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Interview with Fritz Bultman and Judith Rothschild

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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

[Cross talk.]

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: [Harry] Weldon [Kees] did apply for a grant from The Rockefeller Foundation and was rejected in a very strong way because I saw the letter of rejection but he was already very disappointed because he couldn't get his poetry published.

He had done a very interesting documentary movie with Jurgen Ruesch at Berkeley on nonverbal communication between parent and children in three different sociological strata of society which was a very interesting thing but it had nothing to do with his life.

He had done a movie called *Hotel Apex* which was, they were tearing down a hotel near him in Point Richmond I believe.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Where is Point Richmond?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well, it's right in the bay, right near—

DOROTHY SECKLER: It's in California?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, right.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Part of San Francisco, but not San Francisco proper. And he took pictures of this hotel as it was broken apart, a marvelous sort of *et corset* [ph] sense of the hotel, and then cats running through it and the debris of human life and so on. It was a very poignant short movie and each of these things was very well done.

Meanwhile he played jazz piano and sat in with Turk Murphy a lot, which was a very good Dixieland outfit, and he went down to L.A. and he saw [Edward] Kid Ory and, you know, he was doing wonderful things.

FRITZ BULTMAN: He was always one of the most lively people that ever—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: He did have a show at the Palace of the Legion of Honor of his collages, yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He did, of his collages.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And his collages—

DOROTHY SECKLER: What year?

FRITZ BULTMAN: —at the end were very good. He had a show here about it. I just wish somebody could find them and re-show them because Weldon was one of the most involved people in the whole thing of the collage aesthetic.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, that's right.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And those last collages that he showed at Peridot was when Peridot was already uptown, so it must have been in the '50s sometime. It's when we were back living in New York, I thought were absolutely beautiful.

JUDTIH ROTHSCHILD: They were beautiful. Very spiritual and—

FRITZ BULTMAN: And also very, very much the spirit of today.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well, I think the odd thing was that his collages were very much the exuberant, positive side of Weldon, and his poetry, for the most part, was the seer, bitter side.

I mean, his last volume of poetry was called "A Breaking and a Death" and it had things in it that are terribly strong and very sharply etched and very compact and most shocking really in the sense of the depression of the soul and he really cared more about himself as a writer than as a painter so that even though he got certain things as a painter, which he really did do very well with, they never meant the same thing to Weldon I don't believe.

DOROTHY SECKLER: What were his collages like? They were abstract, I take it, not surrealist.

FRITZ BULTMAN: They were abstract and I remember a marvelous aura of color.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: He used a lot of pure white, clear colors, that is colors without any gray or black in them, for instance, with—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Numbers.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: —areas of, yes, of—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Of numbers and—

DOROTHY SECKLER: How do you mean numbers?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Weren't there things, like, from calendars, like a big three—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Oh, some of them but I meant just in color. Then you have—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: —linear things that were sheer black against very luminous, especially cadmiums as I recall. There were a lot of yellows of various kind.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I'm very interested in how the collage aesthetic took such root in Provincetown as it apparently did and perhaps it began just in those years. It seems to me that, you know, there's a community that today, for better or for worse and it certainly isn't always for better, that you find a great deal of collage. You know, very often artists who are rather weak resort to it as an immediate way of just getting something down. But on the other hand, there have been some very good collage artists too. But I wondered how it got such a preeminence around that time. You

think it was mainly his example or was it—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: No, I don't think Weldon was thought of as a painter at that time.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He wasn't.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: No, he was a writer and, to some extent, a musician.

I think the reason is, the reason that it's the most important, perhaps the most important concept rather than medium of our century, I mean, I think it was connected with the breaking free from the old forms—

FRITZ BULTMAN: And in it you can break free.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: —and I think it's happening everywhere.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And in it you can break free from the forms of painting.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: And it was happening everywhere else too. I don't think it was just in Provincetown.

FRITZ BULTMAN: But Weldon felt very, very strongly, you know, he would like very much this whole idea of Budd's on a collage aesthetic being central to the 20th century.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I haven't heard Budd's lecture and I think that is—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Well, it's very much Weldon's, it's a continuity without Budd ever having any contact with Weldon. I don't think he ever saw these collages of Weldon. I don't know many people who did see that show.

And, Jeanne, where was Weldon from?

JEAN COHEN: Beatrice.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Beatrice.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Beatrice?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Beatrice, Nebraska.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Isn't that fascinating.

FRITZ BULTMAN: They must be out there. Well, whoever is the heir or whoever, these collages must exist and certainly in any show of Provincetown, Weldon should be represented and I don't know where there is a work of his. I mean, first his sense of continuity, of bringing in people like Blanche Lazzell and then his continuity in jazz, with this early jazz, with—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: And then there's a relation of the arts too which was a very deep thing.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Very, very deep. He really saw the interrelation of the arts.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: He was a very close friend of Conrad Aiken's by the way.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He was?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, and he used to go to see Aiken in Brewster and Aiken would come up and have long times at Weldon's.

FRITZ BULTMAN: At Weldon's.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes. I wonder if he—

DOROTHY SECKLER: But, oh, excuse me.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well, I was trying to remember the name. There were two poets and dramatists who work in San Francisco who were really his closest friends at the end and one of them is still alive. I can't remember. Could look up his name. That would be, I think, a way of finding out where his work is, because I don't think Weldon's mother will do anything without it. She's very possessive.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Isn't San Francisco then, is better than Beatrice as a possibility.

FRITZ BULTMAN: I would try both places because I think that there are people that are collecting manuscripts of his. Someone told me that there is a certain amount of appreciation of Weldon as a poet.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Maybe the Archives have some kind of a lead on him, you know. I may try that.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Or they could maybe through the University of Nebraska see if there's anything there.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: What's the name of the man who published, privately published the collected poems in San Francisco? I forget his name. That's the one, yes. Because that's also dedicated, I believe, to one of these men up here.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Edited by Donald Justice. No, this was the Stone Wall Press.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: No, that's later. I mean, the one that has the—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes, I have that one up on the Cape.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: You see they're copyrighted 1960 by John A. Kees. That's his father.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: That's the father. The father was a marvelous man who was very important around—

DOROTHY SECKLER: And he wouldn't be living today probably, though, would he?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: The father isn't.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Donald Justice in Iowa City would probably be a—

DOROTHY SECKLER: A good place to—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Norris Getty. Norris Getty is another name.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Norris Getty, when I last knew him, was teaching at Groton. He was teaching Greek.

JEAN COHEN: Norman Geske has some.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Norman Geske has paintings of Weldon's?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I don't think Norris—Norris has a painting of mine come to think of it.

[Side conversation.]

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Norris Getty was a professor of Greek at Harvard and then he ended, he was really Weldon's editor.

FRITZ BULTMAN: You know the person to really—

JEAN COHEN: He could find out about the [inaudible].

FRITZ BULTMAN: —is Geske, Norman Geske at the—

JEAN COHEN: The University of Nebraska.

FRITZ BULTMAN: At the University of Nebraska.

JEAN COHEN: Weldon went to school there.

DOROTHY SECKLER: All right. Now let's just spell it out for the tape.

FRITZ BULTMAN: G-E-S-K-E.

JEAN COHEN: No, K-Y.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Are you sure?

JEAN COHEN: Yes, dear. I know him personally. I know that's the way it's spelled [inaudible].

DOROTHY SECKLER: Norman G-E-S-K-Y.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: What does he do, Jeanne? I never heard of him.

JEAN COHEN: He used to have this whole thing [inaudible].

JEAN COHEN: There's a big Philip Johnson building out there and they have a big collection connected with the University that's called the Sheldon Memorial because Mrs. Sheldon put up all the money for it and they have, and he's the head of the—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: And do they have any paintings of Weldon's?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I don't know that, you know. I thought I remembered seeing something. It might have been a drawing, you know. It's not listed in the—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, we'd love a collage too.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well, just write to him and here's his thing. I don't see it. There's no listing here but—

DOROTHY SECKLER: And why do we think so? Since I'm going to have to write the letter probably, why do we assume that he might?

