



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

**Oral history interview with Royal Cloyd,
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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Royal H. Cloyd on May 16, 1972. The interview took place in Boston, Massachusetts and was conducted by Robert F. Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The Archives of American Art has reviewed the transcript and has made corrections and emendations. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

ROBERT F. BROWN: Anything at all?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Okay. No, you're—I had—I've used your—I think it's a little earlier model than this, but it looks—it looks similar.

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is May 16, 1972, interview with Royal Cloyd in Boston with Robert Brown interviewing. Could you explain—we're sitting here in the Boston Center for the Arts, could you give some idea of how you first got into the arts? Did you come to Boston with such an involvement, or has this developed slowly through your career? Could you talk a bit about your earlier work and—at least, as it would shed light on your present position as head of Center for the Arts? And then perhaps I can get into great detail asking about the—something of the—of the history of that led to the center. But if you could first talk a bit about your own personal orientation some time ago, let's say, whether it had bearing on what it led to today?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Well, I came to Boston from Illinois about 16 years ago. I did not come here in any professional capacity in the arts directly. I came to take charge of the adults' programs division for the—of the national offices for the Unitarian Universalist Churches. This is related because they published a lot of things in the arts, and it was our responsibility for—to produce a lot of various kinds of programs, films, tapes. We made records, all this, and all kinds of things that certainly involve artists, but it was not directly. [00:02:03] I had been, in Illinois before I came, very much involved particularly in theater but also in a community arts program that was developed at Champaign-Urbana in Illinois. It was a kind of catchall community thing that we put together a lot of small groups—a community symphony and a flute club and there were a group of painters that had some history. We developed a community theater. We developed some organizations, but it was—it didn't have a place or that is each of the groups met in different places, and we weren't really concerned with real estate at all but simply providing a variety of activities and we kind of—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did this reach out into the whole Champaign-Urbana community?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Well, yes, and we do for audiences on the region as well as—as well as the town. Champaign-Urbana is a very rich place in terms of a certain kind of talent with a relatively small population. Even with all the college students, there were around 100,000 people, but an awful lot of people who come there to staff that enormous university have well-developed skills in the arts. So it was—it was a pretty rich program. There were several hundred people involved on a regular basis as—in producing and working within this thing. But at no time, I have to say, did I consider that as a professional goal. My involvement in Boston really came because of my involvement here in the South End. We moved to the South End, and I got involved as the chairman of the urban renewal project, the citizens committee here for the district, and we began to consider with the citizens. [00:04:04] We had many, many hearings, and we also spent a lot of time talking among ourselves about the kinds of things that we would like to have in this district, and we spent from 1960 to 1965 in planning this. We—planning included a lot of fighting, [laughs] but the community was down here talking about this for five years before we could get a plan upon which we could get enough agreement to get it approved by the city council, the redevelopment authority, and so on. But in that plan was the site for this Center for the Arts, and it probably was put here first because of the existence of the Cyclorama Building and the National Theatre. When it was discovered what these were, people began to think of how they might be used. We talked a lot about it and there was—there were needs, obviously, for a space for artists. And many of the people who were moving into the South End, and some of the people who had lived here before were the kinds of people who felt that this would be an asset to the community. And so when the plan was adopted in 1965, this two- to three-acre site was set aside for the development of an art center. I have to admit that when we adopted this plan—and it was adopted overwhelmingly at as—by the community at an enormous, well-publicized hearing—that I—[laughs]—I just assumed somebody else was going to do it as far as I was concerned. And, I think the other people who worked on a lot of planning as well as the city, we assumed that once we'd set aside the space and after the flower market was going—moved out which we knew was going to take place two or three years later, that— [00:06:04]

ROBERT F. BROWN: This had been the flower market for some years that—the Cyclorama?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: The Cyclorama and most of its adjoining buildings have been occupied by the wholesale flower market for New England. The Cyclorama Building being the trading floor and the lower floor of that building and most of the adjacent buildings were offices and warehouses for wholesale floral companies—some selling flowers, most of them selling those things which go with flowers like ribbons and pots and all that kind of thing. But it had been—you know, it had been here for about 50 years. They came in 1922.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So this was really—the people deep in the South End didn't think of this as a possible arts center? I mean it had never been, uh—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Not before we began talking about it in 19—from 1960 to [19]65. It was an arts center when it was first built, if you like, in 1881 or was it before?

