid of the black lines.

End of F6306 Side B

F6307 Side A

You were talking about the black line.

Yes. As I say one of the ways I developed out of that, I used to use the black line merely as a way of describing objects, and it was always evenly the same, more or less the same width, it did have variations by accident, but, then I started using the line much more as a part of the painting, not merely as a way of describing. I use other ways of describing objects in the painting, but when I use a black line, and therefore I would make the line usually much thicker, so it was an area of paint rather than a line, you know, a sort of stripe of paint. And also I would vary the width of the black line depending on what I was describing and what function it had in the painting. So I was actually losing the way I used to use the black line by, as I say, making an area of paint, not merely a division of paint between one colour and another, or one shape and another. That was one way I developed. And then eventually stopped altogether.

A lot of it's done on shadow now isn't it.

Well occasionally, yes, I've been using shadow. Not a lot, but... Well actually, I suppose, no, it is... There are...some of the shadow is, a lot of it's shadow but it's not shadow of the colour that it's on, but some of the shadows I've been using recently are actually shadows of tones of the colour, so they're like, more like real shadows. Others are like that painting you're looking at, all the green areas are shadows, but the green isn't a tone of the yellow, it's merely a shadow colour.

This is, yes, The Register painting.

I mean if I'd been making more realistic shadows, it would have been a sort of, a sort of...

Dung yellow.

Ochrey, yes, colour, yes, dark ochrey colour or something.

So what you're doing is, making it in a sense a decorative device within the picture, the shadows, but they still are, they are still realistic to the point of defining the objects.

Yes. I mean in this painting, there's areas in the centre, you can't really see very well, which are real, like real tonal shadows.

Yes, that's the Hedone's one.

Yes.

Yes, because that, that sort of seems to define the actual wall doesn't it.

Yes.

And the way the wall could move in and out and these panels. Same here, the shadows, it's either a variant of the yellow or a variant of the red isn't it.

Yes. Mm.

Is there anyone in your family or your close friends or anything that have been interior designers?

No. It's the most unlikely thing for them to be.

I don't know, I mean you are obviously quite fascinated by a sort of, how, you know, a panel in a wall is put on. I mean I think my great-uncle used to do things like that, in the sort of Thirties and Forties.

Oh really? Mm.

And paint trompe-l'oeil panels on walls, instead of wallpaper they would be painted on.

Oh.

Swags and all sorts of decorative bits and pieces. I mean they used to use extraordinarily potent colours as well, sort of violets and limes and all sorts of remarkable things. But I can't imagine that those kind of interiors are preserved anywhere, I've never seen one.

They probably do exist somewhere, I don't know where.

Well as fashions change so much, I mean the sort of, wallpapers came in much more didn't they.

Yes. Well of course Braque's father was a...

A house painter.

Yes. And he had all these techniques which Braque used of course, and he actually taught them to Picasso.

Yes, well Braque appears more and more as, the more important figure in some ways.

Well he was...he did introduce certain elements that Picasso took up quite eagerly. For instance, cut-out, paper collage, he did that before Picasso.

Yes, all this chair-caning and all those sort of things they used.

Yes.

Sticking on bits of rope and...

Yes, Picasso just took it all further.

And combing[ph], combing[ph] was a house painters' thing wasn't it.

That's right, mm.

Yes, he did, yes. I mean are you looking forward to the Braque exhibition at the Academy?

Very much so, yes. I was quite intrigued, one of the colour supplements had some reproductions in it, and a couple of paintings I'd never seen before look quite fascinating.

I think there's going to be quite a lot of stuff that we haven't, we're not familiar with.

Mm.

And these peculiar landscapes he did at the end of his life as well.

Yes, that one, Van Gogh's...

Yes.

Also the, I don't know whether there will be any in this show but, because he lived at the end of his life in Normandy, there are some seascapes he did.

I think there are some of those, yes. But who are the painters that...do you look at many artists yourself now? Do you think, I'll go and have a day in the National, or something?

Not often, no.

I mean are there old favourites who come back to you, or do you just isolate yourself here and get on with it?

I tend to isolate myself. Particularly when you are working for a show, I find it's better not to look at too much stuff, you know. Although I am looking forward to

Braque. I think that could be some sort of source of inspiration I think, but I don't know.

I mean, people always go on about Gris and people like that with you.

Mm.

I mean do you look at Gris at all?

Well I have done a lot, yes.

No, now.

Well it's not always...I mean I've got books on Gris but you don't see exhibitions of Gris very much, or see his things.

There was that wonderful show at the Whitechapel wasn't there, of Gris.

Oh yes, yes, that was the last...

Which was very beautiful I thought.

Yes, exactly. It was the only big show I've seen of Gris. It's interesting to read the Picasso book of his relationship with...Picasso saw him as a kind of pupil of his, of Cubism, but he also got very irritated with him because he thought he was pinching his ideas, he was getting too good.

Well he was enormously talented.

And then when Kahnweiler took on Gris, as he had taken on Picasso, he was pretty upset about that, but he didn't want two Spanish painters in the same stable. So he tended after a while to not meet up with Gris.

What do you think it is that always attracted you by Gris' work?

[PAUSE FOR THOUGHT] Well, you see, I mean Braque did a lot of interiors, but his way of working was so personal and free, I mean one couldn't sort of take anything from it. Well I think with Gris, you know, the kind of formalisation that he does is accessible, you know, and I suppose I employed that to an extent.

He's quite often sort of referred to as the more decorative of the Cubists. Do you see that as a bad thing? I mean does your work get called decorative?

I'm not sure actually, whether people... It doesn't worry me if it was actually, I've nothing against that term. I don't see it as a derogatory term.

I think some people do don't they.

Yes I know. But I mean what do they want it to be? They want it to be kind of, kind of harrowing and meaningful? I don't know how you can... I think that harrowing and meaningful things are often the worst, people try to be expressive and...

Is that the sort of art that you would avoid?

Absolutely, yes.

I mean do you like something that is more understated?

Well I want things to be presented, and then interpreted; I don't want to, I don't like kind of wearing one's passions on the sleeve so to speak, you know. It's not easy to do, I think...I think Picasso could do it, but...

I think it's easy to do badly.

Yes, oh well that's probably why I don't like it so much, because there are so many examples of badly painted, over-expressive art. Of course as I don't paint the human figure it's difficult to be passionately expressive. As I say, Picasso, I think really, reading this book, he seemed, in the end he seems to be primarily a figure painter.

I think that's true. But on the other hand he could make a pot look like a woman's body.

Well, yes, in fact a lot of his still lifes were analogous with women, I mean, a violin is often, or the guitar has represented a woman.

So, I mean, but you could paint your interiors like that in a sense, but you don't want to?

I like...I like to feel that they have a sort of human presence, or a possibility of it, you know...

What, it's as if someone had just gone or something?

Or not arrived.

Or as about to arrive. Do you feel that sort of sense of impending...?

Yes, I suppose so. I don't dwell on it, but I think...

Well I suppose if there's a glass there, it suggests something, doesn't it.

Yes, and also...yes, or even, you know, just a light, a light switched on.

Is on, yes. But that's quite sort of minimal in its reference. You don't want anything more overt than that, like a coat hanging up or something?

No. In fact, I don't... Like a lot of artists at the moment, I mean it's become too much, but I don't really, I avoid any sort of narrative references, feel that something is actually happening. That's really why I like to paint one glass, you know; if there are two glasses it suggests that there's a dialogue.

Yes. But then it makes it perhaps, with only one glass it's almost like sort of solitary drinking or something, rather than companionable. You are a very companionable person yourself.

Yes, but when one's in the studio one's sort of less companionable, when you're by yourself.

So you paint that state of mind?

Well, possibly, I don't know exactly.

But you don't sort of paint parties, like Allen Jones paints parties doesn't he.

Yes.

And he likes going out a lot. But you like going out a lot, but you don't paint parties, you paint quite sort of empty places, with the possibility of a presence of one.

Mm. Well I...

Or emblematic of people rather than narrational as you say.

Yes. I think they're sort of, more contemplative. Just trying, just remembering, focusing on certain things, and, which kind of excludes what's happening on the periphery of vision. It doesn't make sense, but...

Well it does, I mean you are putting...it's like putting something in the spotlight isn't it. Focusing on it. But for what reason?

What reason what?

Why are you focusing on certain things?

Well...

For the sake of the picture?

Well I suppose so, but it's sort of... It gives them some, hopefully some intensity, and maybe therefore makes them more real, you know.

Why don't you paint people, do you think?

Well, the simple reason is, when I was painting the black line for instance, I found that to draw, to formalise a person in a black line, it was quite an awkward thing to do. I tried it a few times and it more or less worked, but it had to be in a particular context. Because, to paint a face for instance, I used to keep the black lines the same width, it made it very difficult to paint.

