



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with William Halsey  
and Corrie McCallum, 1986 Oct. 27

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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with William Halsey and Corrie McCallum on October 27, 1986. The interview took place in Charleston, South Carolina, and was conducted by Liza Kirwin for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

William Halsey, Corrie McCallum and Liza Kirwin have reviewed the transcript and have made corrections and emendations. The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

## Interview

LIZA KIRWIN: This is Liza Kirwin for the Archives of American Art in Charleston, South Carolina, October 27, 1986, interviewing William Halsey and Corrie McCallum.

How and when did you first meet?

CORRIE MCCALLUM: That was an epical event. We both went to the University of South Carolina in 1932, and we were in the art department together, and I looked around and he started looking around and didn't see anybody that he felt was very good except me, and we just kind of got together and gave the department a bad time I think because we were very serious about our work, but we were somewhat critical and wanted everything we could possibly get within those-I won't tell the story about the-[off mike]. I'll save that for you, okay.

WILLIAM HALSEY: I actually was at this time egotistical. It was undeniable what really I think first got us together was the fact that we both of us were expecting a lot going to art school, and there really weren't that many- however you call it-good students. I think each of use decided separately we were two the best students there. [Laughs.]

MS. MCCALLUM: Actually, we were the only ones that made As.

MR. HALSEY: So that had something to do with it. And I think that, as Corrie said, maybe we were more demanding. We had a fine arts department kind of the university at that time. It was run by two nice elderly ladies, maiden ladies, who were very well and fancy but it was not exactly an exciting, breathtaking experience. I mean, it was all very quiet and low key. And we wanted a lot which we felt we weren't getting. So we made life kind of difficult for them.

MS. MCCALLUM: Actually, we wanted a whole lot because we realized we weren't getting enough serious drawing. And we tried to work outside the class with nude models. And would you believe, in that time, we couldn't do it because I was a girl and they were mostly-but anyway, it would have been a mixed group. And the public feeling was such that you could neither get it together or get anybody to pose.

MR. HALSEY: Well, actually-

DR. KIRWIN: What year was that?

MS. MCCALLUM: Thirty-three, I think.

DR. KIRWIN: So there were no live classes?

MS. MCCALLUM: Oh, no, no.

MR. HALSEY: Oh, no, no. That was-you can't realize how-

MS. MCCALLUM: Still life and stuff like that-

MR. HALSEY: -conservative places where we were at. And actually they lied to us. We told them what we wanted to do, and she was very concerned and nice and said, well, we shouldn't do this on our own.

MS. MCCALLUM: That is right.

MR. HALSEY: To let her see if she could arrange it through the department. And she had no intention of doing it. She just wanted to prevent it. Because she thought this was-

MS. MCCALLUM: It came to no good. But we went outside.

MR. HALSEY: But that was how we first met really. And then what Corrie was talking about later on, I went to the university for two years. And at the end of two years, the fine arts dean called me into his office, and he was a very nice man. I mean, I really liked him a lot. But he called me into his office and explained to me very politely and carefully that I had been there for two years, and I have been taking all of those courses that I wanted to take, and electives, and none of the required courses, and this was really not a good thing to do, and that if I expected to get a degree, I was going to have to take mathematics and science for the next two years, and I said I wasn't going to do that.

And he got very concerned. And he ended up saying, well, what would you rather be; what is your aim in life? Do you want to be a well-rounded person or a lopsided individual? And I said I want to be a lopsided individual.

MS. MCCALLUM: And that was the end.

MR. HALSEY: There was no doubt about it. So I left the university. [Laughs.]

MS. MCCALLUM: But I stayed on. I was working my way through, and I had two sets of jobs. One was with the biology department. I did-this was I think government sponsored. I have forgotten all of the initials to the different services, but, you know, like student aid is today. And I did drawings for the biology department that were intimately detailed and scientific, as part of my work for them. And then I did art history slides. I made some slides for the art history department, and I did that for the whole four years that I was in college. But I got along a lot with science. I liked science.

And when I was in my third year, I had taken some math and I took, some, you know, some required things, not just art. And I had taken all of the art I could, but I had an operation and the surgeon was very interested in-when he saw me drawing and also we got on fine talking. And he said, well, why don't you think about surgical drawing? At that time it was just beginning. You know, they didn't have TV or anything like that, and surgical illustrations-medical illustrations.

DR. KIRWIN: Medical illustrations.

MS. MCCALLUM: Yeah, and Johns Hopkins was the only place where you could take any kind of training. And this was a very prominent surgeon, and he said, well, listen, if you'll go back to school and take the prerequisite science courses, I'll see that you get into Hopkins and sponsor you for this course. Well, I was thrilled.

So I went back and I took embryology, comparative anatomy, histology, and something else all in one year. And I was in the lab until midnight practically, and I made A's. I loved it, but I got fed up to the teeth. My hands broke out from the formaldehyde, and I never had a minute to sketch or do anything. And it suddenly hit me, if I go into this, if I go to Hopkins, I will be doing this narrow tunnel-vision art the rest of my life, and I'm very interested, but I'm not totally interested, and you can't do it either/or. So I told him I was very sorry, but I didn't want to go on with it. And it was just about then, towards the end of it, of the last full school year that this WPA thing came up.

MR. HALSEY: Well, actually, you had some medical drawings reproduced in various medical journals.

MS. MCCALLUM: Oh, yeah, I spent a summer in the operating room at his elbow. And, oh, it was wonderful because I was fairly young and he was pretty impressive, and he would snap his fingers for the nurse to bring a little stool for me to stand on so I could see inside the cavity. And he would explain everything and I would ask him all of these questions, and put him on the spot-I didn't know it. They would have to go back and look in their medical book because he didn't keep all of the information at the tip of-no one does. And so they kind of got a kick out of the different doctors. And I really was very interested, but I couldn't give up the creative side. I didn't see how you could do them both.

MR. HALSEY: Very professional, your personality. I have no desire to see people on the inside, to see people that were on the operating table.

MS. MCCALLUM: I saw brain surgery, I saw-well, I'm not going to tell you, but I saw everything.

MR. HALSEY: Don't tell her that is too easy.

MS. MCCALLUM: Well, I had the sweetest mother in the world who backed me up, was very loyal.

MR. HALSEY: Very nice.

MS. MCCALLUM: Very nice, loyal mother. And one day she opened the refrigerator and nearly fainted and she said, why this is-what is this in the refrigerator? And I said, oh, it's just a uterus Dr. Trenon [ph] gave me. It has a cyst and I have to do a drawing for him. What! You get that thing out and bury it; you get this thing out of my house. Well, I had to sit down and spend about four hours drawing it, and take it out in the backyard and bury it.

MR. HALSEY: I wouldn't really blame her.

DR. KIRWIN: Was it a human uterus?

MS. MCCALLUM: Yes, all of it. Right straight from the operating room, and I had to put in there to preserve it, and was fixing to take it out and draw it but she got there first.

DR. KIRWIN: Who were the people who were teaching at the University of South Carolina when you were there in the art department?

MR. HALSEY: When I was there, there were these two ladies.

MS. MCCALLUM: Ms. May Marshall.

MR. HALSEY: I don't want to be derogatory because they were both very well-[inaudible].

MS. MCCALLUM: Ms. Haywood, Catherine Haywood.

MR. HALSEY: And then there were a couple of other assistant people, but it really was these two ladies.

MS. MCCALLUM: Ms. Haywood was wonderful. She taught-I mean, she was the head of it and she was a much more balanced person than the other one, had a better temperament, and really an intelligent woman. And she taught the artist-she taught several different levels of design. You know, design, art history, and drawing from life. We had people posing, but nobody in the nude, and we drew, painted from still life. And we didn't go outdoors very much.

MR. HALSEY: It was very-it was very, you know, classy.

MS. MCCALLUM: It was probably art for the time, you know.

MR. HALSEY: The good thing. The other thing was that they find the that both of us-[inaudible]-for instance, one of my favorite stories was the art department of the university at that time was in an old building on the third floor, and Ms. Marshall was a rather a-to be slightly temperamental. She was given to-

MS. MCCALLUM: Tantrum.

MR. HALSEY: Tantrum. But once she came in-[inaudible]-kicked the table. There was a little blue jar or teapot Ms. Marshall had said, oh, I'm so tired of seeing that teapot. I wish somebody would throw it out the window. So Corrie picked it up and threw it out the window. [They laugh.] And she got very upset about it. You know, this was a thing was a figure of speech, but she didn't expect anybody to do it. And we really were I guess, looking back, we were pretty difficult.

But I guess, you know, I can't describe what it was like because I never wanted to go there in the first place. It was my family's compromise. I mean, I wanted to art school and they said the university has an art department. But after two years, they finally gave in. My mother found out; it was she was the one who made the decision, and agreed that I could go to art school, and by round about ways I got to go to Boston.

But actually, when that happened, it was just kind of fun because I didn't know anything. I had never been any place out of South Carolina, and I had and I heard about the Art Students League in New York, and I had written off for information about that. And that was more of what I had in mind.

And then just by total accident, that was when the Metropolitan Opera was in the process of doing the first production of Porgy and Bess. And they sent a scene designer to Charleston who happened to be a Russian named Sergei Sudeikin. He was very well known. He did nearly all of the scenes for the Metropolitan Opera at the time and he came down because he was totally baffled by, you know, something like Porgy and Bess, and he wanted to see, you know, what the set was like. He didn't understand the set.

Anyway, I met with him in the process, and said something I think about going off to art school, and he said, oh, you should not to go New York; you should go to Boston Museum School because of the director of the Boston Museum school is a great friend of mine- Alexander Yakovlev.

And he is great artist, and a draftsman. I had never heard of Boston Museum. It was really truly by accident that I went to it. And not only have I been very happy since that I did because I think that in a ways it this is a lot better for me and I got a lot more out of that instead of going to something like the Art Students League in New York, which would have probably much more casual and much freer.

But going from the University of South Carolina art department to Boston Museum School was like coming into a

great new world. I mean, it was really-the last time I was-I grew up in South Carolina. At that time I wanted to be an artist. You can't imagine the difference. I mean, all of the sudden, you had a great museum and you had art galleries, and you had people who really had some background and training. And you find out things like contemporary art, which you never heard about in South Carolina. It was really absolutely wonderful. The difference was just incredible.

