



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

## **Interview with Barbara Jones-Hogu**

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### **Transcript**

### **Preface**

The original format for this document is Microsoft Word 11.5.3. Some formatting has been lost in web presentation.

Speakers are indicated by their initials.

## **Interview**

### **Barbara Jones Hogu Part 1**

#### **AFRICOBRA Interviews**

##### **Tape GR1**

##### **TV LAND**

Q: Could you talk to us about the name AFRICOBRA, briefly?

BJH: AFRICOBRA, in terms of the fact that it started out with COBRA, the Coalition of the Revolutionary Artists. And then it went into Afro-. I think at some point, we had Afro before we went to AFRICOBRA. And that's the final statement in terms of AFRICOBRA (sic) which gives us the connection to Africa. Okay? In terms of the fact that we are ... to separate us from the European COBRA group. You know? It also presents our race in our title. You know, that we were basically of African origin.

Q: Could you talk to me like I was like ... I don't know, a 12 year old black kid in America that has no idea what happened in the early 60s? Just the position...in time prior to the wall of respect. Just briefly, what was taking place in America for the black native community?

BJH: The civil rights movement. Fighting for civil rights. I think more so in terms of the south fighting for civil rights, but it affected us here in Chicago. You know, I went to a high school where I was ... there were seven African Americans which we called ... they call ourselves (sic) negro or colored at that particular time ... entering into the high school. And there was a great deal of rejection to us, even though there was no segregation in the public school system.

But you were segregated basically by neighborhood. You know? Chicago is segregated by neighborhoods. So one of the things in terms of that experience being made aware ... you know, once you leave your community that you are different and that you are treated different just because you're different. You know? And that you're not thought of as to be as good as the other group (sic), whichever other group that may be (Laughter) when you're outside of the black community.

So I think that sometimes in terms of children, if they stay in their ... which is probably why a lot of children have a tendency ... African American children many times stay within their neighborhoods. You know? I remember when I was teaching at Carver High School, that a lot of them had never been downtown (Laughter). You know, into the city. Their kind of safety within ...

Because regardless of what it is, you know, you're aware of what the parameters are. So the idea that in the civil rights movement that you had to ... you were fighting for your rights. And I think that was more in the south ... visibly in the south, because it was more public. But you were fighting for your rights in the north, also. And it was like the invisible racism that you experience.

You know, it was still there, and sometimes more sinister, I would say, than it was outside. So I think children of today, because they did not have that experience of not ... and maybe they do ... you know, because still in Chicago, you know, you go into certain neighborhoods, you're not welcomed. You know? In terms of being black. And they can still experience that today. You know?

But I think that they're less aware of it in some instances, depending upon what neighborhood they grow up with. So civil rights is always an issue. It was an issue when I was young and it's still an issue today, so it hasn't changed. That's why the messages that are here that you see in my pieces are still relevant.

Q: Could you also talk about some of the key events and key figures in the 60s that influenced or you were just paying attention ...

BJH: That influenced me specifically?

Q: Or made an impact.

BJH: That made an impact on me. I don't know whether it actually shows in my work or whatever ... I know after King died, I was in Washington, D.C., and in the process of being in D.C., that they had ... the lights were so bright that there was no ... it was as if at night, they cast no shadows. I have ... you know, D.C. has to have

lights that are brighter. I've never seen ... even in terms of them working on the roads there, they do a lot of night working on their roads.

And there's so much light that it looked like you're in daylight. They had lights like that on the street. You know, I would look down 13th Street ... I remember 13th Street, 7th Street, 11th Street, 13th, 14th Street. They would have lights that were so bright at that time that you could see for blocks at night, because the lights were so bright. I think that the idea of that occurring after the riots ... that was there ... and they kind of took a long time to rebuild those areas where they had looting and everything.

And they never rebuilt some of those areas. I think that had an impact on me, but I don't think that you see that in my work. You know? I think some of the things I experienced, you don't really see in my work per se relative to the civil rights movement. I did not go to Washington when King spoke in Washington. I know I had an uncle that was willing to pay my way to go and everything.