It makes one[??] coarse.

Yes, a bit too...too doll-like I suppose. And, that's because I found that, you know, that the human figure is difficult to stylise, simply because Picasso had done it all, and you... So, it didn't...it left one in a, it left me without any language for painting the human figure.

So was it a sort of conscious decision, right, well I'm not going to get anywhere with figures, I'll stick to the interiors?

Well I did, I did paint figures occasionally over the years, but they always had a, I had to have a very good reason for doing them. I don't feel any desire to paint the figure.

Have I seen a painting of, it may actually be a ballet design, of sort of leaping figures in sort of rather sort of flame-like attitudes, by you?

Well, where would you see those? I mean, I did do ballet figures when I did the costume for the...

Well I think it was reproduced in Art Review or something.

Oh.

It's in my Caulfield file.

Well only because I did the costume design, yes.

That would have been a sort of working drawing, not...but then it surely was...wasn't it exhibited there, at some gallery or other?

Well there's that theatre, music theatre gallery, yes, they did show some things. But they're like mannequins really, those figures; the costumes is what it's about.

So you couldn't call that figure painting could you?

No.

It's just a sort of, an accessory.

Yes. I mean the figures are like a shorthand for figures really. They're quite crude actually.

Well what other figures have you painted then? I mean there's the Gris portrait isn't there.

Yes.

And what else is there? I can't think of any other figures particularly.

Well I did the, I copied a Delacroix of course, which has got a figure in. And then I did a painting, which I had to have a figure in, because it was after Magritte, which was a painting he did of his brother looking at the palm of his hand, where there was nothing on it, called, it translates as *The Mysterious Suspicion*. And I liked that painting so much I thought I would do my own version, so it had to have a figure.

Is Magritte one of your favourites, or it's just that painting?

Not... What struck me... I do like Magritte, but what struck me as remarkable was that, he merely had this man, his brother, looking at his hand, and there was nothing in his hand, and, considering all the things, having huge apples in a tiny room, and tubers on fire and people raining from the sky, it seemed to me amazingly surreal without having any of these tricks that he employed. So I was totally intrigued by it. So I thought, I'd love that painting, but I can't possibly afford it, I'll paint my own version, so, that's what I did.

And I bet you didn't keep it though.

Oh no, I didn't keep it. I don't know where it is.

Do you keep your own pictures, or just let them go the gallery?

I haven't got any. Well as I work so slowly, and I always owe the gallery money, I have to let them have the paintings. It's funny, it's ridiculous, but one can't afford one's own work, is what it means.

You've got prints though haven't you?

Yes.

Do you...when did you start making prints?

I think '64 I think, was the first print.

With...?

Mm?

With whom? It wasn't Kelpra was it?

The first one was... No, the first... Oh, Kelpra printed them, yes, but the publishers were Editions Alecto, the first publishers.

And did you take to that medium happily?

Well I was pleased to be given the opportunity to ask to do them, because it was novel at that time. But I've only done a few over the years.

But do you like the process, do you like the...do you like the results, the effect of it? I mean I think you're...I mean personally I think your prints are very beautiful you see, and I think they work very well. But I mean what do you think of them?

Well I vary. I sometimes look at the prints and I think, oh, if I did that now I'd do it differently sort of thing, or I wouldn't mind changing that. Because as they go through this process, which involves the printers and everything, and actually at some stage it goes completely out of your hands, and then you feel it's like, it's been taken over, and afterwards you feel, oh, maybe I should have looked at it longer and left it a bit and then gone back to it, but you can't do that with printers, you have to get the work done.

Do they change the colours, do you find, or are they fairly sort of faithful to the idea of the colours that you had had, or do they alter it, do they alter in the printing process?

They're usually very faithful to the colours that I want, mm. But sometimes I change my mind, yes.

Well, I think that's legitimate. But probably too late.

No, well, it's too late then it's too late, but... Maybe I should go back to some of my old images and do slightly different versions of them.

Well, I don't see why not; it would be quite interesting re-doing something. I mean I think you've got, obviously you've got that lapse of time between the two versions, and of course you've changed as an artist during that period, re-thought things.

Yes. I don't know whether the publishers would be very happy about that, I'm not sure.

Well if they've sold out of the first edition, I don't see why they shouldn't be. It couldn't be called plagiarism.

Oh no. No. But maybe it's not worth doing that, it's perhaps sort of, a negative kind of a practice.

Do you always feel you've got to go on to something new in order to stretch yourself, or to interest yourself?

As much as possible the images like my painting tend to be repetitious, but...

Do you think it's repetitious?

Well I use the same sort of objects really, but, I try and make the actual painting as different as possible, but...

Well that's what it's about isn't it, I mean, you could say that Picasso used a nude an awful lot, but I mean one doesn't get fed up with that because it's the interpretation that he brings to it, in the same way as, you know, your paintings may deal with interiors, but they are, each painting is very often very different.

Mm. Well I think when I was younger I tried to do as different paintings as possible from each other, but maybe as one gets older one kind of, one's perspective narrows and you tend to concentrate on similar things more. So, if that's the case, that's what I'm stuck with.

Perhaps we should go back to the sort of, the history, as we were going through your life. It's not that bad is it?

Oh no no no no, I'm feeling...I'm not feeling very marvellous, so you know...

Do you want to pack up, do you want to pack it up?

Well...

We could leave it there if you like.

I wouldn't mind actually. I'm feeling, as you probably notice, I'm talking very slowly.

Well it comes out well.

End of F6307 Side A

F6307 Side B

Now what's happening? I think it's working now. What's this restaurant called, The Blue Angel?

The Blue Elephant.

The Blue Elephant in Fulham...

Fulham Broadway.

And it's like a paradise?

Well, we've spent about two or three New Year's Eves there with John Hoyland and Beverley. We got the same table which is just by this kind of waterfall and bridge with, it's like a stream with fish in it, it's quite extraordinary. And what's lovely about it is, you can't really see anybody else, though it's a big restaurant full of people.

Is it huge?

Yes. You don't see... Where, that particular table, you don't see anybody else, you know, it's rather good.

Has it got high ceilings?

High-ish, yes.

And it's all plants and trees?

Yes. And the waiters and waitresses are all dressed up in traditional tie garb, so, it's quite extraordinary. It's weird to step off Fulham Broadway into this... Janet?

[BREAK IN RECORDING – JANET ENTERING]

.....on New Year's Eve, as a sort of...

Well, I think, we did it at least twice, maybe three times, and it was very, it's very enjoyable. You pay for the meal like you do for these New Year things, and you get a bit of champagne, and they greet you, these very pretty women bowing to you as you come in. And then they have a dance performance and they come past your table doing a dance and everything. It's quite amusing.

And the food's good?

Very good, mm, excellent.

So you're going there tonight?

Well, I mean we don't go there very much, because it's a bit of way to go, but as we're going that way for Mavis's launch, it's not much further to go you see, and we thought we might as well take this opportunity to go on. Because we'd eat out anyway somewhere so...

Very good. I mean do you go to many places like that? I mean, stocking up with ideas for your paintings.

No, I don't. No, quite frankly, somewhere like that wouldn't give me any ideas, it's too self-conscious, you know; I only get feelings about places if they're fairly nondescript, you know. I don't...

Like what? When you say nondescript, I mean somewhere that's really not very nice?

Well, no, I usually go to places that are fairly nice, but, kind of rather everyday, you know, and... But I don't anyway, I don't think of any particular place when I do images of restaurants, you know, it's entirely made up, but I just pick up on vague things I remember.

So you would say that really they're based on imagination rather than particular places, your paintings?

Yes, they're totally on imagination.

But I suppose the ingredients are things that you know exist, rather than, I mean they've got to look real, I mean, not sort of, are not too overpowering. I mean you wouldn't do, as you say, perhaps the Thai, The Blue Elephant is too overpowering for a painting.

Well it would be, yes.

So the elements you take are quite plain perhaps, and then you subject them to whatever you want to do in the picture, like specific lighting effects or whatever. Is that right?

Well, yes, well they really just suggest architectural spaces. They're not really very specific at all. I mean that one I did last, *Le Trou Normande*, is quite...

Where does that title come from?

That light?

Title.

Oh.

Le Trou Normande.

Oh, well, it comes from the way they describe calvados in Normandy. When you have a meal, in the middle of the meal if you want to revive your appetite, in some restaurants you have a sorbet but in Normandy they have calvados, which means Normandy hole, which means it makes the stomach, a hole in your stomach. So that's *trou Normande*. And I imagined that there would be a restaurant called that, and

apparently somebody said that they're pretty sure there is one, that it's quite a smart restaurant. But I made this up because I was trying to think of a restaurant, a bar for Braque you see, because I was doing this painting when the Braque show came on at the R.A. and so I wanted it to have a sort of Braque reference, for me anyway. So there are a couple of things in the painting that are...like the window with the...that's got the ironwork, the lead work.

