



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

**Interview with William Freed and Lillian
Orlowsky**

Contact Information

Reference Department
Archives of American Art
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560
www.aaa.si.edu/askus

Transcript

Preface

This interview is part of the *Dorothy Gees Seckler collection of sound recordings relating to art and artists, 1962-1976*. The following verbatim transcription was produced in 2015, with funding from Jamie S. Gorelick.

Interview

DOROTHY SECKLER: It's turning, yes; it must be recording, but I will play it back in a moment.

So, let's see if your voice records now. Say something, just anyone.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Give your name.

WILLIAM FREED: My name? My name is Freed.

DOROTHY SECKLER: What's your first name, Freed?

WILLIAM FREED: William.

DOROTHY SECKLER: All right. Well, what's the date of today? Would you tell me that?

WILLIAM FREED: Today's date?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

WILLIAM FREED: I don't know.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: July 27th.

WILLIAM FREED: July 27th.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Now is that the way you talk ordinarily because I want to get it to the right loudness for you?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: That's it?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, Lillian, I imagine you can be heard over there, but—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, I could move over. You know, it's not—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: My voice just rebounds.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, I'm going to sit in the middle.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I'll tell you what. Do you want to stop it and start it again, and then, he'll put the hamburgers on, so it's making.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Sure. Sure.

[Audio break.]

WILLIAM FREED: I was not interested in any of his paintings. In the beginning, it was the interest of going, more or less, in cubism. And whoever didn't do it, he insisted, even used to give lectures, to illustrate the problems, the spatial problems.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Is that where Earle Loran got those principles that he drew up and diagramed? Have you ever seen those?

WILLIAM FREED: Hm?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Loran, Earle Loran, up in California—

WILLIAM FREED: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: —made a whole book analyzing Cézannes in terms of how it was pushing and how it was pulling.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Hofmann always complained that there were copies of his—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Really? I should have wondered about that.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: He always claimed that there was copies.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Because it was a very clever book.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Oh, that's David Hofmann.

DOROTHY SECKLER: That's who I've heard. And, you know, years before I heard of Hofmann, I looked at those things very, very carefully and learned a lot from them. But I'm against making any kind of academic formula of anything. So, I learned it and, then, I tried to forget it, you know.

When I'm painting, I don't want to be thinking, well, I'm going to push here and hold there and make it circulate here. I really want to be responding more totally to this thing, you know. What I know about space, I either know at that point, right? I don't want to bother with it. It has to be intuitive at that point.

WILLIAM FREED: It is very interesting that most of Hofmann's students they are not known at all.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Most of his students?

WILLIAM FREED: They are not known. Those of us that studied with Hofmann, they're not known.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Most of those who stayed with him are not known?

WILLIAM FREED: Mm-hmm.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, that's true of any teacher, I guess, if you had a lot of students.

WILLIAM FREED: All of them.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, Larry Rivers is known.

DOROTHY SECKLER: There's an awful lot of them that are known.

WILLIAM FREED: Larry Rivers not found; Hofmann's ideas.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Larry Rivers is not what?

WILLIAM FREED: Is not found in Hofmann's ideas.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh. In what way do you think he departed from him? I know he got a little bit popish at first.

WILLIAM FREED: I think he made himself foolish, you know, in the paintings and all.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: What happened to make himself foolish in paintings?

WILLIAM FREED: He had to make himself foolish?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: How come? How could he?

WILLIAM FREED: He never painted like Hofmann would like to see paintings, you know, never.

DOROTHY SECKLER: But Hofmann once told me that his best students were the ones who went against him.

WILLIAM FREED: Maybe it's true. Maybe that is true.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, I think he liked someone to rebel, and Hofmann liked students who—

DOROTHY SECKLER: I don't know whether he liked it, but I think he faced the fact that they had.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: But every teacher likes a student that rebelled. You know, like Jan , I remember when Jan had his expedition at the Sun Gallery, you know, and—

DOROTHY SECKLER: They had a fight.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: They had a big fight.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Did you hear what he said?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes, I think. I don't remember exactly, but, you know, like he didn't consider it art. He didn't consider it form. He felt that it was eclectic, that it was derivative.

DOROTHY SECKLER: [Inaudible] art, did he say?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes, he felt that it was not an experience and that he should really go back to nature and he should study. See, Jan felt that being derivative or taking from somebody was perfectly all right as long as he did, you know, and he thought it was right to do. And they had this enormous argument. I thought they were going to kill each other.

But, then, he wrote a letter to Jan, but that letter I never saw. I think Jody [ph] still has it.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm, she mentioned it, mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes, and I would have loved to have read that letter.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, they were very close.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes. He always liked Jan. He was very fond of him, but he and Jan always were at odds.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Really?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Oh, yes. Because, see, he would say to Jan, "You should do this" or "Do that" and "Draw this way" and "Draw that way." And then, Jan—

WILLIAM FREED: Yes, Jan was upset in the beginning.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, we have his painting.

WILLIAM FREED: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: We have a painting of Jan's in which he's very abstract. He's mosaic, you know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: But, then, he changed and he decided he was going to work towards opting—to be the German expressionist.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And he was going through a hell of a period in his life.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, and he was aware of it. And he also didn't have money.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I could understand it.

Would you, by any chance, have a cup of coffee anywhere or anything like that? Just the old fake stuff is fine. I just feel like it's such a wonderful meal, and I would just love to have a cup of coffee with it.

WILLIAM FREED: Yes. Well, right away.

DOROTHY SECKLER: But don't start now.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I like coffee anyway.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Aw, don't.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, no, because I love to have coffee. We always make it the last moment.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, if you insist, but I didn't want to interrupt your meal.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And I know it's proper to have it after the meal, but with a hamburger, it's just a bad habit.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I'm sorry, but it's my mistake.

DOROTHY SECKLER: It's not a mistake. It's my mistake at all. But, gosh, I'm enjoying the hamburger so much, you know. It's just terrific taste.

WILLIAM FREED: I think the fire was just, you know—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, it adds to the taste having that little burnt taste, I think. I don't mind that at all. I wanted to ask you really to think, if you can, about the time when the Abstract Expressionists started coming up here and the kind of effect that it had on the school and on the community and on, let's say, the Art Association, and on everything that happened around here, as they began to come up. And I know it didn't much happen at first because Pollock came in '44, and then, I don't know exactly when Gottlieb and Baziotos came. Do you know?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Was it around '47, do you think?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I think it was around '47.

DOROTHY SECKLER: That seems logical. From everything I can figure out, it would have been around '47 or '48 because I know he was here in '49. Both of them were here in '49.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I think it was about '47 because I think we met them—

WILLIAM FREED: Baziotos?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Did you know Bill Baziotos?

WILLIAM FREED: I knew Baziotos, but my memory was that he was in Provincetown.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: When?

WILLIAM FREED: I can't remember the year.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, you see, I called Ethel. But he was here with another woman before he married Ethel.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: That was what was embarrassing. I couldn't ask her about this other woman, what year he came with her. Dorothy something, something like "Diberoe," [ph] or some name like that. Apparently, he wasn't married to her. But he may have come even earlier, but do you know when he came with Ethel?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, I don't remember. I remember when he came. Didn't he come right after he was in the Kootz Gallery, Freed? He got into the Kootz Gallery and, then, he came. You know, before that, he was not—he was in the Kootz Gallery.

DOROTHY SECKLER: It makes sense because he might have had a little more chance of selling.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: See, because he had no money, and Ethel was working. That was the whole tragedy of her life, that she was always working.

DOROTHY SECKLER: What kind of work did she do?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Gee, I forgot. I think she was as a secretary or something like that.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And she supported him all the time, and I have a feeling that—I don't know about the first girl; you know, I don't remember her—but when he came with her, I believe that she was with—he was with Kootz.

Now was he with Betty Parsons at anytime? What other gallery was he in?

WILLIAM FREED: He was with Kootz here all the time.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I know he was right from the beginning with Kootz. But he was in another gallery. He had gotten into a gallery. Now could they all have gotten into—

DOROTHY SECKLER: They were in Art of This Century first of all, but that was way back in '44.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: That's in '44. But, then, what's his name? Egan?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Was he at Egan's because Jan was at Egan's.

