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Oral history interview with Edward Giobbi,  
1977 Nov. 18-Dec. 1

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**Contact Information**

Reference Department  
Archives of American Art  
Smithsonian Institution  
Washington, D.C. 20560  
[www.aaa.si.edu/askus](http://www.aaa.si.edu/askus)

# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Edward Giobachini Giobbi on November 18 and December 1, 1977. The interview took place in Katonah, New York, and was conducted by Paul Cummings 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

PAUL CUMMINGS: Let me say it is the 18th of November, 1977. Paul Cummings talking to Edward Giobbi, in his studio in Katonah [New York]. Normally we start with some family background. You were born in Waterbury, Connecticut, 1926.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Right.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I saw in your notebook there, you have, what, a sister? Brother?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I have two sisters.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You have two sisters?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. One lives in Waterbury, Connecticut, and the other lives in Portland, Oregon.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What are their names?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Mary and—their marriage names?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Mary Mansonelli and Audrey Delgado. She lives in Portland, and Mary lives in Waterbury.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So there were three children, right?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Three of us.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And you grew up in Waterbury?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I grew up in Waterbury.

PAUL CUMMINGS: From, well, 1926 to about when?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Until I went to war in 1944. I went in the army in 1944. I returned home in 1946. I was just sort of biding my time. I had a part-time job—I had a full-time job, actually, in a foundry, in Waterbury. I was saving money in order to go to school. I started school in New Haven soon after.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of schools did you go to in Waterbury? What was the ambience of the town?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Oh, well, Waterbury—

PAUL CUMMINGS: What were you interested in?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I was always interested in painting. My—from the time—I can remember when I was four, and I remember my desire to be an artist.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How come so early? Were there books around, or pictures, or how did you know what that was to be?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: There were no books, and there were no pictures. My father never went past the third grade in Italy, and my mother never went past the third grade. [00:02:05] But my mother loved opera, so we did own a radio. Every Saturday—

PAUL CUMMINGS: The Metropolitan Opera?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: We would go to the Metropolitan Opera. Being of an Italian background made it fairly easy for me to follow through this desire, because painting was not considered a dirty word. They thought it was fine. They didn't think I should learn something that involved more money or more prestige. They thought being a painter was fine. But there were no books in the house, none whatsoever, and there were no paintings on the wall. I lived in a poor, blue-collar environment, an environment that was suffering quite drastically, because Waterbury is a mill town, and all the mills were closed during the Depression, and my entire childhood was—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was right through the Depression.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Through the Depression. So it was a very lean environment, but they thought it was fine that I wanted to paint. They couldn't help me in any way. My father would buy me a box of crayons for Christmas when I was a child, for instance.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where do you think the idea came from? There must have been something around to show you that that was a—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No. It wasn't an idea. No.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It just came out of you?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah, that's where—I don't—when you start talking about the inner mysteries of [laughs] the soul and of the subconscious, you get into heavy ground. It's a mystery, and it's one of the beauties, I think, of life, is when an individual is born with a need, or—the desire, obviously, was a product of a need—and a certain ability for a certain thing, before he's even able to talk. [00:04:17] I think that's a very mysterious thing, and I think it's very interesting. No one has ever answered the question clearly. People—I've read many books and articles on the subject. They talk about the soul, and they talk about religion, but no one has been able to explain it, or even define the creative process for that reason.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, that's true.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It's a mystery, and I never questioned it. Fortunately, I had very bad—to get back to one of your earlier questions about my educational background, I had a third-rate education. I went to a—I lived in a poor neighborhood, and the schools were not very good. I went to a very bad high school.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of schools were there in Waterbury, then? Were they public schools?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Public schools, neighborhood schools. The high schools—it was interesting the way the high schools were set up. There were basically—there was a high school that prepared you for college. That was Crosby High. You couldn't get into Crosby High unless your grades were on a certain level. There was a high school that prepared you for the mills. Trades, more or less, but really it prepared you for the mills. They emphasized machine shop, and emphasized crafts.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Carpentry and metal working and whatever.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Exactly. Then there was a high school that prepared you for white-collar secretarial work. Now, the secretarial high school was basically a girls school. [00:06:02] There were a few boys studying shorthand and that sort of thing, but mostly girls. The trade school was the school I ended up in.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Like a vocational school now, so-called vocational school?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Exactly. Actually, I guess, in final—in the long run, it was probably the best school I could have gone to, because it did help me how to use my hands, and I think an artist is a cripple if he can't use his hands. If he can't build his own stretchers—if he doesn't know how to use tools, it's a real problem. I've noticed that with some of my better-educated friends. They don't know how to use tools, and it's a problem. Of course, the school that prepared one for college is the school where the wealthier children went, or the brighter kids went. I always thought I was kind of dumb, because I never did well in math. I hated it. Now I realize that it was simply because it was presented to me the wrong way. I loved art, and I took art in my free periods in high school. Boys were not allowed to study art.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Only girls, in high school. Right. I took it in my free periods. I didn't learn anything, but I was able to use the facilities.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So that was your first kind of art training of some—teaching of some sort?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. I was good. I had a natural ability. I was better than anybody in the class, any of the girls in the class, and so my teacher—her name was Mrs.—no, Ms. They were all single in those days. Ms. Janelle [ph]. She went out of her way to encourage me and to give me materials, and that was good. Actually, I remember my first contact with an art teacher was in grammar school, I think in the fifth grade. [00:08:06] We had art once a week, one afternoon a week, and Ms. McDonnell—I remember her name. [Laughs.] I don't know why.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And art in those days was, what, drawing something for Christmas or whatever?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Well, yes. I remember this one—the first time she came, it was in the early fall, and we had to paint leaves. Take—bring in a leaf, and paint it in watercolors. I painted a leaf. At that point, I loved to paint, but I didn't know I was better at it than anyone else. I had never thought of it in that way. I just loved to do it, and I did it well, and I was very secretive about it, actually. My leaf was the best in the class, and she looked at it and she said, "Did you do this?" and I said yes. At first, I thought I did something wrong, because she looked at me with sort of a surprised look on her face, and she said, "Paint another one in front of me." So I did the same thing in front of her, and she took it, and she tacked it on the wall, and she told the students it was the best in the class. That was the first time I ever received open praise from—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Some recognition.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —someone other than my parents. Well, my parents didn't even know what I was doing, but they thought it was perfectly all right to do it. After that, she treated me like a very special person. That was the first time I was aware of the fact that I did something better than someone else. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did you do besides—in high school, for example, besides having occasional art classes? Were you interested in sports or other academics?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I really wasn't interested in anything but painting. [00:10:00] I did badly in mathematics, and I did badly in physics, because of the mathematics, I suppose, involved, and I hated it. Then I assumed I just wasn't very bright, because I wasn't getting grades as—my grades were not as high as the grades of my friends. In my senior year, my chemistry teacher, Ms. Battle, a little skinny woman who everyone feared—she was tough, and she was supposed to be a marvelous teacher, and this is one class no one horsed around in. Now, in those days—this was during World War II—there was an awful lot of playing around in the classes, because people were leaving every day for the services. Instructors were leaving. So we were allowed to—we got away with things that one normally wouldn't in those days, in a classroom. But Ms. Battle's class was one class no one fooled around in. It was supposed to have been the most difficult class, the chemistry class, in the school, and it was something no one looked forward to. I remember the first day, Ms. Battle said, in her class, she said—she laid down the law and she said she wasn't going to take any nonsense from anyone. She looked at me, and she said, "Giobbi, you're going to be my best student." She must have looked at my records [they laugh] because I absolutely wasn't the best student. But she said it in a way that, for the first time, I felt like a teacher really cared about whether I did well or not, and I was her best student. [00:12:00] I never forget the lesson I learned. If a child is approached the right way, his best can be tapped by—she was smart. She knew how to reach—she certainly knew how to get to me, and I realized I wasn't so dumb. I just [laughs] never had anyone approach me the right way. Unfortunately, I wasn't in her class very long. I was drafted out of her class fairly soon afterwards, and went into the Army. But there—

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was life generally like for you? You went to school. What did you do in free time? Draw, read, do—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I worked. In those days, everyone worked.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You had jobs. Everybody—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. I had a five-hour—I worked five hours a day after high school, every day, and I worked eight hours on a Saturday. All of my friends worked. We all had to work. I never had time to study. Of course, that's no excuse when you think of what Abe Lincoln did [laughs] but I wasn't Abe Lincoln. But I never had time to study. I was tired when I came home. But I had it fairly—I didn't have such a bad deal. I had friends who worked a full night shift, and they went to high school. They worked eight hours. They worked on the 11:00-7:00 shift. Very difficult work, like working in railroad yards. Then they went to school all day. Many of them would fall asleep in class. Everyone worked, and so my afternoons were not free. I worked. I had a—I did all kinds of work. I worked in Joe's Tire Shop. I recapped tires and changed flats. That was kind of hard. Or I might—I worked as a clerk in a grocery store, and I worked as a stock boy. [00:14:01] I did anything that—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —was available.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: What was available, yes. But we all worked. As far as sports were concerned, we enjoyed watching the football team play. I was too small to play football, so that was out of the question. Besides, I didn't have the time. I had to work, so I couldn't possibly get involved with sports. I never really was that interested in sports, I suppose because it wasn't available to me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you have any outside interests, or was it hard because there wasn't any time?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Right. None. All my spare time was taken up with my painting. The minute I had a spare moment, I painted. And—

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of work did you do when you were in high school? With the teacher's help, or set your own problems? There was no museum around Waterbury or anything.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: There was no museum. I used to—I still have some of the items I collected, but I cut out reproductions from magazines. *Life* magazine used to occasionally run an article on famous collection of sometimes. I'd save reproductions of paintings. I remember the first year when the war started, in 1938, and when the mills started working again, my father had a full-time job again—I remember that year, he gave me something like six dollars for Christmas to do what I wanted to do. Maybe it was five dollars. I bought a book on painting. I still have the book. I just—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Which book was that, do you remember?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: *World Masters*. It included—I don't—I think Sir Kenneth Clark wrote it, the text. I'm not sure. [00:16:00] I have it at home. It included reproductions of painters, from the Old Masters to Van Gogh. Homer. That was the only exposure I had to painting. There was an art school at Waterbury called Waterbury Art School, and I could have even gotten a scholarship. People asked me to go, but I didn't want to go.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I instinctively—well, my instincts just told me to stay away from it, and I'm glad I did, because I had 10 years of art school, and that included Europe and various schools in America. I never allowed the nonsense that I learned to get to me, and I think I never allowed it to get to me because I never really had a teacher who was so overwhelming that he influenced me and directed me. I did meet one teacher in my lifetime who did influence me, and who was a good influence on me. That was Henry Hensche in Provincetown. But I'm grateful today that I had a bad education, rather than a good education, because I don't think there's anything worse than having to shake off theories that are no longer useful, that were projected by people with a strong personality. It was very easy—

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's very hard, yeah.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: That's what I've noticed, some of the experiences other people are going through. It was very easy for me to shake off my traditional background, because it never made that much sense to me. What I did keep, I think I've been able to use fairly objectively. I'm very strongly influenced by Italian painting. I'm interested by Futurism, which I've learned on my own. [00:18:00] I'm interested in Renaissance painting, especially early Renaissance, which I have learned on my own, in Italy. Just a question of exposure and living with it for a long period of time. I'm interested in medieval art, which—but everything that stayed with me, all the information that I've been able to utilize in my own work, I've experienced on my own. I learned more from other students than I learned from—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. One usually does. What was the army like for you? Because you hadn't been anywhere besides Waterbury, had you, by the time you went in the army?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No. I was a young, innocent—oh, my God. In those days—of course, we're all a product of the movies to a degree, because that was our outlet during the Depression. Life was dreary and miserable. It wasn't that miserable. We had fun. We had lots of fun, in fact. We ate very well. My father—I used to go gather wild mushrooms with my father, and he always had a big garden, and even seining with his Italian friends in New Haven, with a net that they had made themselves. We always—fresh fish. So we ate well, because my parents knew how to provide us with good, economical food. But it was dreary. It was a small town, and there wasn't really that much to do. We'd go to the movies, and you'd lose yourself in the movies, and you'd lose yourself—you'd identify—not really identify, but you would sort of absorb the characters, your favorite characters, and for a while, you sort of became that character. The morals, the idea of the great blue-eyed, white, Anglo-Saxon good guy, and the dark-haired, dark-eyed, dark-skinned bad guy—I remember in the movies, the Spaniards and the Italians were always evil, and the good guys are always the English and [they laugh] if you had blue eyes—even in the cowboy movies, if the cowboy had a white hat, he was a good guy. [00:20:21] If he wore a black hat, he was a bad guy. And so our morals were based on the morals that the—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Movie morals, yes.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —movie morals that they presented to us. We were very naive, not like the kids of today. When I went into the army, I was a very naive 18-year-old.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where did you go? What happened in the army?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I was drafted out of high school. This was in 1944. Of course, I knew nothing about the army, except I had seen a film the year before that really made an impression on me, and it was *All Quiet on the Western Front*, with Lew Ayres, and that was—for the first time, I was really aware of the horrors of war, and it just scared the hell out of me, the film, and then I just forgot about it. Then I was drafted, and I ended up in Camp Blanding, Florida, after a six-hour train ride on a troop train—I mean, six-day train ride on a troop train. As soon as we got off the train, a suntanned, cocky little lieutenant—he really looked like a bantam rooster. He strutted out in front of us, and we got off this train after six days of eating on paper plates on a bumpy train, all grease, and all kinds of stains. They always fed us stew on the train, too. Our clothes were covered with grease, and we were miserable after that six-day trip. [00:22:01] He said, "You are in an infantry replacement training center." He said, "You're having—we're going to give you 17 weeks of training, and then you'll go overseas as infantry replacements. Those of you who work and learn will have a better chance of surviving than those of you who don't." He said, "A good portion of you will get killed." He laid it right on the line, and all the sudden, I realized that I was in a situation similar to what Lew Ayres was in [laughs] in *All Quiet on the Western Front*. That I was going to be an infantryman, and that my chances of survival were not too good, and that, suddenly, I was going to—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Everything changed.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —have to become a man. We ended up having 15 weeks of training instead of 17 weeks of training, because there was a drastic need for replacements that were getting killed so fast in Europe that they couldn't keep up with them, apparently. We had 15 weeks of training, and it was murderous. We were out all day, and then we'd go out at night. The last two weeks, we had to march 25 miles, with something like 65 or 75 pounds on our backs, and then live out in the field, and just do one horrible thing after the other. By the time I finished my 15 weeks training—it was cut to 15 weeks, because the need became great towards the end for replacements. After 15 weeks training, I was so miserable, I was looking forward to going to Europe. It was really easier.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You would get out of there. [00:24:00]

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It was actually easier. With the exception of the possibility of getting killed, it was easier in many ways. I was actually ready to do what they expected me to do. I didn't hesitate to do what they told me to do. It amazed me, even then, and it amazes me even more now, that they could transform a young, innocent boy into this object [laughs] sort of. They could do anything they wanted to, in such a short period of time. So I had 15 weeks training, and five days at home, and they shipped us right over. In fact, I was thinking about it the other day. The human drama, without getting corny, but the drama of war—war is very exciting. It really is, because it brings out the best and it brings out the worst in people. Being together with people from all parts of the country, and sharing misery and loneliness and unhappiness and discomfort with them, and willingly sharing what you have with them, and then sharing the experience of death and danger—it's extraordinary how people can handle it, how young people can, and how well so many of them do handle it. I was thinking about it the other day, and it's a very, very intense experience that, really, I don't think there's anything that compares to it. Painting pictures doesn't compare to it. Painting pictures is a long, slow, steady, laborious involvement. War is a—your experiences change from minute to minute, and it's a very temporary thing, and your instincts—if you live long enough, your instincts are honed to a point where you do the right thing, and you know how to size up people properly, too. [00:26:16] You instinctively do the right thing, because this question of survival enters the picture, and if you survive long enough, you're going to be that much more successful at surviving. In fact, they say if you live through the first day of combat, you have a good chance of living through the war. Of course, statistics finally catch up with you, but until you learn, until your instincts start to function, that's when you're most vulnerable. It's a very intense experience, and it's just—it's different from anything else. I was thinking about one aspect of it the other day. I was sick—I got—on the boat coming over, I caught some sort of a bug. We were packed like sardines in the boat. We were in a big convoy. I had to wait in the sick line for about an hour before they got to me, and just before they got to me, I passed out. So they picked me up and put me on a table. I sort of came to on the table, and I was perspiring, this cold sweat, and I had a fever. They said, "The sick bay is full. Just go back to your bunk. You don't have to leave your bunk until we get to our destination." They gave me some pills, and that was that, and I stayed in the bunk. When we arrived in Le Havre, France, I still had a fever, and I was quite shaky from my illness, and I had to disembark with the rest of them, with about 65 pounds on my back. It was raining. It was cold. We had to stand in the rain for I don't know how many hours before they got us all organized. [00:28:03] They put us on cattle cars and sent us to a destination where we were given a quick lecture to, and then we got on to more cattle cars, and we're packed like sardines. My head