Tile and paints.

Well, yes. I thought of the, I thought of Braque's billiard paintings which have got exactly those sort of paints in, and also he's got an oil lamp in his very dark paintings that were in the Academy. But it's very sketchily described in his painting, the oil lamp, but you can see that it is, its very distinctive shape of the actual lamp, which sort of bows, you know, billows out at the bottom sort of thing.

So that was a sort of homage to Braque was it in a way?

Yes, that sort of bleak reference.

Great. What I was going to ask you was, what you thought about Andrew Ben-Dickson[ph] referring to the morbidity of your vision. Do you think that's justified, or is it a bit perhaps over-stated?

Well it's a bit strong, but I said that, I did, I'm very conscious of the painting *Happy Hour* that I was, the exit meant, really meant like death, not just leaving the place, you know. So I suppose that's quite morbid. And that was why I called it *Happy Hour*, it's mainly, I suppose an amusing counter[??] [INAUDIBLE].

There's a film called Soylent Green I think in which if you take voluntary euthanasia you go into this room and you have this marvellous sort of, the wonderful colours and the visions and everything that you could possibly like as you're gradually sort of leaving the world. But that probably would be the happy hour, wouldn't it.

Yes, right.

Perhaps it's a bit like that.

Yes, and I suppose the meat is quite threatening in a way. It's not like, very tempting.

What made you want to put meat in to a picture, raw meat?

It's difficult to say. I have painted meat before.

Yes, you've done chops and things haven't you.

Yes, I did, I've done about three paintings of meat, but one of them wasn't realistically painted, it was very stylised, it was called, it had titles in Italian to make it sound romantic, and it was *The Large, Beautiful Roast*[ph]. And that's really perversely done, at the time when vegetarianism was very rife and so I wanted to do something to celebrate the idea of meat. But it's also a bit like a sort of, it's a bit sensual, it's meant to be like a sort of, something desirable, you know, like the female nude or something like that, and... It's all a bit contorted. But this... Well I wanted a reference, some kind of reference really that would suggest that it was a kitchen of a restaurant, or a restaurant itself. And so meat is meant to be on display a bit, and meant to be attractive, although it's...

But surely that connotes more to a sort of delicatessen or something rather than a restaurant where you're going to have it cooked. I mean do they have the sort of raw meat out on display [INAUDIBLE] of course?

No they don't, no, no they don't. But, that's why I say kitchen in the restaurant. But then, as I was doing the painting it changed, because I had this visit to Pompeii, and I thought of the walls of Pompeii which are usually, basically two colours, they've got a Pompeian red and a sort of cream colour, although they have very elaborate, decorative elements, which my painting doesn't, so I thought of this place, of this Pompeii. And then...and I...in the guide book I found that there was this place run by a woman called, before the eruption, called Hedone, Olivia Hedone or something. And so I called it Hedone's, meaning like Hedone's place, you know. And so I

introduced the wine jar, or the jar which I assume would have wine in, so it became a reference of something very far away in time and, except that I happened to be, have gone to Pompeii last year for the first time.

Were you impressed by it?

Very much so, fantastic, yes.

It's surprising you hadn't gone perhaps earlier in your career.

I don't know why really. It's an area of Italy I didn't know particularly, the Amalfi coast we were staying, the Amalfi coast. I went mostly to, when I was younger, to Greece, if I go abroad, and France. But never to that particular area.

Have you gone further afield, I mean to China or Russia or anywhere like that?

No. I've been to... Well not like that, but I've been to Brazil and spent quite a time in Brazil, about five weeks, and I've been to Australia of course, they're the furthest places.

What did you think of Brazil?

Fantastic, it was really marvellous, I loved it.

Did you bring in any references to the country in your pictures.

No. Not...no, nothing specific really.

And what about Australia, was that for work, or was that pleasure?

It was the time John Hoyland was going to be the artist-in-residence at Melbourne University, and at that time I was living in Primrose Hill Studios, and so was he, and he said, 'Oh I'm going to Australia.' So I said, 'Oh John...' I had just recovered from a broken collar bone and I felt I needed another sort of holiday, so I said, 'Oh, I'll see

if Pauline minds, if I can go with you,' which I did. We went via Bombay, and we had a fantastic time, a crazy time.

How long were you there for?

I was there for about three to four weeks, and he stayed on, because he hadn't actually done any work when I was there. Because he had to have his show before he left, so he was there for about eight or nine weeks.

I mean what did you do, travel around or did you stay put?

Well basically we were based in Melbourne, then we hired a car and we drove up to Sidney, and then we flew up to the north, to, gosh, I can't remember the place, where there's a gallery owner we knew. Brisbane.

Brisbane.

And because I was going, the Waddington Gallery managed to organise a print show in Melbourne I think it was; well I'm not sure now whether it's Melbourne or Sidney, I can't remember. Which was rather well put on, I was surprised, because it was all very quick, quickly arranged. So it was...and we met lots of people, we had an amazing time.

Did you like the Australians?

Very much, yes. Well of course we mostly met artists and they were terrific.

Anyone that you particularly admired?

Well I can't remember names now, but yes, there were some pretty good artists. There was a couple I liked particularly, but I can't remember names.

No, I suppose the ones that we know in England are probably the ones that don't live in Australia anyway, I mean like sort of, Noland and...

Yes, that's true. Noland lived here didn't he, towards the end of his life.

Yes. And so did, it's the other one I'm thinking, his friend. Boyd, Arthur Boyd.

Oh yes.

He's still around isn't he. He spends a lot of time in England.

Mm.

But Brett Whiteley, did you know him?

Yes.

Was he alive then?

Yes.

But he was living in England as well probably.

That's right, I met him here first. But he's not a, he's a rather difficult, he was a difficult person really.

Was he?

Mm. I don't think...he had a...a lot of Australians do have a bit of a chip on their shoulder because they imagine that you think that they've come from some uncultural back-wood country. And he, when he was here he didn't seem, he didn't[??] seem very relaxed, but when I met him in Australia he seemed a bit on edge and not very friendly really.

I mean...sorry.

No no. Is this in the sequence that you...you don't want to go back to...?

To what? No, we should go back in a minute. No I was just sort of free-associating really. No, I was talking about, we were talking about travel. I mean, do you think travel has been important to you as an artist? I mean obviously for, in terms of visual inspiration, I mean, the early trip to Crete was quite important presumably.

Yes.

And there have been other things like that perhaps.

I don't think they have actually. But it's so fragmented and...it's difficult. I mean, there aren't many specific examples I can think of. Except that I did...what I used to do was, we would take the car and I would take some equipment and we would go and would rent a house somewhere in, say the south of France, and I would work in the mornings on images and prints until about midday every morning, and then bring them back and make them into prints. And I remember in Italy finding certain colours, well in northern Italy this was, certain colours I used in these images, that came from what I was looking at locally. But very, very vaguely, nothing very positive, you know. I mean I always worked indoors, I never worked...

In a landscape.

No. No.

I mean that's not very, you're not a landscape painter though are you?

No.

Not really.

No.

All right, if we go back to where we had got to really in the narrative, it was sort of, you had left the Royal College, you had started teaching at Chelsea. And you must have been teaching at Chelsea for a few years before you got married, in about 1968?

I can't remember, was it?

I think we worked that out.

I was 32, that's right, when I got married. Yes, I had been teaching there for a few years. I think I taught in all about nine years there.

And this is where you met John Hoyland, at Chelsea?

Yes, yes.

Right at the beginning or did he join after you?

No, he was already there when I arrived.

He was already there.

Yes.

And did you sort of strike up an immediate rapport with John?

Oh pretty well, yes. I mean, sort of love at first sight really. [LAUGHS] No, we got, you know, we got on well right from the beginning, and have remained friends ever since.

Are there any other people in your life who you've done that with? I mean presumably Howard is one, but you don't see so much of him now.

No. Mick Moon is one, he also was at Chelsea.

Also teaching?

Yes, he ended up teaching there, yes. There are quite a few people I still know from Chelsea, like Myles Murphy, Tony Wishaw. And actually somebody who taught me there, which is Prunella Clough, who I see occasionally still.

Do you like her work?

Yes I do very much. I loved that show she had at Camden Arts Centre recently, it was very good.

She doesn't seem to be particularly known to the general public though does she?

No.

They say, they call her an artist's artist don't they, sort of, whatever that means.