I also get an inferiority complex because I realized-one of the first things that hit me was I was older than a lot of the students, and a lot of the students, they came right out of high school, and mostly from the Boston area, and went to the museum school. And it suddenly hit me that there were all of these students that were several years younger than I was who had good art training. I mean, because of the public schools, they had, you know, art education that we never had in South Carolina. And they also had access to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the classes at the museum.

So I got a terrific inferiority complex before long. I mean, I thought I was just way, way behind, which I was. It took me quite a while to catch up.

DR. KIRWIN: Well, your first year at Boston and you were-

MS. MCCALLUM: Well, I was still at the university for the second year probably-or actually-

MR. HALSEY: I was there two years.

MS. MCCALLUM: Okay, so it was the last, last year that I was at the university. And then when I got the chance to be director for history of federal art projects just before my fourth year would have ended-that took a year, you see, William in Boston and I worked there at the art gallery and tried to save a little money. And at the end of that year, I got a-I sent off a portfolio to Boston University and got a scholarship, and so I took my tiny savings and went up to Boston for two years.

DR. KIRWIN: You weren't married yet?

MS. MCCALLUM: Oh, no.

MR. HALSEY: Ready to get married.

DR. KIRWIN: But you lived in Boston. You were just living there.

MS. MCCALLUM: No, I went to Boston. [They laugh.] Actually, no, that is not really true. If I had a scholarship somewhere else I would have gone somewhere else.

MR. HALSEY: I might have moved.

MS. MCCALLUM: Thank you. Yeah, I mean you liked it and it was a good school, and I knew about it through William. It was, you know, a logical conclusion. And so I did send them a portfolio of work and got a scholarship, and took off. But it was funny, the first couple of months he wasn't up there. He was down here doing some things-[inaudible]-theater. So I was still on my own when I first went up.

DR. KIRWIN: What was the WPA like in South Carolina?

MS. MCCALLUM: Well, my impression is that it was totally different in this part of the country, certainly from around New York and I don't know about the Midwest. But there were not that many artists actually in the South. There were more writers than there were painters. And a few real artists didn't need their art projects.

And so what it ended up being by and large-most of the people on the art projects were people that didn't fit into any other slot. They didn't fit in with the writer's project. The didn't fit in with the works progress-other aspects of it, and so they just would shuffle them off in the art projects and-I mean, there was some painting experience, but basically was totally different from the really good people that you got in New York that just went on hard times. You just didn't find that in the South.

And I tried to make the best of it because I needed a job and the job was offered to me, but it wasn't-the challenge was in trying to do something with nothing. I mean, you had some space that was donated by the city, which was at first, as part of the city council-[inaudible]-and then they moved a new-

DR. KIRWIN: That was in Columbia.

MS. MCCALLUM: Yes, in Columbia. They moved up to a new building and we had a little more space. The room really could look like a gallery. I think I had assistants there and people working under me. And I had to think of what to make them do and how to get the materials, and how to get them going. And I was a secretary. And

everything except-sometimes I was the cleanup lady too-[laughs]-but I was, you know, I had to do the type of publicity and do the front stuff and try to find work for all of these people to do.

And I had peculiar people. I had one ex-convict that some minister-his heart bled for the poor, maltreated-gave him another chance, and it was a disaster. He was a loathsome character. He couldn't be of any help. He was really not a good person, I don't know. And then I had two very nice teens or the early '20s. I don't know exactly how they made it on my project. And I had a very good artist twice my age who had studied in Paris with [William Adolphe] Bouguereau, and she exhibited at the Corcoran who was justifiably incensed at having me as her boss I suppose. But she was somewhat impractical. Her name was Laura Joses [ph]. And I had to coax her along and keep her trying to work.

And then I had some interesting-I think she was a Russian person in Aiken and I would have to go see her about once a month. And she did things out of dried flowers, and she made them-not too uninteresting arrangement. She never would tell where a secret formula was between somehow or another she stumbled on her way to fix something, and it looked dead, dead, dead.

DR. KIRWIN: How did these people get on the project? Did they hear about it and then applied for a job?

MS. MCCALLUM: I think they didn't have jobs and applied. Two young people I had to-that they desperately needed jobs and they weren't qualified. Well, I did things the way I felt they ought to be done, the projects. And this girl, I let her take an hour off every so often when it worked out that she needed that particular time-she was taking a business course. And so when she got through with the project, she had a skill because there was no way she could be an artist-you know, didn't have the capabilities. The other young person, I think he went into drafting or something. He had a little more feeling for drawing and so I helped him out because of that. And I think he went on to write commercials and drawing or something.

So it served some purpose, but it was a kind of a makeshift situation. But I think the interesting thing is that this was the first public art gallery or anything like that in Columbia. At the time, there was only one art museum in the state, and that was the Gibbes Art Gallery in Charleston, and there was nothing in Columbia. And we did have exhibitions that the public was urged to come through, and while I didn't have a budget, I had some contacts and I had exhibitions of work by Alice Huger Smith, and Anna Heyward Taylor, and Maxfield Parrish, Jr. Have you ever heard of Maxfield Parrish, Jr?

DR. KIRWIN: No.

MS. MCCALLUM: I got hold of him. He was a real character. He did a little wood carving, mostly with little animals and things. He was the son of the Maxfield Parrish and we corresponded and we had an interesting correspondence and he ended up letting me have exhibitions, free, and that was kind of fun, the longest shows I had-[inaudible].

DR. KIRWIN: Okay, yeah-your attendance record story.

MS. MCCALLUM: Well, one of the few things that WPA cared about was a certain amount of red tape, and the red tape meant that you had to turn in certain statistics and one of them was attendance. Well, usually the gallery was not too well located, and not a great deal of advertisement, although I wrote things for the paper and got in as much as I could. So to keep the attendance up, it took a bit of thinking. And I came up with that idea that high school is not very far from there. And maybe they could send some classes and it would do them good and help us too.

So I talked to the principal of the school, and he said, well, I don't mind them coming, but I'll give them a free period, but I haven't got the teachers that I can let off. No way. So I said if you can find somebody that will escort them to the gallery and make sure they don't goof off, let them come. So once every few weeks, I would go to the high school and get these 30-or whatever-30 or 40 students and parade them all the way down Main Street because the high school was just the other side of Main Street, and into the gallery and give them a gallery talk, and parade them back again. [Laughs.]

Most of them were as big as I was, but I was barely 21 I think, and some of them were 18 and 19, I'm sure. And the boys vie with each other who is going to walk with me. It was kind of fun in a way. Well, it wasn't the happiest time in my life, and when the year was over and the director who had gotten me the job because he had a sabbatical and had gone to Europe-the state director was Robert N. S. Whitelaw.

DR. KIRWIN: Let me ask you another-what part of the state did you-

MS. MCCALLUM: Well, see, Robert N. S. Whitelaw was the director of the whole state, and apparently it was divided up into two or three regions. And I had the part that was Columbia and Aiken and-did I have Charleston?

MR. HALSEY: I don't know. I thought that that time was when Robert had Andrew-I thought he had this group.

MS. MCCALLUM: Yeah, he had this section. But I had Columbia and that area, and I know I had to go to Aiken every so often. I can't remember. That was 50 years ago. So it wasn't anything that I wanted to keep too many memories about. It wasn't that important to me personally except as a pillar, a steppingstone, and one thing to the next. And actually while I was doing that, I did a few things for the writer's project. And the writer's project had I think more-really more good people because at the time there were more writers than there were painters in the area.

And one of the things I did was-[laughs]-illustrate a book for adult illiterates. Historical stories, like, about the pirates and early settlers, and all, and very basic me-Jane-you-Tarzan-kind-of language, and eight drawings for them. And that was published.

DR. KIRWIN: William, could you talk a little bit more about the Boston School and your studies there, and the scholarship that you won?

MR. HALSEY: Well, when I first went there-the first two years I was there, this man, Yakovlev, was the director, and he was a very glamorous character. You never hear of him now, but in Boston he cut quite a swath. And his most important thing I think that he would be that he wanted a whole lot of the expeditions, a lot of those expeditions to Africa and Asia and-I wish I could remember-of some well-known explorer who was heading the exhibitions at the time. And Yakovlev went on the staff of artists. There are a lot of-I have some somewhere. A lot of the early geographic magazines from that period would have his drawings and paintings of natives and Africa, and Arab encampments. And he was a beautiful draftsman. He wasn't that much of a painter. His paintings weren't as good as his drawings. But he did make terrific drawings of people. They were very skillful, but also very sort of almost scientific, anatomical. And he was a director. I don't know how it happened but he was brought-he came over here to be the director of the Boston Museum and he was much admired and adored in Boston, and all of the intelligentsia sort of followed him around and sat at his feet. He was a very elegant little man.

And he had a terrific influence on everybody at the school. I mean, I still have a few drawings that I did then. Everybody drew in Yakovlev's manner. He did wonderful demonstrations. Great things he would do-he would do two-hour demonstrations. They always worked from a model and of course the great thing there was he had nude models all over the place. His models-the models he preferred were usually beautiful, sexy, blond, young, female models. [Laughs.] But he did these terrific-he would do these full-scale life-size figures, drawings and he would do them in a couple of hours. They were really very impressive. Everybody was trying to draw like Yakovlev.

But then after two years, I think he got tired of it. He left. And so for the other two years-and I think I was very fortunate with this-it was quite a contrast because the new director who came in was also a foreigner. I mean, he had come to the United States before. He was Karl Zerbe who later taught to me in Florida through the University of Florida. And Karl Zerbe was a total contrast. I mean, he was primarily a painter. He was interested in paint and color and not into draftsmanship so much, so we got a very different view from him.

And Zerbe was very good to me, I had felt. Andy Yakovlev had his favorites and his satellites.

DR. KIRWIN: Fairly good too.

MR. HALSEY: Well, all right. [Inaudible]-you should have stayed longer. [They laugh.] And I was-actually Yakovlev's can't find anything suitable in my article. He used to refer that I had people-he didn't admire anybody's work. He would refer to them as a New Age that was the worst form. And the student that he usually preferred as a rule-were either the students were Italian or Polish or some other descent if not-and he didn't really like - I kept thinking the first couple years I was there, I wanted to change my name. You know, I had the wrong kind of name. If I'd had an exotic, foreign name-but then Zerbe came in and Zerbe immediately noticed my work and he was very good for me. I mean, I got a lot through him.

