



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

**Oral history interview with Deborah Remington,  
1973 May 29-July 19**

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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Deborah Remington on 1973 May 18-July 19. The interview was conducted by Paul Cummings for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose. This is a rough transcription that may include typographical errors.

**What follows is a DRAFT TRANSCRIPT, which may contain typographical errors or inaccuracies. The content of this page is subject to change upon editorial review.**

## Interview

PAUL CUMMINGS: Let me say it's the 29 of May 1973. Paul Cummings talking to Deborah Remington in her studio on West (inaudible).

Let's start at the beginning, as they say. You were born in Haddonfield, New Jersey.

DEBORAH REMINGTON: Yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: Where is Haddonfield?

MS. REMINGTON: Haddonfield, NJ is in the southern part of New Jersey about 35 miles from Camden, and now today everybody knows that area of Cherry Hill, which when I was a child was really a suburb of Haddonfield. Now it appears Haddonfield has become a suburb of Cherry Hill.

MR. CUMMINGS: A monster shopping center there --

MS. REMINGTON: Right, yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: How long did you live there? Give me some ideas of how --

MS. REMINGTON: I was born in Haddonfield, and I lived there till I was about age 14. My father had died a couple years before that, and I'm an only child. So my mother picked up and took me off to Canada for a year. And then that was the western part of the Canada.

MR. CUMMINGS: Where about?

MS. REMINGTON: Around Calgary. And then we went to Vancouver. And from there, I guess maybe because of educational reasons, my mother felt that life and education or whatever would be better in southern California. So I went -- we went to Pasadena where I went to Elliott Junior High School.

MR. CUMMINGS: So you had some primary school in New Jersey, right?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, I went all the way through my first year of high school in Haddonfield. So all of my development, oh, what, consciousness, I guess, my early awareness, everything was really centered in Haddonfield. The first museums I saw were in Philadelphia, the first galleries in

Philadelphia.

My first experience with art was really in Haddonfield. When I was in eight, I had private art lessons. This came about after several years of playing the piano and actually giving a recital. It's a marvelous story because I hated reading music, and I would simply memorize everything, all the pieces that were given to me to further my musical education. I would simply memorize them all and always be looking out the window or doing something visual. I began drawing pictures all over the music. Pretty soon, you couldn't even read the music even if I wanted to read the music. And one thing lead to another, and promptly, it was ascertained that I was really visual.

MR. CUMMINGS: When did you start drawing then?

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, I guess whenever, beginning when I could hold a pencil. I mean, I still have drawings and stuff from childhood stashed away in some relative's attic somewhere which I suppose I better try to get ahold of. Always had an interest in art. Had an interest in, I guess, music too. I still love music, but I don't play any instrument.

MR. CUMMINGS: Why did you take piano lessons? Was that your mother's idea?

MS. REMINGTON: That was what -- yes, that -- nice little girls were given dancing lessons, which I loved. I danced for a few years when I was a child. And then played the piano, and it was very good because what it did was forced everything to come for the fore. It forced everything to the surface where at age eight, they made the astounding discovery that I really was much more oriented towards the visual arts than anything else.

And at that time, I went to -- I had lessons, private art lessons with some lady in Haddonfield at age eight.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you remember her?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, but I don't remember her name. I even found a drawing the other day I had done there. Yes, of -- let's see -- a porcelain, not a porcelain, a china bunny rabbit with a plant growing out of its back.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, were your parents interested in the arts?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, yes, in all of the arts, and I think it was their idea, I suppose, in terms of raising a child was simply to expose the child to each art. And whichever one was -- proved to be the one that could maintain, hold the interest of the child or elicited some special interest would be the one.

After a year with this lady, I was given -- every Saturday morning, I then began to go to art school.

MR. CUMMINGS: Where was that?

MS. REMINGTON: In Philadelphia. Now, this is age nine, and at that time, the school was called the Philadelphia School of Industrial Art. And I began going there every Saturday morning and went there for about three years and studied painting and drawing.

MR. CUMMINGS: What kind of things did you have? I mean, were they all young people?

MS. REMINGTON: No, that's the problem. They were not. They were no classes. There was one

class for children when I went there and that was age nine and that was fine. And we painted with watercolors and the teachers told us stories and we were to illustrate them or do whatever you felt like, not really illustrate them. That was fun.

The next year, they eliminated that class. So I was put in with older kids. I mean, older meaning 17-, 18-year-olds and early 20s. And naturally, I couldn't draw nor paint as well as they, but nevertheless, I stuck it out with drawing with plaster casts with charcoal which was a never ending source of not only boredom but total frustration for me because I could never make anything work.

MR. CUMMINGS: In what way?

MS. REMINGTON: It was too much, I mean, for a 10-year-old kid to make drawings as good, let's say, of these beautiful plaster casts or busts or whatever or the model. I never could do it as well as the 20-year-old kids. And I was, of course, always frustrated.

MR. CUMMINGS: When did you start drawing from a model then?

MS. REMINGTON: At age 10, live model.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's pretty young.

MS. REMINGTON: And this went on --

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you like that? I mean, did you have any friends your age who were --

MS. REMINGTON: No, there was no one in -- no, no one in my classes that were my age. I was really strictly alone, always in my early development, always alone in terms of being taught. Although it was a class situation, there were no other people.