WILLIAM FREED: No.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And [inaudible] was at Egan's and McNeil was at Egan's. But where was Baziotis? I don't think he was at Egan's. But he must have gotten into some gallery. I think he was at Betty Parsons. I'm not sure, though.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Why do you think he would have left Kootz?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: He didn't leave Kootz. I think Kootz just started. See, Kootz wasn't in the business long,

DOROTHY SECKLER: He wasn't?

WILLIAM FREED: He wanted to get to get rid of [inaudible].

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: He got rid of—that's when what's his name, Bob died of a heart attack. Because Kootz started originally as the promoter for Macy's, and he wrote a little book. And then, he opened the gallery when he married Jane.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And when he opened the gallery, he started with the French idea; he had a stipend, each artist had gotten X number of dollars, you know, or something.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And I don't know what happened to the business, but it may not have succeeded.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He was selling Picassos to make the money to keep the rest of the artists going.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: That's right. But, then, he decided he was going to change the whole format. So, he dropped certain people, and one of the people he dropped, one the persons that he dropped was Baudevack [ph]. And Baudevack was supposed to have gotten some kind of job or something. That's what I heard. "Don't do it. Everything is going to be fine." And then, all of a sudden, he sent him a notice saying that he's dropping him from the roster. And then, he put all his paintings up for sale at Gimbel's. And Baudevack [ph] took legal action to stop that because it immediately dropped his prices.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes. That's a dreadful thing to do.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And then, he was very sick after that. I don't think he lived very much longer. Now he was very active here, too.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Was he in the Kootz Gallery here? I think he was.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I think so.

WILLIAM FREED: No, I don't think he was.

DOROTHY SECKLER: No?

WILLIAM FREED: No, he was not in the Kootz Gallery here.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Who was here?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Adolph was, wasn't he?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Gottlieb? Yeah.

WILLIAM FREED: I don't know. She has a better memory than I have.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I think Adolph was. I think he had a lot of people. I think Baziotes was up here, too.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Maybe. Bazaine I'm thinking. Wasn't there some French painter here?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, Bazaine he could have had, but that wouldn't concern us on this story.

But there was a time when only Adolph and the Baziotes were in town and Volkmann was in town. Would you consider Volkmann, was he considered an Abstract Expressionist at that time?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: What would you call Volkmann?

WILLIAM FREED: Hofmann was against Abstract Expressionism.—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: What would you call Volkmann at that time? Or how would you consider him?

WILLIAM FREED: As an abstractionist.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He studied with Hofmann.

WILLIAM FREED: Hofmann was against, again, he was against Abstract Expressionism.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, you may say that, but I think he did take certain things from him, and they took certain things from him. He gave them cubism, and they gave him back the possibility of all this business with matiere and being much looser and more open and more free. And he took it; I think he did.

It's so easy to use a word like "Abstract Expressionist," but, as we know, it doesn't help us very much sometimes. And I once heard him lecture when I was writing a story on him, and he talked about Pollock with great admiration. And one of the students was trying to do linear things. Like he said, Hofmann said, "Ah, it's like an ice skater making lines," but he said, "Of course, nobody makes lines like Pollock." And he was admiring very much. So, I think it's true that he didn't put it into his system, but he recognized something was there.

WILLIAM FREED: Do you believe he took something from the other artists?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Not that he copied them, but the ideas they were all talking about, all of it together, set him thinking and opening up a new way of thinking himself.

WILLIAM FREED: I don't believe that.

DOROTHY SECKLER: You don't see a change in him?

WILLIAM FREED: I didn't see anything in him. I don't believe Hofmann took anything from anybody.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, nobody invented art. Of course, he took things from everybody.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I think what Dorothy is trying to say, that he was influenced and that he saw certain things in the different artists. But I don't know whether he was that much influenced in the American arts.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I had a feeling that he was, but I could be wrong. But, I mean, it seems to me it's very evident, when you look, when he began to do with paint, letting it run, letting it drip, usually had a great speed of the brush, he was not doing those things before.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: That's true.

DOROTHY SECKLER: This was something that came out as a whole outlook of this group, taking the risks. You know, they kept talking about taking the risks and working for this sort of sublime and tragic subject matter, like primitive art. Instead of having an object or just planes, you were thinking of the total role of mankind or something like that, universal ideas, and so on, and the unconscious. You see the surrealists then had never been important to Hofmann. He never discussed it, did he? I mean, if he did, tell me.

WILLIAM FREED: So, the Europeans—

DOROTHY SECKLER: But, you see, the Europeans, when they talked about surrealism, to some extent, they meant like dream pictures, which certainly would not have interested Hofmann. But

there was also Miro, and Miro was a different kind of surrealist, and I think Hofmann must have admired Miro,

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: He did.

WILLIAM FREED: He did, yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: You see? So, that was that much of a tie between the surrealist outlook and things that he could use. I think so, but tell me. If I'm wrong, tell me. You know, tell me what you remember.

WILLIAM FREED: I don't think Hofmann was interested in the Abstract Expressionists. He was laughing at it.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He was laughing at it? Well, he sure did laugh awful hard then.

WILLIAM FREED: He said they're just space. He says anything which has enough space is ornamental or it's a design.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, would you say that those things, let's say, that Gottlieb was doing when he came up here, not the pictographs, but the ones where there was kind of a horizon, and all the ground underneath would be roughly painted and sort of scored with paint, and then, there would be round emblems, you know, suns and moons and blocks in like Morse code in the sky, did he consider those not spatial, do you think?

WILLIAM FREED: I don't think it was considered spatial.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, he didn't because I think he considered more—that he didn't consider it plastic.

WILLIAM FREED: I think the plasticity was the greatest thing to him.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Even when he dish-dashed, and so forth, you know, he made a couple of dots, he always thought in terms of the relationship, you know, the spatial, the intervals, the tensions, and so forth. And he didn't think of that in terms of—a lot of the paintings he considered [inaudible] ornamental. He used the word a lot, ornamental, and, in fact, he used the word "academic."

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: The abstract work, all of the so-called American abstract work, he considered academic—

WILLIAM FREED: He said anything which has no space is academic.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Even if it's abstract.

WILLIAM FREED: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, you must admit that there's certain Hofmanns you can look at and sort of wonder what the space is doing. I remember one that was on the magazine cover of *ARTnews*. It

was just about two red lines, one going like that and one going like this, and they crossed each other. And I couldn't see the space in it for anything.

WILLIAM FREED: Maybe he did. Maybe he did.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Do you remember that?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, not exactly, but, you see, I think what Hofmann would answer would be that his classic experience is so great that, no matter what he would do, it was always in the end like a Miro, be plastic or pictorial.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I don't know.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: But he felt that a lot of people really didn't understand the picture plane and his spatial relationship. I don't know why he came to that conclusion. He felt that the American painters lacked that understanding, and he also felt that de Kooning, like he never finished his paints because, once he said, "The trouble with de Kooning is that he sells it too fast. He has no time to resolve a problem."

DOROTHY SECKLER: But I understood that Hofmann himself told the students all the time—his is what Wolf Kahn told me—that the important thing is really the process, you know, what you discover, what you feel in the course of doing it, not to turn out a finished object.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, that's a defensible statement because—

WILLIAM FREED: He made one statement and somebody else made another statement. You can believe that, too.

DOROTHY SECKLER: But I imagine it would have been more in the late years he might have said something like that.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes. But, in the beginning, you know, it's a funny thing; Hofmann is great lover of Grunewald, that German painter. To him, he was very expressive, very dynamic, and plastic.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He is.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: So, you know, he would always bring his work as an example.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Isn't that interesting? Jerry is so fascinated by it right now.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: That's interesting because that's the first thing—you know, anytime he would have a—if he wanted to show them an example, he would always bring a Grunewald. And when he had the illustrations in the class, he would show details of the Grunewald with his hand, you know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Marvelous.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Or with Christ on the cross. And sometimes he would show the whole reproduction, and he would say, "Here's this little painting which has all the plastic elements and pictorial space and expression," and so forth. And then, next time he would parallel Picasso, you know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: What do you mean how he would parallel it?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Because at that time we have the *Guernica* mural.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, yes. Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And he had other—because like that time was still semi-abstract.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: So, he would go into that space, you know. At that time when we were there, his great love was Picasso. Later on, like the latter part of his work, he changed, right?