MS. MCCALLUM: Well, he was interested in you.

DR. KIRWIN: Do you think he treated you differently because you're a Southerner?

MR. HALSEY: No, I never felt that. The students were great. No, I never felt any reaction because I was a Southerner. People made cracks about the accent. But I didn't see any particular thing there. It was just this thing with Yakovlev about the-that he really felt that anybody who was a true blue American didn't have an artistic temperament. But Zerbe was really, through him actually-he was the one who got me the fellowship that I got when I left. But he made me-I was a student assistant. And I don't know why my voice is always doing this.

One year, a couple of years, an artist named [Lewis] Rubenstein-I can't remember his first name. I can't figure

his first name out-who taught fresco painting, which was-and I think this was partly you see because this was the period when Mexican art was very big. Diego Rivera and [David Alfaró] Siqueiros were doing the murals all over Mexico. And I think it was around that time that Bill McGriff because when Rockefeller made the great mistake of commissioning Rivera to do murals in Rockefeller Center in New York, and then they took the murals off the walls because he did nasty pictures out of them. Anyway, mural painting was a big thing.

So this [Lewis] Rubenstein taught fresco painting, and I took fresco painting. The first year I took it was when Yakovlev was there, and I think more or less against his wishes, because he didn't consider me advanced enough that I wanted to do it, so I took it anyway. And then the second year, when Zerbe came, I was assistant in fresco painting. I mean, I assisted with teaching the classes and also I went on to some drawing and painting classes. And this did a lot for me too. It helped me ego a great deal because I'd felt so underprivileged before then. But I did a lot of things when I was at Boston Museum School the first couple years I was there.

For one year, I worked as a kitchen boy in a very fancy resident's club in school. And I scrubbed all the pots and pans.

MS. MCCALLUM: To this day, he doesn't like the wash cloth.

MR. HALSEY: No, I do. I wash all the pots here. But I've always remembered the thing because this was, I say, the very elegance of a place. Only to the best girls, the debutants went there. And once when I was in the kitchen-because the kitchen was on the entrance, not on the family. And somebody-a friend of mine from Charleston who was going to Harvard and decided to look me up, and somebody had given him direction as to how to find me, and he came in the kitchen. And I had on my duty apron scrubbing pots and pans, and he was very shocked and upset. He didn't think this was what nice Southern boys were supposed to be doing.

But then later, that was also the first teaching experience I had. After that, I got a job teaching art classes at the boys' club at Roxbury. Roxbury was then-I think still is-a pretty tough district. It was really roughed up. And this was one of those things-I took classes at night. And there were kids in this class ranging from about nine or ten to about eighteen or nineteen. And some of them were real thugs. I mean, they were twice as big as I was and certainly a lot tougher. And it was interesting. It was an exhausting experience. But it was for-that was the first time I ever taught. But it had some nice things about it, because for instance, one of the students I had there was at the time a boy named John Wilson [b. 1922] who was a black boy who really had a lot of ability and he later on got a scholarship to Boston University.

MS. MCCALLUM: Didn't you help him get in?

MR. HALSEY: Yeah, it was through me partly. But he got a scholarship to the Boston Museum School, and for many years he's been teaching.

MS. MCCALLUM: Boston University.

MR. HALSEY: Boston University and he's quite well known now.

MS. MCCALLUM: He did a bust of Martin Luther King that's gotten a lot of publicity in the last few months.

MR. HALSEY: Yeah, but that was really-I must say, because I had no eye there at the time, and I spent a large part of my life teaching, but it was my first. And I didn't know how to teach; I'd never done teaching. And a great deal, it was really they had discipline problems. The kids, they didn't do me any harm, but they didn't really want to paint that much. They just wanted to raise hell and throw paint all over the place.

MS .KIRWIN: Could you talk about the mural project in Charleston?

MR. HALSEY: Yes. You mean the ones at the Dock Street Theatre? Yes, well, actually, that was the first commission I ever got. And that is what Corrie was talking about when she first went up to Boston, I wasn't there because it would have been my premiere. And this commission was to do some panels in a ballroom at the theatre and also a little fresco in the courtyard and the fountain, which I told you-

MS. MCCALLUM: And the things on the doors.

MR. HALSEY: Decorations over the doors, and I got this commission because of an architect, Albert Simons, who was a Charleston architect. And he was one of the two architects who were working on the Dock Street Theatre. But you see, the Dock Street Theatre was really the big WPA restoration. I mean, it was restored and reconstructed with WPA money. So they had one architect who was the government architect, Douglas-[inaudible]-who came out of Washington. But Albert Simons was the resident architect who worked on it. And I had known him before, and he was very interested in art. And he got me this commission.

DR. KIRWIN: So that was a government commission?

MS. MCCALLUM: Yeah, government, WPA-type-

MR. HALSEY: Yes, it was a government commission. It was through the WPA. And Albert Simons was very concerned that everything should be in period so that none of what I did was original. I mean, the murals in the ballroom were adapted from some of the-[inaudible]-prints from the-[inaudible]-series, because those were the right period. The fresco in the courtyard was taken from a decoration with the masks of comedy and tragedy that was from an old veteran in Charleston.

MS. MCCALLUM: Hello, David.

MR. HALSEY: I'll finish my sentence. Come on in, David. The decorations over the door were period pieces too, so none of it was really my original work. But I was very excited about getting a commission to do anything at all. Can we break for a minute?

[Audio break.]

MS. MCCALLUM: Am I on?

DR. KIRWIN: You're on.

MS. MCCALLUM: It's funny, but you just reminded me that I did my first teaching in Boston, because the first year I was there-no, first or second. Second I think, I got a job teaching children's classes in the museum. You know, they had classes for children and I assisted the teacher. And I loved it. I found it was just magic with the children. They liked me and I liked them. I taught 40 years after that, all different levels, but the children were always my particular interest. And when my children were small, the young children were the ones I specialized in. And then as my children grew, I got interested in ten to fifteen, that age, and I started spending time teaching them, also teaching the younger. And then eventually, the college age-it just sort of grew with me.

But the curator of education thing, I think was kind of interesting. Did you find anything about that?

DR. KIRWIN: What do you mean?

MS. MCCALLUM: At the Gibbes?

DR. KIRWIN: The Gibbes, yes.

MS. MCCALLUM: Because I sort of had to make that program up.

DR. KIRWIN: Were you the first curator of education there?

MS. MCCALLUM: Yeah, well, what it was, they weren't getting much money from the city or the county. Well, they felt the need of something to attract people in to come into the gallery so they could then command more money, so they hired me. I only wanted to work part-time because I had other things to do in raising the children. I wanted to paint some, so I said I would do it three days a week. And there wasn't any known thing to do, but someone had started a collection of good reproductions of paintings, and one of the banks had given them some money and they had a few dozen of those framed reproductions. So I cooked up this idea of going out into the-because they wanted county money-going to county schools and taking, say, five reproductions to the school and talking about them, and then leaving them for a month with the school, and then going back and taking another group. And so they were really getting art history in a sense.

And it got-well, they actually wanted me to do it full-time, and I just didn't want to give it that much time. But I stayed there eight years part-time, and I talked to 20,000 children a year. And I did it up on stages. Sometimes there'd be 500 students in the audience, and sometimes it'd just be a classroom. But whatever was most needed. And I tried to make the students participate, and I would always have to have a mike, and some of the principals said, you've cost me some money because your voice is not loud enough and we have to give you help. So I would have a microphone I could carry around with me, because I would point to the things and ask the students, what do you think? I would compare a [Hans] Holbein and a [Pablo] Picasso head and say, you know, well, what do you think about this one? And why is that one that way? What do you think? Try to make them get involved. And it brought a lot more attention; they got a lot more money; they got a station wagon they could-you know, it helped. But it was interesting for me. I liked being with the children. I would paint. The funniest thing is, I'm kind of shy. But when I got up on stage, I found it all left me. Once I was up on stage-maybe it was because it was kids, I don't know-but it was like magic. And I could stand on my head if I needed to. It really didn't bother me. So I started giving demonstrations every now and then when I felt they needed something to shake them up. I would get my poster paints and easel and make something, and I would just start to paint and talk while I was painting. And I would ask them, how do you think it would look if I put blue there? What do you think? And I'd say, well, let's try. Well, that didn't do so well. Maybe it needs a little something

added to it. And I would do this kind of stuff. And of course, you couldn't complete a painting in an hour on stage, but you could get something that looked like something, I thought. I would always try to get feedback, you know, from the kids, and I said, does anybody have any questions, anything else that you wanted to ask me? You never knew what they were going to say, but I wanted them to be open.

MR. HALSEY: Because this was after we'd been teaching.

MS. MCCALLUM: Right, we'd been teaching at the Gibbes about 10 years at the Telfair. And then I went-we had our own art school. Yeah, we had our own art school. But it worked out like about every ten years, the emphasis changed and the kind of teaching or whatever.

MR. HALSEY: So that's why I said what I do earlier on about, you know-it's impossible.

MS. MCCALLUM: But one-you said something about travel. In 1968, I got a fellowship. But I had applied for a grant five years before because I was doing this school program, and I thought, now here I'm showing all these wonderful reproductions of all these paintings, and I've never been to Europe. I've never seen them. So I applied for a grant to do that thinking I could tie it in with the schoolwork. Well, by the time I had got the grant, I had stopped doing the schoolwork and it was five years later. And I got more money and so I went around the world.

DR. KIRWIN: Maybe you can go back to the first traveling.

MS. MCCALLUM: All right, the first traveling-

MR. HALSEY: Well, actually the first traveling was when we went to Massachusetts-

MS. MCCALLUM: To live, that's true.

MR. HALSEY: [Inaudible]-had been very good and I was terribly impressed, because he told me when I was after-getting close in my fourth year. But he could get me a summer scholarship to go to Europe. And the reason he wanted to do this was because he wanted me to come back and be his assistant in some of the teaching at Boston Museum School. Well, evidently he had second thoughts about it, because I was very surprised and impressed, because he said later, because I was awarded with James William Hayes Fellowship, which was a fellowship, which was for two years traveling and study in Europe instead of just a summer scholarship. And he said later that his wife gave him hell and said that he was being unfair to give me a summer scholarship instead of pushing for the bigger thing just because he wanted me to come back. But anyway, I got this fellowship, which was for two years' travel and study in Europe, and that was when Corrie and I decided to go ahead and get married because it would be great to go to Europe in legitimate style.