MR. CUMMINGS: The age difference was so --

MS. REMINGTON: Right. No one else I could relate to. It was strictly an isolated, solitary thing of development in that sense but within a group. I received lots of encouragement, instruction, et cetera, et cetera, and little by little, it came. My eye, of course, was always developed which I think is very good.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, I'm curious. Before we get all the way into that, we'll come back to it. Did you have books around? Your parents were interested in music obviously because you took music lessons. Or was that something for you?

MS. REMINGTON: No. It was they were also interested in music. They had a friend who was the first violinist with the Philadelphia orchestra at that time. I was very small. I don't remember the man's name, but I do remember he had a Stradivarius violin. And every time he would come over, he would leave it on the chair in the hall, and my mother would have absolute fits that something would happen to that violin. And when they would retire at night, she would always ask the guy would he please take it up to his room so that nothing would ever happen to it, that kind of thing.

But did I have books?

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you read?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, I read. I used to very often get up at 6:00 in the morning and read before

anybody else got up.

MR. CUMMINGS: What did you read?

MS. REMINGTON: Stories, mostly fiction, yeah, as a child, but I also like non-fiction. I read travel books but travel books written for the age level where I was or non-fiction. But I found non-fiction eventually, and this really developed as a child, let's say, seven, eight, nine years old. I began to discover that non-fiction travel kind of things or real-life experiences were by far more exciting and more adventurous and more interesting to me than fiction. I went back and forth between the two but --

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you remember any books particularly that you read?

MS. REMINGTON: That I read, oh, dear. No, I mean --

MR. CUMMINGS: It was just everything that was around.

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, right. Lots of children's books. I mean, all through the Oz series. Now, after you get through the "Wizard of Oz," I mean, there were -- there must have been 15 other Oz books that I've read every one of them at least twice. And those were marvelous in terms of my imagination. They really got me going. They were almost surrealistic. They really were. I think they were very, very interesting and that kind of thing.

Of course, "Gulliver's Travels" and this sort of thing piqued my imagination, and I very often as a young child when I would read books that were not illustrated would make drawings to go with them or to accentuate --

MR. CUMMINGS: (Inaudible) story book --

MS. REMINGTON: Right, even my imagination, my interpretation of what these things was, was they were illustrations. So I was constantly, I guess, drawing and illustrating everything which had no pictures to -- you see what I mean?

MR. CUMMINGS: What about primary school? Because you were still in primary school and going to painting classes.

MS. REMINGTON: That's right.

MR. CUMMINGS: What school did you go to? Do you remember which ones?

MS. REMINGTON: I went to public schools in Haddonfield, primary school and kindergarten, primary school. I'm very bad at math because in fifth grade the teacher thought I showed such marvelous talent for drawing that I was given the chore of illustrating as the seasons changed or as the specific days came along, I was the one who would get a huge piece of blackboard to do an illustration of Christmas and the turkeys for Thanksgiving and so on. And, of course, always this took place during math, the hour that was devoted to math, and my math is terrible. I'm sure that this is why. My whole fifth grade was spent doing that.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, that's funny. Well, how would the other students like the fact that you could make all these drawings and were doing all these things?

MS. REMINGTON: It just seemed a natural matter of course. It was very acceptable because other

students did other things. I mean, oh, let's see. Right around world -- I guess right around when World War II began, Toscanini, the conductor's family, fled Italy, and they landed in Haddonfield, New Jersey. So Walter, the maestro's son and his wife Cia and son Walfredo came to live in Haddonfield. Now, Walfredo was in school, put in school with me. Walfredo was this nice little boy who spoke no English and wore, of course, very European clothes with short knee pants, and all the kids laughed at him except me. And I thought he was very fascinating, and my mother and his mother became friends so we became friends.

There is an instance of somebody who could -- who came from a family who could do something. He was a very talented kid, and I remember one day he took me home for lunch. And the first course of lunch was a raw egg, and he showed me how you poked a hole with pins in the end and then you sucked the egg out. Well, I almost fainted. I never heard of anything like that in my life and declined the offer. Then we ate lunch.

And after lunch, we were taken into the living room where we were served chocolates. Now, my eyes were very big as this little kid, oh, boy, this fancy box of chocolates. Now, in each of the chocolates, there happened to be a cordial which tasted absolutely terrible, and I had no -- this was a terrible thing to say. I had no place to put these damn chocolates, and I put one in my mouth and get this awful taste. I would -- I had no place to spit them out, and we were sitting on this furniture that was huge overstuffed furniture with carved lion heads, the only stuff they had brought from Italy.

So I began taking these after I had bitten into them a little bit and I didn't like them and there was no other place to put them. I really wasn't a terrible brat, but I was stuffing them down into the chairs, down in the upholstery between the cushions and the actual seat. Really, I don't know what they thought when they found (inaudible) chocolates stuffed down in their upholstered furniture years later but --

MR. CUMMINGS: That's funny. Well, what was it like growing up? Did you have lots of children in the neighborhood? Did you have a lot of friends? Were you running around doing all the things children do in some ways or --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, I lived about a mile out from the center of town in a very nice suburb, very nice middle class suburb. I think that many artists, really a great number of artists come from this kind of background, just a nice middle class background. I don't only mean visual artists, but I mean people in music, theater, dance, writers I know. They -- it's strange, but most of us come from that kind of a background.

I had lots of friends. There was a block away a huge woods so it was like open, free country. I played in the woods, and I played with other children, lots of friends. There was good communication between, I guess, the kids in the neighborhood. It was a good growing up situation.