WILLIAM FREED: Matisse.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Was he Matisse in the beginning with [inaudible] also? [Side conversation.]

WILLIAM FREED: In the beginning when I started with Hofmann, I liked Hofmann very much. He insisted upon realism. He insisted.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, when you say "realism," what do you mean by "realism"? Representational?

WILLIAM FREED: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: You mean academic realism?

WILLIAM FREED: No, not academic—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: What do you mean, Buckerell [ph] realism?

WILLIAM FREED: No, not—you know—

DOROTHY SECKLER: But the model always turned out to have a very small, pointed head, right?

WILLIAM FREED: He used to tell me, he says, "Let it look like an elephant."

DOROTHY SECKLER: Like an elephant?

WILLIAM FREED: Yes. The figure should look like an elephant.

[They laugh.]

Then, he didn't change anything. I didn't like it so much, to tell you the truth.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, his criticism changed once he had gotten the GIs and the whole concept of teaching changed.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He did?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes, radically. Because at one time, and when we were there in the beginning, he would never criticize anybody's work unless he had the still life or the model from which he worked. In other words, he said, "I can't criticize. I don't see—I can't relate to it because I want to see the object."

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: But, when the GIs came in and they refused to work in the school and insisted on bringing the work in, he had to change his criticism because, obviously, he couldn't get the object. You know, he couldn't see from what they were working.

WILLIAM FREED: His criticism at night, in the evening, was from the model.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Because the students were working in the daytime and they were struggling. They didn't bring in their papers. They worked from the object.

WILLIAM FREED: So, he used to criticize the figure.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: But, you know, it was interesting, in the beginning when we were there, you know, they had this very big studio and he would have three or four still lifes set up, you know, and they would be there for months, and you would be working on the still lifes for literally months.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Really?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes. And, you know, there used to be this big to-do because the floor would be marked out where the easel was. "I want the exact spot where this easel was, so that I can see it," you know. And then, somebody would say, "Oh, you've got a quarter of an inch of my spot."

DOROTHY SECKLER: [Laughs.] That's where Wolf Kahn has this story about Hofmann posing and modeling. And he said, "And you moved and you've got to put your foot here, so I can screw you down on the floor."

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

[They laugh.]

That's what he said, something similar to—

WILLIAM FREED: So, that's when they needed models. That's when they used models.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: What do you mean? He's always—

WILLIAM FREED: At night.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Because he worked with the models. He didn't work from the still life at night.

WILLIAM FREED: That's right. He used to—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: He worked from the models, and the model would pose a whole week the same pose.

WILLIAM FREED: Yes. And he used to criticize the model.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

WILLIAM FREED: We drew the figure.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And I remember in the beginning when I was there, and I worked in charcoal and, then, I decided some of the students were painting, and I said, "Mr. Hofmann, I would like to paint." He says, "You're not ready yet." So, he was rather strict in those days and he didn't

discourage you, but he didn't encourage you to work from the—I mean, he wanted you to go slow and easy. He wanted you to understand. And he didn't object if you started in an abstract way, but he always tried that, the end result, the figure or the object should come out.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He used to get after Gerry because Gerry would go off on the model a great deal.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Sometimes even have just a big oval shape or something like that. Once one of his ovals was, I guess it was a white oval on a dark ground or something, and Hofmann said, "But she is a black girl."

[They laugh.]

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: You know, it would be interesting if somebody could make a study of the different phases and development of Hofmann's teaching and his changes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

WILLIAM FREED: He changed himself. He changed.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: He changed. I think he changed as he became more successful, and as certain types of paintings were selling he changed, too. And I think—

DOROTHY SECKLER: When did he begin to sell, do you think?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: When did he begin to sell? I think at the age of 70, at about 10 years or 12 years, 10 to 15 years before he died, rather late in life, one, because he started late to exhibit.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And I'm trying to remember whether this was—

[END TAPE 1.]

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, to go back to my question, first of all, let me put on the tape when you came to Provincetown to study with Hofmann and when you settled here as regular summer residents, both of you, and when you bought the house, and anything like that that's on the record. When did you come to Provincetown?

WILLIAM FREED: When did we come to Provincetown?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, I believe we came in 1944, but the Freed thinks we came in 1945.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Were you married then?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And did you come to study with Hofmann particularly?

WILLIAM FREED: No, we didn't.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No. No, we wanted to be with and around Hofmann.

DOROTHY SECKLER: You knew him from New York then?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

WILLIAM FREED: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Because I studied—we started to study with him in 1937, and we studied with him in New York; both of us did. And then, when he came here—oh, no, later on when we realized he was here, during the war we couldn't come because Freed was working in the Navy Yard then. But afterwards we came.

And the first place we had was like across the street from where Hofmann's house is, you know, 98

—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Which house? Which house was that?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: The one, well, what number was he, 92 or 98 there?

WILLIAM FREED: Well, I don't know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: You mean the war place?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes, the war.

DOROTHY SECKLER: The place he bought—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: The war, yes. And we were across the street. We were right near the parking lot there. We had the lower floor of the cottage.

And then, the second year we rented the studio at 24 Pearl Street.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And we were there for 15 years. We had two studios. And then, in 1958, after we bought this property, and Freed and I—actually Freed did the building.

WILLIAM FREED: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: He started from scratch and built this place out.

DOROTHY SECKLER: There was nothing here?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Nothing but trees. He excavated and manholed it and everything he did except electric and plumbing.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Marvelous.

WILLIAM FREED: I had to get a [inaudible] here to take out the trees. When I came out here, I did not officially—officially, I was not a student in his class, but they gave me permission to come to listen to his criticism because I did a lot of work for him.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

WILLIAM FREED: You know, I—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: He did one set of renovation in the house.

WILLIAM FREED: I renovated the house, and—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: School.

DOROTHY SECKLER: What changes did Hofmann make in the house?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Oh, he took out walls. He took the paper off and he built a dormer wall—

WILLIAM FREED: What did I do?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Not you; she did; Miz did. It had layers and layers of wallpaper. He built the dormer on top of that, which became his studio, his private studio, you know, his study room, let's say.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I mean, this school?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, the school was in the back. This had nothing to do with the school. You know that top floor which overlooks the bay, there are a lot of windows there?

DOROTHY SECKLER: You mean in the house or in the—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: In the house, in the house itself.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, I don't remember the upstairs that well. All I remember is how it was so colorfully done by Miz.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes, and Miz painted the stairs and the walls, and, you know, nobody—

DOROTHY SECKLER: How did she go about it?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Gradually she painted. She painted white walls and everybody thought that she was out of her mind, and she painted the furniture, some of the furniture, and she brought some furniture from—

WILLIAM FREED: Germany.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: —Germany, the antique furniture.

DOROTHY SECKLER: But how did she decide on the colors? Did she work that with him at all?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, I don't know whether she worked with him or not, but I think she related to his paintings because he had the greens and the oranges.

DOROTHY SECKLER: It was such a strong rhythm—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: —because she didn't fool around with little bits of color here and there. It

was one big strong shape against another big strong shape. That was what impressed me so. I hope somebody took photographs of that interior.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, I think *Life* magazine took some photographs.

DOROTHY SECKLER: But I don't think there's anything more than just a hint of it. I don't suppose it's still that way, is it?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Did Renate change it all?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: She didn't do anything to it. She was never really in the house. Once he died, she never came in, Renate.

WILLIAM FREED: Well—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No. And he had enormous classes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: How big?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: How big? It got to the point where he had to re-split the two, and he had 40 students. I think he had like, what, one year 178 students.

DOROTHY SECKLER: In Provincetown?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: In Provincetown.

DOROTHY SECKLER: All at the same time?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes. Then, he decided it was too much for him because he also had to rent Franz Kline's barn.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: See, otherwise, he couldn't—because they couldn't possibly do—

DOROTHY SECKLER: That was before Franz Kline was in it, wasn't it?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: After.

DOROTHY SECKLER: After?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Was it before Franz Kline was in the barn or after he was in it?