ROBERT F. BROWN: As the Cyclorama?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Yes, as the Cyclorama, but certainly, it was not the kind of arts center we're thinking about now.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why did you—but why from '60 to '65 did people talk about having an arts center? What—was there great pressure felt or—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Uh, no, we were just talking about what kinds of things would go into a good community, and we talked about housing and streets and streetlights and schools and so on. As we became aware of the existence of this particular real estate, because again, I think of the nature of the people, who were coming in the South End at that time included a lot of professional artists. There are a lot of painters and sculptors down here, a number of them, and there are a lot of people who would be artists or at least they're much more than Sunday artists. [00:08:06] They're people who probably would be artists except they want to make a better living than that and so they worked for advertising agencies and newspapers and they're decorators in stores, and so on, but they are quite good artists. They started moving—and a lot of architects have come here. They started moving in here in, well, about 1960s, just a little before that. And so it is not surprising since they had a lot of interest that when people said, "What would you like to have?" They started thinking about arts facilities. I think the early dream both from those who worked on the plans in city hall and those in the South End was more for a center for the performing arts than it has now become. But I think that's only because that's what everybody else was doing. We are—I don't think—people, in those days, they just weren't thinking about including the visual arts except as exhibition spaces in the centers of this kind as we think of it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Why did these artists move down here?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Well, they moved—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was the South End like? Was it—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Yeah. They moved—they moved here. Well, the South End is a tough place. It was—or at least it started as a tough place, thought of as a very dangerous place. It isn't particularly, but it is perceived to be dangerous by a lot of people because there are a lot of vagrants here, a lot of—a high rate of alcoholism. An awful lot of elderly men come down here to the halfway houses, and these guys lurching down the street with too much liquor in them frightened a lot of people, so they think of it as a dangerous place. Well, it couldn't be further than the truth. But I think the reason that the, the artist as well as a lot of other young professional people have been returning to the South End as rapidly as they could get the money—it was pretty cheap in those days, but it isn't now. [00:10:13] But it's simply that it is still and certainly was then a place in the middle of town where one could live with a lot of space, usually a garden if you want, which is nice in a city, at a fairly reasonable price, and I think that's what was bringing people. One would have to couple with that the fact that if you happen to like Victorian architecture, the South End is a great place to find a house and go to work. And a lot of people for some reason are—these days are interested in that. And it really was—well, in those days, there just wasn't any place close to the central city where you could possibly buy a house and maybe fix it up for \$40,000 or whatever. You had to pay much more than that in other downtown districts. Well, prices are up around here now, but it's still, still less expensive to buy and renovate a comparable house in the South End than it would be on Beacon Hill or Back Bay.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Do the artists—and have they constituted themselves as a community? Is there much going and coming among them?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Well, you mean the artists in the South End or the artists in the arts center itself?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, I meant particularly in the South End in the—before the arts center was a fact, were there—do they have a need or do they—a place where they could get together where they could exhibit jointly?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Well, I think they did have much. There were some experiments. There had been through the years in the Institute of Contemporary Art, certain artists getting studios and exhibiting in those studios, but I don't think they got together in any kind of organization at least, visual artists particularly but also people in music. [00:12:10] Artists learn about each other, and they do have a kind of community. They see each other at openings or at particular kinds of End [ph] plays and concerts. That's—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So what was the catalyst then that got you from learning that there were these two or three acres of the flower market? What was it that they moved it toward becoming the center for the art?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Well, there were a number of people who, apparently, came to look at it. I wasn't involved during those days. After the plan was adopted in '65, I thought no more about it. I don't think most people did for several years because the flower exchange was here. They were in the process of assembling the money and making their plans to build their new buildings, so there was no pressure from that point of view. But—and various arts groups came and looked, most of the people in—professionals and Boston artists did come over here and take a look at these facilities, and they felt they were all very interesting. But the project itself, the buildings are huge, enormous spaces, and for one group to try to develop these things would be quite an undertaking. And if they were groups—that is boards and, uh—had had boards and committees, probably the people who came, came—many of the people did not live in Boston, and they were, I think, frightened of the South End and weren't sure what they could do here, much more so than the artists who lived here. But in arts organizations, the directors have a lot to say, but well, the decisions were made by boards, and they're the people, of course, who come up with the money or don't and so there's a lot of—an awful lot of vigilance. [00:14:06] But I don't think—I just don't think people thought too much about it. When I thought about it, I assumed somebody would come along and say, "Hey, this is marvelous. We'll be able to get these enormous buildings for a reasonable price, and we'll fix them up and use them." I think that's the way we expect it to get built. The thing that caused it to move again as far as we're concerned was a specific conversation that took place while Hale Champion was the director of authority. I had—I had spoken with Ed Logue about the project but never my own involvement in it, although I wouldn't have been—I'm sure I would've participated on some basis if somebody else had done it. But Walter Smart at the South End site office then director of United—of the South End office for the Boston Redevelopment Authority spoke to me one day. He said he wanted to talk with me about the arts center. We were meeting to discuss some other things, some housing problems and so on. So I went over to see him and he said—well, he asked me how I felt about it, and I said, "Well, I thought it was a great thing, and I was looking forward to its development." He said, "Well, unless somebody does it, it's not going to be developed and what we want to know is, is it going to be developed? If it's not, we need some alternatives. Something else has to be done with the land. There are a lot of people who wanted it. There were some schools who wanted it. There were many businesses that would like to have it. It's a nice, big site, well located in the city." In effect, they asked me, I guess, because of my long-term community involvement down here if I thought we could find some way to make it happen. And after talking it over then and subsequently at a meeting again called on another subject with Hale Champion and Walter Smart—and I think there may have been some others in that meeting, but I don't recall—why, I agreed to look into the matter. [00:16:24] I didn't promise any more than that, but what I decided to do—and they wanted me to do—was to reassess the feelings among South Enders about their feeling of need for such a project, were they still expecting it sort of. Now, obviously most people—it's true in any society—didn't know it was going to happen, but for those people who were involved in the community. The second task I had was to try to find out by talking to various arts groups in the city what their needs were, and if they would be interested in something like this. I think to begin with in my early conversations with Walter Smart, the focus was for me to try to get together a group of representative leaders from Boston arts schools to see if they would put something together and develop the project. That was the original idea. I think I brought that idea. The third thing, which was started sort of by accident but really was the part of my beginning involvement was an interest, rather casual at first but then increasing—an interest in the theoretical and the actual problems of developing, building, administering an art center. [00:18:07] And I explored this and became more interested all the time through my visits around the country. I was traveling a lot in those days in Unitarian that I was in most every city that had an arts center in the country during any given year. And so I made a point in the evening whenever I had some time, I was visiting the cities to go and take a look at the arts center and talk to the management, maybe see a couple of plays, picked up a lot of their literature, and think about it. So I was really beginning to collect those three kinds of things, community reaction, the South End reaction, reaction from the Boston arts community, and to begin to try to understand what some of the problems were with developing an arts center. Still, I would say when I was doing most of that, I assumed somebody else is going to do it, but I was trying to find some kind of a model because it became very clear to me when I talked with people even from leading companies in Boston that they really weren't geared. They were not—their organizations were really not designed to take over and administer a project like this successfully. Their interests were very narrow, appropriately narrow—this is not a criticism except in the classical sense. But they were all—anybody you talked to except for passing remarks were looking for facilities for opera, for ballet, for theater, for violin instruction, and so on, and they just couldn't. They hadn't any idea about putting some group together. [00:20:02]