But that was in 1939. And what happened was, we had all the plans. I mean, we had introductions to people. We were going to Paris. And we'd both of us had taken a little French. But then suddenly, it was one of the first ships that was torpedoed during the war had an American student on it who was a student at the Boston Museum School, and he was drowned. And so, the Boston Museum, which was really responsible for these fellowships, got cold feet, and said they were sorry but they wouldn't take the responsibility. We couldn't go to Europe.

And we were, by that time, we had already gotten married. We were in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. I had a second commission I got to do some frescoes in the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, so that was where we spent our honeymoon. Corrie has always reminded me because she said she spent her honeymoon in the basement of the Berkshire Museum washing goat's hair and mixing it with plaster. [They laugh.]

MS. MCCALLUM: In a cold basement with cold running water.

MR. HALSEY: We were in Pittsfield, Massachusetts and had this letter saying we couldn't go to Europe. And we were desperate, because we didn't have any money; we didn't have any plans made for two years. So I wrote them back and said, well, couldn't we go to Mexico instead? And the director of the Boston Museum, by the name of Dr. Joe Anzio [ph], nice old guy-he wrote back and said no, we couldn't. He said this money came from an endowment and the will specifically stated that it had to be used to travel to study in Europe and he couldn't change that. So I wrote back again and I think I made some phone calls daily and saying we're going to starve to death. What are we going to do? Can't we go to Mexico-not because we knew anything about Mexico; because it was the only other place we could think of. So this was in like July or August, Mr. Anzio wrote back and he said, all right, go to Mexico. He said but go quick, because most of the members of the board of directors are away on vacation. They won't get back until the end of September and if you're already there, there's nothing they can do about it. So we went to Mexico like with about two weeks notice.

MS. MCCALLUM: I even took my ice skates.

MR. HALSEY: Yes, she took her ice skates to Mexico.

MS. MCCALLUM: I still had them in my case.

MR. HALSEY: And we didn't know-neither of us knew any Spanish. We really didn't know anything about Mexico. We went to the library and looked up Mexico in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. So that was how we got to go to Mexico. It was a very strange experience. [We were] bewildered by the whole thing. But it was very good. It was a terrific experience, and as I said, I think it really changed-maybe for me more than Corrie-but changed the whole orientation of our life and our art, because if we had gone to France and to Europe, we would have gotten a completely different sort of thing. This was a sort of startling experience and what in one way was a primitive civilization, but in Latin America and in pre-Columbian civilization really had a greater say on what we did in our whole viewpoint after that. And of course, we've been back to Mexico many, many times since then. But that was our first traveling experience. And we spent two years and had a child that was born in Mexico, and came back to the United States very sort of disoriented.

MS. MCCALLUM: We wanted to stay there. But we realized we would never belong. And also, we didn't have any money.

MR. HALSEY: We didn't have any money. We got back to Charleston after two years in Mexico and we were blinded. We came from Mexico by train, got to the railroad station in north Charleston, we had 25 cents and a baby.

DR. KIRWIN: Who were the other artists that you knew in Mexico?

MR. HALSEY: Well, we met a good many. We didn't really know a lot of them very well. Juan O'Gorman was one. We lived in his house for a while. He's the artist who did-[inaudible]-and people don't know his name, but all the pictures you see in the University of Mexico with the huge mosaics on the outside of the buildings-he designed all those. He was an architect by profession, but he did a lot of-like if you go to Mexico City now, there are great big murals in the-[inaudible]-part of Mexico City that are by Juan O'Gorman.

MS. MCCALLUM: Julio Castianos [ph].

MR. HALSEY: Julio Castianos was one of the Mexican artists who was quite well known at the time.

MS. MCCALLUM: Who was the one that we saw not long ago, still making the-which one was that-you know?

MR. HALSEY: Oh, Gunther Gerser [sp], who has a German name, but he's half Mexican and lives in Mexico. He's quite well. He's one of the top names in Mexican art. Now, we met [Diego] Rivera. We were living right around the corner from Rivera, but we didn't really know him. I mean, we were very young and insecure and inexperienced. And he was a great, famous artist. He was also sort of scary. He was a huge, fat man with-[laughter]-but we saw him paint. We knew Frida Kahlo who was his wife. But I'll always remember the great description of Rivera as a big, fat man. I could never understand how he was such a wow with the women, because he had an incredible love life. There was an article describing him and I remember it said, he had big, brown eyes like gooey chocolate éclairs. And I remember once seeing [Jose Clemente] Orozco painting. We didn't know him. But this was when all of them-we were living in Mexico City. We were living in San Angel which was the artistic suburb.

When [Leon] Trotsky was assassinated, he was living very near there. We remember it well. As I said, Diego Rivera was living right around the corner from where we were living in the house of Juan O'Gorman at the time. And we didn't know that Trotsky had been assassinated, but early that morning, we heard all this commotion and we looked out and we could see Rivera. And Rivera was living with Paulette Goddard, the American actress, at the time. And Rivera and Paulette Goddard were loading suitcases and boxes into a car and taking off. And he left for the United States instantly, because he thought he was going to be implicated in the assassination of Trotsky. [David Alfaro] Siqueiros was in jail for a year or two.

MS. MCCALLUM: But Siqueiros did his best painting in jail.

MR. HALSEY: Well, they used to let him out of jail to do frescoes. But no, we didn't-as I say, we were both of us, very-we were not very brash, pushy people. And we were very young and inexperienced. So we didn't really get into a lot of art life. I had an exhibition and it was sort of a gallery workshop thing called-

MS. MCCALLUM: Domus.

MR. HALSEY: Domus, which was run by a group of young architects who were all German architects. But they had very avant-garde furniture and-

DR. KIRWIN: Did you ever meet William Hunt Diederich in Mexico?

MR. HALSEY: Yes, we ran into Hunt Diederich. I didn't think of him as a Mexican artist. But we met him because

he was a friend of a great friend of ours who really helped us and took us under his wing. A German-Mexican name-Otto Butoli [sp] and he and Hunt Diederich and his wife were friends of his of Otto and Otto's wife, Peggy, who was American. But we met Hunt Diederich through Otto in his wife, saw them at various parties and things that they had. And we didn't really know them that well. I mean, we thought they were kind of fascinating and strange. She was a countess, and they were living in Mexico because they couldn't get anywhere else. And they were fairly impoverished at the time.

MS. MCCALLUM: Also, they were very heavy drinkers, all these people.

MR. HALSEY: All these people. One of the things we found very difficult at our age and stage in Mexico as that all these people just drank like mad.

MS. MCCALLUM: All the expatriates.

MR. HALSEY: And for a brief time, we stayed in-we had a robbery. We were robbed and we had to move out of the house we were living in. And this Otto and his wife took us in. We stayed in their house for several weeks until we could find some place to stay. And I've always remembered, as I'm sure Corrie has, that Otto, his greeting in the morning, he would come in our bedroom, carry two little shot glasses of tequila, one for me and one for him. This was the way you woke up in the morning. You had to have an eye-opener to start the day with. And I mentally struggled through it. I didn't find it easy.

MS. MCCALLUM: I said, don't do it.

MR. HALSEY: But for us, people like Hunt Diederich and his wife were quite fascinating but pretty decadent even. I mean, you'd never know a German countess-a baroness I guess she was before.

MS. MCCALLUM: Very elegant, though.

MR. HALSEY: Oh, she was a very striking looking woman. And one of the things I remember, do you remember the funny things, was that we went to a party at the-[inaudible]-and they had quite a collection of people-some Americans, some Mexicans, some German, and Wanda, Hunt Diederich's wife, had-[inaudible]-and blonde. She had on this deep red robe and one of these nice American ladies whispered to us, isn't that a bathrobe? I said, yes, which it was, because she didn't have any clothes. But she looked very striking in a red bathrobe.

MS. MCCALLUM: She pulled it off.

MR. HALSEY: But going back, that was our first travel, and we thought our lives were going to keep right on like that. We thought we were going to keep on living in strange, exotic places, and what happened was we came back to the United States. We produced a couple more children. We had a very difficult time financially. It was something like what, eighteen or twenty years before we traveled anyplace again.

MS. MCCALLUM: All right, it was 1960, and a friend of mine-

DR. KIRWIN: When you came back from Mexico, did you consider going back to Boston instead of Charleston? Why did you come back to Charleston?

MS. MCCALLUM: Because William's family lived here.

MR. HALSEY: We didn't have any money.

MS. MCCALLUM: We had no money, no money.

MR. HALSEY: And didn't have any type of room, and my family was there and we knew they had a big, old house, and we knew we could stay with my family for a while.

MS. MCCALLUM: We didn't mean to stay.

MR. HALSEY: We never planned to come back to Charleston. It was purely accident. And then we were offered jobs teaching at Gibbes Art Gallery, so we stayed in Charleston for a year. I mean, it was pure financial necessity. And then we weren't too happy with things at the Gibbes. We were getting paid extremely little, so the man who was then director of the Telfair Academy in Savannah came over. He was over there and he saw our work and liked it. And he offered us jobs with more money if we would come to Savannah. Not very much more, but a little bit more.

So that was when I say we decided no place could be deadlier than Charleston. We went to Savannah and were there for four years-three years of which I was working in a shipyard because that was when the war came and everything closed down, and I either had to work in a shipyard or get drafted. And since I had a wife and one and

a half, two children by then, I worked in a shipyard. But after being there for three years and finally when I could get out of the shipyard-I couldn't for the three years that I was classified as necessary manpower, which was ridiculous-but after the three years when I could get out of the shipyard, by that time we were disenchanted with Savannah, so we decided if anything, Savannah was deadlier than Charleston. So we came back to Charleston.