was on somebody's lap, and somebody's head was on my lap, and my feet were on somebody else, and somebody's feet were on me. We just criss-crossed. We were in cattle cars for five days before we got to Belgium. Four or five days, it was. I was perfectly all right. I didn't get sick. My fever went—left me the next day. It's just absolutely amazing what you can take when you're—somebody must be [laughs] I felt someone must have been looking at for—but it was a very traumatic experience, and you never forget it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What happened to you in the army? Because you were there for two years, right?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I went overseas, and then when the war ended, we came back to the States. We were supposed to be in on the invasion of Japan. Then the war ended with Japan, and I was sent to Texas, and then to Colorado, and eventually I was discharged.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long were you in Europe, then?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Oh, I was in Europe just seven months, I think. Soon as the war ended, we were sent back, because our division—what they did was they discharged all the older men. They removed the younger men who hadn't been in combat, and they just had a division of young men who had experienced combat. We were supposed to come back to the States, take an extra month of amphibious training, and then we were supposed to be in on the invasion of Japan. Well, fortunately, that didn't happen. They were teaching us Japanese words, like, "Come here with your hands up" and [laughs] stuff like that, which the Japanese, for some reason or other, didn't believe in or understand. [00:30:00] So few of them surrendered. Then, when the war ended, I took advantage of the GI Bill, and I went to art school. But I had a good something going for me. At that point, as I said, my instincts were—well, first of all, I had the Depression background, which was a survival environment, and then the war, a survival environment. So when I went to art school, I had everything going for me. My first year in Boston, I was trying to live on a dollar a day, three meals a day, and I just couldn't do it. I realized that if I didn't—this was in the '40s, and I realized if I continued to live that way, that I'd die of a bleeding ulcer or some foolish thing. I was still a young man, and I felt that I would reach my prime much later as an artist. So I decided then and there to take care of myself physically, and I learned how to cook. I was very careful about what I ate. This is before people talked about health foods, or eliminating fat from your diet. The word "cholesterol"—I didn't know the word existed then. I started taking care of myself physically, simply because of this survival background. I instinctively did the right thing. I learned how to cook well, on very little, and that helped me to live as a painter later on, because when I got through with art school, I painted on a full-time basis. I never did anything but paint. I never—unlike a lot of your well-known painters today, who are commercial artists until their art started to sell—and you can go right down the line, as you know, a good portion of them did other things other than paint until they started to sell their paintings. I would paint—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, they taught, worked with carpenters, all kinds of things, yeah.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I did nothing but paint. [00:32:00]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. How did you decide to go to Boston? You went—where? You went to New Haven.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I went to New Haven first, because it was close to home, and it gave me a chance to catch my breath. At the same time, make a gradual transition from—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you find Whitney School of Art?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Well, it was the only art school within commuting distance that made any sense. The instructors were mostly from Yale, and they weren't bad. It was just the typical type of instruction. For instance, we had to work in black-and-white a certain amount of time before we worked in color. Which is nonsense, because what they were asking us to do is translate a still life into black-and-white before we understood color. What we should have done was work directly with color, and after you know color, then it's easier to translate color into black-and-white. But the usual—the typical illogical type of theory that one got in most schools in those days. It wasn't a bad place. It suited my purposes. It gave me a place to hang my hat until I was ready to make my next move.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Would you say that was the first time you had professional artists teaching you?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It was?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: The Whitney School of Art.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who taught there then? Do you remember any of the instructors?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I can't remember one name. We studied perspective, and we studied drawing, and we had art history, which was pretty thorough, and painting class. The second semester, we had painting class. I can't remember one name, because this was before Albers. Actually, Yale had a pretty mediocre art department at the time. It was very commercially oriented. [00:34:01] Most of their people ended up in the commercial world.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It was still kind of academic, too, wasn't it?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It wasn't good academic, not compared to the type of academic experience I had in Italy, for instance.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long did you go to that school?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I was just there one—I think it was one semester. Or maybe it was a year. I don't remember.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But then it sort of wore out? You had enough of it? You learned something new?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Then I knew I had to get out of Waterbury. I knew that I could never really work at being a full-time student at home. There are too many distractions, and I was commuting, and it just—I didn't believe that—I knew I had to do more than just go to school, and then put in so many hours in school each day, and then forget about it until the next day. So I felt I had to get home—leave home. All the schools at the time were full. You couldn't get into a school without at least a year wait, a good art school. There weren't that many art schools—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right, still aren't.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —at the time. Very few universities had art departments. There were very few schools, actually, when you come to think of it, at the time. But I heard about this school in Boston called Vesper George School of Art. I thought, well—I wanted—I heard of the Boston Museum, but I'd have to wait at least a year to get into Boston Museum, so I thought, well, I can go to Vesper George and then work from there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Switch over, yeah.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: The idea was to get away from home. So I went to Boston, and Vesper George was a mediocre school, but I had one good experience. I was pretty unhappy there, because the instruction was mediocre, and the instructors, I felt, were mediocre artists. [00:36:03] I thought, there has to be more to painting than this, than what I've been exposed to. A visiting lecturer, Henry Hensche from Provincetown, gave a painting demonstration at Vesper George. For the first time in my life, I met a serious painter, my definition of a serious painter. He was very much involved with Monet's color theory. In fact, he's the authority—I think he is probably the authority in America on Monet. I don't think anyone understands Monet more than Henry Hensche does. It was marvelous, because he worked with—he had his students work with abstract blobs of color, and with a palette knife, so that one didn't get involved with drawing, and just work with color, and learn how realistic color worked in nature. Monet's theories, just painting the same object at different hours of the day, and different light conditions. I went up to him after the demonstration and asked him if he taught anywhere. He said, "Yes, in Provincetown, in the summers." So I went to Provincetown and I studied with him. He was the first teacher, and the only teacher, that taught me something that I was able to really sink my teeth into and go off on my own from there. He taught me how to develop my own color sense. He didn't teach me color. He didn't teach color. He taught one how to develop their own color sense, but it was realistic color, which was fine. If that's all I can thank Vesper George for, it was—that alone was worth the three years I spent at Vesper George, because I suddenly became involved with a serious artist, and that's what I desperately needed.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I just want to ask you, when you were in New Haven still, did you have a studio at home, or where did you work? [00:38:01]

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I didn't have a studio. I just worked in class, and then I went home. I knew that was absolutely impossible.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What about Boston? Did you set up a studio situation?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: In Boston, I shared an apartment with several other people. We had homework to do, projects, which I did. After the first year, after I met Henry Hensche, I was good enough—I was a good student. I was always—I guess—I don't know, I'm probably—I think I was probably the best in the class. Not that I had that much competition, but I was a good student, and I worked hard. After meeting Henry, I just couldn't go along with the little projects, meaningless projects, that the school presented, and so I told them, I said, "I'm not going to do that. I'm going to go into one of the empty rooms, and I'm going to paint. Either figure"—one of

the students posed for me—"or a still life, but I'm going to paint. Then I'll show you what I do, and then you can say what you want." They let me do that. So I did a lot of work on my own. They allowed me to do what I wanted to do, and what I did was just practice what I learned from Henry Hensche, which was just a question of doing countless studies. I have some of the studies here. I can show you.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What do you mean about the color theory? To sort of get back to—what did he say when he was talking about an Impressionist point of view?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: He talked about—his prime concern was color, naturalistic color, color as it exists in nature. He was a marvelous draftsman, though. He said, "It's all a question of understanding color." [00:40:00] He said, "Through color, you understand form. Through form, you understand drawing." He said, "You learn how to draw. You learn everything about realistic painting if you know color." Now, the Impressionists—up until Impressionism, color was more or less—realistic color didn't exist. Landscapes were painted in studios. Color, for the most part, with exception of individuals like Turner, or maybe Constable, was tonal color. The artist would decide on a particular color, and then he'd work it—for a flesh tint, let's say—and he'd work it from black to white—dark to light. He'd darken it, or he'd lighten it. He worked—his approach to color was in a tonal tradition. Monet brought this new theory to a head. Of course, it doesn't begin with Monet, but Monet finally put it all together and said, no, color changes in nature according to the day, according to the hour, and that the individual has his own distinctive color, his likeness is completely identified with his color, and that form turns with a color change rather than a tonal change. You can start with a yellow and end up with a green, or whatever color your face happens to—whatever colors you pick up. Your environment affects it. The Impressionistic approach was towards a color change versus a tonal change, that the painters before the Impressionists were involved with. [00:42:00] Monet said, in order to understand nature, you've got to go out and paint in nature. You have to paint in the environment you're painting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You've got to have it in front of you and do it.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Exactly. You can't do it in a studio. You can't start a landscape outdoors and finish it out in the studio, for instance. For me, it certainly—I was getting something that was 75 years old, the theory, but for me it was an enlightening new theory, because I never heard the theory, and what I liked about it was that it was something I could actually work at. The rules were not rigid. It was just a question of working outdoors and looking hard enough. Henry's theory was—and he got this from Charles Hawthorne—don't use a brush when you start these studies, because you get involved with drawing. Just use a spatula, and make color blobs. You work one color against the other until you finally get the right color combination. From those blobs, you can break down the shape, then you can break down the mass, and eventually you can break it down to fine drawing, but you start with color blobs. So you really start off with abstractions, and we spent the whole summer just doing these abstract color combinations.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was your first summer with him, then? '40—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: That was '40—

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Forty-] seven, eight?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No, '48. It was very exciting, because we got up in the morning, and we were out painting, usually a figure outdoors. If it was a rainy day, we did a still life indoors, in the studio. Just working with abstract color blob. No drawing, no composition. We'd do a study in the morning, and we'd do a study in the afternoon. Of course, the light conditions were different in the afternoon. If you work five days a week—then Saturdays, there's about a four-hour criticism period, which he criticized all the work. [00:44:09]

PAUL CUMMINGS: It was all lined up, and he talked about everybody's work?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. He'd compare them. He'd show us where they didn't work and where it worked. He was also there during the day, occasionally. He would—then we'd scrape all the paint off the boards, we'd coat them with white lead, and start all over the next week. We never kept anything. That was marvelous, too. That way, no one painted pictures to keep. They were just studies. So that was a great idea. You knew that this study was going to be destroyed at the end of the week, so you really concentrated on trying to get a color relationship that worked without getting tricky, or without worrying about finishing it, without worrying about doing something that someone might like or someone might not like. So that was a marvelous experience. I love to do watercolors, and I did watercolors in my spare time. I'd get up two hours earlier, in the morning. I'd get up at five in the morning, go out and do a watercolor. Then we'd go out and do our serious work. Then, at night, after five, I'd go out and do another watercolor. You do that all summer, and it's amazing how fast you grow.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yeah, absolutely.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: When I was ready to go back to Boston, Vesper George, I wasn't ready to give up

anything that I'd learned, and I told them in so many words.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did they think of this?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: They—I think—there were a few instructors who thought I was a prima donna, probably, because they weren't any good as painters. There were a few instructors who admired me for it. But I got my way, because I just quietly painted in my own corner. [00:46:00] By the way, Boghosian, who was also a student at Vesper George—and he also went to Provincetown that same year. That's when I met him, in '47. Boghosian was the same way, only totally different. Boghosian didn't study with Hensche, but Boghosian made these fantastic little drawings of figures that looked like Cronack [ph] drawings. Very strange drawings. When we had a model, he drew with his back to the model. He'd get in a little corner somewhere and make these very beautiful, little, detailed—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Tiny.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —pen and ink drawings. We had an anatomy instructor from the Museum School who used to come by, and he'd get so frustrated with Boghosian. He'd say, "But the femur is not in the right place, and the gluteus maximus is wrong." [Laughs.] Bogy would just turn around and smile at him, not say anything, and go back to his little drawings. I think Boghosian [laughs] and I were the only two who ignored the system. But we worked hard, and they left us alone. The school was bad enough so that they left us alone. I think it was a better school—to get back to an earlier statement I said about a good education. It was a better school, and if our instructors were stronger, they probably would have given us a hard time and made it that much more difficult for us to try to solve our own painting—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Were there other students there that you got involved with or remember?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. Well, not—there was one who studied with Henry Hensche in '49, with us, and that was Richard Anuszkiewicz.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Right. He was there. Richard, at the time, I think went to school in Philadelphia. Came from that area. Another traditional painter. [00:48:00] He just couldn't get it. He didn't understand the—he told me he didn't understand the theory, but I don't mean that he didn't understand it intellectually, because it wasn't that difficult. He just never could get involved with it—

PAUL CUMMINGS: It wasn't his personal—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —scheme?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: He was a figurative painter, and he was a tonal painter. Then, a year later—two years later—he went to New Haven and studied with Albers, and that's where he clicked, with Albers there. It was a very drastic transition. It was from—Monet was far out, I think, for him at the time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And then Albers was another jump.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. It was just a question of finding, I guess, the logic that he—but Richard was there, and—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you like living in Boston? Because here is a city with museums, and there were a few galleries, not many. Did you use those? Did you go to them?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Oh, it was a great experience. Boston is a marvelous city. It was even better than, because there was no violence. Boston was a marvelous city for students. It was a student town. You had Yale and—I mean, Harvard, and all the Ivy League schools, which I had nothing to do with, but it was filled with students. Of course, the Boston Museum is a magnificent museum, and the Isabella Gardner Museum. There were some—there was the Institute of Contemporary Art, that was—there wasn't a heck of a lot in New York at the time either. In fact, Boston was probably more exciting than New York, because I don't think they had anything comparable to the Institute of Contemporary Art.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, Museum of Modern Art, which—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I mean on a museum scale. I remember I saw a Munch show in '47. I had never heard of Munch before that, and I was just overwhelmed by it. Of course, the Isabella Gardner Museum was a place we went to all the time. [00:50:02]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you make sketches in museums, or paint, or do any of that?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. I have them in my sketchbooks. I did one—well, I didn't make sketches of paintings, no. I did go to the historical—to Peabody Museum, at Cambridge, and I made sketches from mummies, which I have in my sketchbooks now. Of mummies and—I was very interested in expressionism, but a romantic form of expressionism rather than a Germanic form. Greco rather than Nule [ph]. I think of Masaccio as an expressionist, and Goya, that sort of thing. In fact, the things I did reminded me of Goya. They were shrunken heads, in rather frightful positions that embodied—mummies, Peruvian mummies, and South American mummies, that were fascinating. I drew them, and I have the drawings. I did not draw from the masters. I did as a child, from photographs, but I didn't when I was a student. I didn't even do it when I was in Italy.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why is that?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I looked at them a great deal, but I never copied an Old Master painting. I always thought it was meaningless. I understood the technique, the various techniques they used, and so I practiced the techniques on my own compositions, but I never—I did make drawings, I did make compositional drawings, quick sort of thumbnail compositional drawings, from the Old Masters, but I never really set up an easel in front of a painting—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —and copied?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No, I always—

PAUL CUMMINGS: That kind of died out with World War II. [00:52:01] Very little has happened in that way since.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I felt that the work was so powerful—obviously, if you're going to copy something, you're going to copy something that's meaningful to you. I always felt the work was so powerful that it would have to seduce you. I thought that it was much more meaningful to look at something and try to understand it visually, and then go back and see what you remembered. I thought it was too easy to sit in front of a painting and copy. I remember I used to go to Uffizi, and there was always—it was usually a little old lady that was copying the painting, and very well, really quite well. I just never identified with that kind of involvement. I wasn't interested in copying.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was Provincetown like in the summers that you were there?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Provincetown was marvelous. I used to—I remember walking down the main drag, Commercial Street, nine o'clock at night, on a Saturday evening, nine o'clock in the evening, walking down the entire drag and not coming across—walking down the middle of the street and not coming across an auto. There were just a few bars, and they were never crowded. It was still a fishing town, and my best friends were fishermen. I used to go out with them occasionally on their boats. They always gave us all the free fish we wanted. They thought it was bad luck if they turned down a request for fish.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. Anyone who asked for a fish got fish. And not junk fish. They'd give you a haddock or anything you wanted. So we lived on fish. We'd go down in the morning and get fresh fish. The light, of course—the reason why it became an art colony is because the light is spectacular. When you realize its geographical position—it's situated at the end of a peninsula that's about 60 miles long. [00:54:07] It's like a finger that goes out into the Atlantic. There's no industry. There's no way—the air is absolutely clear. It still is. It's absolutely clean, and the light is spectacular. Of course, it was a quiet little fishing town. It was a marvelous place to fish—to work. It was great until the early '50s. Then it started to slide. It became a tourist trap, simply because tourists heard about all these crazy artists, and they heard that all sorts of wild things were going on, which wasn't true at all. They came to Provincetown to look at the artists. There was a homosexual element there, and they were quiet, enlightened, nice people. People went there to look at the artists and homosexuals.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Entertainment.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. There was a very—there was a marvelous group of people there. Really, they worked hard. They're talented people, writers and—and the whole thing was—it was a marvelous environment. It was really nice. Then it—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you get to know a lot of the art people and—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Oh, sure.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —everybody who was around?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I knew many of them. I eventually got to know Hans Hofmann fairly well. It was a very open—Gottlieb. I met Gottlieb there, and Milton Avery used to go there. I met Franz Kline. He was a latecomer. Of course, Edwin Dickinson. Everybody. Sooner or later, they all went through Provincetown, and—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Through Hensche, you must have known all that generation. [00:56:02]

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Hensche was a very conservative painter, and he didn't know many—he didn't get involved with many of the abstract artists. No, that I had to learn on my—he also felt—he had a lot of hang-ups about abstract art. He felt intimidated by it. See, he was very well-known as a figurative painter. Then, all the sudden, the abstract movement took over, and he was sidetracked. An unfortunate thing that always seems to happen in America—the minute a movement becomes popular, everybody else is sort of ignored.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's always black-and-white. You can't—yeah.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: He was just brushed aside. So he was rather bitter about it all. There were a marvelous group of abstract artists there, as well as figurative painters, and it was a very exciting environment. Then it just went to pot—really went to pot when Walter Chrysler came. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Took over the church, yeah.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: He took over a church, and we called it—he made it into a gallery, and we called it the First Church of Chrysler. He brought—he attracted a lot of undesirable people, because the word got around that he was buying everybody's work. The shops arrived en masse [ph]. The little shopkeepers from New York arrived, and there was money around, supposedly. Actually, he wasn't paying that much more money for the paintings. It all really—it drastically slid after '56, and it reached a point now where I—I bought a house in 1956, in Provincetown, a very lovely little house. I paid very little money for it. We used to go there in the summers, but I stopped going in—'65 is when I finally stopped, because it got so bad, I just didn't want to take the children there. [00:58:02] Now I'm selling it. The house is—I'll probably close the deal this month. The same thing happens in every artistic environment. Artists find an ideal place. Sensitive people, and talented people. They're not all creative people. Sometimes just people who like to be near creative people go, and the price is right, and everything is perfect. Finally, it's discovered by the spoilers.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, the artist always has a high energy level, and there are people who feed on that.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It's happened in SoHo now. It happens everywhere. It happened in the Village and—