[Cross talk.]

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well, he did graduate from there.

FRITZ BULTMAN: He graduated from—

JEAN COHEN: Yes, he graduated from there.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And this is the state museum.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: It's a university.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And the address? The address would be what exactly?

JEAN COHEN: Well, I'll give it to you if I can—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Can you remember the name of that writer who wrote a book called *I Am Thinking of My Darling*, which is a—I can't remember the author's name [Vincent McHugh]. He was also a very good friend of Weldon's at the end and I think Weldon left him some things.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: This is the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska. See, this is an old thing. Doesn't have a zip on it. This is before zips.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery.

[Cross talk.]

JEAN COHEN: I remember seeing something in there.

DOROTHY SECKLER: University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska.

JEAN COHEN: Yes, it's Lincoln, Nebraska.

DOROTHY SECKLER: All right, that's on the tape now.

JEAN COHEN: All right.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Now, I mustn't let us spend too much time on this because one of the things, too, that I wanted to get, I was fascinated by this figure and, you know, he seems to have been so important in the whole, in sort of sparking the whole Forum 49.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: He was. It was beautiful, his spirit.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And if we could, you know, I'm interested in this whole collage aesthetic thing too and no doubt, you know, we'll be talking more about it at this panel discussion on Friday.

FRITZ BULTMAN: I guess so.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes, and I do know Budd's feelings about it and Budd even feels that Provincetown in itself is a kind of collage. You know, it brings together so many things in radical juxtapositions that in a sense it's true, you know.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I can't think of any other artist colony where there are so many elements and types of people and types of thinking that are just side by side.

FRITZ BULTMAN: I just feel that every house that they build adds a little bit more to its Cubist construction and it's a little bit like the costumes in parade, you know, and I think that this Cubist quality of Provincetown you find right away in the—Probably the earliest and best Cubist paintings are Demuth's which were of Provincetown. His best pictures were done up there.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, besides the one of the, it's called the Universalist Church.

FRITZ BULTMAN: There are two. There's one of the Universalist Church.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And one of the Methodist too?

FRITZ BULTMAN: And one of the Methodist Church too. Then right over—

DOROTHY SECKLER: We thought it was in Spain.

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, no.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, they're both there.

FRITZ BULTMAN: They've both been painted by him. Over right now at the Guggenheim in this show of drawings. There's the Lumberyard Stair which is still pretty much in its same shape.

DOROTHY SECKLER: At Dave's studio?

FRITZ BULTMAN: At Dave's studio that he painted in 1914.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, I remember that. I didn't know that was what it was.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Of course. It's called the Lumberyard Stair—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Marvelous.

FRITZ BULTMAN: —in Provincetown and that belongs to the Museum of Modern Art. I just looked at it the other day and that's the—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I never even looked at the title of it.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And that's the picture that I think is really one of the, you know, the major pieces of Cubist aesthetic in this country is that, more than the churches even, is that stairway, and it's quite early. It's 1912, you know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Do you think, by the way, there's any possible relationship between what Demuth was doing there and Dickinson?

FRITZ BULTMAN: No.

DOROTHY SECKLER: You don't think so?

FRITZ BULTMAN: I don't find any relationship at all, not at all.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, I know that Dickinson didn't come out of that thinking.

FRITZ BULTMAN: I think Dickinson's palette [ph]—No.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I just thought sometimes you see a kind of, it's as if he's thinking of the world as if it existed inside of a crystal in some way, you know, with all these perspective angles but with a crystalline—

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, what's—

DOROTHY SECKLER: —form of some kind.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Demuth really sort of had, like, an early intuitive insight into Cubism but afterwards he gave up without pursuing it much further and Dickinson's sort of Cubist things that he does like that I don't feel have really any relationship with Cubism.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I would agree with you.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He wasn't doing it at that time.

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, the aesthetic is—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: It's a matter of appearance, not of aesthetic.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Of aesthetic.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Right.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And with Demuth those early things have a real—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well, actually remember those Hofmann, early Hofmann drawings of the town. Remember those pen, he used to draw with a matchstick, you know, which he cut with a—

DOROTHY SECKLER: No, I haven't seen those.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: He would take a matchstick and shave it with a razorblade and dip it in ink and draw and it's just like the drawings of Collier I mean, you know, these marvelous—

[Cross talk.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: Well, Hans did drawings. Hans did drawings like that of St. Tropez.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I've seen some of—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Of those.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Earlier.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Earlier ones, before he left Europe.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: So it's the same kind of an image. But it happens to look more like Collier perhaps [inaudible].

FRITZ BULTMAN: Oh, yes, yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Those paintings that were exhibited at Emmerich last, just about a year ago, very blazing reds and oranges and some of them included references to beach buildings and so on. Weren't they Provincetown?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I think they were—

FRITZ BULTMAN: They were painted, a lot of them, from Mercedes Matter's studio.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Did it startle his students that he was doing that at the same time that he was supposedly [inaudible].

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, there was another thing. In those early years, in the very early years that I was with him and I actually shared a house with him down on 4th Street, '38/'39, and then the next year with me shared an apartment, Hans kept the paintings away from the students. He did not want the students to see his paintings. He was very, very insistent on this.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: It's true. When I was studying with him, it was still true and I remember that he invited me to his studio on 8th Street. This would have been probably the spring of '44 and I was very conscious of the fact that he hadn't invited anyone else that I knew.

Of course, you knew his work but I didn't know you at that time and I didn't talk to any of the other people about it and I was very nervous about going because it was very rare. I'm sure he had invited other people but I didn't know—

DOROTHY SECKLER: But you saw these paintings?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Did he say that he didn't want, you know, that it was a secret in any way or that you should—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Not a secret but it was—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: He didn't say that, no. There was simply no chance to see them unless he happened to say would you like to come.

FRITZ BULTMAN: He'd show an occasional, the paintings and—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Not that I remember when I was there.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes, he showed an occasional painting because the big painting of the chair—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Which was in their house?

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, the final version which my sister has. He showed at a show at the Art Students League of former teachers of the Art Students League.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I see.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And that, I think, is '41, '42.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well, that was a rare occurrence.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Then, of course, also by the time I was there he was very close to starting to show.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes, because that year is when he showed—

DOROTHY SECKLER: When was that, Judith?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Forty-four.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: With Putzel was his—

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, his first show was with Peggy—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Oh, with Peggy, yes—

FRITZ BULTMAN: —with Peggy Guggenheim.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: —was in that spring.

FRITZ BULTMAN: That spring.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Of which year are you speaking of?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Forty-four.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Forty-four.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Forty-four.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Forty-four.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: And this would have been that year—

DOROTHY SECKLER: But I understood that Pollock was still twitting him about not showing—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes, Pollock—

DOROTHY SECKLER: —considerably later than that.

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, Pollock pushed him to show.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: No, it was that winter. I remember because—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Was it '44 [inaudible]?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Pollock pushed him to show.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I recall hearing the story that Pollock said if you don't show you're not a painter.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Well, he pushed him very hard and was very influential in getting him to show, very.

DOROTHY SECKLER: The attitudes toward nature of Hofmann in contrast with most of the abstract expressionists interest me a great deal and I have a feeling that you could help clarify that because I know, of course, that you were working, you know, you were up there for that five years and you were, you know, as quoted in April's story about you. Do you want to talk about that for a few minutes?

FRITZ BULTMAN: There were absolutely different points of view because most of the other abstract expressionists like Rothko really come out of Surrealism like Stamos and Rothko. Some come from constructive points of view but Hans really, really believed that in an exterior motif and even in some of the very early and middle pictures of—even into the '50s—if you read them, you will see that though they look very non-objective there is a motif.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: That's true.