ROBERT F. BROWN: So though you saw many other models, there was none real like Boston was there? Because here, you had particular, old established companies in many cases, I mean ballet and whatever. Whereas in the others, wasn't the arts center often the thing that initiated arts activities of many sorts in some cities? Didn't—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Well, there's been some of that. There's been some of that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because here, you could have established traditions, and if not the same companies, you've had similar ones.

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, yeah, it's—I think the chief difference to begin with was the whole business of the—well, we were provoked into becoming different because of the old buildings that were here. I think if we'd gotten involved—well, if we—if the BRA had waited before talking to me, that they'd cleared a lot of these buildings and the land was just here and saying, "Okay, there it is, you've got to get some people together, see what you can do," which would undoubtedly in that case had been—we'd put together a development corporation, get a lot of businesses together, do the designs from the finance, and so on. I think in that case, I don't think—I don't know that I would have been terribly interested other than just getting it started. But I think in that case, we would have emerged a much more conventional center. An awful lot of good things had happened to us regularly I suppose in all our lives are some kind of accidents, and that that—I think that was one of them here. I began to—I can't say it would've dawned on me, but I began to realize that when the artists came here and they looked through these old buildings, that they looked at them and they liked them to a considerable extent the way they were. [00:22:07] The audience to an opera or a concert, it doesn't matter, they want this cleaned up and the carpets down. But I began to think about that whole business of saying, "Well, gee, there are lots of things we can do that really wouldn't cost very much money because the artists, kind of, liked the look of the space. And at the same time, I learned something, which really surprised me as I talked with Boston artist groups before we got started and I asked them what their needs were, and I expected them to respond pretty much in terms of performing needs—more stages, cheaper theater rental, and things like that. Well, that was important to some of them, but it was really only kind of by the by. What was more important to them or equally important was that they have an inexpensive place where they could rehearse, where they could keep their offices, where they could store their stuff, where they might exhibit their paintings, where they could be close to certain shared facilities that are important. So the, uh, the whole aspect of the performing—the center for the performing arts began to look very different at that point, and this really just came from talking to groups about the things that they want. They responded immediately and said, "Oh yeah, we want to an \$800,000 theater with velour drape," and that was always the first thing. But somewhere another a long time ago, I learned when I am seeking information to talk a long time with people because after you get through all of stuff that you expect, you may get some things that you don't expect, and that are very important, and they may or may not realize it. [00:24:08] But it never really occurred to them I think, and it certainly didn't occur to me to begin with, that many of the things that we would do were rather homely things that turned out to be very important for the artist. I think that I also began—at that time, of course, when we started working on this, we were in the beginning of all the conflict with the hip groups and things of this kind all over the country and the kids descending on the cities and so on. And it became increasingly apparent that the atmosphere which young people are seeking in their arts centers whether they're theaters or restaurants or galleries, that they are really seeking, many of them, a different kind of atmosphere than might have been true some time back. And so we started thinking a little bit about that too with a kind of do-it-yourself art center that would perhaps succeed today and in the future in a way which might be surprising just because of the different styles. So we began to become concerned with what we could do here that would enhance and preserve this kind of atmosphere. And as we had discovered in talking to the visual artists that one of their greatest need was for a cheap studio space, I began to realize that one of the problems with the art centers I was visiting is that there really wasn't a great deal of activity going on a lot of the time. [00:26:06] The people tended to come in a great rush to see what the artist had done and then depart. The artists tend to come—tended to come to the centers at the last minute because rental fees were so expensive, and they did their thing and then they left and so the centers were really very much like big city theaters—not at all a home for the arts but a place just where you meet. And we began to think about the business of putting a lot of studios spaces into the complex so that we had a community here all the time. And we felt that this might give it a different kind of feeling in that we would be getting a—we could avoid the alienation, which was present, readily observed between the alienation of the working artist in the community, in many cases, in which the great centers are located. Different purposes, it's a different purpose, it's just a different purpose—