PAUL CUMMINGS: In the Hamptons, even.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. Then they drive the artists out, and then he has to find another place, and he does. [Laughs.] And it's the same story.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Absolutely. Why did you continue going to Vesper George, though? You had the Hensche contrast. You stayed there for three years.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Right. I could have gone on to a school like the Museum School after the first year, but there was also a problem with the GI Bill. The government discouraged—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —movement?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Too many movement—changes. Then there was a wait for your check. So I was—that's the main reason why I didn't make a move after Vesper George. My counselor said, "You have to finish what you started." So I decided to finish up at Vesper George, and then go on to another art school after that. Then, of course, my argument would have been—was that, well, I had to continue my education on a—and so—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Higher level.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: At a higher level. So I went from there to the Art Students League. [01:00:01]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Now, how did you pick that?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: The League?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. Was that just an obvious place to go?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I felt I was ready for New York. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: But New York wasn't—nothing exciting was happening in New York at the time. It was all bubbling, but it hadn't—late '40s, New York was still sort of a stew of a number of movements. But I thought that it was time to get out of Boston. Boston was getting too comfortable, and I thought it was time to get another exposure, in the League. I met a few people from the League, and they talked highly about it, and the League was the school that people were talking about, the late '40s. So I went there and I looked it over, and I liked—the school was definitely the most exciting institution I had seen. It was very exciting in the late '40s.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You mean with the people and—well, it was full of GIs, too.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It was full of GIs, so they brought the standards way up, because they were older people, and they're no-nonsense. They're not just kids right out of high school. They're serious people. The school was filled to capacity. There were huge waiting lines to get into the better classes. I got in Zorach's class. I studied sculpture, and I studied drawing with Howard Trafton, and I also had a painting class with a man named McPherson, who was very good. From McPherson, I got the other—another exposure. From McPherson, I got—he talked a great deal about Matisse, and he was very much involved with two-dimensional space. I was going from Henry Hensche's realistic color to Matisse's two-dimensional involvement, which was a new exposure. [01:02:09]

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PAUL CUMMINGS: Side two. Well, you know, the Zorach influence is rather kind of interesting. Was that your first involvement with sculpture?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you come to want to do that, or study with him?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Well, I heard of him, and I decided that it was necessary for me to understand physical, three-dimensional space. I had no intentions of being a sculptor, but I thought the only way to understand physical, three-dimensional space was to work in a three-dimensional form. I also felt I'd learn more about drawing from sculpture. So I studied sculpture with the intention of being a painter, and Zorach was the best around, so I went with Zorach. But I learned nothing from Zorach.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.] Really?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: He was a horrible teacher. He was a horrible teacher. Not that he didn't know. He was a very ambitious man, socially ambitious, and he was very successful. He had a class full of wealthy women, and he spent all of his time with the wealthy women, who bought his work, and who entertained him, and he didn't give us any of his time. The young, serious student was totally neglected, and I always resented him for it. I know it's not kind to say things about someone who's dead, but I'll never say a kind thing about Zorach, because that's something I'd never do to a young person. I think—I always resented having to work with all these old ladies, who were doing it for therapeutic reasons, and were doing it because they didn't have—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —anything else to do.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: They had nothing else to do. I didn't object to them painting—working at the league, but I didn't think they should put me in the same room with them. [00:02:05] I thought young people, who were still very optimistic about life, who had their whole lives before them, should have been kept together, and I thought the old people should have been segregated from us. Because the old people were very demanding. They decided how they wanted the model. They decided everything. It was usually because they were not physically strong, and they tired easily, and so they decided how long they wanted a model, and they were not quick. They were not very skillful. It slowed us all down, and it just created a very stagnant move. Aside from that stagnant situation, Zorach gave them all of his attention.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah, because that's—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Because that's—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —where the money was.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —where the money was.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The action was.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: For the first time, I met a real materialistic artist. A good artist. In those days, I

was so idealistic, I thought, my God, a good artist is a saint. He never did anything wrong. He was honest, he wasn't materialistic. And here I met a good artist who was very materialistic.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Have you found a few others who are?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I've met quite a few since then. [They laugh.] But that was my first example, was that kind of materialism. I must say, I left the League with not a very good taste in my mouth for Zorach.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But you spent a couple years there, right, about?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: The first session was for one year. Then I went to Italy from there. I remember, during that time, I was living in a kitchen closet. I paid five dollars a week. It was a kitchen closet.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where'd you find it?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Off a kitchen. [Laughs.] I shared the kitchen with three other women, older women. [00:04:01] They had rooms. I had a very small bed. There wasn't room for a dresser. There were just some shelves, and no more than—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where was this?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: This was on 95th, off Broadway. I just barely had enough room to change my clothes in this little closet, but it was fine. That's all I needed, was a place to sleep. I worked at the League, and I had a kitchen. There was a stove and a refrigerator. We shared the refrigerator. We shared the stove. I was able to cook a very decent meal for 35 cents, or 25 cents. The cheapest meal I could get at Horn & Hardart's was something like 95 cents. So it was a good deal for me. Before that, I lived in a horrible place that—it was just the most depressing, dingy room, and I had to eat out, and I never had enough money. So that was bad, but this was fine, and it was only five dollars a week.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's fantastic. I mean, even then, for five dollars.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. I had a better deal later on. [They laugh.] Then I spent all my time in school. I had a full day, so it was fine. I did that for a year.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was Trafton like as a teacher?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Trafton was a good teacher. Unfortunately, he was very ill at the time. He had a heart condition, and he'd come in once a week, in a wheelchair, I think, and his wife took over the class. But his wife understood the theory. She was—it was helpful. His theory—basically, it was—I think it began as a commercial sort of course.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I think he did, yeah.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah, I think he was involved—he's some sort of a decorator. [00:06:01] But he had some good drawing theories. He emphasized Negro sculpture, for instance, and so we did a lot of drawings using these Cubist forms. He emphasized exaggerated perspective, and we drew figures—we'd grossly exaggerate the parts of the figures that were closer to us. Sometimes they were even a group of figures. Sometimes we had three models, one sitting, in a group pose. We'd draw an enormous foot that gradually worked off to a one point perspective. That was very good, because it made you aware of the fact that one foot, even if it was only three inches before the other, was before the other foot. So it was good training.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Move it around in your head.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. So we drew constantly. The class was very serious, and you drew. Just having a model and drawing all morning is good. But he gave us a lot of good information, and it helped.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you blend the information you were receiving at the League with, say, Henry Hensche?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It was easy. Henry taught me how to observe color and develop my own color sensibilities. When I drew the figure, I was translating the color of the figure into line, or into black-and-white, and I was much better than other people, because I had that much more behind me. It was very easy for me to look at a nude and translate that color into black-and-white, because I understood the color.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I see.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I knew—in other words, even today, when I paint with color, I don't think of

chroma. I think of weights of a color. I think of how a red—a cadmium red deep weighs versus—almost as if I put the colors on a scale and weighed them—versus how much a cadmium red light weight, versus how much a cadmium yellow light weighs, or a cadmium lemon. [00:08:12] When I work colors together, I work not with chroma, but with weights. I think of the weight of one color next to the weight of another color. I thought it was sort of a unique way of looking at it. Not that I was looking for a unique way, but I thought it was my own way. I understood that this was important to me, and I didn't question it, and I just—I worked that way. I remember reading one time about someone who had visited Picasso's studio, and he was using a particular red. It was probably a cadmium red deep. It was probably a cool red rather than a warm red. He was using a particular red, over a large area, and there wasn't much red left in the tube, and his friend said—this man said, "Well, what will you do when you run out of red?" He said, "Use black." It wasn't a supercilious statement. It made a lot of sense to me, because I think he was—

PAUL CUMMINGS: The value there.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. I think he was working with weights, too. The funny thing is, red photographs as black. By learning—just by working with color, naturalistic color, and learning how to look at the color through my eyes, it was a lot easier for me to draw, because what is a line? A line is a meeting of two masses. If you can see a red and a purple meeting, well, the line is formed by the meeting of these two masses. But if you can't see the red or the purple, you can very easily miss that line. Then just observing. I don't care how you do it. If you sit and observe for a certain length of time, in a certain order, you can easily utilize that experience in another way. [00:10:09] I can show you—I have some of the drawings. I can show you the drawings I did at Trafton's. They were fine. They were good.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Were you doing—well, you didn't have any space to work outside the League, did you?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. Yes. I used to do watercolors in the streets after school. I loved to paint outdoors, even in the winter. My water used to freeze. In those days, I didn't feel the cold. [Laughs.] I used to do watercolors in the streets, and never showed them to anyone. One day, someone from the League saw them. I don't know how. Maybe a student, a friend of mine, had one. I don't remember how this person found out about it, but she said, "You know, the Eggleston Galleries, on 57th Street, right down the street from the League, might be interested in your work, and they might be able to sell some." In fact, at that point, I was selling watercolors in the Witherstine—the Shore Studios in Provincetown. Mr. Witherstine, who's dead now, ran the studio, and he handled John Whorf, and he had—it was the only gallery in town at the time. He heard about my watercolors, and he came up to see me in Provincetown. He saw my watercolors, and he said, "You keep painting them, and I'll keep selling them." I gave him some watercolors, and he did sell some. I didn't even have enough money to buy paper, and remember, he gave me 10 sheets of 300-pound paper. Then when I went to New York, I continued painting watercolors. [00:12:01] Someone said, "Take them to Ward Eggleston. He can probably sell them." I thought, well, fine. So I took the watercolors to him. He looked at them, and he liked them. He said, "Leave them here." I said, "All right." He called me up the next day at the League, because I didn't have a telephone, and he knew I was at the League, and he said, "You've been awarded the Emily Lowell [ph] Award." I said, "What's that?" [The laugh.] He said, "We're going to give you a one-man show, frame all your watercolors, and pay for all the costs." He said, "Do you have enough watercolors?" I said, "I think so." So I gave him my watercolors, and I had a show, and I sold some stuff. I got pretty good reviews. After that, they gave me another grant, \$50 a month for a year. That's when I went to Italy. To get back to Zorach, when I had that show, I didn't tell anybody about it, because I didn't take watercolor seriously. For me, my serious involvement was with my oils, and just the studies, and the watercolors I did for fun. So I never even showed them to anybody.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who suggested it? Do you remember?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Suggested what, the—

PAUL CUMMINGS: That you go to the gallery.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: One of Zorach's old lady students—I don't remember her name—who knew something about the gallery scene. I didn't tell anybody about the show. I didn't let anybody know about it at the League. One of the ladies came up to me, and Zorach was standing next to me, and she said, "I just saw your show and I think it's wonderful." He got this stiff expression on his face. He said, "Do you paint watercolors?" I said yes. He said, "So do I." Oh, he asked me if I did it, then he looked at this woman, who he knew, and who had been one of his patrons, I guess, and he said, "I paint watercolors also." [00:14:07]

PAUL CUMMINGS: A little competition. [Laughs.]

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Fine. So what? Then she said, "Have you seen the show?" and he said no. She said, "You should go see them. They're marvelous." He said, "Well, he may be a good watercolorist, but he'll never make it as a sculptor." She was even annoyed at that. I mean, for this old, successful man to be envious of a student's minor success—he was a little man. I resented what he said, because first of all, he never gave

himself a chance to see whether I had any ability as a sculptor or not, but I thought that was a horrible thing to say to a young artist who had serious aspirations. Who's to judge what talent a person has? I can think of more painters who started off slowly and badly in art school, and ended up staying with it, than painters who started off fast and ended up doing nothing. He didn't like that little bit of success I had. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Incredible. That's incredible. What was it that got you to Italy, to Florence, and why?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: My mother had just returned from Italy, and she said, "You've got to go to Italy and visit your relatives," because I didn't have one relative in America. She said, "Why don't you go to school there?" I always wanted to go to school in Italy, but I didn't want to go until I was capable of understanding of what I was exposed to. I didn't want to go to Italy as a dumb art student. I wanted to go as a student with a fairly secure—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Some background, yeah. [00:16:00]

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: With some background, and someone who had an idea of where he was going to go.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You spoke Italian, though, didn't you?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I understood it, but I couldn't speak it at that point.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You didn't speak it at home, then?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No. My mother and father would speak to me in Italian, and I'd answer in English. I guess that was a reaction to being a first-generation American, and—well, that's another story. [Laughs.] We didn't get into that. I wanted to go to Italy, but I wanted to go when I was ready, and so I thought, after a year—this was during the League, when I was at the League, when my mother reminded me. I said, "I think you're right. I think if I—I don't have the money, but"—because, at that point, I was about to finish my GI Bill. She said, "We'll go this spring. I'm going back. Come with me. I'll get you set up with your relatives." She said, "We'll support you." At that point, my father was earning—was working in the mills, and he wasn't earning much. The Korean War had started, but the mills weren't doing well then. Waterbury prospers during war. They said, "Don't worry. Between the two of us, we'll help you, and you stay as long as you want." I had also received this \$500 grant from the Emily Lowell people, and I sold some paintings in my show. Sold about \$600 worth of paintings, something like that. I went in late spring of '50, 1950. I didn't know where I was going to stay. The first six months, I stayed with my relatives in this little, very small town, a little further north than Rome, on the Adriatic Sea, right near a city called San Benedetto del Tronto. During that six months, I learned how to speak Italian, and I familiarized myself with the country, and I visited Rome, and I visited Florence, and I visited Venice. [00:18:10] Then after visiting the major cities of Italy, I decided on Florence. While I was—that first six months, I painted every day. I did a great deal of watercolors, and I really worked hard, because I wanted—I assumed, well, when I go to the academy, I'm going to be with all these real sharp students, and I wanted to be good. Well, I selected Florence, because the city wasn't too large, but it had everything that I was interested in. The best Renaissance paintings were there, and all the great—the things that really turned me on, even works of art I didn't know about, but the Romanesque architecture, and the lovely medieval towns near Florence, Siena, and Arezza. I just thought it was a perfect place to be, because I was also fairly close to Venice, and close to Rome. And so I decided on Florence. Also, it was such a small city, I immediately felt at home. I went to Florence, and I stayed there for three and a half years. Trip to Italy, we were on an old boat, called the *Italia*. It was built before the First World War. It was a prize of war. The Italians got it from the Germans. It was filled with Italian immigrants, like my father, who had gone to America at the turn of the century, and returning to Italy, either to visit Italy, or in many cases, to retire. [00:20:07] People who hadn't been back to Italy in 40 years, 50 years, were returning. It was rather sad. I met one old man who looked very sad, and we started talking. He said, "I came to America as a young man. Had my family here. I came with the intention—from the moment I arrived, I came with the intention of returning to Italy when I was ready to retire." He said, "I retired before my wife, and we waited for my wife, and my wife was just about to retire from her job, and she died." He said, "That was a few months ago." He said—so the minute he got on the boat, he realized he was doing the wrong thing, because his children—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Everything was here.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Everyone was in America, and he realized everything he left in Italy—all his friends were either dead—most of them were dead at this point, and he was going back to a strange country, but he couldn't do anything about it. But there were some very funny people. The women would arrive with

enormous—they arrived with enormous corsages on their dresses and coats. They'd wear the corsages every night to dinner. It took us 15 days to go. Every night, they had these big, limp corsages—

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.] Fading.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —that would just sit on those enormous bosoms. [They laugh.] When we got off the boat, they had these enormous corsages on their coats, waiting for their relatives. It was very funny. It was a very, very funny trip. I enjoyed it very much.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you set up in Florence? You went to the academy.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Right. Obviously, the first thing you do is you go where the students hang out, and find out where one can find a cheap room. [00:22:00] And, as usual, I met some students and they said, "Go to such-and-such a place," or "Go to such-and-such a district," and I found a room. It was on Via de Servi, right near the academy. I think it's the street Cellini cast his *Perseus*. It was a medieval street. I had a room, and no heat, obviously. It was so cold and so damp in that room that my shoes never dried out. I had chilblains all over. My shoes never dried out. They were always wet. My clothing never dried out. The building—the room was like a—it was damper than my wine cellar. I held out for the winter, and then finally I met a friend who became a dear friend, and I still see him. He was working on his Ph.D. in art history. His name was Al Colarusso [ph]. He went to Florence to write a book on Ghiberti. He never did write it. Al was very bright, and knew art history very well. Al and I got—decided to live together, and we found a marvelous space in a building that had wooden floors, and was dry. Real great space, and it was very cheap. We never could figure out why it was so cheap. It was sort of strange. But we didn't ask any questions. One day, about two weeks after we moved in the place, I happened to look out of our window, which faced the terrace, and this big, red flag with a hammer and sickle was flying. It was May Day. It turns out that the house—the building had been taken over by partisans after the war, and a former colonel from the partisan was one of the squatters. [00:24:04] The building wasn't his, and they made it into their Communist headquarters. They were not paying any rent at all, and they were renting the extra space to make a few extra dollars. [They laugh.] They were nice people, though. But we didn't stay—we couldn't stay long, though. Finally we had to leave. Then, from there, we found a marvelous place that another friend lived in, and then he got married, so he passed the apartment on to me. Al had one floor, and I had the floor above. I had a studio. That was on Costa San Giorgio, the street Galileo lived on. Costa San Giorgio begins very close to the Ponte Vecchio, and it's a steep hill. The building I lived in was about a three-minute walk from the Ponte Vecchio, and then I lived on the fifth floor, and I had a little terrace. It was the most romantic spot you've ever seen. From my terrace, I had a view. I was in the heart of the city, and I had a view from the Piazzale Michelangelo, all the way to Santa Maria del Carmine, where the Masaccios were. Directly in front of me was the Duomo. It was just a spectacular view, and I lived there for three years. It was so beautiful. I paid 7,000 lira a month. That was about, I don't know, eight dollars a month, nine dollars a month. Because we got quite a bit for the dollar then. It was great.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's fantastic.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I just—when I went to school—I went to the academy every day. I also studied sculpture and fresco painting at the academy. [00:26:00] This was the walk to the academy. I had to cross the Ponte Vecchio. Then I crossed past the Uffizi, into Piazza della Signoria. Piazza della Signoria, on the right, is this great building, the city hall, which Arnolfo di Cambio, the architect, made in the 13th century. On the left was another—was a Gothic loggia, Loggia dei Lanzi, by Orcagna. This magnificent, Gothic, open loggia. Under the loggia was Cellini's *Perseus*, a couple of Giambolognas, some Roman, and some Etruscan pieces. Directly across, in front of the Signoria, was Donatello's famous *Judith*, a copy of Michelangelo's *David*. Then you go up 20 feet, and there's a marvelous manor's fountain by Ammannati. Then you cross the square, past the Orsanmichele, a magnificent structure, a Gothic structure, with sculpture by Ghiberti and Verrocchio all around the building. Inside is a marvelous tabernacle by Taddeo Gadi. Up to the next square, Piazza Santa Maria del Fiore, the Duomo was there, Giotto's Campanile. Across from that was Ghiberti's doors of the Baptistery. I went up the street from there to the academy museum, where Michelangelo's *Prisoners* were, amongst other things, and to the academy. [00:28:03] I made that walk four times a day, past all that magnificent sculpture and architecture. So it was quite an experience. Whenever I wanted to look at Masaccio, I'd just walk a few blocks down, and—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —there it was.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I'd look at it. If I wanted to look at Michelangelo—it was all there, and I spent a great deal of time looking. It took me years and years to understand Michelangelo. I knew that Michelangelo's work—figures were anatomically correct, but they couldn't function anatomically, and I couldn't quite see where he distorted the anatomy to the point where they really couldn't function anatomically, and one day I finally saw it. I saw it in the *Prisoners*. There were two prisoners. The arms of both prisoners were very, very—in practically the same gesture. I noticed the volume movements, or the muscles, of one arm went one way. In the other piece, the volume movements of the same arm went a completely different direction. I realized what he did was

he changed the movements of the muscles. He didn't change the muscles. He exaggerated them when he wanted to. But the muscles were all there, and that's what I couldn't understand. I couldn't understand why these things were not supposed to work anatomically, because although you might say his figures were muscle-bound at times, but anatomically, everything seemed to be there. But he changed the movements, or the volumes. The movement of a muscle in a particular way, set up in a particular—if the arm is moving in a certain way, that muscle has to move with the arm. [00:30:02] Well, in this other work, the muscle went the other way, although the arm was in the same position. So I saw two arms in basically the same position, but the volume movements were working in opposite directions. Then I realized that that's what he did. Then I saw it more often in other works. But I had to look and look and look and look, because nobody really explained it. I read that his things were abstract to the point where they just don't work anatomically, but I could never understand why they couldn't work, because they looked right. So I had marvelous experiences. I understood the Old Masters to a point where I wasn't intimidated by them. Before I went to Italy, I was intimidated by them.