FRITZ BULTMAN: A piece of driftwood, something like that. What happened with him, you see, Pollock believed that nature was inside as well as outside and all of that. With Hans it was nature was like a reverie on which to develop and it wasn't until much, much later that he came to give all of this working for motif up.

And even at the end of his life he said about his paintings—We were talking. It was in an article that I did just for the show at the Museum of Modern Art and I was with Hans a great deal because I was writing it as I was going into the hospital and he was with me. It was right after Miz [Maria Wolfegg] died and we were very, very much together again like we'd been in the earliest time. He said, "Actually if I had the strength I would like to do it all over again after nature like Cézanne."

[Cross talk.]

DOROTHY SECKLER: I visited him shortly after Miz's death and brought down a tape that I had of Miz's voice and it was a New York apartment of course, and he led me at one point over to the window and he said this is my nature and, of course, they were all the buildings and he was at that time, I believe, doing the paintings of the rectangular shapes and that was very surprising to me at that time.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I agree with you.

FRITZ BULTMAN: It's a totally different—He felt a dialogue with the exterior world. Hans had, without any doubt, the greatest optimism and it's that optimism of that whole generation that came to fruition before World War I and he never lost it—

DOROTHY SECKLER: That's true.

FRITZ BULTMAN: —for five minutes and—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, he believed in the world,—

FRITZ BULTMAN: He believed in—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: —in the outside world.

FRITZ BULTMAN: —the exterior world outside. There was no retreat, no inner retreat and the two were synonymous for him, the exterior and the interior world. I think that is one of the main differences between, there's very little reverie in Hofmann's world. It's always a dialogue between, it's really a trialogue between the canvas and what he felt was the plastic experience of the canvas and of the exterior world and his interior world.

DOROTHY SECKLER: That's very well put.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I think when I knew him and some of us were getting to know Mondrian's writing and I got involved in that a little before he himself had gotten that involved in neo-plasticism. At that time neo-plasticism hadn't been translated and I had translated it and was passing it around.

He got very interested in that and I remember his criticism of some other student's work that was also influenced by much more neo-plastic kind of sense of space with a very defined backdrop with the picture plane beginning to come forward a lot more.

And I remember his saying no matter how abstract it is, it is still the object and you have to always decide exactly the depth and each corner must be based on that figure there and the space around her because, of course, there was always a model and there was always, you know.

And I remember his criticizing Larry Rivers when Larry Rivers started studying with him and painting, or drawing that is, abstractly and Hofmann was very impatient with him and—

DOROTHY SECKLER: You mean drawing so that he created shapes without reference to a model or anything.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes. And Hofmann said but you must deal with this space around you. Because he invited me back once to watch a criticism in the summer and Rivers was then, and he would never call Rivers by his name Rivers by the way. He would always call him, whatever his name was, Riversky [ph] or something, and he would always say I can't remember his name and he would say that thing but his old name, his original name. But he was particularly impatient with him because he said he was not dealing with the reality of the space.

FRITZ BULTMAN: It was really the reality of the space that Hans was—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: In love with.

FRITZ BULTMAN: —concerned, absolutely in total love with. And this dialogue with this space went on. This is his whole life.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, it was a real passion.

FRITZ BULTMAN: A passion, yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, how did it affect you, caught to some extent perhaps between Hofmann and the attitudes of the other abstract expressionists which certainly did not refer to nature that much in most cases.

FRITZ BULTMAN: I have always felt very comfortable with the object. I draw, you know—

DOROTHY SECKLER: That's close, right.

FRITZ BULTMAN: —all the time from the object.

DOROTHY SECKLER: But did you then? I mean, did you—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Did I draw from the object?

DOROTHY SECKLER: —all those five years when you were living in Provincetown could you tell me a little bit more about what your work was like or what you were thinking about in those years? That was, what, '45?

FRITZ BULTMAN: We lived up there '46 I guess, '47, '48. Yes, that's when Johann was born. Anthony was born in '45. I had my first show in '47 with Hugo and I lived there until '50.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Were you there at this time or nearby, Judith?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I went west in '47 but I remember coming back and visiting the Bultmans. It must have been in '50 I think and—Well, go ahead with what you were going to say.

FRITZ BULTMAN: My work, I would start painting and there are quite a lot of these paintings and drawings still around—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, we must be able to locate a couple too, you know, for both of you.

FRITZ BULTMAN: —that would start off with a still life and become totally, totally an object.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Fritz, I remember a title of yours, I don't know if it was from that period, that something called "Dialogue of the Hills" or something.

FRITZ BULTMAN: That's a later picture that's in—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Was that later? Because you said dialogue just now.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes. Yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Was that later?

FRITZ BULTMAN: That was later.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: It's a beautiful painting.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Painting, yes. But I started, I would start with something. I worked in a different way than Hans in that I would start with something just to get going.

DOROTHY SECKLER: If it took you into another reverie, you would follow that.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: You didn't necessarily feel a compulsion to stick with the original—

FRITZ BULTMAN: With the original thing. The work would transform itself and sometimes I would leave things in various, they would be completed in various states and some of those very abstract, early paintings of mine have rather realistic drawings that are close to the beginning.

Bill Alexander has two versions on the Cape of a thing called *A Reader* and one was a portrait of a friend of mine reading and the other is a painting that I painted maybe five years later with no reference to *A Reader* in it at all but I still called it *The Reader* because something remained. You know, for me something remained and this is how I work.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Thinking about the possibility of selecting something for the show, what do you think would be, you know, if it has to be a single thing, what would be the most—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: What date are you thinking of?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well, I would like, if possible, to keep it either in the late '40s or '50s I would think.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Well, there's a great big picture that I started, that started off—I carried a stack of corn into my studio and halfway along the way I threw it out and continued painting from some of the, you know, from some of the paintings that I—But first I painted the corn rather naturalistically and there are some rather naturalistic, not naturalistic but representational drawings for me of this clump of pulled-up corn from the garden.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I think in the days that I studied with Hofmann one of the things that he did, and I don't know if he had time to do this later with his students, he really taught you how to get in touch with yourself so that you could draw from your experience, this contact with reality in a way that related to you. I mean, this that you've just described is very analogous to the way I worked and still in some ways but now I'm, perhaps, more realistic and more exact in the base of what I do, but in the base of reality, I mean.

But I think that was, perhaps, one of the great things about Hofmann. Even though he was teaching all this technique, which is what we always end up talking about that he taught, he had this genius for teaching you how to find out what really moved you and what, and it did connect with the whole surrealist experience which was somewhat in the air. At the same time, were the most abstract experience and that was really a colossal thing that he did which I think, you know, could change one's life as an artist because you could draw from this for the rest of your life.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Could you tell me a little bit more what you mean by surrealist there?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Would you not use maybe the term of symbolic equivalent?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes. Yes, that would be a way but I also was thinking of the fact that we all have met so many of the European artists, not simply the automatic but the equipment of the subliminal and the subconscious and so on and then in that sense not enough, not in a more literal sense.

FRITZ BULTMAN: It was the method—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Like the visual [ph] method, yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: —to achieve, you see I feel that there was, with someone like Graham and with Hofmann, there was something of a more profound nature than what came to be known as surrealism in this country, you know, of a literary surrealism. What they were after was reaching sort of a, of pushing towards a vision that no matter where the source was it was totally personal, that was really forced out of the inner vision of the artist.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: That's very well said.

DOROTHY SECKLER: The surrealists implied to some extent the sense of your nervous system coming out into your gesture and the spontaneity of movement of your hand in relationship to the materials or that sort of thing rather than, well, fantasy of, you know, the more literary type thing. I'm thinking a little bit there of Jack Tworkov who had been much more closely in touch with de Kooning, was working at that time with a kind of magic board where he just did autonomous things all the time.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: He does.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Now, he was not, of course, a Hofmann student and—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: No. No. Had nothing to do with that.