WILLIAM FREED: Before.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Before. Oh, that's right because, then, he bought the house. And then, he rented it to Zabriskie—

WILLIAM FREED: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: —as a gallery.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Now I want to get straight a little a bit about Kline there. You don't remember what year Kline came, I suppose, do you? Have you any notion at all? It must have been —

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: It must have been in the '50s.

DOROTHY SECKLER: In the '50s? Around the middle-'50s, '54 I would think, maybe '55 even, huh?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: What year did Pollock die? He was here before Pollock died.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Pollock died in '56.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: '56? Then, he must have been here about '54. Because I understand he had some kind of car accident in the Hamptons and he wasn't permitted to come back.

DOROTHY SECKLER: That's the first I ever heard of it. That's kind of sad. Because he used to drive over people's flowerbeds here, I understand.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I guess he just got drunk, but, you know—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I mean, unless I'm mistaken—I mean, I wouldn't want to be quoted—but I think that's why he came here, because he couldn't go to the Hamptons.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Now he had money by that time, I suppose?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: He had what?

DOROTHY SECKLER: He was selling paintings by that time?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Oh, yes. Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Because he had a red Jaguar, right?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes. And then, Betsy Zogbaum came and she knew Hofmann.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Now Betsy, he wasn't married to Betsy Zogbaum, was he?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, no.

DOROTHY SECKLER: But that was his girlfriend?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: That was his girlfriend, but he was married to—I don't know—his wife who was institutionalized at the time, and I think she only recently, or soon after his death, was released from the institution, but—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Really?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: What was it about?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: She had a—mental problem.

DOROTHY SECKLER: You don't think he drove her to it with drinking?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No. You see, a funny thing about Kline—now I'm quoting somebody I know who knew him very well. And he said that Kline, prior to coming to the Egan Gallery, he never drank. He never touched liquor. And only after, when he became a social drinker, that he got involved in drinking. He was also disturbed about his paintings because he felt a certain limitation. I didn't know Kline. So—

DOROTHY SECKLER: The few times that I have met him, mostly I ran into him at the Cedar Bar. We had a nice talk one evening. And I met him at one of the artist's—houses—it was probably Nick Marsicano—and we talked a bit. And I liked him each time. He seemed to be a gentle fellow. So, I'm always surprised when I hear about the things that he does in his cars, and so on, you know, when he's been drinking, because I've never seen that side of him.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I said he was very gentle. The fact is that he was very considerate. He left Betsy well taken care of. He left his wife, you know—in other words, he didn't say, "Look, I'm done with you." You know, "I have one and not the other," you know.

And I understand he was supposed to be a very, very nice person.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm. I thought so, more than most of the Abstract Expressionists, because a good many of them could be kind of, you know, very snippy. If you weren't a part of that particular crowd—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: —they didn't even know who you were, you know. You were just there.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, Kline was very—I think he was a very uninhibited—I think, practically, that—See, I think that, tragically, Kline, being bent on this abstract impressionist I think fell upon him by accident, not really by design.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Tell me about that because you're not the only person that has that impression. But I'm kind of interested in it.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, this I'm also quoting somebody who said that—well, like every artist, you know, Kline likes to be—every artist wants his work shown—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: —and every artist wants to be successful, and so forth. I think it was Egan who came in to see his work. You know, somebody said, "Oh, go and see Kline, Kline," and that he had something that is upside-down.

DOROTHY SECKLER: A chair?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: A chair. Egan said, "If you make a lot like that, I'll give you an exhibition." Whether he made it or not, I don't know, but I remember seeing Kline's exhibition at the Egan Gallery.

WILLIAM FREED: It was the first exhibition—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: The first exhibition, and he also had—and I have it somewhere—a review by some Japanese reviewer who reviewed Noguchi's work and Kline's and compared Kline to calligraphy, the Oriental calligraphy, and then, said how great, you know, it was and so forth.

And I believe it was really an accident that he worked that way and, then, subsequently became very famous. Then, he tried to use color which he wasn't very successful. I think he had—that's what Hofmann told me at the time, they used to have a lot of discussions about art and about form and about color.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He knew Hofmann pretty well then?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, when he came up here. I don't think he knew him before. I mean, I don't know, but I don't think so.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And I think Hofmann knew de Kooning well.

DOROTHY SECKLER: By the way, Kline has said that he studied with Hensche, and Hensche told me that Kline studied with him. I wonder when that ever took place.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes, that did take place.

DOROTHY SECKLER: When?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Gee, I don't know.

WILLIAM FREED: I don't remember.

DOROTHY SECKLER: But, I mean, would it have been long, long ago or sometime when he first came up to Provincetown?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, it would have to be, no, it would have to be in the '30s.

WILLIAM FREED: It would be earlier, yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, the '30s?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: In the '30s.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Then, he must have come to Provincetown, obviously, before this whole period.

WILLIAM FREED: Hensche became a great artist.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Hum?

WILLIAM FREED: Hensche—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Many artists became famous.

WILLIAM FREED: Yes. Hofmann, no.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, that's not important, you know, but—

WILLIAM FREED: That's not important.

WILLIAM FREED: I think Hofmann confused artists, some since—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Why do you say that?

WILLIAM FREED: Why do I say that? Because in the beginning he insisted to paint or to draw from realism, yes. And then, they went over to—I remember one time I came into class. I didn't know anything. I see a woman, and I don't remember her name. You remember it probably, her name.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, I don't.

WILLIAM FREED: I don't remember. And she was doing something black, so black. I said, "Where did they get this charcoal to make it so black?" They took velvet and they made a very big plane, so one onto the other. So, imitated her. I didn't look at the model; I looked at hers. I remember him saying, Hofmann comes over and says, "This is not the model." So, I tell you, why is hers the mode and mine is not the model, you know?

DOROTHY SECKLER: But did he also criticize the women who did it with the black?

WILLIAM FREED: The black was the model.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: In other words, what you're saying is that Hofmann said that hers is more the model than yours?

WILLIAM FREED: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I see. Well—

WILLIAM FREED: He was very funny. You know, sometimes I do that in one place and he would put the head over here. The next day he would decide to put the head over here; so, he puts that back over here. Sometimes it confused me, too.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, he was contradictory.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, perhaps most of all, he really wanted simply to have it, one thing move against the other. And if you had changed one of the other planes in the meantime, then he had to put the head wherever to make the shift.

WILLIAM FREED: He says at that time when you work in space at the end, the object has to come out. You remember that? At the end, the object has to come out.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Take somebody like Myron Stout, who was in his class when I wrote this article about him in *ARTnews* from the New York School. Myron, we were up in Peggy's, and he did this series of plains. Well, how did he get to that kind of model?

WILLIAM FREED: I don't know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Would Hofmann have—I think he had something like that on the wall when I was down there, and Hofmann seemed to like it all right.

WILLIAM FREED: He had pride about it.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, you see, when you work abstractly, then you just took the basic spatial elements, you know, and you simplified it. If you work like, say, to integrate the model, the object and the space, like Picasso did in the *Guernica*—mural, I'm using that as an example, then the concept had to be different.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: So, it depended. So, let's say measuring space only as Mondrian, is one thing, you know, or think in terms of the Miro. It depends upon the concept that you had in mind. And Myron's concept was simplification and spatial relationship, and the characteristic, the end result was different, you see.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: So, I think that was Hofmann's gift, that he was able to relate to the various students and the different directions that they were working.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Do you think he would have accepted what Kline was doing?

WILLIAM FREED: Huh?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Do you think Hofmann would have accepted what Kline was doing—

WILLIAM FREED: Lion?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Kline. Kline when he was—

WILLIAM FREED: Kline?

DOROTHY SECKLER: in his work where he did the big black things?

WILLIAM FREED: To my knowledge, he would not. Probably in his presence he would say, "That's all right. It's all right. It's all right. Keep on doing it." But I don't think he would think—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I don't think that Hofmann had a great feeling about American painters, I'll tell you now, publicly. I mean, privately, I don't think he would have.

WILLIAM FREED: I want to tell you something. Hofmann had a private opinion and he had a—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Public.

WILLIAM FREED: Huh?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Public.

WILLIAM FREED: —a public opinion. Two opinions he had. Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, I think he was worried that the American were cutting themselves off from Europe too suddenly. He certainly was upset about that when they took this position that they didn't want to know anything about Europe—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: —particularly Gottlieb. And then, Hofmann and Miz put out this manifesto. What was it? It was after the Forum 49.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Remember that?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: It was a funny title, *An Ostrich Art Politics*, or something like that. *Ostrich Art Politics*.