ROBERT F. BROWN: They're sort of for the final performance, are they, many of the other centers or but then—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Well, that's the way—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —quite a bit—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: —they've set it up. That's the way they've set it up. You know, that's the way they set it up. Some of them have schools in them, but again, they're not used by many groups but by, in general, a few

groups.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So you have real flexibility here then?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Yes, yeah, we've designed it that way. We can change an awful lot of things. There are some things we can't change because the buildings have their own safety codes, but there's a lot of flexibility, and it's designed that way.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you could—can look forward, do you think, to a long life for the center? But I would think—you've mentioned a couple of things: [00:28:03] first, this homeliness as you called it this, so your workaday atmosphere. And second, the fact that you are trying to answer to the deepest practical needs as you mentioned in the case of the theater groups where there's some space rather than performing stages.

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: So could you project—I mean—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Well, we want performing stages too, but we just considered these other things as important, so yeah. And in some ways, they maybe even more important because there are other theaters. There are a lot of the groups that are here now doing most of their performances, and I think always will, out in the high school auditoriums. They'd go out to all of the towns around and use city halls and so on to perform, so they have that kind of space. What they need is the space to get ready and as much as possible to try to get ready without having such an enormous overhead that they can forget their production together. They've closed for lack of funds before they would get started. An awful lot of good things die because of that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, here, such things as that overhead is not nearly as great as it would be in other places, is it?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: No. Our projected overhead is rather low. We're—the overhead for operating the center itself is considerably less than that of a lot of theaters around the country, theater groups.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In the visual arts, do you have a criteria for exhibits, for exhibitions here, or how does that work? How has it worked then in your first year and a half or something?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Well, we—our—that whole question of criteria, who gets to use what, is a sticky one. [00:30:00] We operate pretty much on a first-come-first-served basis. If you have the money, and you want to do something, and you come in—that is related to an arts center, and we have to agree with that, you can come in and just sign a lease and we live with that. Of course, we have to make choices sometimes, but generally, we do it on the basis of one's ability to pay and one's ability to get things enough together to come in and get to dance a week and work on a lease. And we have an endless parade of people come in and talk about all kinds of things—you never see them again. But they come, they talk about it, sometimes they're pretty good ideas.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But there won't—do you foresee any kind of danger in having a reputation of exhibiting things that are—that others would say aren't of museum quality or something?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Well, of course, there's some danger because these things get reviewed and it rubs off on the other groups. So far, we haven't had too much of a hassle on this. It's always a possibility.

ROBERT F. BROWN: On the other hand, you've had Provincetown summer show from last year.

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Yeah. Our intention, you see, is—again, as is true of a lot of centers, our intention is not to compete with our own groups. We see our role primarily as to service the groups that are here as well as the community. And so, consequently, if we have a group that can do a particular program, we turn it over to them, and we prefer that. So if somebody comes in and says, "We want to—" well, this past year, the painting and sculptor show was conceived of by some people working out of Provincetown. They put it together. It was funded in part by the *Boston Globe*, but more directly, by the Plymouth—Provincetown 350th anniversary, I guess, committee. [00:32:10] So they provided the money, and we provided the space and leadership, and there are a lot of things that fall in the middle, and of course, we have to work on those. Next fall, we will have even more than we have now by way of support for a painting and a—or a print and sculptor show that will take place here in the fall. As a result of one we did last year, the Boston Printmakers and the New England Sculptors Association approached us. They had never gotten together before. They've always been separate exhibitions, but they got together and started thinking about it. They decided—both groups felt they really could not do justice to a show that would be big enough for the Cyclorama, but together, they thought they could. So they got together, worked out some of their plans, and came to see us. Now, we'll be doing next fall a show with those two organizations, both of them respected around here in general. And a great deal of the work of putting on an exhibition will be done by them. They'll make the selection that they're going to hang in the show. They will

provide the invitations and all the publicity, and so on. A lot of the work will be done by them, and that's really what we like to do. If—there's no reason for us, for example, to run a—as we see it—to run a print show if the Boston Printmakers will do it and they will do it here. That's what we're trying to do is to support the arts. If somebody else—you know the deCordova, the Museum of Fine Arts, they may want to do it because they wish to express a point of view that may draw nationally. But those two groups, the one Boston-based and one New England-based are perfect for us because they're made of temporary artists' works, and that also appeals to us. [00:34:02] We have a policy. We do not acquire—we don't wish to acquire any collection here so that our work will always be that of something that's presently [inaudible]. If somebody offered us a Raphael, we would take it only to sell it [laughs] because we have—uh, we can't possibly compete with them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Nor are you trying to.