DOROTHY SECKLER: —had quite a different idea at that time but he was interested very much in the idea of psychoanalysis as a source for the artist. This was not, I gather, something that came too much into Hans' thinking.

FRITZ BULTMAN: It did into mine.

DOROTHY SECKLER: It did?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And how about you, Judith? Would you have thought of it as logically related?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Only in the most abstract sense of method and, as Fritz says, a reaching back into one's—I was more involved with Jung really than Freud really.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And was Hans to any extent?

FRITZ BULTMAN: No.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: No. [They laugh.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. Hans had the most marvelous sense of being like a great smiling Buddha of the external world. I mean, Hans—

DOROTHY SECKLER: That's lovely. [Laughs.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: —really welcomed the new day, the new age. He thought, for example, that the

atom, releasing the atom and the atom bomb would release mankind from drudgery, from slavery, that it would bring in an era of plenty. I mean, the confidence that Hans had in all of this was simply marvelous, combined with a rather mordant wit and sort of a bitchy sense of humor when he was pushed to it.

Somebody said, you know, about Berlin being bombed and destroyed and someone said, oh, it was such an ugly city it doesn't really make any difference if it, you know, if it is bombed and he said, yes, but just think, if they build it up to look like Chicago.

[They laugh.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: You know, I mean, he could put the knife in and it's like that other, you know, this remark really should be kept, and somebody said to him you must wait until you die until you're represented it in the Museum of Modern Art and he said it is not I who must die. It is Barr who must die.

[They laugh.]

DOROTHY SECKLER: That's great.

FRITZ BULTMAN: You know, he was always, always right there with any, don't think of him as just a sweet, benign old man—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes, I know.

FRITZ BULTMAN: —because he was really a very with it but he had this marvelous sense of—I mean, these people had been wiped out and I mean wiped out, World War I, Hitler, I mean, enough to destroy anyone's confidence.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And yet he was very skeptical about discussing politics or having his students that way.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Oh, no. That had another reason. When I arrived in the school, there was a tremendous polarization between two groups of students. One was, this was during the Moscow trials and the so-called Trotskyites and the Stalinists.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I see. I see.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And it got to be such a battle in the school that Hans put up a notice.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Really? I never knew that.

FRITZ BULTMAN: No more politics talking and, you know, he says, and he wasn't terribly concerned, he was concerned more with the causes of things, you know, almost the discovery of, you know, for example, the breaking of the atom, this great hunt of mankind, you know, of breaking the sound barrier, all of these things, you know, that man had exceeded these dreams, the dream part of technology.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And he saw parallels in what was happening in art.

FRITZ BULTMAN: You see, Hans had had a certain small career as a young man—

DOROTHY SECKLER: As an inventor. Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: —as an inventor. And he really brought this with him and the political thing, I mean, like he dismissed Hitler. He could never conceive, until it was really right there—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Almost there.

FRITZ BULTMAN: —until it was almost, till Miz was almost trapped, that this, you know, this character can be—

DOROTHY SECKLER: But when it did happen then, did it deeply affect him? Was he able to, how did it, was it—

FRITZ BULTMAN: By then he was into America and I would say that Hans was one of the most American Americans I have ever known.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, I would agree with you. That's true.

FRITZ BULTMAN: I've never seen anyone embrace a civilization and a culture. The person he was really mad about was Roosevelt. I mean, he couldn't conceive of Hitler because he couldn't conceive of anyone who wasn't Roosevelt. That is just the sort of, and he was deeply affected, I remember, with Roosevelt's death.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, I remember that too.

FRITZ BULTMAN: He was very, very American, and he let a lot of things go by, you know, like, that he would dismiss because he didn't want to get involved in. But that other thing of, you know, saying no politics talk, it was just school was becoming a battleground.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I see. Yes, I understand.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I think he wasn't a political person at all really it seems to me.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Apparently not.

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, it was personalities, somebody with, who shared a big vision of things with him.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Which is what he liked doing [inaudible].

FRITZ BULTMAN: He liked his vision, his big vision of things. And he did have a big vision of the world, you know. I mean, you must remember, I mean, he came from a much earlier generation, got right into the first airplane that would take him anywhere and went. That's the sort of person he was. And this was what was marvelous being around him.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I'm afraid I'm presuming on your time and I just wonder since we have a bit of, I mean, just a little while. You must be getting terribly hungry. It's your dinnertime, isn't it?

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, that's all right.

DOROTHY SECKLER: But I wanted to come, if I could, through the period of through '49 and then the consequences in the exhibition that Miz helped paint the wall for and, you know, that went on in '49 and then in '50 again. Is that right?

FRITZ BULTMAN: That's right.

DOROTHY SECKLER: They were for two different years.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Two different years.

DOROTHY SECKLER: The first year, I gather, was the year that they had the old abstractionist along with the new and the second year I don't believe I have anything about what the subject of that exhibition was.

FRITZ BULTMAN: It was French and American painting.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: That's the one that's here.

FRITZ BULTMAN: That's its other folder.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: It was a much smaller show actually.

FRITZ BULTMAN: It was just held in the Hawthorne wing—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, it's in the Art Association this time?

FRITZ BULTMAN: And this was held in the Art Association.

DOROTHY SECKLER: They were getting in on the act.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes. By then, and we had some sculpture by then. We had David Smith.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, now I see what this is, yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: And it came, this came more, I believe, from galleries.

FRITZ BULTMAN: This came—yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: The other one was more—

FRITZ BULTMAN: More—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: —just in the area.

FRITZ BULTMAN: —in the area.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I remember packing this show up afterwards and they all went back to New York.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: The first show really got all the painters out of the woodwork that—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Right and it was not trying so much for a level of confidence in the show. It was a more free—

FRITZ BULTMAN: We brought some things up from New York, Bradley Tomlin.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, I remember.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Pollock.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: But there were local people and—

FRITZ BULTMAN: That was when Bob showed that little Spanish Elegy that afterwards became such a sore point.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: It seems to me I've heard that title before.

[They laugh.]

[END TAPE.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: —shift in Provincetown and he used to have on Saturday mornings lectures and the public was invited and people like Mrs. Hawthorne came and Blanche Lazzell and other people that I did not know.

I got to know them because first of all we were neighbors of the Hawthorne's living on the hill there and renting from her and then this was in the '30s and we always knew Blanche Lazzell.

Gerry Kamrowski, who was one of the early students with Hans in Provincetown when I went there, also I know went to see [Karl] Knaths because he came from Minneapolis and he went to see Knaths and he also went to see Ambrose Webster. Gerry had been very interested in the, what is that in France—

[Cross talk.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: Reality nouvelle and with that whole group and so he was very interested in both Blanche Lazzell's work and Webster's work because they had studied with Gliezes and this is the earliest memory that I have of a contact with the earlier community in Provincetown.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: In a curious way the Hofmann School and Hofmann sort of completed this circle because I'd say from my hearing about the early days with Knaths Webster and Lazzell and he were terribly isolated from most of the, say the Provincetown Art Association type painters, and they had this big European tradition of cubism which they were involved with, which many of the local artists almost resented and I think when Hofmann came in it gave them a kind of broader contact and it sort of completed the circle for them in a way.

Instead of there being a sort of little embattled group against the social realism and all the problems that have come about in the Art Association in the '30s, which Karl used to speak about, which, of course, I never knew, but you may have known them—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Did you know anything about social realism in the '30s in Provincetown because I—

[Cross talk.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: Oh, yeah, there were no social realists painters there really.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well—

DOROTHY SECKLER: For two years, of course, Soyer was there if you can consider him a social realist.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: There were people who thought they were, Fritz.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And Shahn was in Truro.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Shahn was in Truro, but everybody was in their own world in a strange way. One or two of the few people who made contact with the Hofmann School was Dickinson and the other one was the man who afterwards went to the Rhode Island School of Design who had the school on the beach.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Frazier was his name.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes, he had been an assistant to Hawthorne.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Both of them had been close to Hawthorne.