Well that's...well, I don't quite know what it means, but I think it's not a bad term, indication of what she's like. She's very self-effacing in her person, personal life, and I think that's perhaps why she's not so well known.

Do you think it helps to be flamboyant then?

No, I don't think it does. It might be the worst thing you can be. But, I don't know why. I think she comes from a generation who are sort of more reticent. I mean if you think of somebody like, you mentioned Euan Uglow; well he doesn't really cause a lot of attention does he, he kind of, he comes from that sort of, Fifties Slade group of people. Myles Murphy is the same.

When you sort of left college and, I suppose it must have become evident that you were going to be, spend your life as a painter, I mean had you thought of that earlier, or did it just sort of creep up on you, that you were going to be an artist?

Well I think I told you earlier that, when I went to Chelsea I went into the, what I regard as the commercial art department, well I think it was probably called graphics even then but...but I didn't stay there long, because I was trying to be a bit practical, I thought that I won't make a living as an artist or anything. But then I got a bit carried away, thinking, well maybe I could try, and I found the area of graphics very uninteresting, after I had been there a term. And then... There's never any dramatic conversion, you know, like on the road so to speak. It gradually became evident that I was going to try and stick it out, and I did quite well at Chelsea, I got a few prizes, then I got into the Royal College, and it became more and more inevitable, and then, I got a gallery, so, I think that's probably the way that most people get into it.

Did you think there was anything that, you know, you had to do in order to be, you know, an artist or successful in any way?

God! that's a difficult question to answer really.

Well let's put it like this, I mean, I think you once said to me that you wished you had kept your regional accent, like David Hockney, you said that it actually stood him, David, in very good stead. No, I wondered if, you know, didn't you take elocution lessons?

No.

You didn't?

No.

I thought you told me you did.

No, I never took lessons, no no. Not at all. I don't know what happened really. I was self-conscious about my accent, which was pretty stupid, but...

Because Hockney for instance, you know, obviously still does in a way talk with a Bradford accent doesn't he.

Oh yes. I think the remark about elocution may have been, I was referring to John Hoyland who said that he thinks David takes elocution lessons to keep his Bradford accent.

I see, right.

But of course David was a bit gimmicky, you know, in wearing that gold lamé jacket and then dying his hair blond and so forth, he was trying to cause attention to himself; that's the sort of thing you mean. I mean I never, I wouldn't have known what to do in that respect.

Yes, or someone like...yes, I mean other people are just sort of, just get on with it don't they.

Mm. Well most artists do I think.

Well someone like Damien Hirst presumably is, I mean I think it's changed now, but I mean it's a sort of very conscious way of promoting themselves. I don't think it was...was it like that when you were a student, the same sort of professionalism?

Well there were a few people who tried that. I don't think it helped them very much. There was a guy who changed his name, I think he was from New Zealand or somewhere, to Billy Apple, do you remember?

Yes, I met him once.

His name was Barry something.

Yes.

He was an absolute plagiariser, he would...he would... What he would do, it was when I was at the Royal College, he was there, but I think he was in the graphic section, and he would, you would find him going through the racks of stored paintings

up in the Painting School, and then come the *Young Contemporaries* you would see a conglomeration of the ideas that he had seen from the racks, you know. And he was...he was always trying to promote himself, he was desperate. Didn't get him anywhere of course.

No. So basically natural ability and talent will, is what sees you through?

One would hope so, yes. I don't know.

And luck?

Yes, I think so.

I mean luck in terms of, you know, getting a break with getting a gallery or something.

Yes. Well of course we've been through that, when, you know, one... Robert Fraser took me up, which was because of the Whitechapel show.

The New Generation. What happened, what happened after that, when he went? Because he went but didn't he, Robert Fraser?

Yes. Yes.

Did you go straight to Waddington's?

Yes. Robert was suggesting I might go with Marconi in Milan.

Which, you went out there didn't you, we've discussed that.

Yes, I had a show there, that's right.

Yes.

But, I thought that would be a bit too, I'd get a bit worried about getting money from Milan, you know, although I'm sure Marconi was very straightforward.

I mean your work went down well over there?

Quite well, there was nothing dramatic. But I thought it would be easier to deal with a London dealer, so I chose to go with Leslie Waddington.

And was that sort of almost immediately after Robert Fraser packed up?

Yes. I can't remember really but I don't think there was much of a gap. Because I really needed to have another contract, because I'd got used to having one, although I was still teaching.

Yes. I mean did you actually enjoy teaching?

I enjoyed the company of the staff there.

What about the students?

Well the students are individuals obviously, and you know, they came and went, and you know, you got to know some better than others, and you got on with some better than others. But the staff were there more constantly, so my memories really are more of the staff than the passing parade of students. But I found that after a few years I was very conscious that I was being repetitive in my approach to the students, and I spent more time in the pub with members of the staff. I didn't think I was doing a very good job. However, generally the atmosphere between the students and staff there was very good; I think that they did benefit from the ambience, whatever that was, even with the kind of, slightly tipsy teachers.

Can you remember if there were any star pupils, I mean who have gone on to do well?

Again I'm not very good at remembering names, but there's one person who took up the sort of art deco style, who shows fairly regularly in London. It's terrible, I can't

remember, no. You'll know his name if I could remember it. But there weren't a great many, I think two or three who kept going.

Have there been any sort of School of Caulfield painters?

Well not from that period I don't think.

Well, I mean from any period?

Well you sometimes see people doing something that they believe is like my work, but usually I'm told about it by other people, I don't see it.

You can't think of anyone that...?

Well this person I'm trying to remember, he wasn't like, he didn't imitate my work but he was very much a kind of flat, bright-coloured style you know, that I was doing at that time. Gosh, I wish I could remember his name. He was very, he's a very stylish person, the way he dresses and everything.

Duggie Fields?

Yes. He was a student there.

Right. Yes, well that makes sense. Now, during this time presumably you had been having a sort of fairly stable family life, and you had had children had you?

Yes. Well, yes. Well when I was living at the first address, Clarendon Road, we had a child, I can't remember then the sequence. I think there's only a year later I had another boy, and then it was about two or three years later Pauline had a third.

All boys?

Yes.

So you've got three boys?

Yes.

Did you feel that you had got to go out and earn lots more money, or was it possible to survive?

I didn't realise they cost me as much as they did. You don't think of things like that when you have children. You always think of them as being babies, you know, and no problem. Well, just keep you awake at nights but.....

End of F6307 Side B

F6851 Side A

Very little to say about him.

Your brother. Sutton Coldfield?

Mm. Rather appropriate for a Caulfield I think.

Sutton Coldfield? And what was his job? Accounts?

Well he worked in the...yes, accounts, at British Rail.

All his life?

More or less, yes. I mean I don't really know what he did.

And you would see him what, once every...?

Well no way regularly. I see him when I see him, whenever... I suppose, perhaps the last time I saw him was at my mother's funeral, which I can't remember when that was now.

But you get on well, or not?

Oh perfectly well, yes, absolutely.

Do you exchange, I mean do you phone each other up or anything?

No. He's pretty... Actually our family never communicates, it's one of the features of the family. We never spoke to each other unless we had something really important to say, like, 'Pass the peas' or something. That's a joke by the way, yes.

Well I'm laughing.

No, the 'pass the peas' comes from one of my favourite Westerns of Gregory Peck, called *The Stalking Moon*, and...

I haven't seen it.

Oh. No, not a lot of people have. It's got Eve Saint Marie[sic] and Gregory Peck, and she is kind of, inadvertently rescued from the Indians, Apaches, and she's got an Indian son by this Apache sort of warrior, and it's about how they are pursued by this father, the Apache father. It's done in a very very clever way. But anyway there's a problem with, not with language, because she speaks English, you know, and she speaks it hesitatingly, having not spoken it regularly for something like four years. But he's sitting with her when he, and he agrees to help her sort of cook and everything, and a table, and he said...well, you could say something, you know, you could say, talk, because they're saying nothing you see. [INAUDIBLE] say, 'Pass the peas.' And, actually it was very agonising because I got, it was on television, *The Stalking Moon*; gosh, well that's fantastic.

Not on a video, you saw it on TV?

On TV. But we videoed it. But, they had cut out all this episode to make it less long, where they were getting to know each other, and they thought, well that's not accurate, and that's not important. It's actually the most vivid moment of the film.

So you saw it originally in the cinema?

Yes.

And it had that extra bit in?

Yes. And not only that, Janet joined the Film Institute in order to hire the film, because, you know they have a system where if you hire a film, you're a member and you hire a film four months ahead, you pay a certain fee and you get ten seats in the front of the cinema, part of the payment, and then you can pay for more seats if you

wish. And it's like your birthday treat, it's just shown for you. But the public are allowed in as well, you know, obviously.