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Nor would we try to do—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mentioned the museum a moment ago, the two museums, the deCordova, the Museum of Fine Arts when they host, say, the Boston Printmakers' show is to express, as you said, a certain point of view on their part or a certain commitment. Whereas when you hold this show next fall, it will be a commitment but one among many commitments?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It won't designate or it won't signal other—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: That's right and it's also—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —policy—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: —their show. We're doing the same here, we wish to help you as an organization, you the artist, and that kind of thing. We prefer that kind of arrangement. Most of the things that happened here, the Museum Fine Arts was here this year. This weekend, the Circus of the Arts is being run another group funded by the Mass Council on the Arts, and I think the some of the things involved are done by Cambridge—people from Cambridge. They're setting up, they're organizing it, and we tried—we don't want anybody to go down, and when people get themselves in trouble, why, then we try to come to their aid. But there's little—we are not producers, or at least as infrequently as possible [laughs] we are.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Do you think this is needed here in Boston to have a flexible sort of a medium such as you are rather than a fixed facility or a place with a particular criteria and an outlook?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Well, certainly according to my philosophy, it is, and the center is needed simply because there wasn't any place for most arts groups to hang their hat. They simply didn't have it. [00:36:02]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, now, that they've got a place, do you think it's good to have this situation of no policy, let's say, except as you select what comes in here? What I'm trying to say when they exhibit here, for example, they're—they—there's no—there's not, as we said moment ago, signal a certain outlook or point of view or the fact that you're committed to this particular kind of art. Do you think it was good that there would be one place here where all sorts of art could be exhibited?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Well, I do think that it's good, and I think the cooperative things that come out of this, this is one of the advantages. There are things that—there are relationships here that make things possible that would not otherwise be possible. Not long ago, I went up to Salem—Salem State College I guess it is—and I was intrigued. I went up to see the opening of an exhibition there in the small gallery the college has of a sculptor in residence here in our center. I went up to see his work and to see him. When I got up there, I discovered that at that particular opening, some friends of the sculptor who have a modern dance group in the center had decided they would—they would like to perform. So they came up and did a program for the college with anybody else who came in the sculptor show. And when I sat down to look at that, I was amused to read in the program that the costumes the modern dance group were using that night had been loaned to them by the Boston Ballet. It was a very successful evening, and it was something, which was made possible in part by this kind of sharing activities. We also can provide exposure to people on the outside of a very special nature. [00:38:05] It would be possible to do it for an individual, but it would be difficult to do what we've done this year with—in a project called the Gateway Project. In that, we have worked with a group of seven western Massachusetts towns who bus kids into the center, and they come for a full day every three weeks all year long. And each time they come, we give them the beginning experiences that a person who was choosing a particular art form would go through if they were beginning. The purpose of this is really to introduce all these kids to all kinds of art forms so that at the end of it, they can make a more sophisticated judgment in terms of their own abilities, of their own—their own interests. And, presumably from our point of view, they will understand a great deal more and appreciate much more what the artists are trying to achieve, so they become good, much more interested, and

knowledgeable about when they go to a gallery or watch what artists are doing, and when they go to a dance, and so on. We've had a great time with those kids. They've had—all of them have four or five lessons in ballet, in modern dance, in classical theater, environmental theater. They've had several sessions with a sculptor, with two different kinds of painters, with two opera groups, and it's very—it's really interesting to watch what they do. These kids are quite enlivened by this experience, their school tells us. And we'll be—they'll be having their last session fairly soon, and we're going to be doing a lot of testing on them to try to find out. We did some pretesting to find out if we can if their attitudes have changed. [00:40:06] Well, that kind of program—and there are some other examples—that kind of program could be done admittedly by a school system, but it would be—if—ours were scattered out all over, but it would be very difficult. It would be very difficult if we brought them in here, sat them down, and had lunch here. And it was a good thing for the artists too, you see, because one of our functions is to help the artist find ways to support himself. There's an educational program, which we got a grant for, and we are able to pay a decent teacher salary for these artists who come over and would spend a couple of hours in the morning at least. And this is very important for these artists because a lot of them don't want to be teachers—that is, they don't want to go to work teaching in a school system because that takes far too much time. They don't want to be teachers in that sense. On the other hand, they like to teach. And in some of the programs we can arrange, we can get—the artist can give us a few hours a week, and the rest of the time, he or she can be in a studio working, which most people—most artists prefer. I've said a number of times a kind of gobbledygook phrase, which I now understand is quite important. And if you say this to working artists, particularly visual artists, they understand it instantly. And the phrase goes, "I had to learn this year that there is a great deal of difference between a teacher who is an artist and the artist who is a teacher." There's just a lot of difference, and what we're about here primarily are artists who are teachers and—as opposed to running a more conventional school system, which is very important, which they try to get them to teach, the artists. Now, we're going—we're planning now to do—to go into teacher training. That's one of the things that I'll be running and want to do, and there's a lot of requests for it. [00:42:02] Many teachers are interested. That's a very special kind of thing, and many of the artists are interested in training teachers and very interested in kids but they themselves wish to spend as much time as they can working in their particular art.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And these would be teachers who are experienced teachers who would come in?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Yeah, sure, and who do—who do plan and want to give their time, their lives to work in the classrooms.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This will be quite a bit different from the conventional art education that's taught?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: I dare say as I observe it, it seems to be. Art education is not my field and so I really don't know all that much about it, but I—my impression is it is different. That's my impression. I think—I think one of the things that was exciting about this Gateway Project was how quickly the kids were interested, became interested when they were exposed for brief periods of time to some of the artists who really do things very well. And the teachers who came with these children were—noticed it, and I certainly did too. It was amazing. I wasn't sure what was going happen to be perfectly frank. But it was very clear that the kids perceived that they were—that they were dealing with somebody who really knew something rather special, and they responded to that with excitement rather than saying, you know, "God," and start throwing clay around. It really wasn't that kind of thing at all. The kids just dug in. They were all volunteers. We were amazed at the interest in the program. I don't know if we talked about this before. It was a fascinating experiment for us. It got offered in these seven towns out there, and when the kids heard about it, there were so many applications. We can only take 59, we decided or whatever it was that's the limit that the two special buses will hold. We decided we would take—we would deal with that. [00:44:03] That they actually had a lottery in those towns in the schools. I mean, no one came who did not volunteer, but they had a lottery and drew names to decide what kids could come. So it's interesting that we're living in a time when there would be that much pressure among kids to come and do this, and we have rather carefully described what they were going to have. And they—many of them had the kinds of attitudes, which we thought—in the pretesting, we found out that most of the boys certainly never thought they would be interested in dancing, you know not surprising this kind of thing. We find in fact that most of them had a ball up in the ballet studios once they did it. And we required, pretty much required everybody to try everything. It's kind of amusing that the parents who came along and chaperons usually got involved too. They certainly didn't have to but the—after the first time, why, most of them started bringing older folks. And we found we could solve a lot of problems, and again, the artists showed us the way to do this in rather novel and inexpensive ways. We tried to figure out how to keep this cheap for the kids, and one of the biggest problems we—in the beginning was how could we get them costumes for dancing—leotards and slippers. We tried several places to get them donated and for—and we tried to get a good rate, and it's expensive. It was an expensive kind of thing. It was very funny because the first time we sat down with a couple of the teachers or the people in the ballet, they—and in the Movement Lab, the modern dance group, why, they just laughed about it and said, "Oh, that's no problem. Just tell them to bring their shorts, and we'll do it bare feet, and it doesn't make any difference when you're beginning these things. When you've been dancing for 10 years, and you're dancing for an audience, these things become very important, but not at the beginning at all." [00:46:04] They said, "Don't bother with any of that stuff. That's all a waste of money." [They laugh.] Well, I always thought you had to buy