WILLIAM FREED: You know what this is?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I know, but I haven't got it, but I know that it was, I think it was ill feeling as a result.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, now Motherwell could not have been for cutting off ties with Europe because he was very close to the surrealists, and so on. Gottlieb we know was for cutting off everything, you know, just because he was like that. He hated Europe. He seemed to always hate Europe.

So, when the Europeans invited him over to Paris when he was already selling and doing quite well, he and Esther flew over and, for some reason, the people were not right at the gallery to greet them and to have things ready, and he was so furious he walked out the door and took the plane back. And then, when they telephoned, I guess—I don't remember the whole story exactly—I guess they apologized trans-Atlantic cable or something—he got on another plane and went back.

[Laughs.] That's how he was.

WILLIAM FREED: You know, he was playing the pigeonholes, he used to call it, the pigeonholes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes, yes.

WILLIAM FREED: So, he had a very bad criticism at that time by, not by Reed, but—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Jewell, Alden Jewell, was it?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes, and then, they wrote that letter to *The Times*.

WILLIAM FREED: And he changed. Gottlieb at that time changed.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He did begin to change from that time on?

WILLIAM FREED: Yes. Yes. Yes, he did change.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He began, then, to do the big broad horizons.

WILLIAM FREED: Yes, yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Which I think were better, actually, myself.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, Hofmann didn't get a favorable review when he went to Europe.

DOROTHY SECKLER: When he went to Europe?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, what year?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: What year was that?

WILLIAM FREED: It's Kootz.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: He went and he met with Kootz, and Kootz went with him, and Picasso, they met Picasso.

WILLIAM FREED: I think Picasso.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And Picasso was not too favorable about his work.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Really?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, he came back very depressed.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Roughly, what year would that have been, '45?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, no, in the '60s.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, in the '60s? Really?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Oh, yes. He was already—this is when they were branching out, and that's when he became familiar with Galerie Maeght, you know?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Is it Maeght or—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Maeght. Maeght.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Maeght?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And I think, what year did Miz die?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Was it '63?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: It must have been about five years before that, in the late '50s. In the late '50s.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And Picasso took a look at his painting—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Didn't like him because, see, Picasso didn't favor non-objective work. At that time, I think Hofmann's work was—

WILLIAM FREED: Picasso didn't favor until the end of non-objective work.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: In fact, Hofmann showed me the photograph of Picasso and Hofmann there together. And, no, he said that Hofmann—Hofmann's feeling was it was politics. But he said that Picasso favored seeing the object. He didn't care what it was. He had this pure abstract work. Was it cubist then or Abstract Expressionist, Hofmann's work?

WILLIAM FREED: Well, I don't know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: But he had been doing those big slabs of color then?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I think it was more planes. But I'm not quite—you know, if I have to pinpoint the year, then—but I know that, I think even Hofmann's opinion about Picasso changed after that, you know, because there was this feeling involved.

But, no, I don't think they show Picasso here.

DOROTHY SECKLER: You know, Gerry talked to Picasso after the war. I guess he told you that?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes. Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Of course, he was too dumb to know what to ask him.

[The laugh.]

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, first of all, maybe he didn't expect him. Maybe he didn't know as much about—

DOROTHY SECKLER: He didn't. He knew later. He didn't know then.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: At the time, you know—

DOROTHY SECKLER: He was just a painter then, and he had only studied with one man who really didn't give him much background in the arts. You know, I was studying art history and so on. So were some of my friends. And so, he heard us talking, but he really didn't follow it too closely, you know. So, he was just a beginning amateur in things. And then, of course, he was very involved at that time with this art having a social meaning.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, that was a very strong feeling in those days about the content of some kind.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And I think that—didn't Hofmann get an award in Germany?

WILLIAM FREED: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Was it that year or later?

WILLIAM FREED: Later.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Later, right. He had gotten an award. Then, he had gotten a mural in New York City, which you helped work on. And then, he was offered a job by literature.

DOROTHY SECKLER: To do what?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Literature, was offered an appointment to teach somewhere, and he had a museum and a school and would get X number of dollars. And he decided he didn't want to take it and he asked Hofmann to take it, and he refused, you know.

But I found that the life here was exciting.

WILLIAM FREED: Where?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: In Provincetown.

[Side conversation.]

DOROTHY SECKLER: But that's very interesting. Of course, even at the height of his fame when he was selling and he had acquired such a high position in this country, that when he went back—I didn't know this, that he went back to Europe and did not—but you do think he did in Germany get some—

DOROTHY SECKLER: He did get a grant, an award of some kind, and I think he felt that was a political move. I think he realized that he was never really accepted. You know, like he never had gotten prestige and the accolades that a person like de Kooning got, or Pollock.

WILLIAM FREED: He got [inaudible] in the Kott [ph] Institute.

DOROTHY SECKLER: But that was only the last year of his life he got, what,—an honorary doctorate or something. But, before that, even to this day, he's not there. I don't think he has the prestige that Pollock or what's his name, Barney Newman.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Barney Newman, isn't that wild?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Barney Newman who was trying—he was here in Provincetown.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: When was Barney here?

WILLIAM FREED: He was here very early.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

WILLIAM FREED: The year we came he was here.

DOROTHY SECKLER: '44, '45, '46.

WILLIAM FREED: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He was? All those years?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: He was here for two years because he lived on Mace [ph] Road.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, that's interesting. He wasn't painting, though, those years, was he? Or was he?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes, he was painting because he did the [inaudible] at that time.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He did?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes. Yes, what I called metal. You know—

DOROTHY SECKLER: The stripes?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: The stripes.

WILLIAM FREED: No, no.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Didn't he? No?

WILLIAM FREED: No, no, no, no.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: What did he do then? Kind of surrealism?

WILLIAM FREED: Something like surrealism.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Big sort of oval forms?

WILLIAM FREED: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I did an article with him Friday, and I was fascinated, but, honest to God, I didn't understand exactly what he was talking about.

[The laugh.] I took it down very carefully.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: But, no, he was here for three years, wasn't he, for three years?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, what was he doing here? Who did he—he was associated with all of them I suppose.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I don't know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He was kind of a spokesman for Adolph and Rothko.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Now Rothko wasn't here yet, was he? When did Rothko come?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Gee.

WILLIAM FREED: Rothko was here the last year.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, before the last year. He bought the house—

WILLIAM FREED: Oh, yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: —and then, he sold it, you know. I don't remember.

DOROTHY SECKLER: The Vevers' house—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: —he bought when? Do you have any rough idea? Any way you could—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Wasn't he here when McNeil was here? McNeil left in '63. McNeil was here from '48 to '63.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes. So, that's a long time.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: That's a long time. Then, he was here when McNeil was here, wasn't he, when John Opper was here? What?

WILLIAM FREED: Well, I don't know. You have a better memory than I have.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Were McNeil and Rothko friends?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I think so.

DOROTHY SECKLER: They were?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I think so. Weren't they?

WILLIAM FREED: Well, I don't know.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: They weren't friends?

DOROTHY SECKLER: I wouldn't assume that McNeil went all the way with most of the programs of the group. To a certain extent, he was interested, I think, in the surrealist idea of art for the unconscious.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And I think he liked the idea of the matiere, you know, using it freely and all, but I don't think that he was a programmatic Abstract Expressionist like the others.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I mean, he would say that, "Our way is the only way, and anybody who doesn't agree with us is just—"

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, you're right on that, but I think he did—I don't know whether he associated with Rothko or not, but I am assuming that he associated with some, had some kind of rapport with, not a rapport, maybe a verbal disagreement. You know, like when Busa was here.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Was he a friend of Busa's?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He was, McNeil?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Wasn't he?

WILLIAM FREED: No.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: George wasn't a friend of Busa's?

WILLIAM FREED: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He was?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Sure.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I think that didn't work out.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, it may not have worked out a long time, but I think he was a friend.