They all went, but they never did ... they didn't go down. They looked at it on television at a relative's house (Laughs). But I guess, no, they had better seats in terms of seeing him and hearing him. So I did not march. I did not do any marching per se. You know? But I remember going down ... I was a part of a movie called "Medium Cool." It was shot before the Democratic convention in '68 that was here.

They thought that we were going to have riots here. I think that was ... the movie was based on, just to get some black artists and their attitudes ... their feeling about America and everything. And we met at a place on the west side and spoke. But during that time, you know, people that was really revolutionary (sic) kind of left the city. But Dick Gregory marched with people downtown.

And we went down ... let's see, we were about maybe at 12 or 13th Street. But they had tanks ... Army tanks in the city, to try to control that group marching down to the hotels where the Democratic convention was. You know? The building that I was in had a fire escape.

I went with some others, and we stood on the fire escape to see over into what was happening to this group. I think that had an impact, because I don't remember anybody reporting on the fact that they had tanks and troops and everything down ... I mean, there was something about being controlled, but I don't think anybody knew the amount of control that was being perpetrated on them.

I think that had an impact on me at that time. You know, because it was an experience, and I don't remember them publicly reporting that as occurring during that particular time.

Q: Are you ... would it be fair to say that the celebration to all(?) what you're experiencing there?

BJH: Mm-hmm.

Q: And that specific painting ... the Unite painting ...

BJH: The Unite came after the experience of going to ... I also in '68 went to Mexico (Laughs). So I was aware ... even though I wasn't there for the Olympics, you know, in terms of the athletes that used the black power movement in their acceptance speech ... but I was there, and I had visited Elizabeth Catlett in her studio. She was working on a sculpture of a figure with an outstretched hand (Laughs) in terms of black power. And I said, oh, I need to do something based on that.

So this is the development from that. It wasn't that I wanted to copy her work. I wanted to speak about what kind of unity we needed. You know, and the black power movement was one of the signs to say that we're going to be more direct in terms of ... and forceful, focused on what we need to do.

Q: Because you felt that there was no unity, but you guys would not ...

(Overlapping comments)

BJH: Not unified. I mean, we still need to be unified as a people.

Q: Can you talk to us a little bit about that painting (inaudible) ...

BJH: (Overlap) That's the Nation Time ... Unite. It's nation time. Nation time was kind of like a saying. It's nation time. To build a nation, you need everybody to work together. You know? Everybody must come together and work together. So that's just in terms of a statement to unite. It's nation time.

Q: Can you talk to us about the role of the female figure (Laughter) in your work?

BJH: I use a lot of female figures. I think someone tried to blame me for using a lot of females. Said why don't

... well, after this period, I used some other ... I mean, I didn't always do AFRICOBRA work later too ... so when one says, "You always have women in your...Why don't you have any men in your ... "

But they didn't see all of the work that I had done (Laughter). But they used to say that. But in terms of the fact ... this one is ... woman is our foundation. That's why I can't ... I'm really ... understand why women are not basically more or less ... what should I say, honored in some of the eastern countries. You know? Specifically why they are so relegated to you know, almost chattel. You know? Because without them (Laughs), you couldn't men could not be born. You know?

And men have a tendency to treat women very badly. You know, I get (Laughter) ... I get tired of seeing how bad men treat some women. And I'm not saying that women don't treat men bad, but it's almost like a slight for men. But we are a force. And this particular piece says TCB at the top, which is the lost and found lettering. It means take care of business. You know, we need to take care of business, you know, in terms of that.

And to be free? Which is in the forehead ... we must protect our community and come together. Here to learn about us also ... you know, because within the educational system at the time, there wasn't a lot of education. I mean, out of the civil rights movement, more courses were taught about our history ... African American history, negro history, colored history ... whatever you ... black history ... whatever you want to call it. There are more courses on it.

But when I was in elementary school, I had a teacher called Mrs. Stratton(?), and she had a week in February that she used to teach negro history. And I think that with Mrs. Stratton, she also was part of my foundation in being aware of our state in America, which was not generally done at ... because that was like ...