slippers and do—I just thought that was part of it, but that's—it is part of it for people who were, sort of, trying to put people on, but for the professional, oh, no, no, don't bother with that because that's a waste of money. So we found cheap ways of just doing all kinds of things that in part have enabled I think some of the—them to follow some of these things back in the school.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Perhaps the crucial thing is that these kids—students were exposed to—immediately with high professionalism and not with watered-down kinds of competent teaching.

ROYAL H. CLOYD: You know I think that makes some difference, you're right. I think that it makes some difference, a lot of difference in fact.

ROBERT F. BROWN: There's a good deal of this public participate—or public involvement here at the center of this active sort as you just described. Were there people coming in or—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Yes, there is, and I don't know how much we're going to be able to deal with all of it next fall. Now, as a result of a variety of things—mostly people hearing about us and thinking about us—we have now had approaches for next fall for programs from four or five schools, all inner-city schools, some of them outside. They want us to do things with suburban schools too, but we didn't do very much this past year with inner-city public schools. But we now have requests for next fall from parents and school administrators that shocks us, but I think we'll be able to handle it, but for programs that would bring about a thousand kids a day from nearby public schools into the center, from all the way elementary schools and all the way through to high school students. [00:48:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Did they seem to be schools in various kinds of parts of the community, middle class, working class?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Slum?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

ROYAL H. CLOYD: No, we're—we're very much into that right now, and I—as I said, I think we can deal with the requests we had now, but it interested us because we thought we might have to do a little bit—some recruiting when we want to do that. But we have yet to go out and solicit. We are—and people hear about us then they come and talk with us, mostly parents and then come the school administrators and then following that come the—for the meetings come the building people and stuff who want to come and look and see, the class is safe, where would the kids hang their coats, and all that kind of stuff. That's interesting. But it's always in that order, you see. It's kind of amusing. But it's really interesting. And it will be—it's wonderful for us, and it's wonderful for several of the groups here. See, most of the professional groups we have, have educational programs. But because of the fact that people work and kids go to school, most of these programs start in the middle of the afternoon and extend through the early evening. That's when most of their educational programs have always taken place, and they need a large—a lot of space, many kinds of facilities to handle that. But for the rest of the night and almost all of the day, from eight in the morning until three or four in the afternoon, the studios and the working spaces are empty, and they always have been, which is a very expensive overhead for any group. Well, through all of these schools programs, that we're cooking up, those spaces are going to be heavily used. It will be a cheap and good buy in education for any school, but it will also help us enormously in taking care of our overhead, and you don't have to write off the use of all that space for three or four hours of intensive use. [00:50:11] You—our space and probably the floor of the music school we're building, which is 13,000 square feet, my guess is by November of next year, that's going to be in heavy use all the time from about 7:30 in the morning until probably about 10 o'clock at night, and this would be every hour with every space. And even—and after 10, there'll be a lot of rehearsal use. We're putting a lot of teaching rooms in the space.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Individual artists are here anyway, aren't they, in all hours?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: That's right. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Has there been—aside from the children's groups, have there been other active participation, coming either for education or artists groups coming in for discussions or symposia or what else?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Yeah, endlessly, all the time. We've had—not long ago, we had a group of—we have now a group that's coming to meet here every Friday night of writers—poets primarily. They call them—they are actually organized—several people in the South End and around the city. Once they came in and saw all the other things—and these who were people interested in writing. And so they came and talked to me and said,