[Audio speeds up until the end of the file.]

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: When I went to Italy, I walked away from a lot of it if I didn't like it, and I knew why I didn't like it. When it was good, I learned something from it. To this day, it feeds me. It's—especially people like Masaccio and Giotto. It's endless.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you like the academy, the place to study?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Oh, it wasn't as good as the League, but it was another thing. I discovered, at the academy, you just don't get the sort of thing you're looking for in an art school. Somehow you feel they're going to open doors for you. They don't open doors for you. If they did, I wouldn't trust it, because it means that the instructor is so powerful—like in Albers's case. I think Albers was such a powerful instructor, I think he destroyed more artists than he helped, which is probably right, but I think it would have been—it was probably very difficult to shake off Albers's theories as a young artist. I met—the academy was set up—it was sort of a place where—it was a place of esteem as far as instructors were concerned. If you reached a certain point in your artistic career, you got a job at the academy. It meant you didn't have to work much. It meant you didn't have to do much, and you—

PAUL CUMMINGS: You got some income, and prestige. [00:32:00]

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Exactly. And none of the instructors worked very hard. I had a good painting instructor, but I learned nothing from him.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: He was more interested in getting back to the studio to paint. He wasn't a real—he wasn't a teacher that was capable of giving what he had to give. I really think it's very difficult to be a painter and a teacher. I think one has to suffer. I think, if you're a teacher, your painting is going to suffer, and if you're a painter, your teaching is going to suffer. But he was involved with his own work. He was a solid painter.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What were they interested in? I'm particularly interested in the contrast. You had just come from the League, where there was this ferment and there was all the energy and activity, and here you go to Florence. Now it's a whole different milieu.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It was low-keyed in Italy. It was a much more intellectual involvement as far as the instructors were concerned. I think, in general, the instructors were much smarter. They were. They were much smarter than the American teachers. They were really professional painters. In America, there were very few real professional painters teaching. Most of the teachers I met, with the exception of Hensche and, all right, Zorach, most of them were people who were teaching because they had to, in order to earn money. In Italy, granted they needed the money also, but it was different. It was a much more—they were painters who were teaching because they reached a certain professional standing. They talked—you could talk with them more than you could—on a higher level—than you could with American instructors. It was a much—and they—

PAUL CUMMINGS: On what kind of terms do you mean higher level? I'm curious.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: On a philosophical level. I mean, if you were capable of it. They wouldn't talk so much about techniques and application of paint, and a lot of the nonsense you learn in American schools, as they would talk about why Giotto's—why his work in the—what's that chapel in Padua where his best paintings are? [00:34:04] Well, why the work in that particular chapel is superior to the work in another chapel, or why Masaccio's *Holy Trinity* is the best of its kind.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you find that the artists there looked backwards farther than, say, the artists at the League in terms of their historical references and points of view?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It depended on the artist. Some did and some didn't. Actually, I think, as far as the League was concerned, I think—well, you had it both ways. There were artists who looked back, and there were artists who didn't look back. Now, I studied with one man named Colachicky [ph]. I studied fresco painting with him. Of course, I learned a great deal there, because fresco painting is trial and error, and so there are things you can learn. He was hung up with the past, and he was very—

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's like carpentry, though, in a way.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Pardon?

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's like carpentry, in a way.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: The technique is—yeah, it's a trade. Actually, the painters didn't even worry about mixing the plaster, and laying on the various layers of plaster, and then mixing the colors. They had people to do that for them. But there's an actual craft involved, and so that can be taught. The people that taught fresco painting were usually people who were more traditional. So that was interesting, because I was very interested in painting frescoes, and I always grieved the fact that I had never had a fresco commission. I always felt that the best way to paint was to have a total environment, like the Old Masters had—four room—four walls and a ceiling—and recreate an environment, not paint a picture in your studio and then have it taken out of your studio and put in a totally different environment, where you know it's not going to look the same as when you painted it. It changes completely. But I thought having a stable environment to work in was ideal. I also thought the medium was the most—and I still feel the same way—the medium is the most beautiful medium there is, simply because it's so pure. [00:36:04] You can't play with it. You can't get tricky with it. It's a very honest, straight medium. The marvelous thing about fresco is, you can look at a Giotto, or a Piero della Francesca, or a Masaccio, and each—their images and their spatial involvements are so different that you think—you'd imagine that the mediums were different. The mediums look completely different, but if you look closely, they're all applied the same way, and it's exactly the same medium. I learned that the medium—you had to be careful with mediums, that mediums could easily become a hang-up. I love the purity of fresco. In fact, I learned about one fresco which not many people know about. In fact, I was talking about it with Ben Heller a few weeks ago, and he didn't know about it. He wouldn't admit it, but he didn't. [They laugh.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's true.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It's *stucco lucci del romano* [ph] and it's the medium—and I learned about this in Italy—it's the medium the Romans used. Very few people even heard the words "*stucco lucci del romano*"—very few people in the art world. The reason why I was talking about it with Ben Heller is because he had some fragments. He has a series of Roman fragments in his home. I said, "Do you know how this is done?" Well, he really didn't. I learned the technique. It's a magnificent technique, and it would be beautiful in a modern building, to use this medium on these big walls. The medium is—it's quite simple, but it takes a lot of skill to master it. With fresco, you use sand and lime, aged lime, for the final surface. With *stucco lucci del romano*, you use lime and marble dust. So you get a much harder and a wider surface. Then, in fresco painting, you use rabbit-skin glue as a binder, with powdered colors that had been dissolved in water. [00:38:00] With *stucco lucci del romano*, you use a vegetable soap, which you dissolve in water, like Palmolive soap. You apply—and you use that instead of glue as a medium, with powdered colors. You apply the paint on the surface the same as you would a fresco, doing a section at a time, as much as you can handle at a time. Then, after a certain period of time, you go over the painted surface with a hot iron, and the hot iron turns the matte soap medium—it's like a waxy surface, but it's not wax, it's soap. The iron turns that matte surface into an enamel-like finish. The enamel-like finish doesn't pick up dust like fresco does, and it protects the color, and it's much more durable than fresco. They don't know if that's the exact proportion—the exact medium that the Romans used, but it's close. And it's not wax.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah, it has that kind of—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It has a waxy surface when it's done. I guess there's a certain amount of wax in the soap. I learned how to do it. I didn't learn—I didn't know how to—I wasn't that skillful with it, but I would have if I had an opportunity to do some frescoes. But it's just a dead medium, because no one has ever—you need a wall to do that on, and I just never had an opportunity to practice it. The reason why I do these big architectural paintings, which are very architectural, is because I'm really painting on walls that I don't have. [Laughs.] I'm a wall-painter. So I have to compromise with my medium. So that was good, learning fresco painting and the *stucco lucci del romano*. Then I had sculpture class every day, and the sculpture class was good, because they supplied the material for armatures, and we did life-size sculpture, which we never did at the League. [00:40:03] They never encouraged you to do at the League. It's just too complicated. No one did a life-size sculpture when I was in sculpture class, which is something else I think Zorach should have encouraged. But we did life-size from the model. We did life-size sculpture every five weeks or six weeks, I think. We had a new model. So it was very good working with—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you think the sculpture has informed the painting, in terms of influencing it?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: At the time, I didn't know, and I studied sculpture a year—two years at the League, because I went back later on, and I studied sculpture three years at the academy. So I studied sculpture seven years. I didn't know how it was going to help. I knew that it was helping my drawing, and I knew it was helping me understand what I didn't know about the figure, but I didn't know how it was going to work out until 1962. I was painting and I got frustrated with the surface of the canvas. So I attached—I have this painting. It's about seven-foot square. I attached one-foot square studies that I had done. I had painted studies for the painting. I did a series of studies on Masonite. They're a one-foot square, and eight-inch Masonite, I think. I attached these studies to the surface of the canvas, just to break the surface. All of a sudden, that opened a door for me. The mere fact that they were physically off the surface of the canvas created a whole new spatial involvement. Soon after, I thought, oh, my God, if I can come out, I can go in. After that, I started cutting one-foot square holes, or windows, in the canvas, and then I slid in my Masonite studies for that same canvas into these open areas. I slid the panels in at various depths. I didn't realize it at the time, but eventually I realized that, regardless of what I did to the surface of the canvas, I had to end up with a two-dimensional involvement rather than a painted object, because I didn't want it to become sculpture. [00:42:02] In fact, Hans Hofmann came up one time to visit us, and he saw the things, and he was very interested in it. He said, "Of course, you know, these have to work as two-dimensional involvements." I said, "I know it. I realize that now." When they work, that's how they work. Now, I realize, at the time, other people were doing similar things, but I didn't know about it, because I went back to Italy. I came back from Italy in 1954. Then I went back to Italy in 1958. I went to Italy and I toured Europe, and I came back in 1960. I stayed in Memphis for a year—well, '59, late '59. I came back—I moved back to New York when we bought this property, in 1961. Up until 1961, I didn't know what was going on in New York, because, first, I never got the magazines, and I was away from the city. I missed all of—from '58—that was before Stella appeared on the scene, that was before Jasper Johns exhibited, and I didn't know what they were doing. As far as I was concerned, they were still painting in an Abstract Expressionist tradition. When I was doing all this stuff, I identified it with—after I looked at it a while, it reminded me very much of broken surfaces in medieval and Renaissance paintings, which they did do, only they were involved with three-dimensional images rather than two. I just assumed that, somehow, it filtered through and it came out. I still think that's what happened. Also, I was very interested in Futurism, which I—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did that come about? Was that because of Italy?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. When I started using double images—like, I'd painted a series of compositions, very similar, for a particular painting, and little studies, and then I'd eventually work it out on a large painting, and I utilized the studies in the painting, so I was getting a double image and a repeat image. When I started using those double images, I did it because it was like one painting was communicating with the other, and it created a certain tension. [00:44:01] They talked with each other, and I liked what was happening. Not what was happening so much as what the possibilities in future involvements were. I realized that the Futurists, especially Balla, did something similar. I looked at their work even harder. The more I looked at their work, the more seeds I realized that they'd planted, that we don't give them credit for. Certainly the double image, if you're going to identify with anybody, it has to go back to Balla. Then, of course, soon after, Pop art appeared on the scene, and the double image that all of the Pop artists used. I don't know where their inspiration came from. As I said before, I don't believe in immaculate conception. Some people say it grew with them, but I can speak of my sources, and I speak of them very openly, simply because I feel good about it. Futurism played an important part, and is still playing an important part, in my work.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you get involved with that? Was it through painters, or your own discovery, or just seeing—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: My own. In fact, most of the discoveries I've made, and most of the directions I've gone in, are my own.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did you think about the contemporary art that you saw in Florence the years that you were there?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Nothing. Nothing. I was in the wrong city. Milan was where I should have been. There was one good contemporary artist, Rosay [ph], who you really had to work hard at to understand him and like, but he was a marvelous painter, powerful painter. But nothing could grow out of it. There was nothing there for other artists. But when he was a young Futurist, he did some very interesting things. He was a latecomer to the movement, but Rosay is definitely identified with Futurism, the latter part of Futurism. But Rosay was a very intimate, very, very strong painter. A regional painter, though. He never—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —burst out?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —burst out of Italy. It's a shame, and that's what so much painting is about. It's

so regional. We have painters here who—well, take a man like Milton Avery. Milton Avery, in Europe, just wouldn't—they wouldn't even look at his work.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They're beginning to now. [00:46:00] In the last—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Maybe in England.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, in Switzerland, France.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Oh, is that right?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah, in the last four or five years.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Because they have so many painters who are similar, who we can accept, like Stuart Davis. They'd identify him with French painting. You miss a lot that way. While living in Italy, I discovered some marvelous painters who just are not known in America. Soffici, people like that, who are very good painters, but they're regional painters for some crazy reason. To this day, I have to defend Futurism with other artists. It's amazing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's never been very well seen in this country. No one—it's always been written about, for years and years, as kind of an offbeat thing of Cubism—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes, and that's not true. I have to defend it with artists. They think of it, as you say, an offbeat of Cubism. The Cubists were not involved with films. Balla was. I'm talking about 19[0]9 and 1910. In fact, videotape and all that comes out of Balla. The Futurists were not involved with physical movement. Kinetic art comes out of Futurism. I mean, the Cubists were not involved with physical movement. The Cubists were not involved with sound as an art form, with noise as a sculptural form. In fact, one of Boccioni's manifestos on sculpture, he talks about sound, gases, cloud formations, and physical movement as a sculptural form, 1913. There are Futurist musicians, using atonal music. Very—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, there are lots of things, yeah.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: There is Futuristic literature. Of course, Marinetti. There was Futuristic sculpture, which—just sculpture Balla did is way out. Some of it is quite marvelous. Abstract geometric sculpture he did in 19[0]9, stuff like that. Different materials. Then, of course, you have Futuristic architecture. Sant'Elia, who died in his early 20s, in World War I. [00:48:00] There are some drawings in the Museum of Modern Art. It's Bauhaus. Sant'Elia talked about Futuristic cities with pedestrian malls, made drawings for them. Traffic flowing one direction. Talked about the beauty of dams, modern dams, and warehouses, and things that Nervi eventually put to use. It wasn't just—without denying the marvelous contribution Cubism made, but Cubism was an extremely limited—

PAUL CUMMINGS: It was a studio environment.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: And these people were involved with the 20th century.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, it was also the political influence that helped spread the interest.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah, well, the political influence, that's something interesting, too, because you talk about Futurism and people immediately think of Fascism. First of all, in order for the Italians to get out of the Renaissance, they had to make some drastic—Italian artists—they had to make some drastic statements and commitments, just like the Impressionists want to burn down the Louvre. They had to break from the past. They had to enter the 20th century. They identified the 20th century with machinery, which was basically true, with the automobile. They talked about the beauty of an automobile. They had to—and they identified with World War II, which was—and they were accurate, because World War II meant the end of the old system in Europe. I mean, World War I, rather. Sorry. It meant the end of the system.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The thing that—I think everything you're saying is very true, but I still somehow suspect, when I look at Italian art, or talk to people who live there or go there, which I do on rare occasions, you still sort of feel the Renaissance hand, even though the Futurists have tried to remove it and do modern design and art, and everything. There still is a pervading influence of—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I don't think that's bad.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —centuries ago.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I don't know why it has to be bad. I think a good artist, like Balla, was able to use it to its best advantage. I think a man like Morandi used it beautifully. [00:50:01] I don't believe in cutting. I

don't think you can cut yourself from the best.

PAUL CUMMINGS: No, no, but it seems as if it's so much more difficult to grow in that environment than it is—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It is.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —in other places.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It separates the men from the boys. It is. There's no question about it. But to get back to politics and Futurism, Fascism doesn't appear on the scene until the '20s. Futurism is already over by then. The strongest period of Futurism was the immediate years after World War I, and the years before World War I. Marinetti identified with Mussolini for a while. Marinetti also—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, he was the most vocal.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. Also, Mussolini was a Socialist before he became a Fascist, and he betrayed the Socialist movement. He was elected, really, as a Socialist. He was an intellectual, and he embraced the idea of modernizing Italy. Of course, then, eventually, he [laughs] used it sort of to get going. They get involved with—there isn't a good book out on Futurism. That's what's remarkable, too. Let alone the individual artist. There isn't a good book out. There isn't a good book out on Balla, and it's just fascinating what that man has done. But anyway, I suppose I talk more—I talk a lot about them, and I'm not really that hung up with Futurism, but I feel someone should bring them back. I think one of the reasons why Futurism has been neglected is because it was an Italian movement and not a French, because everything had to come out of France during that period. It took Americans until 1944 to shake loose of French domination, and if it didn't come out of Paris, it just was meaningless.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Also, there's no powerful writer that came out of the Italian who translated, it seems.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No, that's true.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It wasn't—it stopped.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. Then, of course, Mussolini didn't help.