(Background/off-mike)

BJH: I didn't really deal with feminism per se.

(Background/off-mike)

BJH: When I was dealing with women, I wasn't really dealing with it from the standpoint of feminism. You know? I think ... I had a very strong mother. I did. And she had a very strong tongue (Laughter). I think that possibly, out of that, I know my mother and father had conflicts because she was sharp ... sharp tongued (Laughter).

So in terms of being forceful, I think that's a part of my background. You know? So women in my ... women become important to me ... okay, because to me they are the foundation. You know? I have a concept that Adam was not (Laughter) a male (Laughter). That Adam was both male and female. Okay? That's my own. When they separated, they separated the man, not the woman out of Adam.

Q: Is ...

BJH: So ...

(Overlapping comments)

Q: Is religion or is spiritualism important in your work?

BJH: Spiritualism is important to me. My main message of truth is God is present at all times. That we are all gods with a little g, whether we realize it or not. You know? So religion is very ... spirituality is very important to me, even though I'm not going to the church. I don't go to church every Sunday or whatever. You know. But I pray a lot. So ...

Q: Can you like summarize as short as you can why is AFRICOBRA ... why was AFRICOBRA still relevant to not only our community socially? I know it's a broad question, but ...

BJH: AFRICOBRA is important because it still exists (Laughter). They're still going. I mean, even though the focus is different. I mean, there is a body of artists coming together you know, with AFRICOBRA at the focus. And they ... it's alive. It's real. It's active. It has a presence. And I call it part one and part two. There is a present in the part one and there is a presence in the part two.

So the fact that it still exists, it's important that they exist. And there must be an energy within it that needs to be projected for them to still be relevant, you know, even to this time.

Q: So you think that it's ... it was important then, but there's still a lot to be done. A lot of things that AFRICOBRA is with social responsibility, but is additive to make things work.

BJH: Social responsibility? I think AFRICOBRA has a spiritual responsibility. I think that they have an energy and a force that needs to be present. It's active. It has not disintegrated, so it becomes significant.

Q: Could I ask you to list me (sic) the names of the ... start with the founding members with ... I mean, as many as you can remember. I'm sure there's so many that some of them will (inaudible) ...

BJH: (Overlap) I don't know all the members. There's ... I called it AF(?), and I only came up with that yesterday ... AFRICOBRA part one and part two (Laughter). That came to me yesterday. I do not know the part two group.

Q: So let's start with ...

BJH: Well, so ...

(Overlapping comments)

Q: Let's just (inaudible) the founders.

BJH: In terms of the founders are basically Jeff Donaldson(?). Jeff Donaldson is the spearhead. Okay? I think that this was his concept, something that he was interested in. I believe it grew out of a grant that he had to put on CONFABA that was in a part of his doctorate, dissertation that was at Northwestern because he brought people from all over the country to be a part of that as a grant from the Ford Foundation.

I think out of that grew the concept that there needs to be a black aesthetic in terms of looking at the art work that we needed to develop that. We came together and decided what that would be and then we worked on it. So Jeff Donaldson is the spearhead. You know? And he was a spearhead through the group ... through the many years, part one and part two.

Wadsworth Jarrell, I would say would be second, because it was done in his studio on 61st Street. That's where we first met. We came together there with many different artists ... were invited. Some decided that they wanted to be a part of the group and some did not ... dropped away. So Wadsworth Jarrell, who plans to do a book on AFRICOBRA ... I hope that he completes it so he can tell the story ... the correct story (Laughter), because there's a lot of versions that have come out since then.

And I hope he's able to do it. So he's a founding member. His wife, Jae Jarrell. I need to put her because of ... she's married to Wadsworth, and she was ... she's a third founding member. I become one in terms of Barbara Jean Jones Hugu ... added ... my name was Barbara Jones at that time. And everyone called me BJ. And so I would call myself the fourth member. And Gerald Williams would be the fifth founding member of AFRICOBRA.