MS. MCCALLUM: But in 1960, this friend of mine said she had a sister and brother who lived in New York, and she said-she worked at the Gibbes Gallery as a secretary-actually she was the niece of Alice Smith and she lived in the house with Aunt Alice, as we called her, and Aunt Alice's sister. And so I knew Aunt Alice quite well. And my friend Caroline said, I'm going to the Virgin Islands for a week. Jane is sending me. She thinks I need a rest. And I want you to come with me, because I don't want to go by myself. Well, Jane was the rich one in New York, so I said, well, if I can get away, I'd love it. I hadn't been anywhere out of Charleston I don't think, except for something in ten years. I mean, I was just hungry to get out. So we went by way of New York, would you believe it, because Jane said that was the best way to go to the Virgin Islands.

So we went up to New York and William said, now, if you're just going to be there a day, call James Johnson Sweeney and tell him you have a friend and you want to see the Guggenheim Museum. You don't want to be up there and not see the museum. It just opened. And I said, well, I can't do that. But then we'd met him and he kind of liked us, liked me, so I said, well, all right, I'll give it a try. And I called him and he couldn't have been sweeter, he said, oh, I'm so sorry, my dear, I won't be able to take you around myself. I have a bunch of people here from the United Nations. But if you and your friend want to come, I certainly want you to see it. Just tell so-and-so at the door, and be my guest. So we went, and there was nobody in the museum at all. It was spectacular. And we just wandered around, and we would stand and see all of the paintings and everything. I came back and I was so excited. And I said, William, this is the best museum we have ever saw. Well, later, he went when it was crowded and full of people and all of the ramps and everything. He said, what do you mean? You can't see the paintings of the people.

Well, anyway, I did a lot of drawings and paintings every minute. I was so turned on down in the Virgin Islands. It was so beautiful, that turquoise water and everything. And I came back and showed some of the paintings and sold them right off the back. So I said, oh, I have got to go somewhere else. Well, unfortunately, I had to have some major surgery, and while I was recuperating, William got a call from Bill Gertz saying he was going down to Yucatan-this was early summer-and wouldn't he like to come down there with him and we didn't know much about Yucatan.

MR. HALSEY: Now, it's my turn. Let me talk. No, and this really-and this started a lot of things. It is funny because Bill Gertz and I-I may have mentioned-we had known him because he had been curator at the Norfolk Museum in Virginia, and we'd gotten friendly. And when he brought up this thing about going down to Yucatan, I said, well, I don't have any money. Oh, you can come on.

MS. MCCALLUM: Brilliant idea.

MR. HALSEY: But David-well, it's actually, it's an old-I had to-[inaudible]-earlier, the earlier American artists have done this, you know, when they went to Europe and they were subsidized. Somebody put up some money and in return, they did paintings and scenes of Roman antiquity or something.

So I thought, gee, I had read about this. So what the hell did I have to lose? So I called a few people that I knew who had bought paintings of mine, and said, you know, I'm planning to go on this trip and I'm going to do a lot of sketches and when I come back I'm going to do some paintings. And if you want to gamble on it, if you want to put up some money in advance, when I come back and do the paintings, you can come and pick out a painting and you get it for half of what it would cost if I had it in an exhibition. Well, it didn't take a lot of money to go to Yucatan. I think I raised like eight or nine hundred dollars, because people put up like \$50 or \$100 a piece. And I thought it was kind of a nutty idea.

Of course, going to Yucatan also had a great influence on me because not only was I so exhilarated at being again out of the United States-when we lived in Mexico, we'd never been to that section because that was very hard to get there. And that was before airplane travel. I found Yucatan really terrifically exciting. I mean, it was like-I don't know, I really do have this thing. It's only this déjà vu thing that this was a country I had known, this landscape, which was-have you ever been there?

DR. KIRWIN: No.

MR. HALSEY: It's very arid.

MS. MCCALLUM: I like it, but it's William's favorite.

MR. HALSEY: It's not attractive. It's a very stark, rocky barren country, but with these great ruins. And I felt like I belonged here. This is my country. And I felt that way ever since. But anyway, I went and we were there for-I

don't know-a couple of weeks, not more than that. And the funny part is Bill Gertz, he'd been down there once before, but he jokes about it when I see him now. He's never been back since. And he says, I probably had more influence on your life than on any other artist, because I took you to Yucatan.

MS. MCCALLUM: That's right. It's true.

MR. HALSEY: So it became a sort of-

DR. KIRWIN: Why was he going?

MR. HALSEY: Just to get away. He'd been down there a year or two. It was real cheap. It was very inexpensive.

MS. MCCALLUM: It could have been for the ruins, you know.

MR. HALSEY: Yes, but it was the cheapest place you could go and get away. But anyway, when I came back and I did some paintings and these people came to get their paintings, and I thought this was just a one-shot thing, nearly all of them said, well, where are you going next time? Well, we think this is a great idea. We'll put up some money for next summer. So I thought, gee, is this easy. So the next summer, we went-

MS. MCCALLUM: Well, half of it was, he said, let's see, where am I going next summer? I said, you mean where are we going next summer? He said, now I'm going-I said, we're going, because I found that the things I'd done in the Virgin Islands had made such an impression, so I thought, I can do the same thing. I can get my people to put up money for me and he can get his people and that's what we did. And so we went to Guatemala.

MR. HALSEY: We went to Guatemala and Honduras. But then actually, for I think like sixteen years afterwards, we traveled every summer. We went to South America. We went to Europe.

MS. MCCALLUM: In 1964, I went to Europe for the first time by myself.

MR. HALSEY: We went to Morocco, and had all these trips paid for in advance. Gradually, we upped the ante.

DR. KIRWIN: It was just like getting a grant.

MR. HALSEY: Yes, we did bigger paintings. But it really was amazing how this worked, because every summer, we took trips for a month, month and a half, and these trips were always paid for in advance. I mean, we had the money in the bank before we planned the trip. It was sort of a cumulative thing. We could have kept on doing it, but after that long a time, we decided our prices we could get for our work had gone up so much that we were really underselling ourselves.

MS. MCCALLUM: Well, we couldn't travel before because of the children. But you see, by now, there were five years between each one. And even the youngest one, it was possible to leave her. And so, she could stay with friends for that amount of time. She was like twelve or something. And so we did that, and then in 1968, I announced to the family, I'm going around the world. And they said, oh yeah? And I said, I am. And they didn't believe me because I always get lost. If you get an elevator, I turn right when you're supposed to turn left.

MR. HALSEY: We didn't think she was going to get back. She was going the wrong way.

MS. MCCALLUM: Well, I had this-now, you talk about Yucatan and your déjà vu - I had this feeling that I had to do it, that it was a challenge, that I was going to be afraid, but it was an experience I wanted and that I had to go to Europe by myself-not just Europe, had to go around the world by myself. And I was right. I had the feeling that if I didn't do it then, I never would. Well, I went down to the travel agent and I just linked all the places in my imagination and said can we do these? And the lady said, Bali? Well, now Bali is a little off the track. That will cost you a little more. And I said, I don't care, I met somebody when I was in Europe that said Bali was the number one paradise. I have to go to Bali.

So I went from San Francisco to Hawaii to Japan. And in Japan I met some people who were staying in Korea, and he was the head of the ASCOM [Army Service Command Post] hospital there. And they were on rest and recuperation, and they said, listen, you've got to come to Korea, because you won't appreciate Japan or anywhere else until you've seen Korea. The contrast will make your day. So I said, well, I don't know. I can change my mind, but I'm not sure. So they told me how to get a hold of them if I changed my mind. Well, the next day after they left, I broke off a big tooth, and the idea of a strange little Japanese-I hate dentists anyway-but to go to a strange little Japanese and have him fool with my teeth, I panicked. So I got on the wire and sent a cable, meet me, I'm coming to Korea. So when I jumped off the plane, I said, have you got a dentist? They said, oh yeah, we can take you to the base, fix you right up. So they fixed my tooth and said, we're having a hepatitis epidemic here, have you had your gamma globulin? And I said, no, so they shot me full of gamma globulin, and then the next day, the girl-she was like half my age-said would you like to go to walk? Well, I thought about going to walk right? Five or six hours later, me with my hip full of gamma globulin, we'd walked on top of rice

dikes and rice patties, and climbed up the mountain and looked down on the red Korean border, finally got rescued by a Jeep and a driver took us back.

MR. HALSEY: I have to tell-we were home and Louise, our youngest, we kept getting these strange letters about where Corrie was and wasn't. And this thing about going to Korea-Louise said, my school asked me where my mother was and I said, oh, she's gone to Korea to go to the dentist. [They laugh.]

DR. KIRWIN: Was this travel-was that on the Hughes Foundation?

MS. MCCALLUM: Yes, this was the Hughes Foundation grant that I had applied for five years earlier to go to Europe on. But the high point actually-I went on to Hong Kong and to Cambodia. You hadn't been able to go there for many years, and then subsequently, you couldn't go there again, so I was lucky. But in 1968, I was able to go there in this tiny little plane .We flew along the Mekong Delta and the ruins at Angkor Wat were just unbelievable. I could not believe it. Miles and miles of these fantastic sculptures and I wrote to the director of the museum who had been responsible for me getting the Hughes-one of the committee-Milward Burton, and I said, if I never see another thing, if I never go anywhere else, the trip was worth it, I want you to know. And then I went to other interesting places, like Persepolis in Iran. And I went to Nepal. And all of these places were sculpture cultures. If you stop and think about Persepolis, Angkor Wat, even the Nepalese and a lot of-well, of course the Japanese had printmaking and painting of a different sort. But none of it was anything I'd seen in Europe. And the emphasis was not on easel painting.

It was definitely sculpture. So when I came back, I was paralyzed. I couldn't paint for six months. I didn't want to paint for the first time in my life. And I started doing drawings and then they turned into wood cut, and it was because of this trip. And from the wood cuts, I went into lithography and then into some etching. And that's how I came to start the printmaking department at the college. I was teaching drawing and painting, and I started fooling around with the students with some printmaking, and it kind of took hold. And I built it up into an interest that would demand that they have it as a course.

DR. KIRWIN: Well, I would like to talk a bit about your sense of being an artist from the South. Did Southern arts organizations or regional exhibitions give you a greater sense of an art community?