WILLIAM FREED: No.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Busa doesn't come out of Hofmann at all, does he? He came out of something or other like Will Barnet at the Arts. Well, I mean, Will, of course, was teaching here students for all these years. And where did he start from? I should know. He's one of my old friends, and I've forgotten, isn't that dreadful. Of course, Will, to some extent, is self-taught. He was an enormous admirer of Juan Gris.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Mm-hmm.

DOROTHY SECKLER: That was his idol, Juan Gris. And I think he taught himself to a large extent.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Did he stay with Mars?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Not that I know of.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: But he was here, too, though?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes, he was in 2006; I remember.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I used to see him. That was after he married Elena, and they were up here in '50—I know that was '56 and '57.

[END TAPE 2.]

DOROTHY SECKLER: George McNeil was doing some kind of thing, work that was accepted by the—was it socially-oriented painting?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, the painters that were here at the time, like Yater, Yula [ph], Elmer Browne, you know, of that school, I mean—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Now what school did that—what did they have in common? They studied with Hawthorne.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: They had all studied with Hawthorne.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And what was their point of view? Was it kind of a social point of view of art for mankind and social justice or—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I don't think, no, I don't think they were involved. They were involved with the academic world.

DOROTHY SECKLER: A representation?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Representational work.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes, yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: The one that represented the social aspect is at that time people like Wilson.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Sol Wilson?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Sol Wilson.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Maybe Joe Kaplan.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Now tell me about Joe Kaplan. When did he appear on the scene?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Gee, he—what year? Do you remember, Freed? Because he came from Gloucester. They all came from Gloucester.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Did they all come down from Gloucester together—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Gloucester—

DOROTHY SECKLER: —after the war?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: —After the war, yes. They came from—they were in Gloucester. They were in Woodstock. They were in—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, what do you mean? They were in those two places at the same time?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, no. They're separate groups. I mean, I don't remember who came from what locale, you know—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: But I think that Sol Wilson and Kaplan and Martin Friedman were in Gloucester.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And—

DOROTHY SECKLER: And Byron Browne?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Byron Browne?

WILLIAM FREED: [Not understandable.]

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: He was, wasn't he? Didn't we meet him once—

DOROTHY SECKLER: And Bodkin?

WILLIAM FREED: That I don't know. That one—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Bodkin—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Knott [ph] said Bodkin was also from Gloucester after the war, but Bodkin said he had been in Provincetown years before that, and I must get it straightened out.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: He could have been because he's a Bostonian.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: So, it's very possible that he was here—

DOROTHY SECKLER: That he was back and forth.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: —you know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: But, you see, when we came here in the '40s, '44, something like that, it had mainly, at that time, it had the Hawthorne people and Hofmann.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Which didn't speak to each other?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, not really. And then, I think Hofmann became involved in the exhibitions at the Art Association, and some of the students became involved in trying to exhibit in the Art Association. And Hofmann attracted a lot of buyers and museum people.

DOROTHY SECKLER: About what year now we're speaking of?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And it's still in the '40s, in the late forties.

DOROTHY SECKLER: The late '40s, yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And so, word got around that people were selling work here. You know, so a lot of people came from the other art colonies.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And they became very active in the Art Association.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Now I remember that whenever we wanted to exhibit abstract work or there was a violent disagreement, most of the people were rejected, and when they finally did accept it, they did one of McNeil's paintings. They took a nice, big abstract painting and stuck it up in the balcony in a corner. The size was from floor to ceiling. You couldn't see it. It was a mess.

And we did try to get people on the—what do you call it?—Board of the Trustees and, you know—

DOROTHY SECKLER: The Vice President.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: —the Vice President, and George lost by one vote and, you know, things like that.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Then, they devised the ideas, since we had these vehement disagreements, they would have forums, of course, you know, and they were very popular then. And Hofmann sometimes was on a panel.

DOROTHY SECKLER: There was one that was called *How Does Art Relate to Life?*, or something like that, that he was on. Do you remember what was said there?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No.

DOROTHY SECKLER: *What Has Art Got To Do With Life?*, I believe was the—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I don't know what the—I don't remember. I don't remember the particular, you know, forums that they had. But, anyway, of course, when it came to Hofmann's, everybody would get up and, you know, either somebody was audacious enough to ridicule his accent publicly—

DOROTHY SECKLER: In front of him?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes. But they were always arguing. And, of course, Hofmann would take his stand as far as the art was concerned, you know, and he was capable of doing that.

And then, they decided, well, okay, there were so many people interested in the abstract work, sending in abstract paintings, that they would have two juries.

DOROTHY SECKLER: That was way back in 1927, though.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No. The two juries were set up; they called it a modern and a representational jury. That was set up in the '40s.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Then, it must have started all over again because they got together and stopped having two different shows in '36, I think it was.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, that's before my time so I wouldn't know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And then, however, they may have gone ahead and still had two different juries. But you say that they didn't have the two different juries and, then, they started doing it again?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: That's what I think, yes. Of course, I remember being at one of the meetings in which they had agreed to have two separate juries. Because in the beginning they would hang, you know, haphazardly—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: —you know, this painting, that painting. And then, they decided, well, let's put all the abstract work in the Hawthorne Room or in another room; in other words, separate them.

And what was interesting is that everybody wanted to be with the modern jury.

DOROTHY SECKLER: They did?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And even though they sent in academic portraits, they characterized it as a modern jury. And they also wanted to be hung where the modern painters were hung. It was really quite interesting. Until they—I don't know when they disbanded the idea of the two juries, but they —

DOROTHY SECKLER: What would someone like—you know, the one that does all the little collages with all the—Brigadier.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Brigadier.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Brigadier, what would she have done in a situation like that?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I think she would have submitted her work with the modern jury.

DOROTHY SECKLER: She would have?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Oh, sure. She considers herself a modernist.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Does she consider herself—I guess she does. I just thought she was very bitter, however, against the Hofmann group in some ways.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes. Well, I imagine—she came late. She came after Ku [ph] cut the gallery, didn't she?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Did she? In the '50s? [Side conversation.] I think she had lived in [inaudible] for a while and, then, moved here or something.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: This I don't know. I don't know whether she—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Anyway, I just was kind of interested—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: —because I remember she was telling me with such bitterness about that the Hofmann people tried to take over the Art Association. And, you know, it's always so puzzling to me because I never know when I talk to a person whether I'm suddenly going to hit this division between being modern and being traditional. And I never know which side they're on because a lot of it looks the same to me, you know. I mean, I don't make a big division. When I work, I often go from doing something representational into an abstract thing, and I don't think suddenly now I'm changing over to something. You know, it's just the most natural thing in the world to move from one thing into the other. But here they line up and they get so angry.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: But there was a very strong feeling, you know. You're a Hofmannite—you know, anytime you made a statement and you were talking in terms of the States, they would always say, "You're a Hofmannite." "You talk just like Hofmann." or "You talk—" Well, even today, right, Freed?

WILLIAM FREED: They told me off one night.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Did they do?

WILLIAM FREED: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: What's the shame about that? Just stayed with him and you—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I believe it's an unconscious or subconscious jealousy or resentment because somehow they can't understand what it is that you got from Hofmann that you cherish that much and why is it that your work was so radically different than theirs, even though you're both abstract, you know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, when Hofmann began to get his reputation and his success in Provincetown, he was hated by two people for different reasons: the traditionalists, I guess, just because they thought it should represent the object, which is their privilege, or the figure, and so on, but he was also disliked by the ones who had been abstract before Hofmann—

WILLIAM FREED: Abstract Expressionists.

DOROTHY SECKLER: No, no, before Abstract Expressionists, Hofmann was hated by the ones who had been just plain abstract in the '20s, you know, because they would get these books from Paris like something by Gleizes and they would study it, all the divisions of spaces, and so on. And they thought they were the true abstract painters. And then, along comes this man who uses a model, and that was very confusing. Why should you work from the model if you're an abstractionist, you see?

WILLIAM FREED: That's it, yes. Yes, that is my question, too. This is my question, too.

DOROTHY SECKLER: You mean when you first came?

WILLIAM FREED: Yes, yes. If it was abstract, well, I just work from objects.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm. But you found an answer for yourself, and they never found an answer.

WILLIAM FREED: He, himself, did not work from objects, only when—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Who, Hofmann? He worked in your studio. He worked on your still lifes.