We came together. We came and brought our work ... those who decided to be in the group. We had a meeting. We brought our work to that meeting. We examined what was in each person's work, and out of each work, we selected something that would be a part of our philosophy. Now I'm not sure in terms of what was selected from everyone, but I do know that color was selected from Wadsworth's work, because he was always a colorful artist. He did a lot of paintings of musicians and jockey ... race jockeys and things like that in his work, and it was color. So I know color came out of his work.

And what came out of my work, I had worked that had lettering it, some of my prints that I had did (sic) had lettering. So that was selected out of my work. I think lost and found line may have come from Jeff Donaldson. But something specific was taken out of each person's work in order to fall ... to formulate our philosophy in terms of our aesthetic.

So we worked on that, and that controlled our first three projects that we did. You know, the first one was ... dealt with the black family, and the use of lettering. And so the black family becomes important because we felt that it was something that was an important nucleus within the group that we wanted to focus on.

Q: Can you talk about who were the Ten in Search of a Nation?

BJH: The Ten in Search of a Nation? And I have that (Laughs) downstairs if everybody in it was ... in terms of Napoleon Henderson became a part of the group. Nelson Stevens became a part of the group ... was part of the ten. Let's see. Carolyn Lawrence became a part of the group. I remember a ... Sherman Beck became a part of the group.

There were others that came apart (sic). That was our first exhibit, per se. That was in New York at the Studio Museum, which was a wonderful exhibit. That was a great experience, because they painted the walls AFRICOBRA colors. A studio with all of these beautiful walls. I think that just floored us when we got there and saw that and put our work up at the Studio Museum.

Q: How (inaudible) ...

(Overlapping comments)

BJH: I'm sorry I don't have photographs of it (Laughter).

Q: How was it received?

BJH: It was well received. It was unique. You know, the work was unique. The exhibit was unique, and I was only there for like the opening or whatever, because I don't live in New York. But it was well received in New York.

Q: Would you ... what would you say to like a young kid that wants to be an artist? A young black kid that wants to be an artist. What would you ... like tell him (inaudible)?

(Pause)

BJH: I think I would tell them that art needs to come through you, you know, to focus on what they're interested in and let the art come through them. I would tell them you know, to take classes, to join artists groups, to become involved, to try to have a passion for it. To not give up. You know, to work through whatever their skills are, because they can develop their skills in the process.

And that they needed to be ... decide whether it's really something that they wanted. You know, but whether ... I believe that everyone has an artistic ability. It depends upon whether they're interested in developing it or not. You know?

Q: Why do you think that ... do you guys stay in touch? Do the AFRICOBRA members stay in touch after so many years ... that it's still relevant and it's still around?

BJH: Well, we're kind of like a family. We don't see each other (Laughter), but we still have a connection to each other. You know? It's almost as if, I guess, when we see each other it's like a family reunion. You know, we have experiences, connections that have not been broken by time and space. And so therefore, we'll always you know, be united on that front.

I don't ... I get e-mails from different AFRICOBRA members. There are those that reach out. I would say Napoleon Henderson would be one, and Frank Smith and Nelson Stevens. You know, I receive e-mails from them, and I think they reach out to make that connection and I reach back to accept it.

Q: What is your take in the work of Howard Mallory.

BJH: What do you mean, my take?

Q: What is your interpretation of what he does with (inaudible) ...

(Overlapping comments)

BJH: Howard ... I go back with Howard Mallory. Howard Mallory offered me my first one woman show. There was a gallery, 353 East 31st Street. There was a group of African American artists that had that studio at that time, and they asked me to exhibit my prints. Howard Mallory was part of that because I was taking ceramics at a community center on 67th Street.

And even though he wasn't teaching the class, he was friends with the ... Sue. I don't remember Sue's last name, but she taught the class and he was there working on ceramics and firing different things. So Howard Mallory goes back with me before AFRICOBRA, before OBAC because it was in the 60s, before I really became involved with the others. So ... you know, he's a sculptor and he taught me techniques in sculpture.

Q: He seems also to be a very spiritual person.

BJH: Yes, he is. He is. We have a connection outside of AFRICOBRA, I would say. You know?