"You know, you don't have anything. You don't have any writers' groups here." I said, "That's right," and they said, "Well, we were thinking about organizing one," and I said, "Great, do it," so they did. They called themselves Callinus, and they meet here every Friday night. They put this free ads in *The Phoenix* just saying if you are interested in reading—you're a writer and you're interested in reading your poetry to other people and listening to theirs on a Friday night, come at eight o'clock at the Boston Center for the Arts. Well, that group has steadily grown now, and they have about 30 or 40 people who show up here every Friday night and have a ball. I listened to them a couple of times, it's very interesting. Very interesting to me because the range of competence is so great that they seem quite happy. [00:52:03] They sit very quietly reading to each other. Some of these people obviously could—probably do make a living professionally as writers. Others are housewives or whatever who have all these written little poetry on the kitchen table and it's—but it's fascinating, fascinating, and this kind of thing keeps going. People come in here and look around, and they'd get ideas. And given our particular philosophy, why, we encouraged that and anybody saying like that [ph] to me, I'd say, "Fine, why don't you get it together and come back again, and we'll give you a space."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Such groups, they pay a rental fee for the space here?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: We figure out what it is, and we encourage wherever possible the sharing of space so that means that the rental can be very low. They only have to pay for two hours in that particular place instead of having to rent the whole thing. We try to—try very much to encourage people not to lock up space exclusively if they're not going to use it, which is a real problem for artists. Awful lot of dead space.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, I was going to say with sculptors and certainly painters of large things, you must have some space tied up by that?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Yup, oh sure, and there's a lot of space that is tied up, but even there, we encourage wherever possible to share it, to use it for educational purposes, and whatever. The rehearsal spaces and certain common working spaces and meeting spaces, exhibition spaces, performing spaces are all—we require that they be shared. We're willing to book them for any active program in any time, but if they come in and say, "We want to rent this, and we're going to just be using it on Thursday and Friday nights," we certainly would—we might not rent it to them. But at the very least, we would try to encourage them and say, "Why don't you just rent it for those two [laughs] nights and let us find somebody who would use it the other three nights?" and, generally, people say, "Oh, could we do that?" And we say, "Sure." It's amazing what people's need are. [00:54:03]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because your idea is to service as many groups as you can?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Yeah, sure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Which—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: And also to keep it as inexpensive as possible so that the artists can spend their money on other things.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see.

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Increase their likelihood of survival.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I gather life would be much more simple for you if you would take down 10 groups who could pay an annual rental for—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: The whole thing?

ROBERT F. BROWN: —you know to—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Oh, I suppose—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —like a—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: —it would really be simple, but it might be kind of boring, you know? Yeah, I think the—for one thing—arts groups that's another thing. You see, arts groups are continually being organized. They flourish, and they die because this is the nature of even big groups, and the Metropolitan goes on forever, but that's fairly rare. We have—I've forgotten whether—it's eight or nine theater groups here in the center. About half of them are coming into being, and the other half are going out. It really has a lot to do with people who get very involved. They become—they develop something in college, they put together an organization that flourishes very well for a few years, and then somebody maybe gets a big job and goes on to Hollywood or where everyone goes these days. And after a period of time, the group dies is what happens. Well, I think such burials should be dignified and easy that kind of a thing because the one thing I'm sure is that within the next two or three days, there's going to be another group of people coming in and saying, "We've got this great idea for a theater

group," and I actually smile, "Give yourself a name, come back, and we'll give you some space." [They laugh.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: As the center becomes better known, this is going to be not just a Boston phenomenon, is it? Is it spreading out, beginning to ripple out beyond through the—in—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Well—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —whatever they've been doing?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: —some, probably some, yeah, some.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, this western Massachusetts schoolchildren's project was an isolated case then?
[00:56:00]