But you've got your seats reserved?

Yes.

Yes, I've heard of this.

Yes.

It's a good idea isn't it.

It's magic, you know. And so, this was a birthday treat from Janet, *The Stalking Moon*.

Oh I shall look out for that, how interesting. Because a great friend of mine is a film buff, he actually used to work there at the N.F.T. in the box office. And it's funny, because I mean we have similar taste in films, I mean particularly sort of films from the Forties and Fifties, and my girlfriend can't see, doesn't recognise the interest in them at all; she likes from the Sixties onwards, but not from that, really from the earlier period at all. But I love those Westerns and black and white and film noire and all those things.

Yes so do I. But this of course was, this Western was more recent, it certainly wasn't in black and white.

No.

But of course you know, the classic Westerns like *Stagecoach* are fascinating. Are we recording this by the way?

Yes.

Oh, is it working?

Yes, it's working. Isn't that strange to believe, after last time, sorry about that. Well since we're talking about film, I mean if you'll just recount that incident that made you a painter Patrick, although that's perhaps not...that's putting too large a point on it, but... You did say that seeing the film...

Oh, *Le Moulin Rouge*, yes, based on Toulouse Lautrec, yes. Well, I didn't know really much about artists, and it struck me as being very glamorous and exciting, and even though, despite I should say, Lautrec's physical disabilities he still, the portrayal of the film, of the life was Hollywood but very evocative, you know, Hollywood Montmartre.

When did you see it?

Well I can't remember, whenever it came out. When I lived in Acton I suppose I saw it.

Before you had gone to art school or anything like that?

Yes, it was.

But it is sometimes these things that play quite an important role in one's attitude towards something that happens in life, like, you know, it made you want to be a painter in a certain way even if it was a glamorisation.

Well it was also sort of, a revelation, as I had been very uneducated in terms of art. This was merely instructive, although people of course who really knew about history of art and that period would have thought it was a bit naff, which it was I suppose.

[What's happening?]

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

No, I was just wondering when you saw it, because you know, I mean had you seen any Toulouse Lautrec's work at that point? I mean did you...?

Not that I recall, no. I mean I may have by chance. I don't remember visiting art galleries very much, no.

Did it make you want to go and look at a book of Lautrec's work, or did that come later?

I think that probably came later. But no, I just thought, it was very vivid, and I liked his technique, it was very straightforward, and I thought accessible, you know, in a way.

Is there quite a lot of art in the film, or is it just a drama?

It's a drama basically, yes.

Because this is the problem that they have in so many films about artists, is, how do they show the art? I mean you know, in that recent Anthony Hopkins portrayal of Picasso they can't show any of the Picasso because they couldn't afford the copyright.

Oh that's right, yes.

And in quite a lot of them you get the art department doing the sort of pastiches, like the Gaudier-Brzeska film that was made, you know, and the films art department do a lot of sketches like, in the manner of, rather than...they never use any real art usually.

Yes.

But talking about film, and the question I asked you just now was, I mean I know you like going to the cinema, you watch quite a lot of films, don't you, I mean they're quite important to you, but is...the question I asked was, you know, is writing, is reading more important than seeing films?

Well it's much more regular, I mean I read all the time, and films, I have periods when I go to see films, and time can pass and I haven't seen a film for months. I don't go indiscriminately at all now; I would go in the past I suppose, to have an evening out, you know, that kind of experience, but now I am reluctant to go unless it's something I really want to see.

Is that because you prefer to stay in of an evening, or not?

No, no.

You do still like going out, don't you?

Yes, but I prefer to go out to a restaurant and talk to people rather than sit in a cinema and maybe have somebody coughing down your neck really, but...

It's become a less pleasant experience I think, going to the cinema.

It has. What I do, I go early evening always, I never go middle of the evening, and that for me is good for two reasons. Firstly it's never very full then, and secondly if you don't like the film you haven't wasted an evening, then you can leave the cinema and go and have a meal and enjoy the rest of the evening.

Yes. But you, what you read would tend to be more history and biography, rather than fiction, or do you like novels as well?

I like novels if I am somehow steered into them. I'm very reluctant to start them without some idea that, you know, that I would get something out of them, because whatever novel it takes a little while to become involved in what it's about.

But what would steer you into it, somebody else's opinion or somebody that you trusted or...?

Yes, mainly that, mainly somebody else, or reading a review perhaps. But I don't, I read more history and biography, and novels, that's, sure.

You read, I think I'm right in saying that you read Rudi's[ph] novels, didn't you?

Yes of course, because he was a friend, yes.

What did you make of those?

Well they varied. I don't think...

I found them quite depressing actually. No, you know, just... I don't know, the thing about novels is, I mean if you like a narrative in a film, you know, why not, you know, enjoy the novel? I mean, presumably part of the enjoyment of a film is its narrative, its storytelling isn't it.

Well of course I've interacted in that way. I've read a lot of Raymond Chandler and, oh God! my memory's gone. *The Maltese Falcon*.

Dashiell Hammett.

Dashiell Hammett. I've read the lot. And I was amazed that the dialogue in *The Maltese Falcon* is practically identical in the book as it is on the screen, and I've never come across that before.

I think that's the way he wrote in the first place, it was so, you know, very easy to transfer it directly wasn't it. It's very cinematic.

Yes, although it wasn't written as a film script in this [INAUDIBLE], no.

No.

I may have said earlier that when I was younger nearly all my reading was of American literature, and...

Did you ever do the same thing for English literature and go back?

No.

So it's all, you've always been more interested in the American side?

Yes. Well I found it was, simply that it was distanced. I didn't really, I mean I...I hate for instance D.H. Lawrence, I hate anything like, about the English working class and romanticising them or giving them some unlikely status, you know. I could accept it more if it was American, because I wasn't aware of them, the way they lived. But of course it was really in English so...

Yes I mean I was going to say, I mean, presumably European literature could have served the same purpose only you would have to read translations.

Yes, which I've done a lot of course.

Mm. I mean you quite favour European poets don't you, for instance?

Well, I'm not that knowledgeable, but I pick up on a few things, you know. And poets are very difficult to connect with I think.

Yes, but I mean you know, I mean, you know about someone like Tasso or, you know, or...who's the one you illustrated?

Laforgue.

Laforgue, yes. How did you come on to Laforgue?

Oh well, it was when I was at the Royal College, a fellow student took this book from a library, I don't know why particularly, and he handed it to me and he said, 'I think you'll like this.'

And you did.

And I did, very much, I thought it was fantastic. I think I actually kept the book.

We were talking the other day, we're now...what's the date? The 25th of August 1988, I think, 1998, gosh, the other day when the machine didn't work, about a chap whose name I've forgotten of course, the American who was at Chelsea, teaching with you. Was he American?

Oh, yes, John Ernest.

John Ernest.

Mm.

E-R-N-E-S-T, Ernest.

Like Ernest, yes. *The Importance of Being.*

Yes. Can you just describe him again, because he sounded really, a lovely chap.

Oh, well...

And you were fond of him weren't you, I mean you thought he was a good bloke.

I was extremely fond of him. Well he, his work was concerned with art, with Constructivist art, he was very into mathematics and things. Totally, he was totally alien from me, I was ignorant about that area.

Did he actually make things?

Yes he did.

Objects rather than paintings.

Yes. But very occasionally he... I always felt he was more a theorist than a practitioner, but...

Did he use colour?

Probably in a very limited fashion, yes. Probably primary colours, I can't remember.

Well I'm not familiar with his work at all, I don't think I've ever seen anything. I mean it's presumably not shown or...

No, he didn't show very much. But, he was a part of a group of people like Anthony Hill. I can't remember everybody's names now.

It was that Constructive context wasn't it, Constructivist context.

Yes.

And he taught, what did he teach?

Well he taught in the school, and what he actually taught I don't know because he wasn't teaching me. I suppose he would graduate towards students who had perhaps a more mathematical approach to art than others, you know. I mean the school then was divided into studios, and the people in the studios, the teachers in various, the different studios had some sympathetic interest to each other. So, the students tended to be guided into these studios that seemed to fit their interests. It was a bit...

Could you ask to be transferred from one to the other?

Oh yes, yes.

A bit like sort of, Euan Uglow teaching in F[??] studio now at the Slade or something, you know that you get a certain type of teaching if you go in there.

Yes, well like, I think, I can't remember whether Euan taught there, but Myles Murphy did, and that was primarily life painting.

And what were you teaching?

Oh something quite nebulous, I don't know what it was really. I never had much to say. I took it day by day. I set up a few self-indulgent projects which the students more or less did, but some with reluctance, some not at all, you know.

So they went their own way?

Yes.

Was it still life-related, what you were doing?