Q: (Overlap) Have you seen his Freedom Train?

BJH: Yes, I've seen it. In fact, I was going to shoot it for ... do a piece on him, a documentary on him. And we went out there to shoot one day. When he speaks about (Laughter) his neighborhood ... I had all my equipment set up. You know, I'm by myself and everything. We start having these drug addicts (Laughter) walking through the back.

And you know, this is school equipment. I can't lose this equipment. I can't have it taken. And I was really afraid. And then Howard got ... he didn't feel well. I don't know whether it was something that needed to

happen ... you know, because I was going to shoot. He kept telling me, it's all right. It's all right. It's all right (Laughter). We're going to be all right. But we didn't ... I didn't end up shooting it, because he was going to talk about each piece and so forth and so on.

But I think it was because of the sun. You know, so the ... it got to him or whatever, and he didn't feel well, so we stopped the shooting. But outside of the shooting, I had visitors, you know, just checking me out and checking out my equipment (Laughter). And I did not want to go back to school and say, "Somebody took my camera. You know?" Or whatever, so ...

Q: He mentioned something about this. His own wall of respect?

BJH: Mm-hmm.

Q: The way he was referring to the Freedom Train was like my own kind of wall of respect.

BJH: Yes it is. He deals with a lot of found objects in terms of putting them together, and you know, he's visually impaired. So he's just dealing with shapes and ... in terms of textures, how he feels them you know, and putting them together so they're more symbolic. You know, they're not realistic relative to however he has done them. But I would call them in terms of montages, collages in terms of their creation.

You know, but they're dedications that he has created to specific persons. So that makes it significant.

(Background/off-mike)

W: The idea of AFRICOBRA art being for the people and a conscious effort not to go commercial with it ... I just wanted you to talk a little bit about that. The conscious effort to be more about and for the community ...

(Overlapping comments)

BJH: Oh, AFRICOBRA was not interested in the powers to be, the artistic community in terms of the ... what should I say ... the outside community. In terms of Euro Americans being focused on our art. Our art was for the people of our community. We did the posters and priced them at ten dollars so that they could buy them.

And it wasn't the idea of trying to make money, because we did not put a high price on it. It was about them having ...

Q: (Overlap) (inaudible) here?

BJH: Yeah. It was about them in terms of wanting the pieces within their environment and looking at it. The pieces, per se. So in terms of thinking about AFRICOBRA from a commercial standpoint, that was not a part of our discussion ... communication, our idea, our focus in terms of what we wanted to do.

It was mainly about putting out a message (Laughter) and working with a philosophy, coming with an aesthetic. Not dealing with just the idea of creating imagery, but creating imagery with a purpose, with something that we can have as a direction for the viewer. You know, significant in terms of the viewer. I don't think that we're motivated by exhibits or trying to put it out as a product beyond what we wanted you know, as a commodity.

We didn't really think about them as a commodity. You know, it was more in terms of a path of creating a statement, a visual statement that we felt that was significant. I think that was our main focus. It wasn't about money. It wasn't about exhibits. It wasn't trying to have a tendency to put it on another level.

(Overlapping comments)

(Background/off-mike)

BJH: Commercial level.

W: A critic out there who might say this is radical art ...

BJH: It's what?

W: Radical.

BJH: Radical? I don't think radical ...

(Overlapping comments)

W: (inaudible)

BJH: Well, the fact that it started with ...

(Overlapping comments)

BJH: The fact that ...

(Background/off-mike)

BJH: The fact that in AFRICOBRA, it became revolutionary (Laughter). We were revolutionary artists before we were relevant artists. You know, so we ... revolutionary in terms of the fact that we were dealing with some ideas and concepts that we had not seen before. You know? We were not concerned where the others had a tendency where the others had a tendency to find value in them or not.

They were statements that we felt that should be made. So radical? We didn't see them as radical. We saw them as being pertinent, important, insistent upon making a statement. Communicating a statement. Communicating an idea, a feeling, an understanding of what we felt was important. You know? Each one had their own importance. You look at the AFRICOBRA work, and you can see that there's something different coming through each individual artist. So that was the important part.