MR. HALSEY: I don't know. I mean, that's kind of a tricky question, because, we of course, going back and you go through all the records, and I always remember what Helen G. McCormick, who is now deceased, but was one time the director of the Gibbes Art Gallery. And years back when she was the director, somebody wrote me asking if I knew of an artist who had worked in South Carolina in like the 1940s or something. And I didn't know the name, and I asked Helen McCormick whether she had any information, and she said, well, it shouldn't be hard to find out because actually there were only about 25 or 30 professional artists from South Carolina at that time. I mean, there really were very few artists. I mean, the times have changed so now we have hundreds and hundreds of people. People can get professional training. But there weren't very many artists. So we were sort of isolated figures, so that we didn't really have much communication personally with a lot of other artists. I mean, we did-looking back at our records, I think we both had things and established the Art League exhibitions and regional exhibitions, but it was not as if there was any community involvement, if that's what you meant.

MS. MCCALLUM: It was pretty desolate.

MR. HALSEY: It really was. And the thing that we found very hard about being there-I mean, we liked Charleston physically, the way it looks. But it was sort of in isolation that if you're an artist, particularly if you're interested in the contemporary world of contemporary art, you're very lonely. And we still feel that way.

MS. MCCALLUM: But you know, one interesting thing I think with all our teaching, we in a way created an audience. I think we had a lot to do with increasing the interest because we taught thousands and thousands of people and we would so earnestly try to get them to care about the kinds of values we had that I think in an unsensational way-but I do think it had some impact on the area. I'd like to think so. Wouldn't you agree?

MR. HALSEY: Yes, I'd like to think so. I'm sometimes not cynical, and wonder whether it was all worth it. I think, but yes, we did. And for quite a while, we were kind of pointed at-sometimes pleasantly, sometimes not pleasantly-as rose marble artists, because what artists there were in this area were people who were doing-and I'm not running anyone down-but people who were doing very nice representations of the southern landscape. But if you did anything other than that, you were considered pretty peculiar. And so, one of the ways we survived-if it hadn't been for this travel fund-we used to say if we couldn't get out of Charleston every so often, we would have died of suffocation.

MS. MCCALLUM: It made it all wonderful.

MR. HALSEY: We could manage to go on these trips. We could manage vacation, because in this period I was exhibiting in New York from-well, I had a little bit earlier-but like from 19-I'd have to look up the date, but I

believe-'49, '50 to end of 1960 or after. I was exhibiting at the [Bertha] Schaefer Gallery in New York and I had little one-man shows there. So I was periodically going up to New York, so at least I could see what was going on. And we could get other places.

MS. MCCALLUM: I didn't go to New York. I had to stay with the children.

MR. HALSEY: But Charleston was, and I think still is-I mean South Carolina, I would say, not just Charleston-pretty difficult territory for anybody who was really trying to do anything contemporary, because there is not any sort of cohesive art community. And there was even less of one back then.

MS. MCCALLUM: One thing that happened to me was in 1967, I had not quite a retrospective, but a ten-year retrospective of my work at the Gibbes. And it was a pretty big exhibition. And there happened to be a man there from Switzerland who was just in town for a few days, and he seemed very impressed with my things. And he said, would you like to have an exhibition in Zurich? And I laughed and said, I wouldn't care. And he said, well, I have friends who have a gallery. Could you give me some picture slides of your work and I'll be in touch? Well, sure enough, I got back a letter asking me to send some things for a group exhibition at this Kunstler Wolfsburg in Zurich. And then, we set up a one-man show, so in 1969, I went over to Zurich and had a one-man show. And then somewhere in Switzerland, about half a dozen people at least have things of mine. But I lost touch with the gallery. I think it closed out. It was a publishing house, primarily for art books and prints. And they had three galleries in connection with it.

DR. KIRWIN: Did you show at any other galleries?

MS. MCCALLUM: Well, what happened was all of the colleges had some kind of exhibition space, and so we did the circuit. I mean, we would have exhibitions that would go from Clemson, Davidson, Galamy [ph] college, Cheekwood, the Mint Museum-[inaudible]-museum.

MR. HALSEY: But if there was not that sort of thing, I think we'd have kept on doing it definitely. But it's nice for publicity, but nobody ever buys anything. I mean, the university calls it galleries. It's an educational thing. And we also, we had things in exhibitions throughout the years. I used to spend about half my time making packing boxes and packing and shipping things. This was before people sent slides around. And I had paintings in exhibitions and all kinds of things. And see when I was exhibiting the Berkshire Gallery in New York, through that-and this is one thing I discovered and I think is still true-don't let anybody kid you about these national or international exhibitions and how they're selected. They're selected from the New York galleries primarily, because while I was exhibiting at Bertha Schaefer, I had things every year in the Brooklyn Museum and the National Watercolor Exhibitions for years. I had-

MS. MCCALLUM: The Chicago Art Exhibition.

MR. HALSEY: The Chicago Art Institute-actually one of my paintings is reproduced as a big poster on the front of the art institute.

MS. MCCALLUM: He didn't even get an honorable mention.

MR. HALSEY: I had paintings-some of those I sent to them myself-exhibited in the California Palace of the Legion of Honor at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, at the Metropolitan. But this was primarily because I was represented in New York.

MS. MCCALLUM: And I didn't have a gallery, so I didn't have the contact.

MR. HALSEY: And also, I say we spent vast amounts of time sending things to exhibitions. And we just-about fifteen years ago, we just stopped doing that. We decided it's not worth it. You know, we'd been doing that all our lives.

MS. MCCALLUM: Oh, I want to tell one interesting thing. Was it in '97-what that the Boston Museum had their hundred year anniversary? The Boston Museum School had a big exhibition-invited exhibition at the museum proper. And this was sort of the hundredth anniversary and artists selected from a hundred years of students' work. And so, William was in it and I was in it, and David was in it, and David's little girl who was then about-

MR. HALSEY: [Inaudible.]

MS. MCCALLUM: I'm going to get there. My friend Betty was a sculptor. She and I roomed together in Boston and she's still my friend. And her mother had also had gone to the museum school. So David's little girl went with him to this exhibition and she was absolutely awed. She said, there's something by my daddy, and my grandfather, my grandmother-there's Aunt Betty! There's Aunt Betty's mother. And she said, oh, she was just overwhelmed.

MR. HALSEY: She thought it was a family exhibition.

MS. MCCALLUM: She thought it was a family group show. But it was kind of interesting that David-he did sculpture there. I took some sculpture when I was a student, but David took sculpture and ceramics for several years and then got his degree through the University of Massachusetts. But Boston, they have a strong influence on me because I would keep going up to see Betty and do lithographs at impressionist workshop in Boston. I haven't done that for a couple years, because I've been more interested in painting.

MR. HALSEY: The Gibbes Art Gallery-when we first moved-had really the first state exhibition. They had what they called the South Carolina Exhibition. It was an annual exhibition every year that was the only thing at the time that covered the state. Then, later on, something got started called the Guild of South Carolina Artists. Corrie was a founding member of that, which sort of supplanted the state exhibition.

MS. MCCALLUM: It got the artists together. They had one exhibition, one annual exhibition, and a meeting. And everybody really did try to go from all over the state. And it was like a meeting and presentation of awards and like that, so the artists had some contact with each other, and a little more competitive feeling too. You know, you could see what they were doing this year. And there was a steady core of artists that were visiting, but every year, the general membership would change, because people would submit work and if they were rejected, some of them wouldn't send anything the next year. But there was a steady bunch.

MR. HALSEY: It also changed because of the location.

MS. MCCALLUM: It would change-more museums opened up. The Greenwood Museum had it, the Gibbes Gallery, and then the Columbia Museum. And then the Florence Museum opened up so it went to four places and it would alternate and get different exposures.

DR. KIRWIN: And when you applied for your membership, you had to be-

MS. MCCALLUM: You joined, you paid your dues, and you submitted your work, and if you got rejected, you could come to the meetings or you could choose not to come. But in the beginning, we insisted that there be a jury, that it not be just a membership exhibition. We wanted to raise the standards in the state, and the only way to do that would be-so we'd get an out-of-state juror. We had good jurors. We had all kind of people coming in. And we thought that would bring up the level of what the artists were doing and help the communities where the museum shows were.

MR. HALSEY: When we first started, the only museum or art gallery in the state was Gibbes Art Gallery in Charleston. Now, I read not long ago something from the State Art Commission that there is something like 30 museums, art galleries in South Carolina. I mean, you know, some of them are very small, but the whole picture has changed. And you know, there has been such a change because the University of South Carolina developed a very big art department; Clemson University has a pretty good art department; Winthrop has an art department; the college of Charleston has an art department. I mean, unlike when we started out when there was no place, now there are a lot of places around. I'm not saying that they're all great, but what students can get-an art education; they can get some training. So there are a lot more artists, the commercial gallery-again, not very good ones, I think in the state. But the whole picture is just completely different so that ever since, the need for some of these organizations like I feel the South Carolina Art Institute is not as strong as it used to be.

MS. MCCALLUM: As a matter of fact, about ten or twelve years-wasn't it ten years-say ten years ago, I felt so strongly about that that at the meeting, I got up and said I thought we'd achieved our purposes and when we founded the guild of South Carolina. This was to raise the level of art in the state and to give exposure to the artist, you know, the two-fold purpose. And I said I thought both these goals had been accomplished at all these other museums and the artists were well-known, and I thought it had served its purpose and was no longer, you know, needed and we should abandon it. Well, it got voted down and so I haven't seen any-neither has William-we haven't seen any thing since. So we a little bit lost touch with it, but-

MR. HALSEY: It wasn't just that. The reason we stopped seeing was it really got awkward because-I mean, for so many years, for instance, I have-there were a few people that used to get the prizes every year, you know, and then later on it got so that in a sense we were competing with our students and our former students. And this got really very sticky and we decided that we had-we weren't being superior but we'd just reached an age and a stage where we didn't fit into this anymore.

MS. MCCALLUM: It was time for another group to come on.

MR. HALSEY: So that we were really the last-so many years we have not participated as much and we have been-at least I have, I think we were sort of disenchanted with the local art scene because more and more of what's happened, and particularly in Charleston with all the students-but in Charleston, since Charleston has now become a big tourist town, what is being produced-they have-the so-called local artists are all turning out

what we call tourist paintings. They're turning out little Charleston watercolor street scenes-

MS. MCCALLUM: Or big Charleston street-

MR. HALSEY: -and things-shrimp trawlers and paintings of black women selling flowers. And the thing that's unfortunate is that all of these things, as I said, not too long ago these are the things that 40 or 50 years ago we had artist Elizabeth O'Neill Verner, Anna Heyward Taylor, Alfred Hutty, Alice Huger Smith were doing these scenes and doing them very well and doing them authentically. Now these people are simply doing them to sell to the tourists and they're doing them, you know, and having reproductions made by the thousands, and we find it pretty depressing. I mean, I'm just-this is not what art is about as far as I'm concerned. It is a very commercial- I mean, there are a few people who are not doing this but by and large, and even some of our-at that time we thought pretty good former students at the college were doing this because it's-

DR. KIRWIN: To make money.