And my parents were strict with me. I mean, I was brought up a well-mannered kid. I certainly wasn't much of a brat, but I did get to do things like, oh, the music, the dance, the art. I mean stuff where I could express myself, the things that really I could get involved in. And I got into Girl Scouts, and this was about age nine and loved that. Did a lot in that, and I was in that for about three years, three or four years.

And when I was born, my grandmother Bessie Howell Pittenger Remington was regent of the DAR. So naturally, when I was born, I became immediately and automatically a member of the CAR, which is Children of the American Revolution. So I grew up having to go to meetings, and as a child, DAR

watermelon parties in the summer. I can't bear watermelon. I can't stand watermelon. These nice little parties, little girls in white gloves and Mary Janes and all that kind of nonsense (inaudible).

This was all fine up to a point. The meetings were kind of interesting because they were always held in an old, old building from the Revolutionary War in Haddonfield, and I'm a history nut. So I think part of this was cultivated from that period. These meetings were always at some point after school once a month or something, and they dealt with history and a lot of the things that I felt were very fascinating and interesting.

Oh, but the social part of it wasn't so hot, and I remember at age 13 proclaiming that I would not continue to be in this silly thing and wrote a dreadful letter to the then regent, DAR regent, declaring that I was pulling out and ending my affiliation and this nonsense which I really -- it came to be a waste of time, as I said, with these silly parties and social life. I couldn't stand it. It's not my kind of thing, and I really realized it at age 13. And my mother said, "Well, that's fine, but you can get out of it. You're not being pressured or forced to stay in it, but you do it right. You write the proper kind of letters, and you" -- she told me, really taught me how to get out of a sticky situation, which I had hated.

I think I had begun to hate for three or four years, really since I had got into the art thing. I didn't want to waste time with all this nonsense. And I was -- I let myself out of it. I think my grandmother had died or something the year before, and so that was all right. She wouldn't have had a heart attack.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. It wasn't her --

MS. REMINGTON: Rotten little grandchild bowing out of the DAR.

MR. CUMMINGS: But what interested you about the history content of the meetings?

MS. REMINGTON: Well --

MR. CUMMINGS: I mean, what was the appeal because that seems to be the part that interested you.

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, I don't know, something that was unknown to me, something that had -- history has always interested me because it has so much to do, I feel, with a person, as a person. Let's say -- I will speak specifically about me. What it meant to me, who I was, how I was developed. I was a product of whatever had gone on before all this, before me, before my time in terms of development and historical development of the town that I grew up in, which is Haddonfield. It was founded in the 1600s by a woman named Elizabeth Haddon. She was a Quaker. It was a Quaker town. There were very strong Quaker remnants or elements still left. I had an uncle who married my Aunt Dorothy whose name was Herbert Scattergood, who was a Quaker man. The meeting hall is still there.

Haddonfield has done a marvelous job in preserving the old buildings, the old trees. The main street is called King's Highway. All these things fascinated me.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, was this a part of your family, too? Have they lived in Haddonfield for a long time? Are they a part of this, or did you --

MS. REMINGTON: My father's family had lived in Haddonfield for a long time. My mother comes from oh, somewhere, I suppose now which is Camden, but not -- in those days, it wasn't. It was

more like Merchantville, another small town. My father's family had lived in Haddonfield, I suppose, for some time since the middle 1800s, I think. Before that, they had come -- well, part of my father's family had been in New Jersey -- I've traced it back. This is one of the things we got to do as nice little DAR, CAR types. One got to trace one's personal family back, and it's really fascinating. On one side I traced it back.

My grandmother actually had traced this part back to about 12th century England, and the background is all Welsh. There was one king involved there, Richard something. I don't know. I could look it up if you're interested. It is rather fascinating.

So my whole background is really English, Welsh, some Dutch, some Scotch. And part of the family went to Philadelphia, but there was part of the family that have been in New Jersey since the last 1600s. So New Jersey, at least the southern part, they have been in the southern part since the last 1600s. So this was almost all a personal history for me.

This is where I had actually -- my background had actually developed from this, and history fascinated me. It fascinated my imagination. I got to imagine what all this was like, anything that could -- I don't know draw out -- would give me the opportunity to use my imagination, what things looked like, what people -- what kind of eyeglasses people wore, this kind of thing, as a child just fascinated me, and I thought this history was marvelous. I still have a great fascination for history, American history, the Revolutionary War and the Civil War in particular. I once made a tour of all the Civil War battlefield not too long ago.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MS. REMINGTON: Uh-huh.

MR. CUMMINGS: By yourself or was that a project?

MS. REMINGTON: Gone through the South and that's marvelous history. We did it in late spring, climbed the hills where the battles were held, kind of followed this whole thing. In fact, I even named a painting "Antietam." The battle was really an incredible battle.

MR. CUMMINGS: Anyway, we still have you as a busy teenager --

MS. REMINGTON: No, we're not a teenager yet. We're about nine or 10. I was hardly a teenager yet. I was still naïve.

MR. CUMMINGS: So at nine or 10, you were going to classes in Philadelphia, having the meetings, tracing family genealogy, dancing on occasions, right?

MS. REMINGTON: Right.

MR. CUMMINGS: And (inaudible) --

MS. REMINGTON: Right.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, were you aware of the Depression or anything? Because this was, what, towards the end of the 30s.

MS. REMINGTON: I was born in a hospital near Haddonfield, actually at Cooper Hospital in Camden,



I believe, on June 25th, 1930. And so all of this was really -- took place really in the (inaudible).