PAUL CUMMINGS: No.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It had to be that—

PAUL CUMMINGS: It had to be something else.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The thing that's fascinating, and I'd like to go into—we're not going to have enough time now, but studying at the League, then going to Florence, and then coming back, because you came back and went to the League. [00:52:00] Then you went back to Florence, or something like that.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Need to straighten that out a little bit.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: What happened was, I came back from Florence in '54, and at that point, I set up my studio in Hell's Kitchen. Twenty-five dollars a month for five rooms. No heat. A walk-up. But it had lots of space, and it was nice. I enjoyed it. I went to the League and I started painting. At that point, I felt that I could no longer work in an art school, and that I was ready to put in a full day's work. Up to that point, I couldn't paint in my studio a full day, consistently.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why, do you think?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I didn't know enough. I needed—the art school provided the incentive to work all day. I felt I should work all day, but I didn't know enough to work a full day on a painting in a consistent basis. I gradually worked up to it. By the time I got back to New York, I was able to put in a six-hour day. Then I felt I was ready to paint in a studio, on my own. But I went back to the League, because I wanted to do more sculpture and I didn't have the space. So I went there on a scholarship. I got a scholarship, and I just used the space, and I did plaster casts and stuff like that. So I really didn't go back for—I went for instruction. Hovannes was the instructor, and we'd chat once in a while, and he liked what I was doing, but I didn't get involved with him. I also, on occasion—I also got a scholarship to the graphics department, because I wanted to do some prints. Again, I didn't have a facility, so several times a week I'd go to the graphics department and do an

etching, again on my own. I just used—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who was there then?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Sternberg. Harry Sternberg. So I just used the facilities that year, and I didn't go—I'd go once or twice a week, and when things went slow—I also wanted to have—I thought, well, if things went slow in the studio, I can always go do a print at the League. It gave me a chance to get out of the studio and still put in some work. That's why I ended up in the League that year, '54, '55. But I really was in a studio. I was already selling. Not a great deal, but I was living off my work. I was selling work at Charles Allen, who helped me a great deal.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you find him? [00:54:00]

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Someone suggested I go see him, and I went to see him, and he liked my work, and he came to my studio, and every month he bought something. Then he'd send other people over. He was very kind to me. Other people would buy things. He sold a painting of mine to Joe Hirshhorn—two paintings of mine to Joe Hirshhorn in 1955, during that period, and he sold one painting of mine, which is now in the Hirshhorn Museum, that I painted as a student. A portrait of a young girl. Her name is Carla. It's a good portrait. I painted that in 1952, I think. He bought it from me, and he sold it to Joe Hirshhorn. I was supporting myself. I was living on nickels and dimes, but I was—and to get back to what we talked about earlier, about artists taking on commercial jobs, I knew that I was in a very fragile situation, being a young painter in a transitional period, from student to painter, and I didn't compromise anything. In fact, when I had enough money to buy—

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PAUL CUMMINGS: Say it's side three. We're talking to Edward Giobbi, in his studio. I can't believe it's December 1 already. With you were beginning the description of a project you fuse, which doing some illustrations, or some line work, in about 1954, '55, and various projects. You were then living in Hell's Kitchen, right?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Could we kind of pick up on that and continue?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Right. That was a—the transition period in my life, it was from student to painter. I felt that any kind of a compromise I made would have been—could have led to drastic consequences as far as my career as a painter was concerned. I made up my mind not to make any kind of a compromise in relationship to my involvement with painting. At the time, I was offered—I think it was \$1,200 to do a series of black-and-white drawings for a book on the Vatican, and I had sketchbooks filled with drawings on the Vatican, and I turned it down. I turned it down at a time when I didn't have the seven dollars I needed to buy a second-hand kerosene stove to heat the place, and I didn't—I was living from day to day. But I turned it down because I thought that it was important for me to—not to make any compromises, and I felt, at the time, that was a compromise. Today, it wouldn't be a compromise. Today, if someone asked me to make a series of drawings to illustrate a bible, or a book in particular, and if I was allowed the freedom that I needed, I would probably do it, because I'm in my orbit now. [00:02:11] But at that point of my life, I had to be very careful. I think that's something that young artists and art students should be—it's a thought that young people should be made aware of, because I think you learn a lot of unnecessary things in art school. In fact, painting, I think, is an unlearning process rather than a learning process. But I think one thing you can make young people aware of, especially when they're about to make that break from student to painter, you can make them aware of the fact that you will have to survive a certain amount of time in this transition period. That's when you're the most fragile, and that's when you should be the strongest as far as your reaction to the various temptations and offers that might be available, that might deviate your direction. I think that's when you make the compromise, and that's when a lot of painters destroy themselves.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What do you do to survive that?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: That's a good question.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I mean, economically, it was obviously very difficult.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. First of all, you've got to learn how to live on very little. It's important to know how to live with a certain amount of style for very little. I was fortunate. I learned—I lived in that kind of an environment as a young—as a child, during the Depression. [00:04:02] My parents lived quite well on practically nothing. We ate very well on nothing. My father gathered wild mushrooms, and I used to go with him, and my mother would can them, so we had wild mushrooms in our sauces all year. My father and his Italian friends made a huge seining net, and they'd go seining, and they'd gather mussels, and fish or crabs. We ate mussels and clams and crabs, and wild mushrooms.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Which you can't even afford today.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Which you can't afford today. That's what we ate during the Depression. Then we got the innards of animals for nothing. My mother said she got calves' liver for nothing. She used to get the liver, the lung, and the heart, and the kidneys for nothing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Fantastic.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Of course, now, they're exotic. And the sweetbreads for nothing. Now they're exotic items. In those days, people were not interested in them, and people would stand in bread lines and get a federal handout rather than eat sweetbreads, or veal kidneys [laughs] or veal liver.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Didn't know how to do it.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: They didn't know what to do with it. So we ate very well on very, very little. I think it is essential that the young painter know how to live with a certain amount of grace and style on very little. In America, it's very easy. It's much easier to live that way in America than it is in Europe, because food is still cheaper in America than any country in Europe. Hell's Kitchen—when I was living in Hell's Kitchen, chicken was 15 cents a pound, mussels were 15 cents a pound. Beautiful, fresh whiting—

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's a lot more now, though.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —was 15. Well, now, it's 30 cents a pound. Chicken is 30 to 45 cents a pound in the same area. Mussels are about 30 to 45 cents a pound. [00:06:03] Whiting is about 40 cents a pound. When you add inflation and—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —everything else.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —everything that's happened in the past 20 years, it's really not—it's still very cheap food. I used to feed—when I lived in Hell's Kitchen, I used to entertain—I was able to entertain six people, give them a three-course dinner, and I never paid more than \$1.25 for the entire meal. Today I can do the same thing with four dollars, maybe, in the same area, if I shopped in the same area. But I had one tremendous advantage that the young today don't have. I was—my entire childhood was in a survival environment, the Depression, and then I was drafted, and then I went in the army, and it was a survival environment. So by the time I went to art school, I was in first-class condition to survive on very little, because that was my entire background.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How were you painting in those days?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: In the—in '54?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I was going through a transition period.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because you now had given up school and studio work, and now it was you on your own.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. I was doing things that, at the time, were sort of misunderstood by many, but a few people, like Charles Allen and Joe Hirshhorn and Al Lerner, sort of reacted to. When I was in art school, I was very facile, and I always had to work with this facility. I always had to control it, because it had a tendency to—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —run away with you?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Run away with me, get in my way. That applied to my watercolors, and that applied to my oils. [00:08:00] When I was a young art student, I did very—my things were fairly skillful. They were a lot better than the things most people did when they were that age, and they were better than most well-known painters did when they were the same age. In the '40s, when I decided I just couldn't go through any more of that, of art school, and then I felt that it was time to start painting on my own, I deliberately set out to destroy this facility.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you do that, and why?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I did—well, I felt that the facility was holding me back and it was getting in my way. I felt that the only way I could go beyond the facility was to destroy it. I learned the lesson—I don't know if I mentioned this earlier, but I learned the lesson—when I was in Italy, in 1951, I was doing the usual watercolor, which I was quite skillful at. All of a sudden, I realized that the technique was holding me back, that I wasn't

reworking areas that didn't function, either because of the form or the color. I didn't rework areas, because I didn't want to destroy a certain watercolor quality that I achieved, that was skillful, but it didn't work as paint. When I realized that my facility was holding me back, I deliberately did everything that I know I shouldn't do with watercolor. I—

PAUL CUMMINGS: For example?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —used opaque, thick colors. I scrubbed color over color, and got muddy areas. I wasn't at all concerned with the technique. I was just—I treated watercolors as oil, as I would treat oil. The result was I didn't have a watercolor quality afterwards, but I got a better painting. [00:10:04] I did that for six months. I just deliberately worked it, purging myself from my facility.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why did you not trust that facility, though? What troubled you about the skills?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Well, I still feel the same way. I think that's the trap that artists have to be very, very careful of. I think the medium you use, and I think the images you use, and I think your color combinations should only function as vehicles. When you become dependent on a medium, or the application of paint, or a color combination, when it becomes a mannerism, then it's death. I felt that none of the—I felt the act of painting should not influence the painting. Which was my big complaint about Abstract Expressionism, because when I returned to New York in 1954, Abstract Expressionism was going very strong, and the main reason why I never became a part of the Abstract Expressionist movement was because I felt that they placed too much dependence on the physical act of painting, and on facility. I don't think there was a period in American painting when facility was more important than in Abstract Expressionism. I thought the cultivated drip, and all the deliberate explosions—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Splatters and all the other—yeah.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —and splatters, I thought they had to end up—they were mannerisms at the time, because after one, it becomes a mannerism. I felt that it had to—it couldn't possibly last long. I was surprised that Abstract Expressionism lasted until 1960, because I thought it should have died in 1955, because of that reason. [00:12:05] I avoided that, because I felt that was a trap. When I arrived in New York, I was going through this purging process, where I was deliberately using primitive forms. I used to use a medium that—it was one part dammar varnish, one part stand oil, and one part turpentine, and it gave me a very tacky surface. I was able to paint wet on wet, and glaze wet on wet, and I was able to get some very tactile paint surfaces. I could build up a paint surface like a Rembrandt with that medium, by using it a little thicker. When I realized that I was getting a little too facile with my application of paint, this was—I realized this when I was in Italy, as a student, and I have some paintings from that period, that I haven't repainted, that I think will show this facility. Then I thought, well, I've got to destroy this and go back to a pure, hard, sort of sterile application of paint.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did you do to accomplish that, and what—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: What I did was I stopped using the medium. I used just turpentine as a medium. I worked on a gesso ground. I prepared my canvases with—it wasn't really gesso, but it was a very dry, absorbent ground, so that it absorbed the color. It was a dry surface that I was working with, so that I'd have to fight to put the paint on the canvas, so that it would be a struggle, rather than an easy slide of colors, which would have been the case if I used the sticky medium. [00:14:10] I used a dry medium—turpentine, oil—on an absorbent ground, and I used—I kept my forms fairly primitive. Primitive in the sense of just simple outlines. I was always very interested in the Romanesque, so that sort of came through. I used sort of Romanesque shapes, and simple patterns that I had admired in Romanesque artists. But my whole involvement was involvement of purging myself of what I had learned in school.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What about the imagery that you were using?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: The imagery became quite simple. The imagery—I was still involved with architectural images, like Romanesque arches, and there was a certain amount of architecture in my painting. I—

PAUL CUMMINGS: When did that start?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: That started in '54. I used an open form. I didn't—I wasn't concerned with composition very much. I just wanted the paintings to flow out of the—off the canvas. I guess that was a hang-over from Monet. I wasn't concerned with composition too much, although I think you naturally compose things so that they work. If the paint works, usually the composition works. Certainly, Monet, he totally ignored composition, and yet his compositions are quite beautiful. You don't—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, they came with just what he was doing. [00:16:00]

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. You don't miss composition. I ignored everything. I opened up the forms. When I was in Italy, I was using low-keyed, darker colors. So I thought, well, I'll use brightly—I'll use primary colors—and colors right out of the tube, applied in this dry fashion. The result was that they had a—I think a lot of the strength of the paintings was in this very simple, honest approach, and in the midst of Abstract Expressionism, I suppose they probably looked even more honest, because they didn't have any of the bravado. It wasn't because I didn't know how to do that kind of bravado. It's because I was reacting against it. It's not that I was reacting against Abstract Expressionism. It just happened to be, at that phase of my life, I was reacting against facility and—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —skill?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —my own facility, and skill. I realized then—and the biggest lesson I ever learned in painting was that I'd have to go through periods in my life in which I'd have to deliberately work at destroying my facility, and I knew I'd have to do that every so often. It works out so that I have to do it about every five years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: And I do it. Yeah. It's like taking a [laughs] laxative.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [They laugh.] Why do you think that it appears every so often, and you have to [inaudible] trends [ph]?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: What happens is, I work with a particular image, let's say, and a certain color combination, and certain medium, and I work with that combination for a period of years, and then I notice that I'm becoming dependent on that medium or those images. [00:18:20] I find myself—I find that it's no longer feeding me, that I am sort of feeding it. When what I'm involved with stops feeding me, then I start to concern myself about shaking it off, eliminating it. In fact, I'm going through it right now. I used bright colors for quite a while. Colors, or reds, out of the tube, and yellows out of the tube, and a certain amount of virtuosity as far as the paint quality is concerned. Now I'm—well, I started it in June, and it's been about five or six years since I've done this. I found myself, without planning it, gridding my canvases, making grids of half-inch and quarter-inch squares on large canvases—there's one behind you that's 12 feet long—and deliberately, painstakingly, filling in each one of these little squares with a low-keyed color. Now, I just felt it was time—and I really didn't—it's not an intellectual process that I'm speaking of. I'm still a painter of instincts. It was just time for me to—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Kind of a cyclical—you know.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Exactly. Pull back, and just to restrain myself, and just force myself to just [00:20:04]

PAUL CUMMINGS: What happens, say, towards the end of a cycle, before you begin the restraint? Do you find that things flow too easily, that things just kind of come out and—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. I go through a period of depression.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It gets away from you. Yeah.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Because it gets so I feel I'm just painting, and I go through a period of depression first, and I'm not as excited about my work. I have to force myself to work, and I find myself forcing myself to paint. Then it doesn't take long before I realize that I'm becoming—I'm dependent. I've become dependent on a certain image, or a certain format. Without deliberately setting out to destroy it, it happens almost automatically. But I do go through this period of depression, and I go through this period of indecision. I never learn. The funny thing is, if I just sat down and thought about it, I'd know what was happening. But I never realize it at the time, until after I've made the break, and then I say, my God, of course that's [laughs]—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —what's happened. You were in New York for, what, a year or so, then you went back to Florence?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No, I was in New York from 1954 to 1958. I was there for four years. During that time, I went through this dry, sort of naive, in a way, application of paint, to a point where, by 1958, my paint was loosening up again. Only it was different than the period in Italy, of course. [00:22:02] My paint was loosening up again, and I was getting skillful again. So then I went to Italy, and I traveled. I went to Holland. I wanted to see the Rembrandts. I wanted to see Frans Hals, and I was delighted to see his work, because I had never really appreciated Hals until I went to Holland and saw his great things, and I realized what a marvelous painter he was. I went to Holland, and then I went to Spain. I went to Spain for two reasons. I wanted to see the Prado, and I wanted to see the Gaudí architecture. At that point, architecture—there were still architectural

elements in my work, but it wasn't—they were not that strong. I was very interested in architecture. I always was. After seeing the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art of Gaudí's architectural—well, they're mostly photographs, and there's some grillwork—I was fascinated with his work, in the early '50s, which I saw at the Museum of Modern Art. So I went to Barcelona to see the cathedral, and I went to Palma, Mallorca, and I discovered a Gaudí apartment building on my own. [Laughs.] I saw a building that I just knew had to be Gaudí. There was a restaurant below, and I asked the proprietor. I said, "Tell me, did Gaudí design this building?" He said yes, and he said, "Nobody comes by to see it." He was so pleased, he brought us out coffee and drinks. [00:24:02] He was just absolutely delighted that we knew it was Gaudí.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What happens—you've been talking about the paint quality. How does that affect your imagery? Do they go together, or is there a contrast there?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It affects the imagery.

[Audio Break.]