Still...?

Still life-related.

No, no, it wasn't.

Might, you know, given your interests, I mean it might have been that they would have asked you to teach still life, that's all.

No, no. No it was more to do with the figuration of some kind. In other words maybe with the sort of, the remnants of Pop art concepts and the history of Pop art, but not specifically. Something that was neither abstract quite or figurative, you know, but, it was usually...well I always used to think it was conceptual, before the word Conceptual art was applied to something more specific.

So to do with the sort of, a distancing, a stylisation perhaps of the subject.

Yes, yes, stylisation, or formalisation of description. Yes, something like that.

But you're not very happy with the designation of Pop art anyway are you? I mean if someone says you're a Pop artist.

No, I only use that as a convenient hint, you know, what...you know, what I was vaguely doing at that period in teaching. But, no, as I've said before, I don't really think I'm in any way wholeheartedly a Pop artist, because one was nothing really. The term, like all these terms, are always invented after the event, so then they are applied willy-nilly to whoever happens to be in the sort of catchment area.

Yes, that's right, it's like trying to shovel into a pigeonhole wasn't it.

Mm.

But, I think you've even gone as far as to say the person who invented the term should be shot.

Mm?

I think you've even gone as far as to say that the person who invented the term Pop art should be shot.

Oh. No, I don't think so. I can't remember who invented it. Did I say that? I don't remember. No, these things, I mean they cover[??] historic contexts and descriptions, and, you know, they remain useful reference points, like the Fauves didn't want to be called the Fauves.

It was a term of opprobrium to begin with.

Yes. And the Impressionists didn't want to be called Impressionists, but they've stuck.

Well because they're handy encapsulations aren't they.

Exactly.

Shorthand. Yes. So John Ernest, I mean you gave me some marvellous descriptions of his sort of sense of humour, and this marvellous way in which he would catch flies.

Yes, it's very difficult to describe verbally.

Well no, try Patrick, I think it was so good, it was so funny, I think it would be nice if you had a go.

Oh, well, it was when I was in the south of France with him that, you know, we'd go to soak in the ambience of past, early 20th century art, and he demonstrated how to catch flies, where you sweep your hand above the fly, so that when it takes off it comes, it flies into your hand. Then you shake your hand so the fly becomes dizzy; I don't know whether flies actually become dizzy. Then you throw the fly against the wall, and it then falls to the ground and you tread on it. [LAUGHS]

Do you think that relates in some ways to his personality as an artist as well, I mean this very methodical approach?

No, it relates to the fact that he is Jewish and he was brought up in he Bronx or something, and that's the sort of thing he would do then, you know, sort of... He was very streetwise when he was very young.

What was one of his other things, about jumping over chairs or something?

Well he could stand jump over a normal chair, which is...

As opposed to a running jump, I mean would he just go...

No no, stamp jump.

Yes, he would just go, like springs [INAUDIBLE].

Well, you could conceive how difficult that is. It doesn't sound like, you know, walking on a tightrope over the Niagara Falls but it's...it's very difficult to do. And he got all of us trying it, and you know, with quite painful results.

So that's what you used to get up at Chelsea when you were teaching your students?

Yes, when we were meant to be teaching.

Who else was there? There was Hoyland, Mick Moon, Myles.

Myles Murphy, Craigie Aitchison, Tony Fry, Martin Froy, Euan Uglow, he was there. Someone...I don't know. Leon Vilancourt[ph].

Who?

Leon Vilancourt[ph].

I don't know him.

No, you may not know him. He was one of the most eccentric people in the place.

Was he?

Mm.

Was he a painter?

Mm, still is.

Oh right, he's still around.

Oh yes.

A good painter?

I think so, yes.

Figurative?

Yes, but very eccentric paintings though, and...

I can't recall having ever seen any. I'd like to.

No, you wouldn't, you wouldn't have done. Although he sold one recently to the Arts Council. It's about the first sale he's had for years.

Do you still see him?

Well I saw him at the Arts Council, because he had sold this painting, otherwise I hardly ever see him. He hasn't changed, either physically or in his sense of humour. Because when I saw him, we were standing with another person, I can't remember who, at this reception, and I said to this other person, 'Do you know, I've known Euan[??] for years, he actually taught me at Chelsea, and then we taught together at Chelsea.' And Euan[??] said, 'Yes, I remember, we met standing on the staircase, throwing down these dead moths.'

Really?

[LAUGHING] Yes.

What were you throwing dead moths for?

We weren't. No no, he makes these things up.

Oh I see. Right.

No, he's extraordinary. He's got, his sense of humour is very oblique indeed. I mean he once stood in the main life room at Chelsea School of Art, which has got two sides

window, one side the door entrance, and another side a blank wall, and he said, 'I always think there's going to be a rhinoceros burst through that wall.'

And was that what his paintings were like?

Well not quite, no, they've got...they're about French history, done in a kind of Watteau-esque fashion.

Is he French extraction?

Well I think he's...he's actually Polish, I think, but he, I think he was brought up in France. I'm not quite sure. Anyway, they're quite...I can't really say.

Interesting. Were there any other sort of eccentrics like that? I mean I think that's the great thing, when you know, you get to meet people like that, and to be taught by people like that at art school or college can only be an advantage I think. I mean you get a kind of richness of experience from people like that I think.

Well when he taught me, I never understood what he was saying.

But you did when you became...

Well no, I never really understood what he was saying. And when we used to interview students, there were all these members of staff, and they would deliver questions, direct questions, at the student whenever they wished to, you know, whoever wanted to say something. And when Leon asked a student a question, we would all be kind of, eyeing each other, because we didn't know what the question was about, and of course the student was totally perplexed. I mean it always used to be some amazing question. It was weird. However, he was a very lovely guy.

We got, when we were talking previously we had got as far as talking about you teaching at Chelsea and then, you were living at Clarendon Road, is that right?

Yes.

You've got married and you're having, I mean presumably your three sons sort of came along quite quickly in succession?

Well not that quickly. I remember only one of them at Clarendon Road.

So this is the oldest one?

Yes.

Is his name Luke?

Yes.

Who's going to get married.

Yes.

And you're going to see your brother again at the wedding.

That's right.

I think that's great, I mean... Yes. I mean do you see, you see your sons quite a lot?

Yes, I do.

So you keep closer, in close contact with them than you would with your brother?

Oh much more, yes.

Well I don't know whether the Caulfield, as you say, you know, the Caulfield home life was that you didn't talk to each other very much, but that hasn't continued in another generation, into...?

No, it hasn't, no.

...between you and your sons.

No.

But if you...do you think that if you really needed your brother, you would go to him if there was a problem?

No.

You'd go to your friends?

Yes. Well I can't imagine a problem that would involve my brother or interest him, or be useful to talk to him about.

His world is very different from yours?

Yes, I mean he...I don't know what he does really. Now he's retired, I don't know what he does.

Well he might have a hobby like gardening or something.

Well they've got a nice garden and everything he obviously takes care of. He probably reads. I don't think he's got anything specific other than that. He's not like somebody who plays golf or anything I don't think.

No.

Not that I know of.

Maybe he watches lots of films.

Possibly. He's not over expressive, you know, he has got his own life really.

You don't communicate really that much?

Well only because, I mean physically we don't, but when we meet each other we chat.

Families are strange, are very strange. Clarendon Road, so where did you go after that? Hang on a minute, I think it's coming to the end of the tape.

End of F6851 Side A

F6851 Side B

So Patrick, you were living in Clarendon Road and the first child arrives, and then you moved from there?

Yes. Well, it was only three rooms, we felt we should leave, and Leslie Waddington said if we got a house he would help, you know, to pay the down payment and so on and so forth.

You had started showing with him by this time?

Yes. So we got a house. But it was a rather unfortunate choice of house.

Why?

Well, it was in a rather run-down area of Ladbroke Grove, and whereas Ladbroke Grove generally was on the up and up, we realised having lived there a short time that this was a no-hoper situation, it would never go up, just about stay at the level it was. And it needed a lot of work doing and everything, and we had ambitious plans without having the money. And we sort of camped there really for quite a while. I used to work in the house and everything.

Why did you choose that area? Was it convenient, or cheap?

Well it was where I knew, and it was round the corner from where we'd been living, and I liked that area very much, and a lot of friends lived there. [INAUDIBLE]. And we were very happy there, despite the fact that the house was half a wreck.

Did you ever get it into any state of habitation?

No, not really. In the end we decided... Well what happened, OK, a simple thing that happened is that John, my painter friend, John Hoyland, he said, who was living up in Primrose Hill, in this purpose-built 1880 artist's studio, said that one had become vacated, because it had been occupied, a sort of pied-à-terre, by Lord Methuen.