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MS. REMINGTON: So that's where my -- I guess whatever influences there, that's where it was.

MR. CUMMINGS: Were you aware of the Depression and economic problems?

MS. REMINGTON: No, I was too young for that because that was really pretty much over, I guess, when I was born.

MR. CUMMINGS: No, it went all the way through the 30s --

MS. REMINGTON: That's right. No, I was not aware of --

MR. CUMMINGS: -- war --

MS. REMINGTON: -- small. When I was six or seven, let's say a first understanding a child would probably have of economics, I mean, I wasn't suffering any hardship in terms of what a lot of people suffered during the Depression. I think I first heard about it, I guess, when I was about that age.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you find going to Philadelphia? Was that sort of a standard thing that you --

MS. REMINGTON: Well, I loved going to Philadelphia. I loved the big city. I loved the excitement. I think this is what ultimately led me to really finally decide to live in New York. I love the big city. I love the vitality. As a child going to Philadelphia, it was absolutely like a million ice cream cones all at once, you see, because I could see and do everything. My mother almost every Saturday, we would go to Philadelphia. I would go to art school till around noon, and then I would meet my mother. And we've had lunch, and I would go to museums. We often went to museums or --

MR. CUMMINGS: When did you start that?

MS. REMINGTON: I was about five.

MR. CUMMINGS: So you were really --

MS. REMINGTON: Uh-huh.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- child going to the Museum of the Parkway and --

MS. REMINGTON: Right. I especially loved the Egyptian stuff, and when I was a very small child, hieroglyphics fascinated me.

MR. CUMMINGS: Why do children like hieroglyphics and Egyptian things?

MS. REMINGTON: Probably two reasons. They -- again, it's an opportunity to use one's imagination on what these things mean, of course, before you know anything about it. And secondly, I think they're a little bit easy to understand visually because the frontal attitude or the profile attitude, it's sort of a one-dimensional thing. It's a little closer to, let's say, the way children can see figures or people in drawings. It's not that difficult. You don't have to think of a third side or light and dark or shading. It's --

MR. CUMMINGS: It's flat.

MS. REMINGTON: It's flat and it's presented and it's -- you can read these processions. I mean, it's obvious. Hey, there's a bird, and this is what they're doing and so on and so forth even before you know any history connected with it.

And I remember as a young child, one of the guards in the museum -- well, where the Egyptian stuff was -- taught me two hieroglyphs, and I remember learning those and going home and writing them on my blackboard. And they were on that blackboard for three or four years. I never erased them, and I learned them. I don't know what they were now, but I remember -- I think maybe one was bird and one was something else, but I was fascinated that this kind of -- it was my first association with another language which was a visual language that meant something. It meant I did understand that people could read this. I couldn't read this, but I could read two hieroglyphs. And I think that was just marvelous.

MR. CUMMINGS: You didn't have any other languages at home, did you?

MS. REMINGTON: No.

MR. CUMMINGS: So that there's no --

MS. REMINGTON: No, I did not grow up bilingual, unfortunately. I had to do all that on my own later.

MR. CUMMINGS: And what school did you go to after you left the primary?

MS. REMINGTON: Haddonfield Junior High.

MR. CUMMINGS: Haddonfield Junior High.

MS. REMINGTON: And then Haddonfield High School. It's very simple. I just went to Haddon High for one year, and then as I told you, my father died and then --

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you remember the instructors, the teachers in those days that you remember particularly who were important to you one way or another?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, there was -- I guess there were a couple of them, I think. I had a teacher in fifth and fourth grade and then I think again in eighth grade, a lady named Ms. Connolly [phonetic]. And strangely enough, I think in 1969, there was a small -- it was a picture of me and my work and a small article in *Look* magazine. And I got this letter from this woman, Mrs. Something, and she said, "Maybe you might remember me. My name was Claire Connolly. I was your fourth grade teacher."

I almost fell over. She said, "Well, it's very nice to find out that" -- it's gratifying for her to find out that one of her students could do something.

She was very excited about reading this thing in *Look* magazine. I remember her.

I remember a woman who lived across the street, a lady named Ms. Farrow [phonetic]. Now, Ms. Farrow was a typical version of an old maid schoolteacher who lived with her rather ill old father and took care of him for years, and he owned the local drugstore. And this sounds like *Peyton Place*, right?

But growing -- I mean, every town I suppose in America has its own *Peyton Place*. But at some -- at one point, she shocked everybody by marrying some man, and they all moved in and took care of Daddy. And then Daddy dutifully died, and there they were. And it was marvelous. Ms. Farrow still remained the old maid schoolteacher, however. It didn't loosen her up at all.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, how was high school because here you were getting older and it was a different kind of thing. Did you like what happened in junior high, right?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, gee, as junior -- yeah, it was all right. Junior high was all right. I --

MR. CUMMINGS: Still a lot of activities interest you still or were you spending more time drawing and painting or --

MS. REMINGTON: Both. I was interested in school activities. I loved sports. I was very interested in sports and went to high school. The first year of high school I loved because we got to, oh, I guess in literature, we really got to read some interesting things. *Ulysses* and all that business we had to read, start to read that.

My first year in Haddonfield in high school wasn't that -- really wasn't that interesting. I did have a very interesting high school experience, but it didn't happen until I got to Pasadena. And my second -- am I jumping too fast? Can I go?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: My second year of high school was spent in Elliott Junior High School, which was in California. The system is a little different. You actually graduate from 10th grade. So actually, I ended up graduating from eighth grade, 10th grade and 12th grade in a gown and cap and all this nonsense. It was really funny.