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Hand-in-hand. Yeah. The imagery—it's not a complete, drastic change, obviously, but the imagery is affected by the application of paint. The space isn't, but the imagery is, to a certain extent. I think images—again, they're vehicles, at least to me. You work on an image because that image helps carry you to a certain point. I think painting a picture is a learning process. I think, as far as I'm concerned, as long as I can learn from a painting, the painting is valid. If I paint a painting and I don't learn anything from it, then it's not a successful painting as far as I'm concerned. So I'm just interested in what I can get out of it. The application of paint does affect the imagery, in my case.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The obvious thing for me to say is, what do you get out of painting a painting, then?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: At this point, I don't get much out of it. [Laughs.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: I mean, over the years, it's obviously changed, and different—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. See, when I was a young student—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —experiences at different times.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —and when I was a student, I enjoyed painting. [00:26:02] I loved it, because I was learning obvious things, like facility, and manipulation of paint, and I was learning all these easy, obvious things. I was always very good at that sort of thing, so I was always one of the best, or if not, the best in the class or the group, and everybody—and my friends always treated me like I was one of the best. So it was very—a pleasurable experience. I'd paint something, and people would tell me how good it was, so it was fun, and I was satisfying my ego, and I enjoyed that. But the older I got, and the more I learned about painting, the less enjoyable the act of painting became, because I think painting, for me, is sort of a form of self-psychoanalysis. Painting, for me, is an unlearning process.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Unlearning what?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Unlearning everything. It's unlearning what I learned in school. It's unlearning as far as my environment is concerned, as far as what I've been exposed to. It's a shedding process. I'm trying to get closer to what I am. I compare it to—I never discussed this with anyone, but I compare it to psychoanalysis, only it's self-psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is a painful process, because it is a shedding process, and all your nerve endings are exposed, so to speak. The deeper you go, the more painful it becomes. I think the same thing applies to painting. I think the deeper you go, the more painful the act of painting becomes. It's not fun, because I'm not interested in the bravado and the application of paint that I was—the sensual act of painting. [00:28:09] I think that's a lot of nonsense for someone my age to be involved with. I'm interested—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why do you think that changes, then?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Because I think, as you know more and as you grow, all your youthful enthusiasm about the act of painting has to go with it. I think the deeper you get involved with painting, the deeper you are involved with yourself, and the deeper—the more you shed, the more it hurts, so that painting becomes—I think it is painful. When I paint, I do it because I have to do it, because that's what I am, I'm a painter. I don't do it for economical reasons, because I'd make a heck of a lot more money being a cook or writing cookbooks. I do it—I do have to survive, and I do like to sell my work when I can, but that's not why I paint. I paint because I have no choice, because that's what I am, and I accept that. I accept that I'm a painter, and so I don't fight with it. I don't question it. But it's not fun. It's hard work. I don't even mind the hard work. I don't mind physical work. I do a great deal of physical work around the place that I enjoy. It's very unsatisfying physical work. If you cut a cord of wood, or if you plant a garden, that's satisfying physical work, because when you get through, you see what

you've done. But when you paint a picture, and you go through this very difficult involvement of shedding and trying to paint something true, and trying to paint as close to the truth as possible without being influenced by what's been going on, about trying to keep yourself as clean as possible—and when the painting is completed, you're usually not satisfied with it. [00:30:18] You say, well, the next one will be better, so you end up producing something you're not satisfied with. Very often, it's something that you end up putting in your racks and not even exhibiting. I've got paintings that are 14 feet long that I've never exhibited. So it involves a great deal of physical effort, it involves a certain amount of financial commitment, and you put it away when you get through. It's depressing—especially if you have a studio full of paintings—it's depressing to paint another big picture, and still you do it. I've got more 12-foot and 14-foot paintings that I've dismantled, and why do I do it? I do it because I have to do it. That's depressing. But I sleep well at night. See, I do it because I know I'm doing the right thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you feel that that scale, that size, is congenial then, or is that a difficult size?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Totally unrealistic to do the sizes I do, but I do the sizes I do because when I visualize an involvement, I visualize it in that size, and so I do it. I feel the size is very important. I don't think—I think if you see something as a six-foot tondo, though, and you decide, but a four-foot tondo is what will sell, and make it into a four-foot tondo, you'd never get—

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's not going to work.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No, it's not going to work. I do smaller things, too. I don't do just big things. The sizes I paint are sizes that are necessary for the paintings. [00:32:04] I don't do them because I'm trying to present a heroic presentation, because I know I won't even show most of them. I really do it because that's the size I visualize that particular involvement in. It's hard to be true with yourself, because it's hard to—you have to constant—another reason why it's depressing is because you have to constantly fight the outside influences, the expenses. The fact that you may have a gallery that can't even show a painting that size. The fact that no one's buying paintings that size anymore. The fact that you don't have storage space for that size. And yet you go ahead and start—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, you find—you make it. It comes out of somewhere, you know. You lived, where, in the same place here in Hell's Kitchen from '54 to '58?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. I lived in the same cold water flat from '54 to '58. By the time I left, though—I started off with nothing, and then, as I said, people like Charles Allen bought paintings of mine, and Joe Hirshhorn.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you meet him again the first time?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Someone suggested I visit him.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You just went to the college?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I just went to him, and he was very nice, and he liked my work, and eventually he bought things. Through him, I sold things. Then I had a show at the Artists' Gallery, which was a great gallery, and they gave—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did that come about?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It's funny. Charles Allen had one of the best galleries in New York at the time. He was certainly a highly respected dealer. He knew what was going on, and when he bought my work, he said, "You should check out the Artists' Gallery, because they help young painters." So I went there and—I called them up, actually, and Mrs. Munte [ph], who used to check out the paintings, she came to my studio, and she loved my work. [00:34:05] She was very excited about it, and they took me on, and they gave me an exhibition the following year, which sold. They gave me all of the money, and they sold three things to Joe Hirshhorn, plus other people. Al Lerner was one of the directors at the Artists' Gallery at the time. Eventually, he went with Joe Hirshhorn. Then, through the Artists' Gallery, other people became aware of my work, and John Heller saw my work at the time, and he took me on. At the time, John Heller was also showing Lichtenstein, which was interesting. I've been in a number of group shows with Lichtenstein.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah, but he was doing a whole other kind of expressionistic, brushy Indians and—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Right, he was painting—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —cowboys and Indians.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Right, right. Exactly. He wasn't doing very well with them. At the time, he wasn't selling there. John Heller was an interesting guy. He was a real—

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of character was he? Because I never knew him very well.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: He was very bright. Totally dishonest. [Laughs.] He was just dis—but it was obvious. So I liked him. He was just a—he was a huckster. He was bright, and he was a reporter. I think before he became involved with painting, he was a reporter.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. He was clever. He had his own sensitivity. He treated me like his star, so that was very pleasant. I was the star in the gallery at the time. He—totally dishonest, but in a very nice way. So you just had to count everything you gave him, and recount it, and [laughs] recount it. [00:36:04] It was a game with him, I think. I think that's why it wasn't objectionable. The whole—when it came to manipulating and not paying, or paying, it was sort of a game with him. It was fun if you played the game with him. I really didn't object to it, because I knew what was going on. He was a very tricky guy. But he worked hard for me, and we had a nice relationship. We understood each other, and we got along quite well. He pulled a few things that made me—that I was very annoyed with. I left him when I returned from Italy in 1959. I knew he was closing down anyway, but I was ready to move on, and I liked Carl Lundy [ph] a great deal, and he already had some things of mine, so I—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where had you met him?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: That's interesting. I met Margaret—Lowengrund?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Lowengrund.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. I met Margaret Lowengrund when she opened her first gallery, print gallery, on 57th Street. It wasn't the Contemporaries then. It was another space. I showed her some of my prints, and she liked them, and so she handled my prints for me. Then she moved into the larger quarters, on 57th Street, and the name of the—in the contemporary space. [00:38:02] That was her gallery, the Contemporaries, and she also—and she started to handle sculpture and painting as well. Actually, the Contemporaries, I think, was the first good-sized gallery on Madison Avenue. It was in the '50s. It was in 1956, I believe, that she moved there, and she was one of the very first galleries to move up from 57th Street to Madison Avenue. It was probably—I think it was the most exotic gallery, space-wise, on 57th Street at the time. That was before—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where was that, 57th and where?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Across the street from Park Bernay [ph]. That's—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, on 77th and Madison?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Seventy-seventh and Madison. This was before World House, and before all the other people moved out. When she moved out, moved to the big space, she gave me an exhibition in 1956 of my drawings, and some sculpture, and prints. Then, in '59, I think, she died, and Carl Lundy took over the gallery. I guess it was '58. Carl Lundy took over.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was he working for her?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No. I think Carl Lundy—I don't remember how that happened, but the new owner was—businessman—oh, I can't think of his name now. He also did watercolors. Begins with a W, his name. Mr., uh—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, Ian Woodner.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Woodner. Woodner. I think Woodner hired Lundy. Woodner owned the gallery. So I left some drawings with Carl Lundy, and then when I returned from Europe, I liked the way Carl Lundy handled my affairs. [00:40:07] He was totally honest, and he was building up a gallery at the time. He had taken on Richard Anuszkiewicz and Bertioia, and he had taken on all these people who were totally unknown in New York, and who have since made quite a success of their lives. I liked Carl, so I pulled out of Heller. The interesting thing was, when I pulled out of John Heller's gallery, he acted like he was a little—he was offended, he was hurt, but the fact was, he was selling the gallery at the time, and he was sort of selling his artists with the gallery. The person who bought the gallery assumed that certain artists would go with the gallery. So here [laughs] he had to —

PAUL CUMMINGS: You were being sold and you didn't know it.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: That I was being sold. But fortunately, I got out before that happened.

Unfortunately, he died soon after. He died a year later. He was killed in an automobile accident. He moved out to Vermont, or New Hampshire, and he was driving on an icy road, and he was killed, which I was sorry to hear about. At that point, I was firmly established with the Contemporaries, and I stayed with the Contemporaries until 1963. That's when Carl quit and the gallery more or less closed, and so then I went to Charles Allen. But unfortunately, Charles Allen was about to fold when I—

PAUL CUMMINGS: He went through all sorts of changes, one after another.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah, he stayed a year, and then—he was open for a year, and then after that, he closed.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But then he came back. Now, how did the Contemporaries do for you? Because that was very lively at that point. [00:42:02]

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. I did fairly well. My show in 1962, I got marvelous reviews, and the Whitney bought a painting—no, 1963. That's when I first showed the canvases with the recessed images. I got very good reviews, and the Whitney bought a painting out of the show, and Roy Neuberger bought a big painting out of the show. I did well, and I was very eager for the follow-through, which was two years later. Unfortunately, a few months before my show was supposed to take place, the gallery was sold. I did very well, but towards the end, Carl Lundy was unhappy with the gallery, with being a dealer. He really wanted to teach, and he was very unhappy. I felt he neglected the gallery a little bit the last year—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, he did for years, sure.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I felt he neglected—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hired all sorts of people and—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —wasn't there.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I don't feel—I was never bitter about it, because I knew he was going through problems of his own, and then I've always admired him and liked him. But I don't think it was good for me. I think it held me back, because it's a funny thing about New York. You have to—when you have a success, you have to follow it through, and if you don't, you're back to where you started. It takes so much time and so much effort to achieve a success, and it set me back. The important thing is, there was a lot of interest in these new things I was doing, and then, after that dead year at the Contemporaries—and then I went with Charles Allen, and he was about to close down. [00:44:07] It just sort of killed the interest in what I was doing. I've always felt that, in the proper environment, things would have been a little different.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You were still going to Provincetown in the '60s, right?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. When I returned from Italy, I went back to Provincetown. That was in 1959, I returned. I went back to Provincetown in 1959, 1960. I went every summer. I stayed there for the summer until the mid-'60s.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You had a couple of shows with Corliss [ph], too.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes, I joined Tiertsa's [ph] gallery in the early '60s, and I had a show every year.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you sell things in Provincetown in those days?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Oh, yeah. In those days, it was good. I used to sell as much as \$6[000], \$7,000 worth of paintings in the summer, Provincetown.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. In the good years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who bought from her?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It was the best gallery in town, and at the time, there were still important collectors. People used to—there was quite a colony of collectors, and wealthy people who went to the Cape for the summer, and they'd come up from Wellfleet and from all over, because it was the best gallery in the Cape.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So it drew from—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: And she would sell. I've sold—she sold works of mine to Bostonians and Philadelphians, and people from all over. She even sold something of mine to the Boston Museum. [00:46:00]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Good.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: She had quite a following. At the time, Provincetown was still considered the most exciting summer art colony in the country—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you like it in those days, in the '60s?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I loved it until '56, and then it started to slide. In the '60s, early '60s, I still liked it, but I was very unhappy about what was happening. The town was getting very commercial and junky, and the better artists were leaving. I didn't enjoy it as much in the '60s as in the '50s, but it finally reached a point—I think it was the mid-'60s when I finally felt that it just was no longer the type of place I'd like to go to. So I stopped going, and—

PAUL CUMMINGS: But you had a house there for years.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. I bought a house in 1956, and I rented it. I rented it because I just didn't—the town got very bad, and it got very junky, and the serious artists left, for the most part. I think there were only three left that I knew. Today, there's just Nassa Stafnis [ph], and Robert Motherwell, and Jack Tworokov, and that's about it. But at one time, it was—every major artist went there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why do you think the artists leave a place like that? They just get fed up with all the people who come there and want to look at them?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes, it's like SoHo, and the Village, and everywhere else. Artists discover a unique spot that they can afford, that has—that they can enjoy, and then, sooner or later, the spoilers follow them, and the commercial people, and the vendors, and the hucksters, and the prices go up, and the place gets junky, and eventually, then, the artists leave in disgust. [00:48:14] That happens everywhere artists go. It happens over and over. I think it's happening to SoHo now.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I'm often curious about people who work in Provincetown or the Hamptons a certain part of the year, then in New York or someplace else. Was that an easy transition for you from New York to Provincetown and back?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I went to Provincetown originally as a student, and so it was very exciting for a student to go to Provincetown and be in the same environment important artists were working in. It was a stimulating environment. There were a lot of interesting students around at the time. And it was physically beautiful, so it was very exciting for me as a young painter. I went back because I had friends who I enjoyed being with. Boghosian has a house there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you meet him there?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No, I met him in Boston, in 19—in my—

PAUL CUMMINGS: As a student?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: As a student, in 1947, I think. But Boghosian used to go in the '40s, when I went. In fact, we lived in the same building. We were good friends.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. We were in the same building. We were good friends.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's a long relationship.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. I'll tell you a funny story about that afterwards. [They laugh.] He—and so it meant living in a nice—in a summer seashore environment, with artists you knew, old friends, and also with artists, like Hans Hofmann, who you respected, and who you got to know and enjoy. [00:50:03] So it was a very nice, pleasant, professional environment.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How much did you get to know Hofmann, for example?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I got to know him rather well towards the end. At the beginning, I used to go to his lectures. I was never—I didn't want to go to school, because everybody studied with Hans Hofmann, and I just said I would be one painter who could say he didn't study with Hans Hofmann. But I used to go to his critiques. Actually, I don't think he saw much of his students during the day. On Saturday morning, I think it was. I don't remember exactly. I think it was Saturday morning. He'd criticize the work of his students, and that was interesting. It was very funny, because no one understood a word he said. His English was so bad. Nobody understood what he was saying, but he would have a painting in front of him, and he'd speak in his very thick German accent, and then he'd—he had lots of colored paper at his feet, and he'd say, "Das and das in red," and he'd put a piece of red paper up against the painting. Of course, that immediately set [laughs] all kinds of exciting things—set everything off, and everyone would go, "Ahh." Then he'd go, "Das and das and das in blue," and he'd put a piece of blue paper somewhere else. It was very funny the way he taught. I think he was such a successful teacher, because nobody understood what he was saying. I used to go to Hans Hofmann's critiques occasionally. His students, like all students—students of Henry Hensche thought that they were the best in the world and everybody else was wrong. Hans Hofmann's students thought they were the best in the world and everybody else was wrong. Students have these unbelievable prejudices about other ideas, and they look down at everyone else. [00:52:00] It was a refreshing—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you maintain a friendship with Hensche? Because you had studied with him.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. Yes. We were friendly, and we're still friendly. Henry's a funny guy. He was very, very—he's a marvelous teacher. He gave an awful lot of himself to his students.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But he was like the Hawthorne—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. He was a little—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —idea.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —Hawthorne. All he talked about was Hawthorne. He had this father—Hawthorne was a father image. It was a very complex involvement, I think, and very complicated. Henry talked about Hawthorne and never himself. He was very good that way. The theories that Hawthorne taught were Monet's theories, and Henry only talked about Monet and Hawthorne when he discussed these theories. He never took credit for it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really? Very generous.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. He was never interested in pushing himself as a great teacher. It was always Hawthorne, which is extremely generous, but it's also kind of—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —deprecating.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah, there's some—yes, there's something very—it's very interesting, I think, the relationship. But Hawthorne, as a person, was rather selfish, I felt—I mean, Hensche, as a person, was sort of selfish.

PAUL CUMMINGS: In what way?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Well, in sort of a miserly way. Maybe because he lived with so little for so long. He was not—it was funny. He was very open in many ways, and he was very tight in many ways. I think Hans Hofmann was a more generous man. I met Hofmann later on, and then we became friendly. [00:54:01] Hofmann came through our home in Provincetown a number of times for dinner. He even came out to Katonah, to dinner, and to see my work. It was very interesting how we met him. We had a mutual friend who knew him well, and this friend—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who was that?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Fritz Lowe, who was a good friend of Hans Hofmann's. Fritz and Matilda Lowe told Hans about this seafood dinner they had in our home, and Hofmann loves seafood, and so he said, "Tell that young painter I can come over next week at seven o'clock." [They laugh.] I was delighted, because I liked that kind of frankness, and I was over delighted—we were delighted he wanted to come over. Then they warned me that he was suffering from claustrophobia since Miz died. He didn't like to—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, it was after her death?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It was after her death that I got to know him personally. And that he didn't like to be in a room by himself, and if he was in a room, that we should open the window, and place him near the open window. Fortunately, we had a little grape arbor, and it was in the summertime, so we served dinner outdoors,

which of course he loved. It was marvelous. We invited—I invited Boghosian over, too, because I thought he'd enjoy it. Boghosian's first word was, "It's like having dinner with art history." Hans just talked, and everybody listened. He was a marvelous guest, because he loved to talk, and he talked about what it was like in Paris, at the turn of the century, and the Bauhaus school, and all the people he knew. It was just marvelous. [00:56:00] He was just delightful. He enjoyed it, too, so he came over a second time, and then the Lowes had a birthday party for him in New York one time, and they asked me to cook the dinner of shellfish and seafood, which I did, for Hans Hofmann. What's his name came—Rosenberg came there. I found out later that there were a group of people who constantly followed Hans Hofmann around. Whenever they found out that he was being invited to someone's home, they usually got in touch with the hosts and tried to get invited also. I heard that Larry Rivers was one, and Rosenberg was the other, and that they constantly—they wanted to be in his company.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Part of the circle.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. I was very interested that Harold Rosenberg came, because I was curious. I read his books, and I knew he was a very important writer during the Abstract Expressionist period, so I was curious to hear what he had to say, and it was very interesting. He didn't say a word. Hans Hofmann talked, and he didn't say a word. I tried to get something out of him, and I realized that Rosenberg is a great listener. He takes everything in, and then he goes home and he writes things down. He didn't say one word. He didn't dispute anything. All he did was listen, which was interesting. Another time—well, Hofmann wasn't there the second time at the Lowes, but Rothko was there, and I was very impressed with Rothko's—Rothko had a—he was so unpretentious, and so—he was a calm, dignified, unpretentious man. [00:58:05] I was very impressed with him. There was a quality about him that was very beautiful, that you rarely see in artists, I think. He was a lovely human being.