DOROTHY SECKLER: How did Dickinson make that contact, do you remember that?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes. I think it was really through Mercedes Matter, who was Mercedes Carles then, and she had spent a winter in Provincetown and lived in the house at the bottom of the hill where the Dickinsons had another part of the house and I think she actually made the contact between Hofmann and the Dickinsons.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: How much were they close?

[Cross talk.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: They weren't that close, they would come to parties.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, that's what I thought.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And I was still rather young, I was 18, 19 then, I guess 19. The other person who was there that summer that I remember was Gorky and he would talk with Hans and discuss with him and dispute with him at these Saturday morning meetings where Hans would speak and lecture on aesthetic problems.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Would this have been about 1939?

FRITZ BULTMAN: This was earlier than that. This was '38.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Thirty-eight, yes. Wonderful. I'm glad to get something from that early.

[Cross talk.]

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Those lectures were mostly taken down by two women who were sort of his trusted students at the time. I don't know if you have those lectures, do you?

FRITZ BULTMAN: No. I have—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I have them somewhere if you ever—I think they're on the Cape. I remember typing them out for all of Hofmann's students in the '40s and I remember that whoever took them—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Did Lynita [ph] take them down, Lynita?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: She may have been one of the two.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes. Yes, it would seem that she would take them down.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: They kept getting special and spacial mixed [They laugh] I remember in their translation of Hofmann's English.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes. Some of Hans's English was just really, I mean you couldn't keep a straight face when he would talk about hiffs and hips.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: But who is the—Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: About what?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Hiffs for hips.

[They laugh.]

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: But actually I think those lectures give a very clear sense of the way he taught in his more cubist teachings.

FRITZ BULTMAN: In his more cubist. It was really cubist teaching.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, it was.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And it had a great response particularly to someone like Knaths, whom he did not see that much but who was always when they did meet extremely friendly.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I think—I don't think that Knaths went to many of those lectures.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Lectures, no.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: But I do think that there was through the Gliezes notes, that was the big win because I know that those lectures are very connected and even some of the diagrams that Hofmann did were very similar to the Gliezes lectures that Blanche brought back with her from Europe.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Well she was always at Hans's lectures.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Was she?

FRITZ BULTMAN: This was how—I remember her in her tennis shoes—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Bright eyes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: —and her bright eyes and she was always there and very alive and very much a part of these Saturday morning meetings. Then came the war years which brought a real influx of people of European artists as diverse as Anaïs Nin and her husband and—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Did Léger come?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Léger came at one time again to visit the Matters and to visit Dos Passos.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Where did the Matters live?

FRITZ BULTMAN: The Matters at that particular time lived in that same house that is at the bottom of the hill. It's a long gray house that now is bulldozed all around and has a flat yard but was set beautifully in the landscape in those days.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, in the East End.

FRITZ BULTMAN: In the East End. I'm talking about the studio on the hill all the time.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, right. Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And someone found in a letter from Tennessee the other day that as late as '45, I think, '44, but he was going to try to get a—If he couldn't stay on at Captain Jack's Wharf he was going to try to get a room and stay up at the Hofmanns.

So that shows how late it was, you know, that they were still, that they still were in the financial position of having to rent rooms to students and to—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Right. But he did rent instead from Knaths, you know.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: He rented the little shack to the North of the main house on that property and that's where he wrote *Streetcar*.

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, that's where he wrote *Menagerie*.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I thought—

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, no, *Streetcar* came much later and he wrote that out—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well he worked on *Streetcar*.

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, *Streetcar* was written out at Beach Point because—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Are you sure?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes, because he was in and out of our house the whole time.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: At that time?

FRITZ BULTMAN: At that time, yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well I was in and out of his cottage where he was writing it but I thought it was where—

[Cross talk.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, you're wrong about the play. It was the *Menagerie* that summer that he was working on because he'd stay with us and he'd borrow our typewriter.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I see.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He was tough on typewriters apparently.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Oh, he could go through a typewriter a week and Don Windham is editing the letters now.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And he just ran across this thing about Hans and I was surprised that it was as late as that, but they were still in the thing of renting rooms.

Now in '44 the reason why Hans did not come to this general meeting, in the photograph that we can't find, there are all the artists took part in Forum 49, because by '49 there were quite a number of abstract painters there, is that in '44, '45, that winter, Hans lost the house on the hill because Mr. Davidson came along and bought it, and just right from under the Hofmanns, and Mrs. Hawthorne just sold it and—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: They had only simply rented it and never thought about not getting it the next summer. In those days there wasn't that much pressure on a place. I remember Miz being terribly bitter about that.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, bitter.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: But it was a shock. I mean everyone thought of it as though they owned it.

FRITZ BULTMAN: It was just a very—And as late as '49 he would not come to this meeting to be photographed with—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: The man who bought it.

FRITZ BULTMAN: —Davidson because he just couldn't stand him.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: See he bought it and then opened up his own school there.

FRITZ BULTMAN: School. Because he thought that he would, that the students were coming there because of the school, of the building, and he did not realize the stature of Hans as a teacher.

DOROTHY SECKLER: You mean Davidson was thinking he would inherit this following?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes, yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: It was an incredible piece of stupidity.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: But you know to go back a little to what happened after the war to the ambience in Provincetown, I think there was a—of course, I was not brought up there as you were, so I saw it much more as an outsider, but it seems to me there was a tremendous polarization because of the fact that there was this influx of GIs studying with Hofmann and then a whole lot of artists just a little older than that in experience, not necessarily in age, but who were just beginning

to be professionals who had a completely different aesthetic and I think that it made a great change.

The Art Association ceased to be central to the art experience of the community and that's really, in a way, why this Forum 49—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Just at the end of the war you see this happening?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I think that had a great deal to do with it, yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Well by '49—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, but I mean it started at the end of the war and it took several years until it really crystalized, but I think there was a huge difference in what was going on and in some ways it was very hard for the people who had been there before.

I mean I can see this partly because I knew Karl so well and Karl was always sort of in both camps in a way, and he, by the way, was always very fond of Hofmann—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: —and they had a funny ritual for many years, which I'm sure you knew of, every year they would pay a visit to each other until quite late in their lives and then they sort of did give it up quite—I don't remember when, because they were both getting on and it was hard.

They both were hard of hearing, which made it terrible actually to communicate, but Hofmann usually came down to see Karl and Karl would go and it was sort of a formal kind of thing.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes, that's nice.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: It reminds of the thing that Matisse told me about when Miro and Matisse met and they had this very formal meeting and it was very important to them to have this formal meeting. And so, but I think a lot of people have thought that the two men had animosity towards each other.

And I think Fritz and I are among the few people who were friends with both of them and I know that they didn't, I felt they didn't have that at all.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And this Forum 49 really brought together what was then the growing atmosphere in Provincetown and we distinctly did not hold or even approach the Art Association to hold this exhibition of the forums there.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Right.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Because the Art Association was so, we felt so rigid and by chance the *Advocate* office was empty, the place where the *Advocate* has been, it's empty again now by the way.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes. It would be lovely to have the [inaudible].

FRITZ BULTMAN: And we just started off very simply, Cecil, Cecil Hemley and Weldon Kees and I, early in the season to spread the word and see if we could get some forums going. Weldon was really the mover and shaker because he had the car and the energy.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: He had a car, by the way, that he had gotten from Rothko, which was called Tiresias, [they laugh] and it really was an incredible machine and the sides of it were always sort of slipping off into the road as you drove it and it was really quite an institution.

DOROTHY SECKLER: So Rothko was there at this time?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: The summer before.