In 10th grade at Elliott Junior High School was fine because I got to take -- I wanted to take Latin and Spanish together. I'm a language nut, it turned out, and found it very easy. And that was the only school in Pasadena of the five junior high schools that would tolerate this sort of thing. They thought I was absolutely crazy, but they said oh, all right, you can do that.

Again, they had a good crafts program. I remember I got involved in making jewelry and stuff like that which I thought was kind of swell, the second year in high school. Doing a lot of reading. I had just come to California, and I was astounded because they didn't have any snow or that -- you were not aware of seasons. This was -- let me think, oh, my. I guess in the mid '40s this would have been.

Before there was air pollution in California, it was absolutely beautiful. You can't imagine the clear air and the mountains stood out. I remember walking to school. Often in the mornings, I would look up in the mountains. I lived in Altadena, which is above Pasadena. And the mountains would be so clear. They looked two-dimensional as if they were cut out and stuck there, and many things looked that way. This did impress me for a couple of years. I'm sure that has carried over somewhere in my work.

MR. CUMMINGS: What about Canada? How did your mother decide to go there?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, I think she was very grief stricken and very upset because of my father's death. My father had leukemia and suffered for four years with it, which was really -- it was hard on everybody, and my mother was a nurse. She didn't practice nursing, of course, during the time

she was married. She later went back to it, but yeah, she took very good care of him after the doctors said he had six months to live. She really took such good care of him. He lived for four years mostly because we had spinach and liver every other night, if you can imagine. I love spinach, but I absolutely can't eat liver anymore. I think I had enough of it for four years.

I guess we went to Canada. I guess what I would call my mother's (inaudible) had something to do with her life, to get away, to have some kind of a new life, to try to forget all this really tragic thing because my father and mother were very close and very much in love. So I guess my mother felt very lonely, and being an only child, there were just two of us really. So I was also very adaptable to anything. I always have been, and I love traveling. And this was marvelous.

So we went to Western Canada first to spend a summer. I guess this was when I was in eighth grade. I spent a summer on a ranch and riding horses and every outdoor thing. And I loved it. It was just marvelous for me. And then back to Haddonfield, and then I went to high school, my first year, and then back to Canada for a year again, the outdoor life, and then Vancouver, which I didn't like at all.

MR. CUMMINGS: Why?

MS. REMINGTON: It's a stodgy kind of town. I don't know. I didn't relate to it. There's some towns you relate to, and some towns you don't. That's not my kind of town. And then we went down to Pasadena, which was probably by and large, the way I look at it -- what happened to me educationally from there, it was certainly the best move that could have happened. Now, why my mother actually chose Pasadena, I don't know. I think she had friends there or something from years ago who had made the move and felt probably that that would make it a little easier to settle, and I think it did.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, those were the war years, too, aren't they?

MS. REMINGTON: Those are the war years, yes. And so I can recall gasoline rationing and meat and all that sort of thing. Oh, maybe this was just right after the war. No, I guess it is during. No, it was during the war, absolutely. I remember that.

We once had to drive from Pasadena, and my mother had to come back on business to Haddonfield. And I remember once a long, cold drive through the southern U.S. to get back to Haddonfield, and it was like Christmastime. And hotels were full and this and that and the other thing, and, oh, what a strange trip. I remember one night late at night, my mother was driving through -- I don't know. We were driving through some tiny southern town trying to find a place to stay, and I guess my mother was so tired. She followed some car and followed this car right into its driveway.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really? That's funny.

MS. REMINGTON: But anyway, where were we?

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you have any relationship with Haddonfield, or is it just finished? I mean, do you have any relatives or friends --

MS. REMINGTON: No, I still think of it as my wellspring. I mean, it's the place that in a sense where I was formed. I have friends there. I remember going back in 1966, 1965. I guess in the fall of '65, I went back to Haddonfield for really the first time in 20-some years and looked up all my friends. It's just three or four friends that I'd gone all through school with and kids I'd grown up with.

And it was very funny. I remember meeting one of them. I had driven down from New York, and I was to meet two of these girls in a restaurant. And we were going to have lunch, and then I was going to stay the weekend. And so I remember walking into the restaurant, and I hadn't really seen these kids since sixth grade or something. And it was astounding that all of a sudden, my first reaction was but you've grown up, you're not three feet tall anymore. I guess they must have had the same feeling about me.

It's a strange thing to confront dear friends. Well, let's say the last time I saw these girls was in high school. To confront dear friends who are grown up and very mature. One of them had kids and all that sort of thing.

Yeah, I mean, Haddonfield is there, and I still keep in touch with some of the people. I find I don't have much relationship with anybody there now that they have kind of grown into their worlds and I've grown into mine. There isn't much -- there really isn't any going home again. I mean, I don't consider that home especially in that way. I will always consider it home in another way.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, what about the rest of high school in Pasadena?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, after 10th grade, I graduated from 10th grade, and I went to then something called Pasadena Junior College. I got into a progressive education thing. There was then --

MR. CUMMINGS: How did (inaudible) your interest or your mother's interest?

MS. REMINGTON: That's what one did if one qualified in a certain IQ level. There were two high schools. They were known as Elliott -- no, wait a minute. Pasadena Junior College was really Pasadena High School that had been changed to Pasadena Junior College. And Muir Junior College, I think. Now, the kids -- let's see. The kids that went to Muir were another IQ bunch. In other words, they kind of separated people. They were the ones that got the straight high school education.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, those were the school system's doing then?