Radical? We didn't think of it as radical. You know? Revolutionary in the sense of really being a revolution ... you know, in terms of guns and things like that. You think ... in terms of confrontation ... we weren't thinking of it being confrontational. It was more in terms of being solidly confirmed in stating that we are ... we need to be. You know? Or to be.

Q: But it's powerful (inaudible) ... would you say that? Would you agree with that?

BJH: Looking at them now (Laughter)? Looking back on it, yes. I don't think that we were thinking about boldness, per se. They were direct. They worked with the philosophy ... looking back on them, then they become bold statements, because they don't look like anybody else's work. You know, they look like our work. AFRICOBRA work. So that becomes significant in itself.

Strong pieces. They become strong. You know? But I don't think that in terms of doing them ... I thought about, I'm going to make a strong work (Laughter). You know? I'm going to make a statement. You know, this is what I'm going to do. So I'm happy that they turned out the way they did.

Q: Is there anything that we're missing that you want ... would like to talk about? Any point that maybe we haven't made yet that is relevant in AFRICOBRA?

(Background/off-mike)

BJH: I don't know. Is there anything that you want to know?

W: I just ... you can't think about it. But there's three women in a group that even today (inaudible) male.

BJH: Uh-huh.

W: And your role in the group really stood out. And I just want to hear you talk about the role of the women in the COBRA, and if there were any challenges. Because when you were (inaudible) ...

BJH: (Overlap) Well, when we're ... the fact that there were three women in the part one (Laughter) ... AFRICOBRA group, I don't think there was an issue about women, per se. The fact that in part two AFRICOBRA there are no women ... there are no women outside of Chicago that became a part of the group, because we were all a part of the Chicago group.

You would have to ask the men about that. I think I've made that statement previously in the past when I was asked that question, because I don't have an answer to that. We had no problems being a part of the group. There was no idea of men and women roles within the group during the time that I was a part of the group. You know, we were all active. We were all working on our projects. We were all doing whatever needed to be done to critique the art work, to get the art work out. We all had functions in terms of doing that.

So it's important that we're part of the group, and I guess I'm happy that I'm a part of the founding members (Laughter) of the group.

(Overlapping comments)

W: (inaudible) negative ...

BJH: Yeah?

W: But I feel like (inaudible) role is (inaudible) have ... is important because you're able to speak to many of the female images as you know, the (inaudible) ...

BJH: The men have female images in their work, too. I mean, you know, so just the idea of using female images was not an issue either. You know? I don't think that we really thought about male or female within what our images were going to be. I think that was mainly put on us, possibly the work after as people look at it as a consensus of what was done at that particular period of time or the philosophy of some people's interpretations of some others based on feminism or what happened in the group later ... becomes an issue.

But we, as a group, did not consider it an issue. So you see men and women in all of our pieces, and I think women just kind of gravitate to women. You know? In terms of being in their art work. I don't really think that we thought about it as an issue.

## **Barbara Jones Hugu Interview Part 2**

### **AFRICOBRA Interviews**

#### **Tape BJH**

#### **TV LAND**

(Background/off-mike)

Q: So Barbara, you've talked a little bit about ... oh, about the change in you as an artist from in a sense, negative to positive, you know, around the time ... the late 60s. You know, some of the influences that certain people had on you that sort of changed your philosophy. And I'm just curious about how you felt ... I mean, you've talked about it, but in terms of how you felt about it emotionally. You know, what it did to you as an artist.

You know, you seem to draw from a spiritual place, from an emotional place. And I'm going to ask you how you feel about that today, ultimately. The real question is, are you an optimist. You know, Michael said he was an optimist. And I'm just wondering how four years of time ... kind of then and now (inaudible) transform you as a person and as an artist.

BJH: In our work, there has always been a purpose. It was not just creating visual imagery. I think that the creation of visual imagery for and of itself only was depleting for me. You know? And doing negative statements ... I wouldn't say they were negative from the standpoint of the idea that these were negative experiences that were happening to my family, my people, my community.