FRITZ BULTMAN: He had been there the summer before.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Was he working there or just summering there?

FRITZ BULTMAN: He always worked when he summered. Mark always worked.

DOROTHY SECKLER: No one seems able to actually think of any specific thing that, you know, so that if we wanted to use it in the exhibition that we could, that he did there, you know.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Well that last year that he was there just before his death—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes, I remember that year.

FRITZ BULTMAN: He had that little studio of Al Silva's and that's where he did a lot of those black gouaches, you know, the—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Where would they be now?

FRITZ BULTMAN: In the estate.

[Cross talk.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: In the estate.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well that's the thing, you know, black gouaches.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes. No, you could—Yes, he did a great number—

DOROTHY SECKLER: I saw him that summer. In fact, he came to my place to dinner.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Well he had that studio and worked all summer long because Jeanne got the studio for him, she got the house for him, and then the studio, and he would come then afterwards to use, it was right around the corner from my studio, to use the bathroom and to use the telephone to call a taxi to go home.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: You know, the summer of '46 was the summer that Pollock was there.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Because I know I had the studio that he had had which was on the property that Kline bought.

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, '44 he was there.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Excuse me. He may have been there twice, but I know he was there in '46.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Because in '44—Jeanne [calling for Jeanne who is out of the room]?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I am positive of this, Fritz, because—

DOROTHY SECKLER: He was probably there both—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Listen. I couldn't, there's nothing that could be clearer to me because I remember when I rented the place the landlady was on Cottage Street.

JEANNE BULTMAN: What?

FRITZ BULTMAN: What year was—Come upstairs a minute, honey.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Mrs. Freeland [ph] made a joke about drinking, which I took to mean it was something about having a liquid diet, which I thought meant that she thought I should go on a diet to lose weight.

And I remember this so clearly because I was so young and so hurt, you know, that this stranger would make a crack like this and I remember the building.

FRITZ BULTMAN: [talking to Jeanne] Wasn't it '44 that we built the house?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: He wasn't using an easel and there were all these things tacked against—

JEANNE BULTMAN: Yes. We were married in '43 and we built the house in '44 and Anthony was born in '45.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes, but—

JEANNE BULTMAN: Because we had a hurricane.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Right after the hurricane—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: That's right. Maybe he was there twice.

FRITZ BULTMAN: —was when Lee and Jackson were there in '44 because they came up after the hurricane, I remember.

JEANNE BULTMAN: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: I remember that visit.

JEANNE BULTMAN: Yes, it was before we had children.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well, Fritz, I know I [inaudible].

FRITZ BULTMAN: I know that they were there in '44.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well they must have been there twice then.

DOROTHY SECKLER: They probably came twice then.

JEANNE BULTMAN: Well I think they were there twice.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Well they came in '46 but that was the time they came and stayed with us, a short visit.

JEANNE BULTMAN: No—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I don't think it's important for this.

JEANNE BULTMAN: —because we had Anthony [inaudible].

DOROTHY SECKLER: No, it isn't.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Fritz, let's not argue on this tape.

[Cross talk.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: They stayed in the [inaudible].

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I don't think it—

JEANNE BULTMAN: Could be.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: He must have worked there, too, because I could see evidences of his—

JEANNE BULTMAN: He worked down on [inaudible].

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: That's right and that's the place—

[Cross talk.]

DOROTHY SECKLER: Can you think of any one thing that you saw, any studio at any time, either of you?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes, drawings.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well would you know—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well there was the—

[Cross talk.]

DOROTHY SECKLER: Any way of identifying them at all?

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, I could tell the drawing.

DOROTHY SECKLER: You mean if you saw a whole bunch of them you could, but there's no way I could go to—

FRITZ BULTMAN: To Lee?

DOROTHY SECKLER: To Lee.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Lee would know. She would know.

FRITZ BULTMAN: She would know.

[Cross talk.]

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Actually though in the Freeland [ph] place, which was the place that I rented, he was doing oils and he was doing large oils because, you know, he had tacked them against the walls, that's when he first started to do it that way.

DOROTHY SECKLER: On the wall?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: He didn't have an easel.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Not on the floor?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: No.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: He couldn't have done it on the floor, the floor was wobbly and rough and it would've been impossible.

JEANNE BULTMAN: You know, they might've been up there in '43. We were [inaudible] Summer of '43.

FRITZ BULTMAN: They were there in '43 with Hans and Miz.

JEANNE BULTMAN: Ah ha. Because we were—

[Cross talk.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: They came up and spent part of the summer of '43 with the Hofmanns.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well I don't think Dorothy cares about this.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well I think it's kind of interesting though, what you do remember. It doesn't matter to the particular month or anything.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: But it was constant of people coming and going.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, that's right. It is a terrific atmosphere.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And artists of all of the certain of the surrealists up there, people like Charlie Cheffla [ph] over in Wellfleet and—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: There was an enormous sense of—

DOROTHY SECKLER: And—

FRITZ BULTMAN: And Berman's brother.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Leonid.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Leonid was there.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I remember a painting that he did and I don't know where it is but I remember all silvery grays with that on a horizon with boats floating, do you know that?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I wish I could remember—

FRITZ BULTMAN: They were there and so the war really made quite a change in Provincetown—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I think so, yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: —and the years after the war, you see the Hofmann's had—In '45 he used the studio that Tony Smith and I were building and we built the school around him and then the next year he had his own house.

DOROTHY SECKLER: What do you mean you built the school around him?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Well Tony Smith and I were building my studio and Davidson had put Hans out up on the hill.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: He had no place to go and Tony and I built the studio with, it was half finished and Tony is very slow, and the school was in it and we were really building it around—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, I see what you mean. They were meeting there and you were half finished, yes. That year, that was?

FRITZ BULTMAN: That was '45.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Forty-five, yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: That was '45 and by '46 Hans had the house down on—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: The West End.

DOROTHY SECKLER: The war place.

FRITZ BULTMAN: The war house, yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: George McNeil told me that he had helped him find that place there. It was—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He didn't say too much else about what he was doing in Provincetown. He was not studying, of course, with Hans, but had years before.

FRITZ BULTMAN: No. No, George—Dora had been there during the war when George had been in

the Navy and George came back and was painting that summer.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: He was there. He is in this show.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: That's right, he's in the picture.

FRITZ BULTMAN: He's in this picture. We don't have that one photograph.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, I'll get you that picture.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, I see.

FRITZ BULTMAN: But Adolph was there.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Now Adolph how long had Adolph been there? I knew he didn't end—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Adolph had been there quite awhile.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: That's because he sailed.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And you see he was Cecil Hemley's cousin and Adolph did a lot of sailing.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes, I remember that.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And he lived—

DOROTHY SECKLER: I took his place after he moved out.

FRITZ BULTMAN: After he moved out.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I guess he was in that place all along then, right there—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes, right down there.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Right on the waterfront in the middle of town.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I'm trying to—

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, that's where Weldon was first.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: That's right, he was, but then—

[Cross talk.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: Adolph took that from Weldon.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Right.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Weldon had that place first.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He did—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: And then one of the addresses was 456 but I can't remember which place that was.

DOROTHY SECKLER: That would have been further up, it would've been a 300—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: That was the second place that [inaudible] Weldon took afterwards.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Because Weldon one summer—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Howard Nemerov was there.

FRITZ BULTMAN: One summer Weldon had a place in the back and Bill Baziotes was there, because Bill Baziotes lived on Brewster Street and Weldon and Bill I remember coming to see me in my studio and this was the first time, you know, that, you know, that other artists had really shown interest in the work and I was very moved by it.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Weldon had a marvelous capacity for empathy and enthusiasm and understanding of other artists and I think this was one of the things that made those summers more exciting than is easily recaptured.

I remember he, for instance, he reintroduced Motherwell and me that summer. I think that was also in '49.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Forty-nine.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I had known Motherwell earlier.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Now Motherwell wasn't there, living there yet was he?