MS. REMINGTON: Right. There was a man. Now, this was in the late '40s. There was some man -- or middle '40s, I guess, this would be -- who came out from Michigan -- and I don't remember the man's name or anything else. I think it was Michigan -- to an educational experiment in progressive education, and I happened to land in the high school the two years that he was there. Now, after that happened, they fired him for being a Communist or some nonsense like this.

I -- let's see. I graduated from Pasadena Junior College -- I'll go back over this -- I think in 1948. And at that time, that graduating class -- and I think this may still hold true -- graduated more artists, musicians and people who went into atomic science than any other group of high school -- than any other graduating year. So that my -- I'm getting ahead of myself a little bit, but my last two years of high school in this progressive education system was spent. It's a marvelous thing. It was spent with people in the visual arts and in music, which I also have an infinity with people in music, and also, people who were very into physics and science. They're the people who were shooting the rockets to the moon nowadays and so on were all a product of this school.

Anyway, I got there, and I spent two years there. And this system was that your last two years of high school and your first two years of college were somehow combined if you were bright enough to take it. They also let you go into an area of specialization. In other words, I had -- I was really

heavy into art.

I had a lot of art classes, a lot of drawing classes, which was very good. And then you had to take design and lettering and junk like that, but that was -- I mean, that's all right, but it was kind of throwaway for me. Painting and drawing, a lot of languages which I was interested, a lot of. Your English, if you qualified, you got to take Chaucer in middle English, let's say third year high school, which is really astounding, instead of reading *O Pioneers!* by Willa Cather. You got to do that and Shakespeare and some really good lit classes. So by the time I got out of high school, I had a very good -- a pretty good background in stuff like that.

I'm horrible at math. I got thrown out of geometry, literally, after two weeks because -- this is a very interesting story. The woman -- the class was mostly comprised of football players. Football is a game I have had no interest in and absolutely cannot understand. It's the biggest bore in the world. Baseball's fine.

All these idiot football players were in the class, as far as I'm concerned, some of the stupidest people in the world. And this teacher, this woman, this tough woman who -- all she could do was talk about plays and football when she wasn't teaching geometry. Now --

MR. CUMMINGS: She was a football player.

MS. REMINGTON: Right. Now, the first two weeks, that was all right. She had drew something on the board. She drew a triangle, and it pointed to the right. And she called it a right triangle. That was fine. I could understand that. One day she drew a triangle on the board and it went to the left and she called it a right triangle. Well, being very visual and not understanding geometry too well, I raised my hand and said, "Why do you call this a right triangle when it goes to the left? To me, logically, it would be a left triangle."

Well, I was thereupon accused of being a smart kid trying to disrupt the class, a rotten brat and so forth and was promptly thrown out of geometry and told never to come back which suited me fine. I then got to do what I wanted to do which was take biological sciences, which I (inaudible) biology and botany, and that was my science requirement. And I just did marvelously with that.

MR. CUMMINGS: What were your art classes like? What did you have there?

MS. REMINGTON: We went -- let's see. I can remember -- first of all, we only went to school right from 8:00 in the morning till noon, and then we had the rest of the day free. So a lot of that time in Pasadena -- of course, the weather was beautiful -- would be, oh, I would go with my friends. We'd go out drawing or painting, collecting botany stuff. I made this huge book of tree identification and leaf identification and all this plant identification, which I still have, with all the botanical names. That interested me. That was fascinating. And we would also play very hard and swim, a lot of stuff like that.

Drawing, the classes, the art classes were -- oh, drawing classes, let's say we were -- he'd spend, the teacher, would spend a week on ears, and you would sit with someone facing someone who would draw each other's ears for a week or each other's knees or each other's hands or elbows or noses or eyes. It was marvelous because after you got over the giggles --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, they're sitting there looking at you.

MS. REMINGTON: Really, after you got over the giggles, you really understood what -- how to look. In other words, it really opened my eyes for the first time. I don't remember the man's name.

He was a very good drawing teacher, especially for high school. This was unknown, unheard of. You didn't have to draw from those dreary plaster casts. A couple of times, we had live models, and they were sort of clothed, semi-clothed but --

MR. CUMMINGS: Draped.

MS. REMINGTON: Draped. I might point out in high school, I met some friends with whom I'm still friends all these years afterwards, painters who were ahead of me in school, ahead of me meaning they were actually in the junior college section, one of whom was David Simpson who is a painter, still lives in Berkeley. He's a West Coast painter, very good painter. I first met David in high school. He was my high school boyfriend for some years, believe it or not.

And he taught me a lot. He taught me a lot about watercolor. I don't know, a lot about opening my eyes. Mind you, I must have been all of 15 at this time. I think he first told me or taught me or let's say exposed me to Picasso, to the surrealists, to, oh, the Constructivists, the things that say modern art, per se. I began to read books. I began to look. I began to draw Cubist pictures. I began to do all kinds of things like that.

Then another guy named John Ryan was involved in that. We sort of became a little group. Later on, we actually had a gallery in San Francisco called the Six Gallery made up of many of us who had met at this time. Another person was Wally Hedrick, who is still in the San Francisco, the Bay area. He still paints, is an artist.

Oh, there were a few other people involved in that, but these people, we learned from each other. It was a very intensive kind of thing. We were all best friends.