Everyone should be aware of it. You know? It's not just happening to me. It can happen to you. It can happen to anybody. I think that was the main focus when I was working on the American piece, because I remember doing a ... it's a silk screen ... it's an early silk screen where I have in the center, a box of people trying to survive, and the people in that box are all different colors. And there's perpetration against them by the powers to be in America, because they ... the box exists within the American flag.

So it's like focusing on what was negative in creating art imagery of that negativity. It's not so much that my statement was negative. It was focusing on the experiences that were negative and letting that focus inspire me or impress me to do images that were related to it.

It changed in terms of AFRICOBRA because I needed to think in, as a part as a group. You know, what type of ideas do you want to express in your work? And I guess in terms of hearing someone say that they did not want any negative, even though they knew these negative experiences were happening, they didn't want it in their household. They didn't want to look at it every day. They didn't want to be reminded of it.

If I was going to speak to the people, what kind of ideas do I want to express to the people? And I want to impress upon them positive ideas.

Q: Was it coming from a place of anger originally and then moving to hope, or ...

BJH: It was coming from a place ... the early ideas came from a place of analysis. A place of what is happening now. You know, what do we need to look at and be aware of. This is my experience that I'm living, and I see others are living that I wanted to express. And moving towards the idea of wanting to inspire, inform, educate (Laughter). Almost indoctrinate (Laughter) a new way of life.

Because even if this is not a part of your experience now, this should be a part of your experience. These are the things you should be focusing on. You know? That was one of the ideas in terms of doing things that were positive. Inspiring positive action. Inspiring positive thought. Positive endeavor. Positive purpose. I think that's still a part of the images that I'm presently doing in terms of the digital images.

I want to put an idea, a concept on the mind of the viewer. You know? For them to consider. I think that that becomes a part of my art. And I don't have art with a lot ... I have art without lettering you know, in terms of that, and that can be interpreted in terms of however you look at it. But there is that element in terms of utilizing lettering to inform.

Q: So you are an optimist?

BJH: Yes, I guess I am an optimist. I'm always looking for that which can be better. You know, I'm a professional student (Laughter). So I'm always learning, looking for more. You know? The idea is that I'm in my latter years, and there's so much more that I want to know (Laughter) and do (Laughter) that I become jealous of those that are young.

And I hate to see them not doing anything with their abilities, you know, or even striving for some opportunity to advance or have some endeavor. So from that stand of ... point of view, yes, I'm an optimist. There's so much to learn. There's so much to do, and you can't do it all in a lifetime. I do believe in what ... that you have many lives. And I just hope that I'm preparing in all that I do for my next life. So I'm looking forward to it. Coming back again. Not as Barbara Jean Jones Hogu ... coming back as whatever, whoever and continuing my goal of developing, evolving as a person.

Q: And contributing.

BJH: And contributing. Yes.

Q: Seems like you've done ... you've got ... you're up to a good start.

BJH: Am I off to a good start?

(Overlapping comments)

Q: I think so.

BJH: Where I'm ... I'm looking forward to making the transition out of and making the transition back into (Laughter) and continuing.

Q: That's beautiful. And you see in these children ... you see just potential?

BJH: Yes, because everyone has the potential. You know? Decisions. I mean, you have the opportunity. You have to make the decision in terms of what you want to do with your life. You know, the opportunity is there. It can be negative or positive, and each person decides what they want to do. So it's an inner thing that each one person has to decide on.

Q: Have you expressed this throughout ... and you teach throughout ... you can command(?) this or you can communicate throughout ...

BJH: Yes you can. I mean (Laughter), art is the first form of communication. The first written language is visual imagery. And it can be understood by everybody. Just the visual image can be understood by everyone without language. So I consider art as being the first language ... visual imagery as being the first language.

Q: Interesting. We could go on for a while, but I think I'm going to stop there.

BJH: Okay.

Q: Well, thank you.

BJH: You're welcome.

Q: (inaudible)

BJH: Thank you.

(Background/off-mike)

(END OF TAPE)