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, but he—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: No, but he came.

FRITZ BULTMAN: He had been up in one of the war years with Peggy Guggenheim and spent a few weeks and then they all got sent back because of Max Ernst not having the correct papers.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes. But he came for one of the forums, that's how he happened to—

DOROTHY SECKLER: I remember that, yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: That's how he came back for one of the forums.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Where was he living during the summers at that time?

FRITZ BULTMAN: He was in East Hampton.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, he was. So he did the other switch. [Laughs.]

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: That's—

FRITZ BULTMAN: You see he and Pollock moved into East Hampton in those years. That's when they—

DOROTHY SECKLER: But they were friends in those years?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes, they were friends in those years. It didn't last very long.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh, Lee tells a different story.

FRITZ BULTMAN: I know she will tell you a different story, but they were friends in those years and I know that in actuality I'm quite sure that I remember Bob buying them a stove to cook on.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Really?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes. Bob has some very nice traits.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, I was—

[Cross talk.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: They are sometimes very hidden in a strange off-putting manor, but underneath there's some very good traits. Now there is one other element that I think should be mentioned.

Cecil Hemley was married to Don Witherstine's daughter. Now Don Witherstine had been the Director of the Art Association. He was an alcoholic, as Weldon said, whose wife gave him the Keeley Cure, let's give him a dose of ipecac and tie him up in a crocus sack.

[They laugh.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: Weldon had this absolutely marvelous sense of humor.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Brilliant.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And Don Witherstine had been dropped from the Art Association and had opened—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I never knew he was—

FRITZ BULTMAN: —a gallery of his own.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Called The Shore Studios.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: The Shore Studios, and lasted until now.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: But he was there.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Up in the West End. He died a number of years ago, and had been an etcher but he became a rather successful art dealer.

DOROTHY SECKLER: In Provincetown?

FRITZ BULTMAN: In Provincetown. And he sought out various modern artists, Hans being one of them, he came to me and got some paintings at Hans' recommendation, and this is where Weldon

saw my work and this is where the Forum 49 also begins.

DOROTHY SECKLER: This is just before Forum 49 that this happened at the Shore Studies, that you were showing there?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: But had he been there for awhile before that?

FRITZ BULTMAN: I don't know for how long.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes, it was several years probably. Doesn't matter.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: It's sort of ironic though because actually The Shore Studios really were not so great in the community.

FRITZ BULTMAN: No.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: And he had a lot of people that were not so good. He had really, if I may say so, he had just a—

FRITZ BULTMAN: A lot of buckeyes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, just a lot of stuff.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He had a real [inaudible] stuff, that's my impression.

FRITZ BULTMAN: But he had—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: But he didn't ask—He was clever. I mean—

[Cross talk.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: The think about him is that he was ready to go in a situation and Cecil, being married to his daughter, was a certain degree, a catalyst in this direction.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Now that is the other, that is the third—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Element.

FRITZ BULTMAN: —element in this development.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well it's very good.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: And I think also it's—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Hold it just a second. I want to reverse and just make sure we're not wasting [inaudible]—

[Audio break.]

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes, I guess it's alright.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well Weldon I think though, because he was so gifted and so empathetic in so many directions. For instance, even though Weldon and Dwight Macdonald subsequently had a fantastic and marvelous fight.

He was able to talk to Dwight and they were very involved and Dwight Macdonald was at one of the forums and was really very brilliant.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Was he a Provincetown person, Dwight, do you know?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: He was in Wellfleet.

FRITZ BULTMAN: His wife still lives there.

DOROTHY SECKLER: So he was there for many summers or just one summer?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Oh, many years.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: He was then—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Many, many years he had been there.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: You mean his ex-wife still lives there.

FRITZ BULTMAN: His ex-wife.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, they had a place on one of the—

FRITZ BULTMAN: On one of the ponds.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: But there were a lot of people like that that Weldon was able to communicate with that he brought into this, poets, Howard Nemerov, for instance, he was a very hermetic and complicated person who was at one of the poet's readings and oh, I'm thinking of some of the architects—

[Cross talk.]

DOROTHY SECKLER: Was the, you know, it starts with K—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Kessler?

DOROTHY SECKLER: No, not Kessler. Visual art at MIT, a—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Oh, I know.

FRITZ BULTMAN: [György] Kepes?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Kepes. Was he involved—

[Cross talk.]

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: They were there, which they were not important.

FRITZ BULTMAN: They were there. They were there, but we—You see I had studied with Kepes at the new Bauhaus and I had really had the Bauhaus group up to here.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I don't think he had the status.

FRITZ BULTMAN: He was never a painter.

DOROTHY SECKLER: But he does paint in a very different way.

FRITZ BULTMAN: He does paint.

DOROTHY SECKLER: His paintings have nothing to, apparently nothing on the surface at least, to do with the electronics and all the other things.

FRITZ BULTMAN: All of this other whoopty-doo stuff.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: No, I don't think Kepes really sorted of weighted very heavily with us.

[Cross talk.]

DOROTHY SECKLER: Did they—

FRITZ BULTMAN: They had nothing—No. Actually the person from that group that we finally settled on to represent that attitude in the forums was [Serge] Chermayeff who was more articulate and also not very interesting as a painter.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Had Kepes built his house and was he living there at the time?

FRITZ BULTMAN: It seems to me, yes.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He was there a long time?

FRITZ BULTMAN: It seems to me, yes, because I would run into them occasionally and I don't know how early on this started. You see I left the new Bauhaus to come and study with Hans, and that's, so I had contact with both.

DOROTHY SECKLER: You mean in Germany?

FRITZ BULTMAN: I had gone to Germany to study at the Bauhaus.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: The Bauhaus had been closed by Hitler, this is what I didn't know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: By chance I met Miz Hofmann. I came back to study at the new Bauhaus and on the way—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Came back where?

FRITZ BULTMAN: The United States from Germany.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And on the way I stopped and talked to Hans. After a few months at the, or a year at the new Bauhaus in Chicago I made up my mind that that was not for me and that I wanted

to study with Hans and that's when a whole group of us came in '38 to study with Hans.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I'm glad you mentioned that because I've been wondering how it was that apparently that there are reports that Miz was carrying on a kind of school in Munich even during those years.

FRITZ BULTMAN: No.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And I wondered how it was possible.

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, it was not.

DOROTHY SECKLER: She was not.

FRITZ BULTMAN: For the first year after Hans left there was a student of his by the name of Kinsinger, who subsequently went to Texas to teach, and he tried to carry on the school while Hans was over here.

See Hans left in '32 for the last time and Miz tried to hold on to the school and was really in a process of liquidating it by '35 when I got there.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: When did Miz come here?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Miz was on the very last American boat to get here in '39 before the outbreak of the war.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I see.

FRITZ BULTMAN: She was on the last boat, I forget which one it was, one of the last days in August.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Were you on the same boat?

FRITZ BULTMAN: No.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Oh.

FRITZ BULTMAN: I had come several years earlier. I came back at the end of '37, but Zogbaum had been over there and he had been staying with Fritz Winter but he was friendly with Miz and she gradually, we convinced Hans that it was a hopeless situation, and gradually got her out.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes. Why did it take so long?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Everything just seemed to take forever, first of all to convince Hans that—I mean nobody had any real idea of what Hitler was. This is part of the thing.

I mean Hans would say oh, he's a political figure that's going to disappear very quickly, they will not put up with this nonsense for much longer. You see that was the attitude and it was quite difficult to get people in.

It was really my father got some congressman from Louisiana to help write letters because Hans did not have that much stability and money to bring a dependant and my father signed for Miz and we brought her over.

DOROTHY SECKLER: I see.