MR. CUMMINGS: There was a museum there, wasn't there, Pasadena?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, the Pasadena Museum was there. They still hadn't much of a modern policy. There were still showing flowers and portraits and stuff that people painted around there. I once remember they did have sort of an open exhibition when I was still in high school, and we all marched down with paintings to enter in to be juried. And I remember mine had -- it's very funny. It was kind of some funny Cubist nude. Part of the painting, I had decided to put -- to glue seeds on. I think it was sesame seeds or something. I don't know. So anyway, I glued on there, and all the seeds were falling off as I was carrying it around, this trail of seeds.

MR. CUMMINGS: Followed by little birds.

MS. REMINGTON: Yes. Needless to say, this picture didn't make it. I don't blame them. I think I still have the picture. I mean, it's fine. For a 15-year-old kid, it was marvelous.

But there was some, but there wasn't any art activity in Pasadena to speak of in a community sense. It was still -- the little old ladies painting here and there and everywhere. I was not at that time familiar with collectors or people who were really serious about all this.

MR. CUMMINGS: But I'm curious about Simpson and the other people. They're not much older than you, though, are they?

MS. REMINGTON: About three years, some of them three or four years.

MR. CUMMINGS: What was it about the modern art that appealed to you? Was it their enthusiasm about it, the imagery or --

MS. REMINGTON: Well, obviously, it wouldn't only be their enthusiasm. Their enthusiasm in a sense led me through the doors, and their enthusiasm put in contact with these things. I think it was my enthusiasm that for the visual world, what was it. I saw this stuff. It appealed to me. I then began reading about it. As I said, pictures and et cetera, et cetera.

I was astounded. I remember the first book I checked out on Salvador Dali. I was absolutely astounded with those pictures, the drippy watches and all that business. The movies, the surrealist movies that would have been done in the '30s, some of these had been shown then around Pasadena simply, I think, by accident. I really don't know. I can't (inaudible) very well.

MR. CUMMINGS: (Inaudible) because Eugene Berman was around then those days.

MS. REMINGTON: Right.

MR. CUMMINGS: And Bill Copper [phonetic] had a gallery a couple years later in that area, and there were -- a lot of them went to Hollywood.

MS. REMINGTON: Right.

MR. CUMMINGS: And there were a lot of Europeans in Hollywood who owned surrealist art. So it's interesting that it drifted all the way down to you.

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, it did. (Inaudible) Picasso but, I mean, anybody that had done anything. There was a whole consciousness, I think, going on in not only my little group of artists, but that group was, in fact, larger. I was -- I knew a lot of musicians at the time. At 15, I began listening to the bebop people. I mean, Charlie Parker and Dizzy and really got into that very heavily. Went to all the concerts in Los Angeles, heard -- oh, Lord, I remember going down in those days on Central Avenue, I mean, at night with my friends. We were 15- and 16-year-old kids, and we'd go in the bars and listen to Charlie Parker and Dizzy. I first remember hearing Billie Holiday down there, Lester Young, all these people.

Very often, I would sit there and draw, not of anything. I mean, these were really abstract things, but nobody bothered us. We just sat there and listened to the music and pretended we were much older so we could drink. Sometimes it worked, and sometimes it didn't work. That was all right. I mean, those years were absolutely marvelous because I got to do all those things and hear all those people. It was all part of the art thing that was developing in me, and my awareness of it, visually, it collated so well with these ideas in music that was -- that were going around and what I was hearing. It's --

MR. CUMMINGS: How do you relate those, the music and the art?

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, I think it's really -- I still relate them. I'm still heavily into, I suppose, jazz, which is making a comeback, and, of course, some of the rock stuff, which I consider musically fascinating. Not the bubblegum-type rock but something with some substance musically, the Beatles, that kind of stuff.

I've always thought because I've been asked this question by all my musician friends for years and years and years. I've always thought that it's the same ideas. It's just simply coming out in a different form. I mean, I still listen, let's say, to old Charlie Parker records, and the ideas are still relevant. I mean, they are expressed abstractly. It's --

MR. CUMMINGS: In what way? What kind of ideas do you see coming out, one, in music and, let's



say, again visually?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, you're getting into a very broad expanse. I mean, you have to -- you're dealing here with the varied levels of human experience that communicate or transcend any kind of literal description, really. I can't say well, that's a -- that's solo there is a protest about McCarthyism or is a protest of the war or --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, the aesthetic is related?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, the aesthetic, I think, as it has been in all of history is deeply -- it's really the same thing, basically. I feel that my life has been very enriched by starting out at such a young age to listen to, expand, to experiment with these ideas which not all of which I understood completely at the time, probably, in fact, very little of which I understood in terms of the aesthetic.

MR. CUMMINGS: Were you interested in classical music, too?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, yes, always interested in classical music. I remember once in high school I went through, oh, I don't know, about a nine-month period of listening only to Wagner. I don't think I've ever listened to much Wagner since then, to be honest about it.

No, music has always -- classical music has always been related -- related to very much. And also, contemporary American classical music, I'm a big Hindemith fan for one thing. I think he's a great man. I've spent years of my life listening to contemporary classical music or classical music in traditionally, let's say, all the way back as far back as one can buy recordings of.