WILLIAM FREED: Then he didn't work in my studio. Wasn't he painting?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes, but he was working there. He worked at—he had still lifes set up.

WILLIAM FREED: No, no, no, he had no still lifes in the studio.

DOROTHY SECKLER: But he used to work from things in the garden a lot, but I don't suppose that he went out and made studies of them. I think he just looked at something and got a feel for it.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: The driftwood he used to have, picked up that he use as inspiration or he don't—he would try—he applied the Chinese method in the end where he would study the landscape or the object, and then, come home and paint it, you see.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I think that's enough. But he wouldn't let his students do that?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No. No.

DOROTHY SECKLER: But, anyway, to get back here, so here we have Hofmann, and the old Hawthorne group are naturally disturbed because here's this man with all this influence and he doesn't use representation art anymore.

Now one of the things that we have to realize is happening here that was kind of sad, I suppose, I was talking to an old, a very spirited old lady, a Portuguese lady, while we got at the hospital the other day. And she was saying that it used to be so great in the old days when the artists worked out on the wharves and men like George Elmer Browne were around, and they were such great artists. Now she says, "After that man came up from New York," and then, she says, "everybody is just in their studios and they don't come out anymore and paint, and it's just a different world." And I could feel a sadness, a very real sadness in this woman, you see.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: That's true, because when I came here, the representational artists were painting on the wharf. They're out watching. They had a model pose, and the tide would come in, and the students were painting and they were getting wet.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Really? [Laughs.]

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes. And I thought it was very strange, you know, because they were working where the parking lot is, right across where you are.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And then, later on—

DOROTHY SECKLER: On fishermen's wharf?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Not on the wharf; on the beach.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, yes, mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And later on, Harry Angle [ph] had that as a studio, you know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And maybe it was his students. I don't know. And there were more artists around, but don't forget there were less people here.

DOROTHY SECKLER: In what year?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: In the '40s.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And during the war years?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: During the war and after the war.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Less people than had been when?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: You mean, the multiple people that we have now?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, I see, in relation to now. I thought you meant in relation to some other time before.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No. No, but it is only recently that we have this, you know, this mob. But one time you would walk down the street there, and every night every tenth person we didn't know. We knew everybody, you know. I mean, it was like a very close community. You'd walk down the street and, you know, like a friend of mine says, "My God, you know the whole town." But we really didn't know the whole town. There weren't that many people here. But today it's another world here.

But, then again, the social life was different then because the social life, I remember when we were with McNeil and Richenbourg and other people, you know, we would get together over a cup of—bring your own Coca-Cola and practically kill each other with our different philosophies—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Really?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: —and concepts.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Where did Richenbourg come into this picture now? I met him the other day, and he was in 256 Gallery.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He did tell me, of course, that he came to Provincetown pretty early. And I don't know; I wrote it down on a pad somewhere, I suppose. But when do you think it was?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Was he in the army, Freed?

WILLIAM FREED: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I think he came as a GI.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I'm not sure, but I think so, you know, and—

DOROTHY SECKLER: And there's another painter that wasn't an Abstract Expressionist certainly. He didn't study with Hofmann, either, did he? Or did he? Richenbourg did study with Hofmann?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He did?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: As far as I know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I wouldn't know it from his work.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, that's it, you see, because I don't know whether he was—but, frankly, you would know that. Did he work in class? Richenbourg? Or did he work at home and bring his work in?

WILLIAM FREED: He painted at home and he brought it in.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes, I don't think he ever worked in class.

WILLIAM FREED: No, not in class.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He never sketched from a model, right?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No. Well, he was doing very strange things at different periods in his career. You know, sometimes they were quite good in a way, but, you know, you always expected each time you met him each summer that he would be on some other track somehow.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes. Is he doing something now?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Gee, I don't know. But I don't remember seeing it. I used to go there often to watch the criticism, to listen to the criticism.

DOROTHY SECKLER: You're right there.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: But I don't recall seeing him work in class. In class he used to bring the work in. He used to bring these big canvases in.

WILLIAM FREED: He painted in the class, though.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: He did? Well, I don't know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, did he consider himself an Abstract Expressionist?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Did he?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Do you think George McNeil considered himself an Abstract Expressionist?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I think so. Didn't he, Freed? He's always taking—he's in pictures, photographs, of the group, and so on. He's around, apparently, a lot.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I think he had definitely shared with them the idea that art was something from unconscious.

WILLIAM FREED: Yes, his style is written.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes. And that it all comes out and gets into the air and, you know, you must be very free and never mind the planes so much if you're really getting it out of—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: He was really expressing as an expression? He was always, you know, as an expression.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Mm-hmm.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: In fact, McNeil's work, when I saw de Kooning's work, I thought he was copying McNeil.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Really?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes. Because he would see McNeil's work in his studio at that time. Of course, you know, McNeil didn't exhibit, but de Kooning did. And I always thought, not having seen

de Kooning's work, I always thought that he copied McNeil.

WILLIAM FREED: The black and white. The black and white.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: The black and white.

WILLIAM FREED: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Even in color, some areas.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, George, when I first picked up George's work, when I saw it, he would do things like he would take something from the model, but he would probably take some little area, like it might be just something here, old and part of a hip or something, and then, he would enlarge it. And, you know, you wouldn't even know whether it was a figure or not. But he would know it. But, I mean, it would be what set him going.

WILLIAM FREED: In de Kooning, that's his style and he draws the figures in the drawings.

DOROTHY SECKLER: It isn't so different. You know, it's—

WILLIAM FREED: I think it's going back to realists.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: But George always worked from an object, didn't he, in a still life?

DOROTHY SECKLER: I know occasionally he has done landscapes. Now I don't know whether he did his landscapes from a sketch or from his imagination or whatever. I liked them, too, very much, when I've seen them, only one or two, and I liked them very much.

I don't know whether he ever did a landscape down here or not, but if he did, I'd love to see it.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Did he do—

WILLIAM FREED: A landscape?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: —landscapes here?

WILLIAM FREED: Who?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: McNeil, when he was here? I thought he worked in the studio mostly.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I imagine he did. He told me he worked in—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: He worked very hard. He turned out a lot of—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: You know, when he had his studio next to us, he would come at 5 o'clock in the morning. He would come very early. McNeil would come early. You know, he was at Studio 3. I had 5. Then, we moved to 6. We moved from 6 to 7; that's where we remained for 15 years.

DOROTHY SECKLER: At [inaudible] studio?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes. We were there about 15 years.

WILLIAM FREED: I have to believe art will come back to Cézanne.

DOROTHY SECKLER: If it goes back to realism, it probably will bypass Cézanne, I think, because you can't go through all that thing of planes again.

WILLIAM FREED: The planes, they come to nothing, nothingness.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Hm?

WILLIAM FREED: They paint nothingness.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, I don't know, but it just seems like you couldn't go through it again.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, you know what I mean. When you go back to Cézanne, it doesn't mean you have to go back to all the planes. You go back to the concept of form. I don't know; it doesn't mean that you go back to the little planes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: It goes further back somehow, I imagine.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: It may go back to—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, they've already going back, like Fairfield Porter went back to Manet, and there's a whole group that are interested in doing that now and going back to Manet or Courbet.

WILLIAM FREED: You go downtown in New York. What's the name there?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM FREED: No, all the exhibitions there, they're presenting realism.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

WILLIAM FREED: Cheap realism. Cheap realism.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: But that is realism. That's what it is, yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, you mean Pearlstein and all that—

WILLIAM FREED: And then, they say it's a movement to work in photographs, too. It really is one.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes, there's going to be an exhibition at the Fine Arts Work Center, and the chap who is doing it, actually very well I think, is Egloff.

WILLIAM FREED: It's very easy to, nowadays with this mechanism that they have, they can project a small penny to any size they want.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Like what's her name, Audrey Flack paints in the dark because she's got this thing projected on the canvas.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: On the canvas and it looks like that.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And she sells in thousands and thousand—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: That's incredible.

But, anyway, to go back, then when they had the intense disagreement, then they organized Gallery 49.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Gallery 49?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes, Gallery—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Giving an exhibition at the Forum 49?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Well, they call it—was it Gallery 49 or Forum 49?