FRITZ BULTMAN: But it took, it seemed to take forever. It took—I'll tell you what it—Hans came to see what was happening when the Munich Pact took place in '38 and it took all of that winter. That's exactly the time that it took.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well it did. I mean we brought people over as a family.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: It did take a long time.

FRITZ BULTMAN: It did take—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Until you've gone through all the red tape and everything.

FRITZ BULTMAN: I was also helping—

DOROTHY SECKLER: But I was thinking from '32 to '38—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Thirty-two to '38, that's—

[Cross talk.]

DOROTHY SECKLER: —hey, you know, what was she doing there in that time.

FRITZ BULTMAN: What was she doing?

DOROTHY SECKLER: It isn't [inaudible] relevant to this, but I just—And I don't know why I never—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Well she rented the apartment first to—Yes, it is relevant to a woman who is translating Hans' book, you know, the prim of it has never been published, a woman by the name of Peggy Huck, who lives in Barnstable, and it was through Peggy that I met Miz because she was in the same junior year that we both got thrown out of after I couldn't get in the Bauhaus, they were supposed to get me in the Bauhaus, and I just studied privately, language and mathematics because I was coming back with what I did was college work.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And Miz rented the apartment and with the small money over from that she was able to live in the country. When I moved in she came one day and she was going to stay in the attic and I said well why don't you stay here, you know, there's an extra bed, and she stayed and this is the way I got to know her and she became a surrogate parent for me.

I was 17 then and really needed someone to sort of wise me up and she was my friend.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And she understood a great deal about—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: A really wonderful woman.

FRITZ BULTMAN: She was a great woman.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes, she was.

FRITZ BULTMAN: She was a very great woman, and Hans was totally aware of this, totally aware that he owed his painting career and to her sense of organization and when she came things began to change.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Yes, for him.

FRITZ BULTMAN: For him. She, by the way was constantly helpful in this Forum 49 thing. I remember her on a step ladder helping paint this place.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: She was little.

FRITZ BULTMAN: She was a real mover and shaker.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: You know one of the things about that forum that I think should be said is that there was so much excitement in all the arts I think at that moment, the people who came came down and as far as I know the regular arrangement was more or less someone put them up somewhere in town and then they were always given a bottle as that was their stipend for coming.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes, a bottle.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: And that seemed perfectly great. I mean nobody questioned it, it was fine and we always had a party after the forums and there was a place called Wuthering Heights, did you ever go there?

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Which had no liquor license but you could go out there and bring your liquor and they'd give you setups.

Weldon used to play jazz piano and I remember that that's when I met Eileen Simpson, Berryman then, but Berryman apparently wouldn't go to a thing like that because it's—Anyway, he wasn't there, but we had marvelous dancing and jazz and stuff afterwards.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Jeanne and I had little children and had to go home usually.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: That was really a wonderful ritual. Also—

DOROTHY SECKLER: What was the attitude of the Association toward all of this happening?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Well they began to get interested.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: They began to compete.

DOROTHY SECKLER: They had a forum in '45 in which they had Hans participating as one of the people on the panel called What is Art to do with *Life*, or something like that.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: That's right, yes.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Something like that. But it never sort of got off the ground but by the next year they had a meeting and we presented the second show, that is this show here, with all of these people, it was called Post Abstract Painting.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: France America.

FRITZ BULTMAN: France America.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Now that was the one that was really exciting.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Miz and my sort of a general answer to the fact that European painting was totally finished that Adolph and Weldon were pushing.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well you felt they were.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Well, yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well Adolph was certainly pushing.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Adolph was pushing.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Weldon really wasn't.

FRITZ BULTMAN: No.

DOROTHY SECKLER: And then didn't Miz and Hans eventually put out a manifesto against that position? Or was that someone else?

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, it was Hans and I put out a manifesto called A Manifesto Against Ostrich Politics in the Arts—

[They laugh.]

FRITZ BULTMAN: Because he hated Nationalism as much as I do, you know.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: But, you know, actually that, I think a lot of that battle had to do with Gottlieb.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Oh, yes, Gottlieb was very chauvinistic and—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: He was very narrow in this thing.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: In my memory it centered around him because the—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: After you—I used to work on the taking tickets and it became very hard to do because that forum became so popular that people were storming the doors.

It was a very hard job just to keep people out of it and so I worked with Esther Gottlieb through all that and they were incredibly hot about this issue of Nationalism, which I don't think was true of Weldon Kees at all.

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, because Weldon happened to prefer Dubuffet practically to any other painter.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well it certainly influenced—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Well was there anyone else beside Gottlieb who was so militantly for the cutting all ties position?

FRITZ BULTMAN: No.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: No, I don't think so.

FRITZ BULTMAN: No. Adolph was really playing that scene all alone.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Right.

DOROTHY SECKLER: He was the chairman of the night they had the particular discussion, how did he happen to get into [laughs]—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes. Well you see he hadn't done any other forums.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: We [inaudible] decided on him. I mean—

FRITZ BULTMAN: And he wanted to push this particular—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: And don't forget when you're getting together a forum like this one of the things is to have it controversial a little bit.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Sure.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: I mean the fact is the Art Association forums were too stayed and too philosophical and so there was always a certain temptation I think to let it get tense.

DOROTHY SECKLER: But you made him chairman, how could he talk or could he just step out of the chair?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well we didn't run them that tightly.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Oh, they weren't—It was never a tight ship.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: No, no. In fact the last forum was called Everybody's Forum and anyone who wanted to could sign up to speak for three minutes on any topic.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Wow.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: And one of the things, I was just speaking to her about it the other day, Elaine de Kooning wanted to speak on the role of women artists in history and she got up and she —And it seems like such another era. At that time Elaine was very incredibly shy. I don't know if you were at that forum.

FRITZ BULTMAN: No, I wasn't there.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: She stood up, and I still remember, her hands shook and she read this paper on women artists in the past, including Mary Cassatt, and she had done a lot of—

It's really, it would be fantastic to get that document now because all this we accept so completely, but it was sort of gutsy of her to talk about this then and she was extremely, you know, I mean sophisticated as a person speaking in public.

But anyone could speak on anything and a lot of people did speak back to this controversy. I can't remember who. It's a shame you weren't there, your memory would be better than mine.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes. No, I wasn't there.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: It was sort of a free-for-all so it was great fun, you know.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes. Now that followed immediately the one about—Because the paper that I have at home just has these four and, you know—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Well there was one on architecture that Breuer was there.

DOROTHY SECKLER: Yes. Breuer, yes.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: And Blake was there.

FRITZ BULTMAN: And Blake.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: And he was very—

FRITZ BULTMAN: And Kessler was so—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: And Chermayeff was on that.

FRITZ BULTMAN: Was Chermayeff on that one again? Breuer?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: It was Breuer and Chermayeff were on the same forum and then Blake—They got into quite a hassle.

FRITZ BULTMAN: But, what's his name, Kessler, Kessler was so annoyed that he wouldn't go and he made Lillian [inaudible], that he afterwards married, he stayed up at the Hofmann's house and he made Lillian go down and write down everything that was said—

DOROTHY SECKLER: Did he?

FRITZ BULTMAN: —because he was so annoyed at the whole idea. He said, "I will not appear with those people."

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Well Breuer—

DOROTHY SECKLER: What annoyed him most? The whole Bauhaus—

FRITZ BULTMAN: Just the Bauhaus attitude, it was—Kessler was—It was very partisan, remember?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Don't you remember Breuer and Chermayeff got into an argument about the Bauhaus and Chermayeff, as I remember it, was saying it's all a matter of plumbing and Breuer got very angry and sort of said it's all a matter of aesthetics and—Do you remember that?

FRITZ BULTMAN: Yes, I do remember that.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: Then there was one person's psychoanalysis.

FRITZ BULTMAN: That one I don't think I—

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD: And there was a film one with Helen Levitt—

FRITZ BULTMAN: And—

[END OF INTERVIEW.]