MR. HALSEY: To make money-well, a lot of them then, they don't need to make a living. I mean, we know people whose husbands are doctors who make a very good living. I mean, their wives are painters. But it's what people-they say, well, that's what people want. Well, as far as I'm concerned, art has never been about what people want. It's about what you want to do and some things you find necessary to do. But anyway, the picture is really totally changed.

DR. KIRWIN: When did you start the Charleston Art School and why?

MR. HALSEY: Well, it was necessity. Okay, what happened was we were teaching-had been teaching at the Gibbes for nine years and, you know, it was our main source of livelihood. And then there was a great upheaval because all kinds of things happened. See, the Gibbes-it's a very peculiar setup because the building belongs to the city but the collection does not. The collection belongs to an organization called the Carolina Art Association, but the building is city property. So there was a lot of flack because Bob Whitelaw, who was the one we mentioned earlier-[the] director of the WPA-was the director of the Gibbes and he was a very intelligent person but also a very difficult person. He didn't find it easy to get along with the rest of the human race. As somebody said about somebody else I read not long ago, he not only didn't suffer fools gladly, but he didn't suffer intelligent people very gladly either. [They laugh.]

But anyway, he decided-and he was perfectly right-that the Gibbes was not getting enough city and state support, so he announced that he was going to close the Gibbes Art Gallery; he was going to close the school as of such and such a date unless the city put up a lot more money. But he got fooled-let's just say he got fooled on that one because what the city did when the day came and he said the gallery was going to be closing, they sent around city officials and they said this building belongs to us and we're going to keep it open.

But in the process we were teaching. There were four people: Corrie and I and a sculptor named Willard Hirsch and a painter named Faith Murray. Both artists are now deceased. But the four of us had been teaching there for a number of years and we had a-you know, for a small thing it was a working operation. And then Bob Whitelaw announced with great publicity that if the city didn't put up money, the whole thing was going to be closed down, including the school, which meant us, and we were not consulted about this. We were just-had it announced that, you know, if the city didn't put up this money we were going to stop teaching.

So we decided the hell with that; nobody asked us. So we sort of threw a slight bombshell. We got lots of publicity because we got together and said, all right, we're going to open our own art school. And we had articles put in the paper saying that if the Gibbes Art Gallery closed, there would still be an art school-

MS. MCCALLUM: The Charleston-

MR. HALSEY: -called it the Charleston Art School, run by the same people.

MS. MCCALLUM: And we would sculpt in his studio and we taught-[inaudible]-in our studio and they dropped out.

MR. HALSEY: They dropped out.

MS. MCCALLUM: They dropped out.

MR. HALSEY: But that was really out of necessity. We had weeks of a lot of unpleasantness about it, I mean, locally, because we were accused of having tried to demolish the Gibbes Art Gallery, which we didn't. It was done in self-preservation. I mean, we needed the money so what we did, we had been living in an old house that had a kitchen house that we had used as a studio. We taught classes in the kitchen house and the house we lived in. Willard Hirsch had a studio around the corner and he taught classes there and we collaborated for like nine, ten years.

MS. MCCALLUM: Eight or nine years anyway.

MR. HALSEY: We ran this school.

MS. MCCALLUM: We had 140 or 50 students.

MR. HALSEY: Yes, well, it was a sort of a makeshift thing. I mean, it was a lot of children's classes and then we had some adult classes. But it-you know, we did it.

MS. MCCALLUM: But the footwork and the telephone and the publicity.

MR. HALSEY: It was an awful lot of work. I mean, it was really sort of, you know, a very time consuming thing but we did that and it reached a point after awhile, we weren't getting along too well with Willard Hirsch and so we sort of separated-

MS. MCCALLUM: Yes.

MR. HALSEY: -that way. I mean, he was-and then just accidentally the college thing came up. The College of Charleston had a new president and the college had never had really any art at all. It had several people who had taught what they called Art History course-an Art History course but they mostly made like architect. They talked about Albert Simons, an Art History course that was basically-

MS. MCCALLUM: Architectural-

MR. HALSEY: -an architectural history course and then this new president came along, Walter Coffield [ph], and he decided they should have somebody teach actual painting classes and anyway, he got in touch with me-

MS. MCCALLUM: And he was the first one.

MR. HALSEY: -and I sort of thought out and I thought it was going to be another one of these things, because we'd taught tall-time classes over, every place. We taught it to the naval base, the Air Force base,-

MS. MCCALLUM: Marine base.

MR. HALSEY: -the Marine base. We really did.

MS. MCCALLUM: Town hall. We commuted-

MR. HALSEY: I thought, well this will be another one of those things that'd be, you know, for a year or two. But it developed and I taught first this one class, but here they are, and then the year, I think there were two classes and then they got another-a new president that pledged 30 TMA and that was when the college changed over, you see. It happened the last time the college had been a municipal college. It was one the-I think it was the first municipal college in the United States really, but it was dying as a municipal college.

When I first taught there was something like enrolled about 500 students and they had about 30 people on the faculty, so they finally decided they became part of the state system, which meant that there was a lot more money coming in and they got a new president, Ted Stern, and he was very smart because he realized that one of the things that he could do-he did a lot of things. I mean, but one of the things that he could do would be to start up a real full fledge art department because there is no place else in the lower part of the state that does. So he got in somebody as an art historian, full time, and then by degrees we got in-we got a music person the next year, so that it really and eventually ended up being a pretty good small fine arts department, and by degrees, I found myself from being-teaching part time, I was teaching full time. I ended up with, at my request, I was the first artist in residency and my title was artist in residence for like the last five or six years I was there. I had the status of full professor, which I find very amusing, since I never had a degree in my life. I mean, I went to-you know, I went to art school for years but I have no degrees and it really was, you know, it was kind of exciting. Corrie taught part time for a number of years.

MS. MCCALLUM: Well, I taught at Newberry College, which meant commuting. It's 45 miles the other side of Columbia, so after one year, I liked it and it paid all right, the students were not terribly exciting but it was easy enough teaching. But the long ride each way was pretty exhausting so a chance came for me to come into the college as an adjunct professor. I would be getting less than I was at Newberry but I thought it would be so much better so I stopped the Newberry thing and started at the college and that was when the next year, I started the print making and I kept on teaching painting, drawing, and print making until we really needed a full-time print maker and I got one and we had a growth. We got presses and they put a lot of money in the print-making department and it really became a valid thing and I went back to just painting and drawing. But it was interesting to teach all the different levels.

MR. HALSEY: Of all the things, I never expected to be-I least expected to end up being a college professor. I mean, I always-it used to amaze me when I was at the college and somebody would say, Dr. Halsey. And I'd look around because I want to know who the hell is that. [They laugh.] I mean, you know, I'm no doctor. But it really did get-because I taught there for 19 years, I mean, all in all. And from, you know, a sort of accidental, very small beginning, it got to be a fairly major and for me, a very happy thing, in a lot of ways. I mean we both enjoyed it.

MS. MCCALLUM: Oh, yes.

MR. HALSEY: We-it's one of the-it did things. We were talking about the outside things. We met a lot of people because we-

MS. MCCALLUM: We used to go to the college all the times.

MR. HALSEY: -we used to go to the national College Art Association meetings, which was, you know, in New York and Boston and Los Angeles and Chicago and all kinds of places and we made, you know, a lot of contacts and saw people through that but the college thing was really and a very-in ways, very rewarding sort of setting. But I realized since then-since I haven't been teaching, Corrie stopped earlier that I did-been what, like four years, four or five years?

MS. MCCALLUM: Five.

MR. HALSEY: It's been two, two and a half years since I stopped. But I've realized one thing that I should have-I'd heard for years and didn't really get the full impact of, this thing that, you know, of about artists who teach. You can either be an artist or you can be a teacher. Well, I think you can, we managed to sort of balance on the thin wire and keep on being both but it is not easy to do. And I realized since I haven't been teaching, how much effort, both physical and mental, I put into the teaching, that if I had been putting into my own work, it would have-might have made a grave of difference in my own work. I mean, I feel now, I'm doing things that I might have done earlier that I didn't do because I really wasn't having the-well, teaching and painting, and being an artist is a very difficult thing to do.

MS. MCCALLUM: Well, I found with the teaching, it was a positive and a negative. I mean, there was so much positive in the contact with the students and trying to get ideas across to them was stimulating to me. I mean, this back and forth, but for time so I elected to be part-time, which was financially disastrous. Thank goodness William didn't and it didn't have, you know, the fringe benefits but with the idea that I couldn't bear to give all my effort and all my time. Well, I didn't realize that the teaching really was getting a lot more from me than my work was and since I stopped before William, it's like I've just started, I mean, developing. It's been a wonderful five years.

MR. HALSEY: No, well, this is the thing that's funny and the thing we're fighting, both exciting and exhilarating and also difficult right now, is that, you know, here we are both in our 70s and we're really feeling as if-from our viewpoint, we're putting more into our own work. We're doing more exciting work. We're more excited about it than we've ever been before, but from the viewpoint of the general public, you see, particularly her-

MS. MCCALLUM: We're passé.

MR. HALSEY: -we've already had our career. When you're our age, you're supposed to have done your due and so you relax and, you know, you're pleasantly retired but we're not. And that's what's difficult because-and you know, again, we're exhibiting some places and we plan to have some more exhibitions, I mean have galleries. But from a viewpoint of most galleries and exhibitions-commercial galleries, I mean., what they're looking for is new young artists.

MS. MCCALLUM: Yes.

MR. HALSEY: See, and we can't qualify

MR. HALSEY: We feel as if we're new old artists. [They laugh.]