PAUL CUMMINGS: When was that about, would you say?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: That was in the early '60s. Hans Hofmann was a very beautiful human being. He was a type of man—he was an old man. He was in his 80s towards the end. He said he had no regrets in life, he told me once. He said there's nothing that he feels badly about. That he enjoyed his life, and that he felt good about everything that happened. I always thought it was beautiful to hear an old man talk about not having regrets, because most old people say, "Oh, if I had your youth again, I'd do this and I'd do that, if I had my life to live over again." Not Hofmann. He was clean.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But don't you think part of that had to do with the fact he had so much success at the end of his life?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes, but he could have said, "My God, I wish that my entire youth—I was without success. I struggled. I didn't start selling my paintings until I was in the 60s. If I had my youth again, and if I had this money again, I would have done this, and I would have done that." But he didn't begrudge the fact that it was such—

PAUL CUMMINGS: He was always rather optimistic.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: He was. He was a totally optimistic man. The only thing he complained about was the fact that he didn't have the energy, the physical strength, that he had when he was younger.

PAUL CUMMINGS: He would complain he used to paint about four hours a day, and he was tired or something.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. That's what distressed him. Then he married that young lady who—actually, he came over for dinner in Provincetown one evening, and it was the day, I think, after he got married, or a week after he got married, but we didn't know about it. [01:00:07] Well, we knew about it, but it was a secret, so we didn't say anything about it. To this young German lady, who was quite attractive at the time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I haven't met her yet. Renata?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. She was—but then I heard she—she didn't seem—she seemed—she was charming, and she was very attractive, and she always—he always introduced her as his niece.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, how funny.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: That was until they were married. I didn't see him after he got married. He died shortly afterwards. It wasn't long. In fact, I don't think I saw him after that period.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's funny.

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PAUL CUMMINGS: This is side four.

[Audio Break.]

PAUL CUMMINGS: —sort of move you out of Hell's Kitchen here, where we've been moving around. That was until 1958, right?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where did you go then, from there? What happened?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Then I went to Europe. At that point, I had been doing rather well. I had money in the bank, I owned a house in Provincetown. I decided to go back to Europe and look at Rembrandt, and I wanted to see Gaudí. In the meantime, I had been courting my wife for three years in New York.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where had you met her?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I met her at the Art Students League. She was a sculpture student. We had been seeing each other, and there were all kinds of complications, being a Southern Episcopalian and so forth. [Laughs.] We decided to meet in Europe, with the possibility of getting married in Europe. I had to leave my apartment, because they condemned the building and they were tearing it down. So I waited until a week before my departure. They didn't know I was leaving, but I bargained with them, and I bargained with them, and I finally got quite a bit of money. Not much, but it was enough to pay for my trip to Europe, plus some. But I finally—I went to Europe, and we met in Holland. She came over on another boat. Then we traveled through Holland and Germany and France and Spain, and we decided to get married. [00:02:02] We traveled for about six months, and we just never—it was just complicated in every country, and finally Switzerland was the simplest country, so we were married in Geneva, February 14, 1959. Then we went to Italy, and we lived in Italy for a year. Our first child was born in Florence that year. It was very funny. The child was born nine months and two weeks after we were married, and when I mentioned to my aunt's mother, this country woman in Italy, that the child was born, she said—she started counting. Said, "Uno, due, tre, quattro, cinque, sei"—she got up to nine. She said [speaks Italian]. [Laughs.] It was very funny that she immediately started counting, "Uno, due, tre, quattro, cinque, sei."

PAUL CUMMINGS: Some people are so practical.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: But anyway, our first child was born in Florence, and we lived in Florence for a year. I did a great deal of work. I did painting and bronze castings.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you were in Florence, really, from '50—what?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Florence from '59—February of '59 to—no, from March of '59 until May of '60. Then we went back—came back to the States, and we decided to live in Memphis, Tennessee for—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why was that?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —nine months or so. Because Ellie, my wife, is from Memphis, and she wanted her parents to get to know our daughter. [00:04:00] We thought it would be a good opportunity to just sort of catch our breath before we made our move East. We went to Memphis, and through her connections, I guess, primarily, I sold very well there. I had an exhibition at the Brooks Memorial Gallery, and I was sort of artist-in-residence at the Memphis Academy. I stopped by a few hours a week, and it was—it gave me something to do. So it was very pleasant, and it was very easy, and it was a little too easy, and so we decided we better get out. It would have been very easy to fall into a rut there. It was easy to sell, and everybody—and I was getting a lot of publicity, and everybody thought it was marvelous to have a New York artist in their midst. It was very soft. It was very much—I felt very much like I felt about painting, about going through this period of unlearning and learning. When things got too easy in a particular environment, I felt it was time to move on, it was time to get a little more dirt rubbed into my face. It was just too easy. Then, of course, I missed New York. We drew a circle around New York City, and a circle that—35-mile circle from the city, and we decided that we should live in the country because of our child, and we expected to have more children, but we wanted to be within a one-hour drive of the city. Finally, within that circle, we found Katonah. When we moved out—when we came back to the East, we didn't know where we were going to live, and we used Provincetown as a base, because we did have the house in Provincetown. [00:06:07] But I didn't want to live in Provincetown, because it was just—I don't think it was, then, or now, a healthy environment to live on a year-round basis. It's too—incestuous quality about the

place. Actually, it was a very unhealthy place, I think, to live—

PAUL CUMMINGS: In terms of what?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —to live on a year-round basis. Well, because everybody knew each other so well, especially the winter colony. Everybody worked so hard at being artists and poets. It was just a very unrealistic environment, I thought. I'd rather be with people—I like—I have some artist friends, who are dear friends, but I hate to limit my friends to just artists. In Provincetown, that's what it would have been. Here—

PAUL CUMMINGS: You mean the townspeople weren't that available?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Well, no. No. I had some friends who were fishermen, but it was either one or the other. No. The townspeople in Provincetown—they're strange. They're very insensitive people. It's strange. I suppose this is generalizing, but the fishing community—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, it's a tough life, so you wouldn't—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It's a tough life, but they don't—they're Portuguese origin, but they're not very Latin, for some crazy reason.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Portuguese really aren't.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: There's just very little that I could relate with. You would, first—I assumed that Portuguese were of Latin sentiments, but they're very different. [00:08:09]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Didn't—yeah. Oh, they are?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: They're very different.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why didn't you want to settle in New York, then, in '61?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: We didn't think that—we just thought it would be too difficult with children, and we felt that it would be—we just didn't think it would be fair to the children, to raise them in the city and not have a place to play. I don't know how—I don't know if it was a wise decision or not, but it wasn't good for my career, as a painter, to move out of the city, because it's a very fickle city, and if you're not there, and if you're not constantly on the spot—I'm sure our friend Wolf—what's—Wolf Kahn would have felt the same way, because I know he left the city for a while, and he was just totally forgotten. That's what—

PAUL CUMMINGS: And he said it took years to get back to being part of the activity again.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. You have to be there. I knew that, but I felt that I might even become a better painter by living out of the city, but that I would obviously have to pay a price for it. I don't know what would have happened if I lived in the city. I know I would have continued to paint, and I don't know how my development would have—which way it would have gone in. We felt that it would be better for the child. Actually, I think, in the long run, it was better for me, too, as a painter. [00:10:02] Not as far as my success. I think it affected my success, my material success, but I think being alone with myself out here has been good for me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: In what way?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I had to face myself. It's very difficult to be by yourself all day long.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You couldn't run around the corner, go somewhere, or be entertained, or whatever.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Exactly. In the city, it's very easy to walk away from yourself and walk away from your problems. When things don't go well in the studio, you walk around the corner, have a beer, or meet somebody, or people visit you. There's a constant flow of people and ideas, but in a country, you're all by yourself, and you talk to yourself. There's no one else to talk to, and it's not easy getting up in the morning and walking into a cold studio, and just staying there all day.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And you don't have many artist friends around.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Nobody.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There aren't very many.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Nobody.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you like living—you've been in Katonah since '61?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you like the town, and how do they treat you as the artist here? Or don't they, or doesn't that—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: They kind of ignore me, and I kind of ignore them, and whenever somebody writes something about me, somebody mentions it. They're nice about it. They leave me alone. They tolerate me. They don't think I'm a freak. I don't think they think I'm anything special, either. [Laughs.] I think they just sort of leave me alone.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you're just kind of a stand-off?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah, pretty much. Then, of course, there's a group in town, people in town, that want to—that used to invite us constantly to their home, because they wanted an artist at the dinner table, but we've discouraged that sort of thing. [00:12:02] We don't—

PAUL CUMMINGS: You don't want to be the colorful character of the evening, sort of business?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No. I don't sell paintings that way, and it doesn't help me in any way, so why—I don't mind—I'll go to somebody's house if it means I'm going to sell a \$10,000 painting. I'm enough of a businessman to be willing to give up an hour or two of my time if it means I'll sell a picture. If it means that all I have to do is entertain people, that's the last thing in the world I'm interested in.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you get involved with Waddell, then? Because you've been—you had the show with Charles Allen, and then Waddell comes along.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Then Charles Allen gave up the gallery. I think he became partners with that California—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, Landau, right. That's right.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: That's when I left, because I didn't like Landau. I was introduced to Waddell by Eugene Schwartz.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, the collector?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: The collector, who owned a big painting of mine, and who had been out here a number of times.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where had you met him? Was that through Allen, or before?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I met him through Tiertsa.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: In Provincetown?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: In Provincetown. They were in Provincetown one summer, and they saw my work, and they liked it, and then they came out to visit me from New York, and they bought a six-foot tondo. They were always very sympathetic. Gene, especially, was very sympathetic about my work, and he understood what I was doing. He was a very bright guy, and he liked it. He mentioned me to Waddell, who had just opened up this new gallery, and then he told me about the gallery. So I went over and I looked at it, and I thought the space was spectacular. [00:14:00] I didn't know anything about Dick, but—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Nobody did, much, really.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No. But I was very impressed with the space. In fact, he had a dinner party at his home, and that's when he introduced me to Dick. So then Dick asked me if he could come out and see my work, and I think Gene told him—I think Gene must have told him I was a good painter, because he was very interested in seeing my work. Dick didn't have much of an eye, but he listened to people, I think. I think as far as my relationship with Dick, I think he listened to Gene. He came out and he saw my work, and he liked it very much, and he asked me if I'd go with him. So I said fine. Soon afterwards, he gave me a show, and that was in 1967. It sold quite well. The reviews were not—not many reviews came out. What came out was good. Kramer didn't

come by. Kramer used to like my work. He used to write good things about my work in the '50s, and when I was in the *Young America* show at the Whitney in 1960, he wrote about my work, amongst a few others in the show. He always wrote good things about my work. I don't think he even saw the show. I don't know. Nothing came out. Then I had another show in 1969, and the paintings were very sensual in that show, but I thought, why not? Why shouldn't I show what I painted? There's nothing wrong with a sensual painting. They weren't pornographic. They were sensual. I thought they were good. I sold well, but Kramer wrote a terrible review. It was so bad that—it was interesting. [00:16:01] He really—it really got to him, but [laughs] it got to him the wrong way. Usually, a bad review that's very strong is usually more interesting than a good review that isn't so strong, and the fact is, he reacted violently to it, and I thought that meant something. But all the other reviews were excellent. Anyway, the show went well, but Waddell didn't hang it properly, and the lights were too dark, and I wanted the lights changed. The day after the show, he went to England and didn't come back until the show was over. So I felt he wasn't really looking after my interests, and I wasn't happy the way he—I wasn't happy with my business relationship with him. So after the show, I pulled out. I was sort of fed up with the New York scene at that point, so I decided just not to show in New York for a while, and I concentrated my energies in Europe. I've had shows in Italy and England since then.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How have they done? Because American artists abroad always interest me, because they're sometimes accepted, sometimes exotic. Sometimes nothing happens. What kind of experience did you?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Those were good years. First of all, I had a show in London, at the New Art Centre, and a friend of mine was married to the owner, so she came over to see my work in 196—this was after my show at the Contemporaries. In 1964, she came over. She liked my work a great deal, and so she gave me—I had a one-man show in 1964, in London, which was very successful. The show was almost sold out. The Tate bought a big painting from the show. The Institute of Contemporary Art bought a big show. [00:18:00] Part of the show went on to an exhibition at Oxford, and in Leeds, also. Leeds Museum, I think, or Leeds Gallery, in Leeds. I have a book full of reviews. I had reproductions in all the major English magazines, and in the *Times*. Interesting thing happened in that show. There was a major exhibition of Western painting at the Tate Gallery at the time. It was the first major exhibition of Western painting in England, and it opened the same time my show opened. The American painters were selected by the Museum of Modern Art. Each country selected their own artist and sent them over to England. Well, I wasn't in the group, but my show in London opened at the same time. The Tate had a very limited budget, and they intended to buy several paintings from the show. They bought a Vasarely, and they bought a painting by a Polish artist, I believe, or might have been Czechoslovakian, and they bought a painting of mine from my show. They didn't buy any other American. I got a certain amount of satisfaction from that, because [laughs] although I was omitted from the exhibition, because I wasn't one of the hot artists, the Sir Rothenstein, I think his name—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yes, right.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: He selected one of my paintings, and I believe—I was told that it was the recommendation of either Ben Nicholson or—no, not Nicholson. This other marvelous English abstract painter who was influential in the selection. [00:20:04] The same age as Nicholson. Begins with a P, I believe.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Pasmore?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Pasmore.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Victor Pasmore, yeah.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I think it was Pasmore who suggested. That was very satisfying, and the show almost sold out. I sold a lot of paintings. That was fine. Then I decided, after Waddell, to concentrate on Europe. That year, I got a Guggenheim Fellowship, and I went to Italy with the family.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That was what year?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Seventy-two, '73. My last show at Waddell was '69, then I quit. Then I had—I was artist-in-residence at Dartmouth for one summer, and then I got a Guggenheim and I went to Europe. I got involved with the L'Obelisco Gallery, just before I came back to the States, in Rome, and they bought my entire year's output. Then they gave me an exhibition the following year, and then they set up other exhibitions, in London and in Milano. When I—before I got the Guggenheim, the year before, I went to Germany to see what it was like, see what the market was like.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I didn't know you were there ever.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah, I went to Germany in 1971.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why Germany? I mean, that seems just an off—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I just wanted—I thought it would be a good idea to get involved with a big gallery there, because I heard that Germans were—they were buying really well, and I thought, sure, there was a good market, and so I decided to see what it was like. [00:22:04] So I went to Germany. I went Cologne, and Dusseldorf, and Frankfurt. The major centers. Munich. I was a little dismayed, because they were doing—everything was from New York. They were only getting artists from New York galleries. They were only interested in Pop art at the time. Now, this was '71, when Pop art was already pretty much ignored. A lot of things had happened since Pop art. Op art, for instance, and Field painting, and all these other things were happening. They were just getting tuned in on Pop art, and everything—

PAUL CUMMINGS: It takes time for it to move across.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. It took quite a while, actually. So they were oriented in that direction. There was definitely a market there, and there was definitely—there was a lot of excitement going on, but they were only interested in importing art. I didn't see any—there was nothing that was going on in Germany that I saw that interested me. It was very derivative, actually. Then I went to Milano from there, and Milano excited me. There was a lot of very interesting work going on in Milano by Italian artists. They were also buying very—they were buying everything. I would visit galleries and show them drawings, whether they were realistic galleries or just involved with realism, or galleries just involved with abstract painting, who, for some reason or other, couldn't fit me into their gallery. They'd buy my work and say, "We can't use you," and they'd buy a drawing or—it was unbelievable. [00:24:01] You'd walk into a gallery, and they'd buy—and hand you cash.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Just like that?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: And it was so easy to sell things. It was just unbelievable. I finally did get involved with a gallery, and they started by buying three drawings—everything I had with me. Everything I had left, they bought. Then they said, "We want to give you an exhibition" and so forth. So it was very exciting. Then, in '72, it was the same thing. In Italy, if you had a box of used Kleenexes, in Piazza di Spagna, you could have sold them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Consigned them. [Laughs.]

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: People were buying everything. They were just spending their money like there was no tomorrow, and they were buying everything. It was very easy to sell in Europe, and things were tight in New York at the time, so I concentrated in Europe. Everything was great until the oil crisis, and then of course the bottom fell out in Europe, and now things are worse there than they are here.

PAUL CUMMINGS: One thing that always intrigues me is the moving around you've done, and how it's affected your work. Is it easy for you to go to Italy and set up work, and go to work right away?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No more.

PAUL CUMMINGS: No?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Used to be.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Until when? When did it change?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It changed in the late '60s.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why, do you think?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I don't know. I had a great deal of difficulty setting up in '72.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. I finally started working—I arrived in October, and I didn't really start working until January.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's a long time.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: But then when I started working, I did a great deal of work, but it took me a long time. I think the reason why is because I just think I make more demands on myself than I did before, and I think my painting is—well, I think it's less surface involvement. [00:26:16] I just think there's more to the painting, and I think disruption takes its toll, that's all. I think it's hard—I just can't hack the things out, that's all. When I was involved with my facility, and when I was involved with application of paint, I could paint in any environment. The way I work now, I have to be ready to work. I can't just start working unless I feel right about it, where I am, and it takes a certain period of adjustment—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —adjustment to do that.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah.