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Yes, yeah, more so. Although with that photo vision thing, we have made—I don't know if other people have done this. I haven't heard it, but we've made a relationship with a museum or an arts facility in all of the New England states for that. We put the show together here with—there were pickup points so that artists in each of those areas can take their photographs there and then they can pick them up there. And this gives them a chance, at least a shot—a show in Boston, which is important to a New England artist. And then after the show closes here, it will travel to each of those—you know, Portland, western New Hampshire, Maine, Connecticut so that this is—again, this is the kind of show, which is entirely made up of New England photographers—they're the only ones eligible—that those particular institutions probably could not afford to do or would not do. But by doing it this way, they can share and this gets to [be] regional.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In these individual arts, some of these things you do are a great deal like the deCordova does. Have you ever thought of yourself as sort of an inner-city version of the suburban deCordova out in Lincoln, Massachusetts?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Well, there are certainly things that are similar, you're right. I certainly think they're quite similar. I think again—well, there are—there's also some differences. The size is there and also again, this being designed as a community itself and these things emanating or interrelating with the community.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, yes. Experiences you can't—can't duplicate in a suburban setting?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: It would be difficult. It would be very difficult. It would be very difficult to do anywhere that you didn't have an enormous amount of space for one thing. [00:58:00] The reason that size of this works—in fact there are a lot of things that are essential, but certainly, one of the things that's essential is all this space. So that we can afford finally to have theaters, to have exhibition spaces and working spaces, have every—all of these kinds of things, and have enough of them available so that eventually the groups who cook things up will open it and can use it and have a place to show their works. If an artist can't show his work, he doesn't have what would make [inaudible] in the world, whatever it may be, dancing or pottery.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Do you then see use here as greatly increasing and continue—will continue to increase as far as you can see? What you said?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Yes, we've made projections. I haven't but some people at the Harvard Business School have been working on this thing that if we stay with our staging plan, which calls for completion by 1975, as incredible as it sounds, that that on an annual basis, there would be more than a million participants in the program year to year. And they've—they extrapolated this from the curves thus far and from the space we have available, and what we plan to put on those spaces. We know a good deal about that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Now, some of that, a million whatever it is, a lot—or a lot of that, I should say, would be people, single people who will be here for many different things. That's another thing that occurs here that's very interesting. I'm constantly amazed as I walk particularly to Tremont Estates' building looking at a studio and seeing an artist who is here for another reason and taking lessons or dancing or whatever—something I didn't know they were interested in—that the common interests among the artists that is developed is quite marked. [01:00:00] I think the interest in the audiences is not—it'll be interesting to see if that follows. The audiences seem relatively distinct between opera, ballet, theater, exhibition, and so on. There are some people who do everything, but I think they're much more distinct than the artist. They really have—they're busts of each art, but the artist seem to change. Maybe this will happen among audiences too when they come over to see what's going on. They see tickets for one thing, they know where the place is, and maybe that will happen too.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Can you comment at this early stage on the quality of the audience? Do you have any

feeling about that? Are they—you described some of them as [inaudible], really committed. Is there a fashionable element at all, or has that not crept in?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Well, that's certainly a part of it with some of the art groups. I think we—uh, I think we have served, in quotes, the fashionable audiences of the arts less well than we intend to and less—they're probably the least satisfied with our progress thus far. I think this is pretty much related to the amount of money that we have had and been able to spend to spend fixing things up. We've still got a long way to go before—we're never going to carpet everything, but on the other hand, it will be clean and, in many instances, beautiful and well-lighted and all that kind of thing. And I don't—there are a lot of people who are really very concerned with that kind.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you're more—you're really more pleased, aren't you, from what I had sensed with the committed serious audience, although, you just mentioned that you intend to do better by—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Yes, we intend to do—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —a fashionable—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: —better because I think there should be input there all the time, and we're gradually wooing some of these people for various things. [01:02:01] The opera company they had a ball here last Saturday night, which was quite expensive and very formal, and I think most of the people felt they've had a very good experience. A year ago just simply because of the condition of our facilities here, I'm sure they would not have had a good experience. [Laughs.] But we've just gotten—we're getting enough things done so that we were able to make it, sort of, be attractive for this event. And I think that that's important too. I mean, I don't want to shut anybody out. I don't want to and we will not renovate any of our facilities to a point where it makes other groups, we think, feel not at home. That's one of the things we were very concerned about, now maybe we can't do this 100 percent. I guess probably our alcoholic friends out in the street would not be very happy with whatever we do except that leave pile of glass, but short of that, it is our intent, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you do have to depend somewhat on—from the fashionable, I would think, and also the money interest. Do you have to—will you have to depend in the future somewhat on private subscription and—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: We will—must depend upon the private sector for raising the \$4,200,000. Now, it's \$3,800,000. But once that's raised, that's a capital investment. Our plan is not to run any deficit, so we will not be seeking money for ourselves. We will be seeking money or helping to seek money for the groups that are here. That will be the role we will play and try to help them write proposals and find places to get the money that they need. But our idea is that we would not be seeking that for us, ourselves.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [01:04:00] But you don't feel [inaudible] that there'll ever have to be sort of a pandering to the money interest role for you or for the groups here?

ROYAL H. CLOYD: No, I don't—I don't think we've done it yet, and I don't that we will have to. I think that—I think we can, over a period of time, do a lot of things that will interest them periodically, and I would hope that we would. I am person who feels that much of art in its—in its performance should indeed be entertaining, and that is often what these people look for and respond to, if it's entertaining enough. There were a lot of pretty fancy people who found their way to *Godspell* and *Hair*, [laughs] and I think that we'll see more of that. I think some people are offended by these things, but I don't think it was the décor. They just may not like the shows but I think people—I think people do mix a lot more these days. It's just changed.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROYAL H. CLOYD: Almost go to any party you want to with bare feet.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] Yes, as a matter of fact.

ROYAL H. CLOYD: But we have a lot of people—

ROBERT F. BROWN: That's almost—

ROYAL H. CLOYD: —who take the occasion still, they dress very formally, and that's fine too. I should go up to the state house but—

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]