DOROTHY SECKLER: It was Forum 49; I know that much. But whether there was also Gallery 49, I don't know.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Because I just—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Now that included what, what paintings?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: That included—

DOROTHY SECKLER: That wasn't European this year?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, that was American. That was American. That was like Byron Browne, McNeil, Fritz Bultman.

WILLIAM FREED: I was there, too.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: You were there. Let's see, we have given to the Smithsonian Institute Archives most of our papers.

DOROTHY SECKLER: You have? Listen, I must get your permission then. Because if I get a chance to go back to New York before I have to hand this in, I can look them up.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: It's someone who calls here, but—[recording plays very briefly] oh, Frank Coselle [ph]. I'm sorry. If you turn it the wrong way—does that talk about the—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Let's see what we're getting to.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I just came across it.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, this is interesting. Well, it says—"Its painters," speaking of the Provincetown County, "Its painters have a wide choice of how to paint and what they want, all the way from solid traditionalism established by the late Charles Hawthorne to the formal gymnastics of Hans Hofmann."

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: They always call them "gymnastics."

DOROTHY SECKLER: "There is a good deal of photos in the exhibition at the Art Association, as well as a suitable stitched appearance," whatever "a suitable stitched appearance" means. "James Wingate Parish has a landscape of desolation, and there are excellent smaller works by Ari Stillman and Fritz Pfeiffer."

Ari Stillman?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Stillman, Stillman, Ari Stillman, he died, didn't he?

WILLIAM FREED: I don't know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes. Stillman, I seem to have known him once. Did he go to Mexico?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, that's Sills. That's another guy. He was killed there.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Was he?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Gee, I seem to remember—I don't think it was—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Ari Stillman, he had kind of a pointed, little face.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I see. It says, "The more abstract works are gathered in the Hawthorne Gallery. Virginia Berresford's *Circus Nets* is a deft affair. The Hofmann influence underlies works by Edith Sachs, by William Freed, and, notably, George McNeil, strong and unequivocal improvism [sic]. Kahlil Gabran extracts the imaginative essence of a mussel bed in his fragile and lovely canvas, and Lucy Dike's [ph] *Angry Canary*," blank, blank, blank, blank.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: You're right, it is called Forum 49.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes. "Program of abstract work and discussions." That's by Rosalind Browne, too. LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, this is not Rosalind Browne.

DOROTHY SECKLER: No, that's Stuart Pressman [ph], but this one is by Rosalind Browne.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: One forty-nine. You don't have a copy of this, do you?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, but you can make a copy.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, let me see if I can—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I can get it for you, make it for you.

DOROTHY SECKLER: No, I don't want to bother you.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: I go over here. I have this Xerox place—

DOROTHY SECKLER: At the library, you mean?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No, no, the print shop on Shanpinta [ph] Road.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Really? They have it at the library, too. But, of course, now you have to—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: But I thought they had their machine broken.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, it breaks down, and they'll fix it again.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Oh, I didn't even think if it was down there again.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes. But probably the other one is just as good, anyway. Let's see what it says. It's, "Forum 49, initiated by Weldon Kees of New York, Fritz Bultman, and Cecil Hemley of Provincetown at Gallery 200, corner of Commercial and Carver Streets, with a program of weekly speakers, the first session of which turned away twice as many as could be seated last Sunday night, and featuring what is considered one of the finest exhibitions of abstract paintings ever assembled. It's altogether rapidly becoming the artist focal point of Cape Code. Editors and critics of magazines and metropolitan newspaper departments are regarding the enterprise with more than usual interest and are devoting more than usual space to its activities. Despite Sunday's sweltering heat, every seat was filled in the gallery line with the output of approximately 50 well-known American moderns"—yes, that's a lot—"and crowds turned away for lack of space to stand outside to catch the words of four illustrious speakers: Hans Hofmann, Serge Chermayeff, Adolph Gottlieb, and George Biddle on the topic 'What Is An Artist?'"

Now this is the first I have heard of that.

"A few vigorous astute comments by Hudson Walker, Executive Secretary of Artist Equity, launched the forum off to a good start. Mr. Walker said firmly that art is not for the privileged few. Moreover, his travels through the country have indicated to him America's awakening interest in innovation of the contemporary artist. He is encouraged by the fact that Provincetown, normally seat of the arts, is now serving as the center for reinvigoration and creative endeavor."

"On this enthusiastic note, Mr. Kees, poet and painter, took over his duties as Chairman and briefly explained the choice of topic as a direct result of several recent editorials attacking the validity of modern art. However, all four speakers began by skirting the slippery issue at hand and dug right into the jackpot question: What is Art?"

"Mr. Biddle, veteran painter and writer, claimed that no generalities could aptly define art or the artist in the sense that the answer might rest in an intuitive approach to reality rather than merely a proficient record of visual experience. His colleagues expressed themselves more finitely. Mr. Chermayeff, head of the School of Design in Chicago and professional architect, took up the [inaudible] with dry, fluent humor. He stated something, 'without any ifs and buts, that art is a process of making things, a tool, an implement of exchange. The artist, therefore, is simply a man who does his job outstandingly well.' He stressed that art should not be considered a special private world, rejected the conception that art had universal meaning, and deplored the arrogance of students and amateurs who rush their efforts to gallery roles without serving the grinding apprenticeship necessary in any other field."

Could I just pause here and ask, was he a member of the community at any point?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Who, Chermayeff? Yes. But I think he lived in Truro.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Lived in Truro, but he was around—

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: —for a little more than this time? He had been around a good bit?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: "Adolph Gottlieb, much publicized of late as a leading figure among avant-

garde painters, held a fort of so-called unintelligible art." For so-called unintelligible art. "To Mr. Gottlieb, the process of creation is gathered by an element mystery, the artist by strong inner compulsions that force him to express what he feels, come what may. The ensuing violation of accepted patterns of thought were indicative not of chaos, Mr. Gottlieb stated, but of the evolution of new ideas, defying the maze of written shapes and writers' color that surrounded the audience. He described them as 'the true art of today, the logical outgrowth and humanistic blend of the great tradition of cubism and surrealism.'"

That's kind of interesting. "Last on the roster, Mr. Hofmann, internationally-esteemed art teacher and painter, admitted drolly that he didn't know what an artist was and probably delivered the most exciting, convincing speech of the evening. He sobering listed the qualities an artist must have, creative instinct, a searching mind, and fortitude. His conception of the mystery intended upon the active creation was tempered by the opinion that only conscious sensitivity could produce great art." Conscious sensitivity.

"He deeply regretted the unheralded struggles—"

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And that was important, the "conscious."

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, I'm interested in what he's going to say.

"He deeply regretted the unheralded struggles of the pioneers in modern art in this country, since modern art is a symbol of democracy."

Now wait a minute. I can't quite figure that.

"He deeply regretted the unheralded struggles of the pioneers of modern art in this..." Oh, I see what he means, the hardships.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: The hardships.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes, yes, yes.

"Since modern art is a symbol of democracy. Only in a democracy such as ours does the artist have the spiritual freedom to develop new ideas with unconditional and unrestricted creativeness."

WILLIAM FREED: Very, very nice. Very nice.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Rosalind Browne wrote this in 1949.

WILLIAM FREED: Oh.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: And I cut it out because you were mentioned. And also, it was about the Forum.

WILLIAM FREED: Yes, the Forum.

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: You know, the applicant building. Don't you remember how hard you worked there?

WILLIAM FREED: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: It says, "Later on, Mr. Biddle pointed out that the discussion consisted

entirely of generalities. The inspiration of fighting words carried even the jaundiced observer to the pictures with renewed interest.

"The exhibit on display until July 15th was selected by a jury consisting of Mr. Hofmann, Karl Knaths, Mr. Bultman, Mr. Kees, Mr. Hemley, and highlights the works of four Provincetown residents who were early pioneers of the modern movement here, Ambrose Webster, Oliver Chaffee, Agnes Weinrich"—all three are now deceased; oh, dear—"and Blanch Lazzell took their cues from the cubists and the impressionists."

I like Oliver Chaffee. Did you ever know him?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: No.

DOROTHY SECKLER: His work interests me.

WILLIAM FREED: What's the name?

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY: Oliver Chasey [sic].

DOROTHY SECKLER: Chaffee.

[END TAPE 3.]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]