PAUL CUMMINGS: In Katonah, do you work on a regular schedule, normally, painting certain hours a day, every day?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You do?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. I think that's the only way I can do it. I work in the morning, and I work in the afternoon, and sometimes I work at night. My hours vary. One day, I may work four hours in the morning. Another day, I might work three hours in the morning. Another day, I might spend the morning just building stretchers. In the afternoon, my hours would vary, but I'll always be involved, in some way or another, with my artwork. Now, when I have to put in my garden, I may take off an afternoon and work in the garden, if things are going slow, paintings. [00:28:00] But I can't paint more than six or seven hours a day, and I have a twelve-hour day, so I have plenty of time to do everything else. I generally—my working habits are fairly consistent. I get up in the morning, and every other day I run for 45 minutes. It makes me feel good, especially in the winter. It really warms me up. Then I paint. If I lose time at one part of the day, I make it up another part of the day. I have consistent work habits. Then, of course, I'm out in the country. I've got nothing—there's nothing to distract me. The country isn't as distracting as the city. In the city—the city is extremely distracting, but in the country, nature isn't distracting. It's there and you enjoy it, but it doesn't interfere. It might intimidate you [laughs] once in a while, but it doesn't interfere. But it's hard. It's not easy. If you're not a country person, it's very difficult.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Have you become acclimatized to the country, do you think?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah, I think because my roots go back to that sort of thing. I think I take to it naturally because my father was a farmer, my grandfather was a farmer, my great-grandfather was a farmer, and so I don't feel strange in this environment, but I think there are city people—I've known city people who have tried—who like the idea of living out in the country, and have had disastrous experiences out here. They just couldn't take it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, you have to learn some different ways of doing things, for one thing, and learn to live on a different schedule, certainly. [00:30:04]

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah, it's very different. It's not for everybody. I don't think everyone should do it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: One thing that interested me, and just looking at that middle horizontal painting with some rather apparent figures in it still, your work seems to—it becomes very abstract in some ways, and yet there are references to sort of architectural—I can't say buildings, but kind of ideas or something. How do all these changes take place? Are they rapid? Are they slow? Are they—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: They're very slow.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Are they apparent to you, rather, or do they just sort of—all of a sudden, you say, ah, that's what's been going on for a while?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: They're not apparent right away, but they're very slow. I can show you sketches I've made as a student in 1951 and 1952 that have very strong architectural elements in them, elements that I'm using today. I can show you images that I've done in the early '50s that are still apparent in my painting. Broken forms. They're very slow. I don't switch—I've never been a part of a movement. I was a figure painter during Abstract Expressionism. I'm an abstract painter now [they laugh] that the figure is popular. But even when I'm abstract, my work is very organic. It's really not that far away from figurative painting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, there's a lot of landscape feeling in some things. [00:32:00]

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah, and they're sensual. I don't think there's that much—but the architectural element has been there for a long time, and it evolved into architectural shapes of the actual canvases, and I've been doing that since the early '60s.

PAUL CUMMINGS: When did you start using, other than rectangles and ovals, circles—because there are so—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Other—you mean—

PAUL CUMMINGS: With the—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: The free sort of shape?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: In the mid-'60s. About 1965, '64, '65, were when I started using architectural shapes other than a tondo or an oval. It started this way. I would—I remember having a tondo—well, I decided to build—from a tondo, and from a square, evolved the proportion of an arch-shaped canvas, which was half a tondo and a whole square. The tondo—the half—

PAUL CUMMINGS: On top.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —tondo—right. So that was one-third of the total height. From that—I remember one day I had the painting on its side, so the tondo was on its side. I thought, it would be interesting to put another tondo on the other side, a half tondo on the other side of this square. I ended up—this was in 1964 or '65. I ended up with this canvas, 12 feet long, that had two six-foot tondos that met in the center. Now, the shape of the canvas was, if you can visualize it, a square in the center, six-foot square, and then a three-foot half-circle attached to one end, and a three-foot half-circle attached to the other end. [00:34:04] So when you continued the line of the circle, you got two tondos, six-foot, with sort of a square in the middle. I did that shape in different sizes, 12-foot and 10-foot sizes, and nine-foot sizes, for quite a while before Stella appeared with his similar shape. In fact, I was doing that when he was doing his square canvases. It just grew out of that shape that was on its side. Then, after I did that, I thought, well, if I can add half a tondo to one section of a square, I can add it to another section. After then, the shapes became very organic. In fact, on several canvases, I would start with a particular shape, and then as the canvas developed, I added other geometric shapes to the canvas itself, so that the canvas was never—the painting was never confined to a particular shape. As the painting grew, if I felt I needed another shape, another element in the canvas, I just added to it. I'd just build it, and stretch it, the canvas, onto the stretcher, and then bolt it onto the stretcher. In fact, I had one canvas like that in my—I had several canvases like that in my '69 show at Waddell. It evolved from the circle and the square, and then it just—but they're not arbitrary shapes. There's an architectural logic to them. [00:36:00] I've gone in many different directions.

PAUL CUMMINGS: In what way do you mean?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I only used an architectural shape when I felt that the canvas needed that shape for balance, or for—there was a reason for it. I just didn't start off with a shape and then paint it in. I worked the painting with the shape, so that if I needed an extension, I added it to it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So somewhere in working on the painting, you felt you needed another segment, or another shift that would come in?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes, and I just added to it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you didn't start with a shaped canvas to begin with?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No, I didn't confine myself to a particular shape. I did in some cases. But in many cases, I started with a basic shape, and then I just let it grow. I did one 13-foot canvas that way. I just let it grow.

PAUL CUMMINGS: One thing I've noticed in so many of your works is a point, and then concentric arcs, or parallel lines, or a certain kind of geometry or pattern-making that goes on. Where does that fit into it? How does that evolve?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I think that comes from my exposure to Renaissance art in Florence, where mathematics plays such an important part in the painting, and there's a mathematical logic to the compositions. The proportions—the sizes of my arches, for instance. There's a canvas behind you, 18 feet long. All right, the canvas is nine feet high and six feet wide, and it's a perfect Brunelleschi proportion, which is a half—in threes. [00:38:04] It's divided in threes, which might refer to the golden triangle. I was so impressed with early Renaissance proportions that I think it—that kind of logic has made a permanent impression on my paintings. I'm very much involved with sort of a natural type of mathematics. A mathematician came to my studio one day, and he was very interested in what I was doing, because he saw so much mathematics in my work. I was a horrible mathematics student. It was so dull, and I didn't like it. But I instinctively lean towards mathematical equations.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But do you measure these out, or do they fall out in terms of just proportion and sensibility?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It works both ways. There is some measuring, but the first involvement was pure instinct. Just pure—very often, I'd do something, and then I'd discover the logic later. I do have—I just instinctively react to certain proportions and certain sizes, and combinations of certain sizes. I just find an

aesthetic logic to them, and I've never questioned it before, but now, as I get into it, I measure these things, and I understand it a little more than before. I find myself measuring things. It's the logic that interests me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The recent paintings, some of which you showed me last time, don't have the recessed panels anymore. [00:40:03]

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: No.

PAUL CUMMINGS: When you were doing the recessed panels, they were set at different physical depths from the surface. How did you arrive at those? Was that a sensation, or an idea?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Well, no. Actually, I don't deal with ideas, because I don't trust ideas. I think ideas are sort of commercial results. I studied sculpture, as you know, as long as I did painting. I've always been aware of three-dimensional, physical space. I was painting two-dimensional images on a two-dimensional surface in 1961 and [6]2, and I became frustrated with the surface. So one day, I attached one-foot square studies that were painted on Masonite of a painting I was painting. I just attached these surfaces onto the canvas. This was in '61, I think. That immediately—that extra quarter-inch space immediately created a whole new spatial problem, which excited me a great deal. Then I thought, well, if I can come out, I can go in. Then I made these elaborate constructions behind the canvas, and made window sort of constructions, and stretched the canvases around the window, and slid these Masonite studies. Because I usually did a number of studies before I painted a picture. So I slid the actual studies into the canvas, and that was that first involvement. Now, I experimented a great deal, where I put them in at various depths, a quarter of an inch from the surface, and some an inch from the surface. [00:42:02] I realized, fairly soon afterwards, that the problem was to finish—the finished product had to be a two-dimensional involvement, rather than a painted object. I didn't want it to be a piece of sculpture, and I didn't want it to be a painted object. I thought I had to bring it all back to the two-dimensional surface of the canvas. For years, that's what I experimented with. That, of course, affected my sense of space when I painted on a canvas without any breaks, or without the three-dimensional space. I've learned things about physical space which, of course, I didn't know—I wasn't aware of before. The first involvement just grew out of a genuine need. I was just frustrated with the surface of the canvas, and it just wasn't doing enough for me, so I started to attach things to the surface. I realize people had done similar things before, but I was never involved—after I left New York, in 1958, I didn't know what was going on in New York. I didn't get any of the art magazines, and I was just out of touch with New York until 1960. Then when I came to the area, I moved to Katonah, and I spent most of my time working on the house and painting. I didn't know anything about people like Stella or Jasper Johns. All these—Rauschenberg. They all appeared on the scene while I was in Italy, '59 and '60. In '58, they were unknown. They were not in any ex—they were known to maybe people within the art circle, but certainly were not exhibiting. I never heard of. And so it was my own—I was satisfying my own need at the time. [00:44:05] Since then, of course, it's evolved into a number of various directions, including collage pastel things that I've been doing. Although I haven't used an insert, a recessed area, in my canvases in several years, what I have been doing, though, is I cut out the shape of an oval, for instance, out of a piece of wood, and then slide an oval canvas, but the canvas is flush with the surface. It doesn't recess.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So it gives you different surface to work on?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. There's still a spatial—it's amazing. There's still sort of a magical spatial separation between the surface, the hard surface of the wood and the canvas, even though they're basically treated the same way. I go through an awful lot of effort to cut these holes out of pieces of wood, and there's a very subtle change there that interests me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You had mentioned before, briefly, your interest in Futurism.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did that come about, and about when would you say it began?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I was first exposed to Futurism when I was a student in Italy, and I went to the various museums in Italy and saw Futurist paintings, which I had never seen, and I was never aware of the importance of Futurism until I went to Italy. Then, when I came back to the States, it took me a number of years to digest what I had seen and get involved with my new experience, but it wasn't until '58 or so when my Futurist exposures started to come through. That's when I started using double images in my canvases. [00:46:00] Then, by 1960, I was using it quite a bit. Even the idea of the panels, of using the—of course, it's not that canvas, but where I used a number of studies I had made for a particular panel, or versions, different versions, of a particular painting. Then I'd use the actual studies—incorporate the actual studies in the canvas. I always got this repeat image. There would be a slight variation. There would be a repeat image. That interested me a great deal. I thought that—it's like a word or a sound. If you hear it once, it has one implication. If you hear it three or four times, it has a totally different—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. You start reading into it—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: —implication.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —and interpreting.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Exactly. That interested me a great deal. Then I tied it in with films and videotapes, and I tied it in with television, and all the other medias that we're using so much, and I became very involved with it. I really—I was greatly involved with it from 1960 on, and I still am very much involved with it. The more involved I got with Futurism, the more I read about it. Unfortunately, there's very little reading material available. I've read just about everything that's been published, at least that I've been able to find, on Futurism, and it's unbelievable how little there is. But it's fascinating. Boccioni wrote a manifesto on sculpture in 1913, in which he speaks of clouds and gases as a sculptural form, music and sound as a sculptural form, and of course movement, kinetic movement, as a sculptural form. [00:48:15] Theories that people are just beginning to use. Sant'Elia speaks of architecture—he wrote a manifesto on architecture, in which he speaks of the beauty of dams and hydroelectric plants. Of course, the drawings exist that he's made for these things. And futuristic cities, and pedestrian malls, and—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —everything else.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Then, of course, Balla, who was the great innovator of the Futurists, he's the man who planted more seeds than any of them. He did wire sculpture many years before Calder did his wire sculptures. He did floating—not mobile, but sculpture that hung from the roof and moved.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What appeals to you about Futurism? What do you find there that's provocative or exciting?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I think it's truly the 20th-century, total 20th-century, art movement. I mean, they touched everything. The Futurists were the first 20th-century group to get involved with social protests and social injustices. They were the first to discuss the potential of abstract music. There were Futurist musicians. [00:50:00] You had Marinetti, who was involved with literature. They got involved with all the oath. They were involved with a type of nationalism, which represented the new trend in the future. They identified them with the Machine Age. They identified the 20th century with industry, with the industrialization—

PAUL CUMMINGS: All those, you find provocative?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I do, because it's the truth. I don't think the Industrial Age is a very beautiful age. It is, in many ways, but I think the fact that these people had the courage to push Italy from the Renaissance into the 20th century is remarkable, and I think the fact that they utilized the energy of industry—they took the best—the energy of speed. They transformed the idea of a speeding automobile into a work of art.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Have you used many of the concepts that you've found in Futurism in your own work?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. They feed me. I've gotten more from the Futurists than any other 20th-century movement. I think Cubism, which is extremely exciting, I think is extremely limiting, compared to Futurism. I think Futurism enhanced everything Cubism presented to the 20th-century artist, but they incorporated everything else. Cubism was not involved with sound. Cubism was not involved with light. Balla designed the stage set for Diaghilev, for his interpretation of Stravinsky's *Fireworks* piece. [00:52:07] Balla was given the commission to do the stage sets, and he incorporated lights as a form, as a sculptural form, which, today, you rarely see in the theater, which I think should be used, I think.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's very hard to do.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah, but he did this in 1914, or 1915, I believe. It's just amazing what they were involved with. The total involvement in 20th-century media. And they utilized—for the first time in the 20th century—they utilized 20th-century technology in their work. They didn't say, "We're artists and we're above technology." They used it as artists.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It just became one more piece of material.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yes. When you realize when they were doing all this, it's rather remarkable, because we're talking about pre-World War I involvements. The painting behind you, the shaped canvas there, is influenced by Futurism. It's called *75 Miles an Hour*, which comes out of [laughs]—

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Inaudible.]

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: It's not that influenced. It's almost an homage, I suppose. They helped me accept the 20th century, let's just say that, on my terms.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Going back to what happens in some of the paintings, the recent work seems quite different to a half a dozen years ago. The color is muted. It's close-valued. [00:54:00] The shapes seemed to have changed enormously.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: The shapes, a half dozen years ago—no, the shapes haven't changed that much.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I mean, internally. I don't mean—

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Internally. Yeah, some of the images. But the color has changed, but that's part of that building and destroying process I had explained. I am through this—I think I mentioned earlier, where I'm in transition—

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's getting darker, and now it's getting lighter.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah. I'm deliberately keeping—avoiding the bright—the brilliant colors, the—I don't want the colors to get in my way, because I'm in a transition stage now, and I'm going—I'm unlearning again now. I'm going through that process of destroying some of the mannerisms that I've developed in the past five years, and color can also be a mannerism. You can be dependent on certain colors. Bright colors are very exciting, and they can easily become a hang-up. I started about six months ago—or more. Actually, I started a year ago of—I began to eliminate reds and brilliant colors from my palette, and I have been using low-keyed colors. I'm doing it for the same reason, I think, the Cubists use a limited palette, and the Futurists use a limited palette when they got involved with—when they were influenced by Cubism, actually. [00:56:02] I don't want the color to get in my way. I want—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Which means what, now?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Which means I want to resolve certain spatial problems that I'm involved with. I don't want the color to interfere with the space. I want to keep—I want to use, basically, earth, homely, low-key, unobtrusive colors that will not interfere with the space. Because color has a way of demanding its own space, and creating its own space, which you can manipulate. But at this phase, I don't want the colors to manipulate anything in the canvases. I want to control it completely, and it's part of—it also identifies with the technical aspect of the painting, where I drew grids on the surface of the canvas, and where I'm deliberately squaring it off and just painstakingly applying one brush of color at a time. It just seems to go with that attitude of a lack of—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Have you ever developed any theories about your own use of color? Since one always thinks of rather interesting colors, in your case.

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: I've never had a problem with color. I've always handled color easily. It was always easy for me to use a full palette, or to just use black-and-white. I think people have certain natural instincts about color. [00:58:00] I don't think color can be taught. I think you can be made aware of certain color conditions in nature, but you cannot be taught to see color. You can be taught to—you can be shown how to observe it, in a realistic way, but it's one of the more personal elements in the painting. I can use—if someone said, "Make a painting with red, yellow, and blue, or blue, green, and black, or black and white," I can do it with equal ease. I have no hang-ups about color one way or the other. I allow—I don't think about color, and I just use the colors that the immediate needs—

PAUL CUMMINGS: To solve a problem?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: Yeah—demand. In this case, it's a low-keyed palette, and I do that without hesitation. If next year, or the year after, the demands require a high-keyed palette of brilliant reds and yellows, I'll do it. So I have no—I feel rather impersonal, actually, about color, because I feel very comfortable with it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's always interested me—for example, in that piece of sculpture, you have these kind of clouds of short dots or strokes that move through, and they also appear in the paintings in different ways, at different times. What does that, as a graphic do to work at?

EDWARD GIOBACHINI GIOBBI: That works several ways. In the paintings, I usually do it to agitate the surface. It's a way of using the white, the white of the canvas, or the white of the paper. [01:00:03] Because of the agitation of the black, it becomes sort of a negative image, and the white becomes more important. But in this case, see, the sculpture—for a number of years, I worked with two-dimensional forms in physical, three-dimensional spaces, like canvases, where I had actual physical, three-dimensional separations between one two-dimensional surface and another. In this case, I have a physical, three-dimensional involvement, a piece of sculpture. It has four side. The surface is a two-dimension—and the images are two-dimensional. Instead of the physical, three-dimensional space I had in the canvas, here I have a physical, three-dimensional form, with two-dimensional images on the form. The images help open up the form. In this case, the images agitate—especially the black, broken areas—agitate the form, open up the form, but they don't destroy the form. It's still a square.

So what it is, it's the opposite of the painting involvement. The painting, I was using in physical, three-dimensional space, and with the sculpture, I'm using two-dimensional images. It's combining the two and sort of pushing it [laughs] as far as I can without destroying this as a piece of sculpture, and without destroying the painting as a two-dimensional involvement. Contradictions that turn me on.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Good.

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