But when we come in and they say, oh, you've done all these wonderful things. You know, you have this great career, you've exhibited all these places and that's nice, and somebody asked me not long ago because in 1972 I had a fairly large retrospect exhibition that traveled around but somebody said not long ago, who was interviewing me for the newspaper, and she said, are you-what about-shouldn't you have another retrospect exhibition? And I said, well I'm not really interested in having a retrospect exhibition because I'm not simply interested in things I did a long time past. What I'm interested in is what I'm doing now and if I exhibit what I exhibit is what I want or won't exhibit is the things I'm doing right now because I feel that what I'm doing now is pulling together all the influences and all the things from the past and this is what I'm-the present thing is what's

important. But it's difficult because people don't expect you to-you know, I meet people and they say, oh you're still painting and I say, well goddamn.

MS. MCCALLUM: Well, I did paintings that were my version of impressionism for years and years and years. For instance, even in 1968 when I had that-67, when I had that show at the Gibbes, that big show. That's the kind of thing I had and I think I sold everything in exhibition. I mean, it was what people liked by it happened to be what I wanted to paint at the time. Well, unfortunately, that's not what I want to paint now and that still what a good many people like, so I'm having to build a new kind of following of people who like the-well, I don't know how to describe what I'm doing now but it's more fun. I don't start with a sketch anymore. I don't start with an image. I start with a feeling or I start with a color or a line and just let it go from there and sometimes it's interesting and sometimes it isn't or I paint over it. But it's a totally wonderful new experience and a way of working because I'm trying to forget all of the training and all of the regiments, all of the discipline, and yet, it's there. But I don't want it to be visible and I want whatever is deepest inside, if it's light and airy, that's all right with me, whatever. I want it to come out and it's far more challenging. I mean, I can go back and paint a landscape but it'd just be hackwork. I mean, right now I would find it boring and so I have to build up this new following of people who-and there are some, you know, who like what I'm working on.

MR. HALSEY: Well, some of the things that you're doing still-it's interesting because in ways there are certain similarities in our work, inevitably. I mean, we've, you know, we've spent most of our lives together. We've traveled to the same places. We've had the same training but I think that greatest is that some of what Corrie's doing now and kind of intrigues me to see because I'm very impressed with what she's been doing the last couple of years or if I am. But sometimes they come out things what people call abstract, but more often than not, despite her-what she may in saying-they go back to nature. I mean, they have inferences of the water, of the sea, the landscape, the tree, but they're not direct. I mean, it's not a painting of a place, it's a feeling about a kind of place, which is quite different from, you know, what she's done before. But the problem we have, talking about what we're doing now, and I've said earlier, not entirely humorously, but I thought I had a wonderful track record, I'd always managed to be in the wrong place, doing the wrong thing, at the wrong time, all my life.

[They laugh.]

MR. HALSEY: Because I was-you know, I was really interested. I was doing abstract painting many years ago when it was not-but then now you see and I-and we did, we both did a lot of, you know, figurative work. I mean, with the travel paintings we did, they were always the city places, the city things. I did portrait paintings for years. I did portrait commissions, which that is a pretty good portrait. But it was like there were all these different things pulling different directions and now we don't-neither of us, feel this any more. I mean, we're all going-

MS. MCCALLUM: We don't have to do it.

MR. HALSEY: Well, but the problem-

MS. MCCALLUM: We don't have to do anything we don't want to do.

MR. HALSEY: -the problem is that we don't relate to Charleston. I mean, what people in this area buy, primarily, I mean, this is probably conservative, either they have old houses and they want nice old paintings or very conservative paintings.

MS. MCCALLUM: But you couldn't sell a snow painting in Charleston. It's a sky, it could be-

MR. HALSEY: Well, it's not just that. [They laugh.] That's not what I'm telling you, you know what I mean. They have to be things that fit in so that what we're doing certainly is not-and there are, there are a few people in Charleston-

MS. MCCALLUM: I was going to say-

MR. HALSEY: -they're different people.

MS. MCCALLUM: -there are a lot of these simply new modern houses being built in the outskirts. \$300 and \$400 houses and those people are going to be the ones that-

MR. HALSEY: But with-

MS. MCCALLUM: -hopefully can see something.

MR. HALSEY: We're talking of Charleston purposes now, I knew we would. No, because I don't think those people are because those are mostly-those are the condominium resort people. They're not the people who are going to

be collectors. But what I'm trying to get is that we don't exactly fit in and our work doesn't hurt us, and yet, you know, if we go to New York or some place else, the-[inaudible]-strangely enough, for years I was doing abstract things and abstract painting was in. Now abstract painting is-- out. You know, it's--except for the great names. I mean, everybody's doing, you know, figurative stuff or everybody's doing social conscious stuff. So again, I mean, where do you fit? I mean, where does it fit in? And the other thing is--I'm being very forthright on this but actually we--this last two years, fortunately since I've retired, we've discovered we have enough money to live on. I mean, we have enough--we don't need to sell paintings anymore. We would like to and there are a lot other things. We'd like to do a lot more traveling. We don't need to sell them to survive as we did for many, many years, but we need to sell paintings and get rid of them and our work, simply to get them out the way.

MS. MCCALLUM: Yes. So there's not any clutter around you. [They laugh.]

MR. HALSEY: And also, with me, I'm spending a lot more money because I'm doing these sculptor things where I have people working for me so I'm adding more output. I need to sell things so I have more money to put back into what I'm doing so that's why our crisis at the moment and we have some things. We have a gallery in Atlanta that's exhibiting some of our things. We have some place in Washington that's going to be exhibiting pretty soon. We're both adding--I don't know whether you do, do you know SECCA [Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina], but we're having a joint exhibition in SECCA this coming year. It's a year from now, actually.

MR. HALSEY: We had to find ways to--

MS. MCCALLUM: Get to the work out of the way.

MR. HALSEY: Get the stuff out so we can keep on doing it.

MS. MCCALLUM: We get paralyzed every so often lately. Both of us have felt like we've didn't want to come to the studio to paint because there was just too many--you know, we've been painting too much, there isn't room to work.

MR. HALSEY: This is the kind of nutty--I don't know whether you've thought about this sort of problem. [Laughs.] It is a nutty problem. See, both of us, we're in a pretty good state, physically, but both of us have spent most of our lives and the things that we've been interested the most is our own work.

MS. MCCALLUM: Yes.

MR. HALSEY: And if we didn't keep on doing it, we'd both go raving insane. So we have to keep on doing it but if we keep on doing it, just from the physical space situation, we have to dispose of it some way. [They laugh.]

MS. MCCALLUM: No, we've--oh, we're great at recycling. We destroy things but we destroy just about as much as we can destroy. You know, we go back over and scratch something or rework it or repaint it or throw it out. We've always done that but we're doing it more and more because we just--and yet, there some of the early things that you really should hang on to and we're trying not to get restless and destroy all the early pieces because I think that would be a mistake, don't you to do that? But it's the temptation.

MR. HALSEY: Or we don't really have that many, do we?

MS. MCCALLUM: No, not many.

MR. HALSEY: We did for a long time. We sold an awful lot.

MS. MCCALLUM: Oh, gosh, yes.

MR. HALSEY: [Inaudible.] I was looking through not long ago. I have a spare few. [Inaudible.] I only have a few left. Does that answer--I mean, was that--

MS. MCCALLUM: No more wrangling?

DR. KIRWIN: Unless you want to say anything more. [They laugh.]

MR. HALSEY: [Inaudible.]

MS. MCCALLUM: You know, it's just wonderful to be doing what you want to do. I think the saddest thing is people who don't know what they want to do in their lives. I mean, I think you're so lucky if from the age of 12 you knew what you wanted to do, the trick was to get to do it. But you always had something that was calling you that you really felt you wanted to do above all else. And I think people--I feel sorry for them when they don't have that feeling.

MR. HALSEY: Here's the only other thing if I can add to it, is the thing that we find difficult now, is that, you know, it isn't as I was saying, like wanting to exhibit, want to sell things. It isn't just for the financial part of it but the whole art world has gotten so incredibly, shockingly, publicity-commercial-big-name thing. I mean, I would-personally I would be perfectly happy to sell of more of my work and sell it for less of pricing except I can't do it. I mean, I have to-

MS. MCCALLUM: You can't go backwards. You know, you can't do that.

MR. HALSEY: I have people who've bought paintings of mine, bought work of mine for certain prices and prices have increased of course because the cost of living increase previous to this, so I can't all of a sudden say, you know, I'm going to sell them for lower prices. I have to keep up a standard but then you get into the commercial racket. You know the commercial galleries and what a lot of people don't know-we know, you know it, but that, you know, if you have a commercial gallery exhibiting our work, that they take a 50 percent commission.

MS. MCCALLUM: At least.

MR. HALSEY: Which means that if I-like I have a gallery in Atlanta, lets say is exhibiting my work and what I do is I tell her-I give her my prices, but she doubles all my prices, doubles them more, which means that they get quite high, which upsets me in ways, but I don't know what the alternative is. Anne Jacob [Gallery, Highlands, NC]. But any of the galleries, I mean, 50 or even some of them take 60 percent now or add another 60 percent, but the whole standard that sets up sort of a super high thing. You know, we were talking a little bit about the New York art scene. It really is-you know, and I've read that art has gotten to be sort of like being a pop star or a movie idol or something. It's the name thing that sells it.

MS. MCCALLUM: I mean, just look at the people that go to museums now. They go-like people go to a concert.

MR. HALSEY: It's horrifying. These are the big spectacle.

MS. MCCALLUM: I mean, it's the thing to do. We've asked ourselves, we said, we know why we're here but why are all these people here?

[They laugh.]

MR. HALSEY: A couple of them-we were-was it in Philadelphia that big Impression exhibition we went to? And they weren't charging-there wasn't an admission fee, but we had to go stand in line for an hour. They gave you tickets telling you when you could get in. We had to stand in line for an hour to get tickets-

MS. MCCALLUM: Right.

MR. HALSEY: -which was two hours later.

MS. MCCALLUM: No.

MR. HALSEY: So then we had to go and waste two hours or stand two hours and then come back and stand in line again and then when we got in we couldn't see anything. It was just thousands-people with babies and packs on their backs.

MS. MCCALLUM: Yes.

MR. HALSEY: People with kids in strollers and I just got out. I couldn't stand it

DR. KIRWIN: Thank you for participating in the Archives' oral history program.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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