Oh the painter

Yes. Who...

Corsham.

At Corsham Court, yes. And he died, and so it was vacant, and the owners of the property were dealing with it, and they were sort of taking the opportunity of it being vacant to sort of modernise it. It actually had an old pot-bellied artist's stove in it, you know.

Oh marvellous.

Of course we went to see it. And so he said, 'Apply for a possible residency.' And so we did, thinking we wouldn't get it. And we got it, and that was marvellous, because it meant that we sold our house at a loss, which was practically unheard of at that time, anybody to sell a house at a loss. I realised I couldn't be a property developer. And moved into a studio where we had to pay, started to pay rent, which was not cheap, but it was quite possible. So we lived there.

And what did it consist of?

Oh, well, a marvellous big studio room with a mezzanine floor, like a balcony. Another quite large room on the ground floor, kitchen and...kitchen on the ground floor. And then upstairs, two small rooms and a bathroom.

Quite sizeable.

Well it was big enough at the time, mm.

And did you use the big studio room as a studio, or was it a living-room?

Well no, initially I...it was actually before we sold the other house, I used to go back to the other house and use my studio there. And we had some, a tenant moved in, so there was somebody there, living there, in this vacated property. And I worked there until we sold it, and then I worked at Primrose Hill Studios.

Was that, who was the tenant, was that an artist friend or just somebody...?

Yes, it was a lady artist from New Zealand, who I know you know well, Collette Marais de Marand[ph].

Oh right, yes. And then you finally managed to sell it?

Yes.

Was there room for you to work in the Primrose studio?

Well, you know, theoretically there was room, because we had this large purpose-built studio, but it was our living room.

Well exactly, it gets taken over by the living space.

Now we had, that's where we actually lived, so what we did, we had a screen, and I worked behind this screen at the sort of, the back of the studio so to speak, away from the fireplace. And, the children used to have to be kept out of the room when I was working.

Was the light good?

Well the light was excellent.

Because it was properly built as a studio.

It was a proper atelier, mm.

Yes, so they had to be kept... When presumably there were more... Were they all three there?

Well there were two early on there, mm. It's difficult to remember.

Was your wife working at that point, or was she just looking after the family?

She was looking after the family, keeping them out of my way I suppose.

Did you.. I mean you were doing increasingly well as an artist? I mean, presumably you were still teaching. Could you stop that quite soon?

Well I can't remember. I have up teaching when Waddington said he would increase my advances and, but I can't remember when that was actually.

Was it a sort of situation where Waddington effectively would pay you an income and he gets the pictures?

Yes.

And that suited you?

Yes, it's...mm. Well it was a common practice then.

Them, I know. Now it seems like an extraordinary thing for anyone to do. But it had become...

It was called a retainer, you had a retainer, mm.

Was it...was that quite a new thing in the Sixties and Seventies, or it had happened earlier?

No no, I think it was an old thing, an old thing, left over from the Fifties really.

I wondered if it was a 19th century thing in fact.

Oh possibly, yes.

I'm not sure.

It could have been, I'm not sure either.

So you were still, you would be commuting down to Chelsea then from Primrose...?

Yes.

How many days a week, three days a week or something?

No, did it two days.

Two days?

Mm.

And Hoyland was living near you?

Just across the yard, yes.

So probably you saw a lot of him?

Yes, very much, yes.

Do you think that, I mean obviously he's a good and close friend of yours, but do you think that you've influenced one another in any way in terms of your art? I mean, would you discuss art, or would you not discuss art?

No, we certainly haven't influenced each other, and we wouldn't discuss art; we might discuss artists, that is, other artists in London or something. Oh of course we occasionally discuss art, but not in any great depth, no.

How...was it a situation where you would show each other your new work, or...?

Occasionally, yes.

You wouldn't say, 'Look John, I'm having trouble with this, will you come and have a look at it?'

Oh no.

You wouldn't do that?

I never say that to anybody actually.

Even if you are having trouble, you would sort it out yourself?

Yes.

So you might show a finished picture?

Yes, oh yes, I'd show a finished picture, mm.

Say, 'Come and see my latest,' sort of thing.

That's it.

And you would go to his studio?

Yes.

And look at his pictures?

Mm.

Well I just wondered, I'm just trying to get an idea of it. I mean, was it relevant that you were both artists, or could you just be mates down the pub as it were?

No no, it's relevant we're artists, but it didn't mean we talked art all the time. But we, no, we would come to each other's studios and really it was just chatting, gossiping and drinking.

Was he married then as well?

No. No, in fact when we lived in Clarendon Road he had just left his wife and he spent the first night or two in our, in a spare room in the flat at Clarendon Road.

Right. So he had a similar sort of set-up as you, one of these studios?

Yes. It was smaller but...

Smaller?

Mm. Yes.

Right. So, I mean did you stay there, how long did you stay there? Many years?

Well I still pay the rent there, I don't know how long...

Does your wife still live there?

Yes.

Right, so you don't have...I mean, does she use it as a...?

Well she, yes, she does. she's got a big print table, she does, prints fabrics, you know.

So did she...presumably while she was bringing up the children she didn't do a lot of that?

No, no.

So when did she come back to that?

Well when I left...

Because she trained...?

Oh yes, she was at the Royal College.

She trained as a textile person didn't she?

Yes.

Design or whatever.

Yes, textile printing. And, no, that was...when the boys grew up and I left, then she had opportunity to use the studio and do her own things.

Right. I mean do you have to be a working artist to be, to stay in the studios?

No, well initially in theory it was like that, but it's not like that any more. I think Pauline's probably the only person there who's involved in...

And Hoyland's no longer there obviously?

No, he's not there, no.

So when did you leave?

I can't remember.

I mean presumably, you know, your marriage ceased to function as a marriage, and you...?

Yes, mm.

And you went. I mean how old were the...well, you might be able to work it out from how old the children were.

Well I don't like to think in those terms.

No, oh all right. And where did you go when you left?

Well I lived with another woman, Janet.

And you moved...I mean you went straight, you sort of moved in with Janet then?

Yes, mm.

Here?

Yes.

In Belsize Square?

Yes.

And you've been here ever since.

Yes.

And you've had different studios?

Yes. I worked in Soho, and I worked in Charterhouse Square in a studio that Howard Hodgkin had.

Did you? When was that?

Yes. God! I can't remember dates, it's no good. I did that...

Was it after the Soho one? Because I remember coming to the Soho one to meet you.

No, it was...

We sat on the balcony.

No no, Soho was after... Oh wait, I'm not sure now which came first. No, the reason I...I think Howard was first actually. I did this commission to do this mural for Bristol, and I needed a big studio, and Howard had this empty space he had bought and he never used it.

It wasn't part of the Allen Jones, John Hoyland set-up?

Yes, yes exactly, it's a complex of light industrial buildings. And it was a huge space. And so I did this mural for Bristol, and it took me about eight months to do the mural, but I stayed on at the studio for about two years more. And then I think it was, I got the studio in Soho.

Did you like the Charterhouse Square one?

Oh it was lovely, yes. I love the area, it was great.

But you didn't want to stay there?

Well I couldn't, because Howard wanted to use it then, and it was a temporary thing.

And how did you get the one in Soho?

Through friends of mine who are photographers. They took these few units at the top of a building in Archer Street, and one of them they offered to me, and it was perfect really. Not big but it was perfect.

Had that nice little balcony outside didn't it.

Yes, staircase, yes.

I remember we sat there and had, I think I did the first interview that I did with you then. A long time ago. Well, must be about ten years ago if not more.

I suppose so, yes. It must be, yes.

No, a about, maybe about ten, yes.

And then I've worked here since.

Since you gave up that studio?

Yes.

In Soho. You've had a room here. Where Janet also works, in her studio.

Yes.

How did you meet Janet?

Oh, just through, the private view scene.

Because she's an artist as well, I mean it's the sort of... Did you know her work?

Did I?

Not before you met her?

No I didn't before I met her, no.

Do you find living with an artist easy , or is it no different than living with anyone else? I mean do you talk about your work together, do you discuss things?

Yes we do, we do a bit. I must confess I didn't think it would be very good to live with somebody else who is working at the same place, but...

Because it must get quite competitive in a way.

I don't see it that way.

It doesn't? I mean, no, but I think outsiders might, do you see what I mean?

Oh.

Two artists working together, it's like, you know...

Well they'd be wrong. It's not...it's just, we just work together, there's no pressures on either person as far as I can see. We just carry on working really, you've just got to work, and we've got communal spaces, we don't get in each other's way, and, we do such different work, there's no sense of direct competition, you know. So far it's worked out very well.

Do you feel a sense of competition or competitiveness with other, you know, artists, people who are your friends for instance?

No.

Not at all?

No. Nobody's in competition with anybody.

Well, all right, let's put it in a different way. In that, you know, somebody's career might be going upwards quicker than yours, don't you feel a sort of stab of, damn it, I wish I was there, sort of thing?

No. The only difference between artists is a financial one. Some people are much more, much cleverer in organising their life and making money than other artists. But I'm very happy and I've got enough money to work, but obviously, and certainly not as much as other artists I know, but I don't envy them because I don't envy what they do. I'm quite happy with what I do. I mean when I say happy, it's not quite, it's not right. I'm stuck with what I do, and I can only concentrate on it, I haven't got time to be envious and think about other artists' careers.

You couldn't suddenly start painting like John Hoyland or Howard Hodgkin?

[LAUGHS] Well, as a joke I could, yes, I could paint like anybody as a joke.

Yes, but your heart wouldn't be in it.

No, and also I'd be wasting a lot of time.

When you say the thing about managing money, do you...you've done all right, I mean do you feel that you, you know, wish you had a bit more?

Well...

Things are getting better now aren't they?

Yes. No, I do get depressed about worrying, about worrying about money. I don't want a vast amount of money; I want enough not to feel depressed about it. And I am very fortunate, and I get quite a lot of money, but, I do have incredible commitments you know, in my previous marriage, and...

I mean you're still married to Pauline?

Yes.

Is that because she won't, doesn't want a divorce, or she doesn't believe in it?

No, no it's...it's actually, there's no reason. Simply, we didn't get divorced. We didn't get divorced. I mean...

No I thought it was because she didn't believe in it, that she was Catholic or something.

Well it's...

Is that not right?

No, it's not...I think it used to be more problematic with Catholicism. I don't think it is any more. But, actually it's not something I really want to talk about, but, it is not very interesting. I mean we just have remained married, but only in...

Name.

Name, yes.

Do you get on all right with her?

Mm.

In a friendly fashion?

Yes, very well.

And do you see her much?

Yes.

And do you meet up as a family, I mean with the children?

Yes.

And that works OK?

Yes, so far.

No, I wondered whether you had ever, you know, would have wanted to marry Janet, I don't know. That hasn't developed?

Well, I won't talk about that.

Fair enough. Fair enough. So the other person who we haven't mentioned really is Mick Moon. I mean you got to know him at Chelsea?

Well he, he was actually at Chelsea as a student with me, but he was in a lower year, and strangely the...

As a student?

Yes. The years never really mixed. In any of the art schools I've ever been in there's always this strange grouping.

Is it a kind of sort of, a class system in away, it's a kind of snobbery do you think, or...?

No, I don't...I don't know what it is, it just happens like that. Anyway I got to know Mick later on.

Through your teaching?

Mainly through, yes, mainly through teaching, mm, yes.

I mean did you...was it...was he a local, I mean a neighbour, at any point?

No. I suppose when I first really got to know him, he was married and he lived in Chelsea. Then he and his wife moved to Putney, and later on they separated, and I still see him, and he lives in Clapham.

Yes. Yes, I've been there. But, did you see as much of him as you saw of, say Hoyland? I mean would you go out drinking and having a good time?

Well depending on the stages of his life, I mean whether he was married or in between marriages, all different circumstances, it's quite complicated. And also there's the distance. But I suppose I saw John rather more because he lived in the same studios for that period of time, and...

But those are the two artists that you would have said you spent most time with during, you know, the, let's say the last twenty years or so, thirty years?

Yes. Until more recently, I've mixed with other artists now, but, yes, for a while we saw each other pretty regularly, yes.

Who do you see now then?

Oh, I don't...

I mean are you close to Howard Hodgkin?

Not specially. Yes, we are very...we keep in communication, but...

Didn't he bring that part of your bar downstairs for you?

Yes.

Which bit was that?

Well two bits actually. It was a plaque with a Turkish flag, and the other was a sort of, a screen, a kind of eastern screen.

What, a sort of fret work?

Yes.

Well you don't do that for just anyone, do you, I mean you do it for a friend.

No, no no, we...I've known Howard for ages. In fact I worked twice in studios that he owned.

What was the other one?

When he lived in Addison Gardens.

Oh yes, that's right.

When I lived in Clarendon Road, I worked in his studio in Addison Gardens. Well it wasn't a studio, it was a room, a big, lovely big room. And, yes, we still keep in touch. But Howard has been very busy you know, he's got a lot of attention, a lot of exhibitions and so forth, so it's difficult really for anybody to see him. But we're certainly in touch, I mean I rang him just a few weeks ago about going to see him in his place in France that he's bought, which I'd like to do, but I've had so many commitments so...

Well exactly. Are you pleased with the way your career has turned out?

Well...

Would you have liked to have been more famous earlier?

It's impossible say. I mean, I think I'd like to have had less money worries earlier. But whatever's happened has been a consequence of my own behaviour really, and considering that I am not very clever at behaving in the right way, I think I've done fairly well.

I was thinking in terms of, you know, big retrospectives and all that sort of thing. I mean some artists seem to get loads of retrospectives, and one could think of someone like Richard Hamilton who seems to have had endless retrospectives at the Tate Gallery, and I think probably too many in fact, but, and other people don't get so many. Now, I mean you've had, you've had some substantial shows, but it's probably, this forthcoming one is perhaps the most substantial isn't it.

Yes, it will be, yes.

The Hayward show.

Yes.

I mean, it's a great thing, I mean I'm delighted for you, I think, I'm really looking forward to seeing the show. I mean you're going to get the whole of the Hayward Gallery aren't you, to hang the work in.

Yes.

Do you feel in a sense vindicated by this show, that it's all been worthwhile that you, you know...?

Well, I'm extremely pleased about it. But I... One's never relaxed about a show, whatever, you don't feel it's going to be like the show. I don't think it's going to [INAUDIBLE] show ever happens in your lifetime. And also I didn't really, wasn't expecting it, because, I had had that recent show at the Tate, the recent show at the Serpentine, and I felt that I wasn't likely to get another retrospective in Britain.

How did you feel about that Serpentine show?

Well I was amazed.

Do you think it worked?

Well...

I've heard a lot of different views about that show I must say.

Oh, well maybe you should talk to me about that.

Well I am asking you. No, what did you think?

Well firstly I thought it seemed a very strange time to put on a show in the Serpentine, because it was through Christmas, and I always think of the Serpentine Gallery as a trudge through mud, you know, to get to the door. And I thought, they're not going to get many people going to that. But in fact they had a very good attendance, it was amazing attendance, and I was very pleased about that. It was very well hung within the limitations that the Serpentine Gallery then were, I mean they've improved. And so altogether I was pleased with it, yes. Well what have you heard?

Oh no, I think, the one or two comments that I... I mean I enjoyed seeing it, but the catalogue was somewhat peculiar, I seem to remember.

Oh yes. Yes. It wasn't really specifically about the show, but...

No. No no, some of the, the pictures were back to front and stuff.

Well there's no catalogue that doesn't have pictures back to front or upside-down.

No, it was, the comments I heard were about the selection of the works; that, and also that the way, I mean, one or two people weren't exactly complimentary about the way they were hung, and I think that was to do with, as you say, the limitations of the Serpentine. Perhaps it wasn't the best space for your work.

It's quite small, you know.

It is. That's what I mean, people were saying it was too crowded.

Yes, and they had a limited budget, and they borrowed works that were, you know, certainly in Britain if not in London, I mean [INAUDIBLE] otherwise, they couldn't splash out and get paintings from New York. Now, in this show at the...

This is going to happen at the Hayward though?

Yes.

Well that's exciting I think.

Well you see, it wasn't going to happen. The initial thing was, I was going to have this touring show with the British Council, which I was very pleased about in a very positive way, because I've never had anything like a major show going outside the British Isles, and I'm not being blasé about having one, a retrospective here, but that was the thing that really excited me. And then the Hayward heard about it and had

this space, because of the Richard Rogers situation where they couldn't put on the roof over the South Bank, and so this was a sudden plus. Then when they became involved, the Arts Council, then they could bring in paintings from America, which they weren't going to put in the show, travelling show.

So it's made the whole thing a much bigger event.

Yes. And it's given a little more perspective, because, I do feel that having had a show at the Tate and the Serpentine, that a lot of these paintings have been seen before, and I feel it's a bit repetitious, but now we've been able to borrow paintings back from America, they have been seen but a long time ago, and not by very many people really.

Well I don't remember the Tate show you see; obviously I remember the Serpentine show well.

I see, you don't...

No, I don't remember the Tate show. When was that?

'81 was it?

Well you see, I had just left university, I wasn't...

Ah right, you were wet behind the ears.

Still wet behind the ears.

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End of Interview