The more contemporary stuff relates again with the ideas in the painting or let's say the ideas in jazz. It's -- again, it's another way of expressing. It's another form. For me, it always has been. I like the different forms.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, one -- I'm curious about. As life develops in Pasadena, by the time you got out of high school, the war had come to a close. Was that noticeable to you? I mean, the effects of the war and the end of the war and all of the military coming back and this sort of social shifts that were going on, or were you so busy with school that --

MS. REMINGTON: I was pretty busy with school. I think the only -- my first -- the impact of that really first hit me when I went to art school. I was very young when I went to art school. I think after I graduated from high school, I went to -- I wanted to go to art school. That's what I was going to do. I was going to be an artist.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you decide that?

MS. REMINGTON: I think I had always known it. I must have decided that around nine years old, really, absolutely. I was going to be something when I grew up, and I remember having a conscious decision when I was a kid after you finish with -- you know, you're going to be a fireman or one of those, an airline stewardess or some nonsense like that. I really remember somewhere between age nine and 12 making a conscious decision of that's what I'm going to do with my life. I am going to paint. I'm going to devote my life to that, dedicate whatever I am to that and just went straight ahead with it from really -- from childhood. I was -- there was never one solo that the dancing and the piano playing, all that nonsense, was taken care of. I was on the straight path right to it, never any deviation.

MR. CUMMINGS: What did your mother think of all of this as you were pursuing --

MS. REMINGTON: She loved it. She encouraged it. She really didn't understand. I'd paint and stuff in high school, and she really didn't understand all that. But she tried to, and she's a typical mother, a little bit than most, I must say, in terms of how she did encourage all this. And I suppose she thought it was a little weird, and my friends and my ideas in high school may be a little weird. But they were all right. She went along with it if that's what I wanted, and I seemed to be a serious kid. I seemed to be serious about what I was doing and my involvement with all this, fine. As long as you're serious about it, it's not some dumb thing you're going to waste your time on. And she saw that it wasn't.

When high school -- let's see. Yes, when high school was nearing to the end, she said, "Well, we better pick out an art school for you."

And I guess I had -- let's see. I graduated from high school at 16, and I was -- then my 17th birthday between the spring and the fall, I was 17 anyway when I started art school. David Simpson and Wally Hedrick and I and one or two other people went off in the fall to something called Otis Art Institute, which is now I think LA -- no, wait a minute. LA County or something like that, but anyway.

And I went there for a couple of months, and it didn't interest me. I didn't --

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you pick it? Was it just --

MS. REMINGTON: It was there. Everybody was going there.

MR. CUMMINGS: Everybody was going there.

MS. REMINGTON: We had all decided that well, that's where we'd go. So fine, all right. It didn't interest -- it didn't hold our interest. After a couple of months, the instruction was mediocre, pedantic. It wasn't interesting enough. It wasn't revealing enough, strong enough, hard enough for kids who were really serious, as we were. We really wanted to get into this.

And it was this nonsense. We'd sit and draw -- tri -- I remember once having to make a painting of a triangle and a sphere and a cube to learn how light and dark strike the surface and everything. But you only got to do it in two colors. Well, that was all right. I mean, I may even still have that thing around. But the rest of it was just dumb and boring, and it simply wasn't strong enough to hold our interest.

MR. CUMMINGS: And it wasn't what you were looking for in art school, either?

MS. REMINGTON: No, no. So we began to talk about going somewhere else. The San Francisco Art Institute came up. Now, in those days, it was known as the California School of Fine Arts. It had a marvelous reputation on the West Coast. Of course, it was in a different city. It was then decided toward -- oh, I sort of, I don't know, petered out in terms of school toward, oh, November, December. I didn't like it very much.

Right around December or early January, that I guess was '46 or '47, something like that, after long talks with my mother, I guess Wally and David and a few other people -- there was another guy in there named John Ryan, who started out as a painter and has really ended up as a poet, and John and David and Wally and a couple of other people and I really wanted to go to California School of Fine Arts. Now, they had already decided to go. So I -- anyway, it was up to me. My mother finally said, oh, well, all right.

I remember one long marathon drive, my mother at 11:00 at night or something, and we would drive

to San Francisco and take a look at all this. So we got in the car, and it must have been a million hours later, she had done all this driving straight through. So we arrive in San Francisco and checked into I guess what was then the Fairmont Hotel for a night or so and went to look at the school, and I fell in love with it immediately. I remember it was raining, and we walked into the patio, the old -- there's a new part of the school now, but the old part of the school is really beautiful. We walked into the patio, and it was raining.

And I looked at all the art hanging on the walls around the patio, and a lot of it, I didn't understand. I had just walked into something called abstract expressionism, right straight smack in the face. It fascinated me. I loved it. I hated it. It interested me all in the first impact. I didn't -- it was -- I can't tell you. It was like a step into another world all of a sudden.

Anyway, in the next few hours, I registered, signed up, the whole thing. I felt like well, my future is sealed here. Went back to Pasadena and packed up and came back to San Francisco.

And one important person I forgot to mention who was a friend of ours and part of this group in Pasadena is a man named Hayward King, who later was director of -- years later. Oh, he was a painter, but years later, he -- I don't know if he's still painting or not, but he then became director of the Richmond Museum. He was director of that for a while. He had been curator at the San Francisco Museum.

So we had gone -- we had all gone to San Francisco, Hayward and John and David and Wally and two other people whose names escape me now, but who subsequently got out of art so I guess it doesn't matter too much. They haven't been in art in years. I think one's building airplanes, and I don't know what -- one's farming or something. I don't know.

So we all arrived at San Francisco, and I stayed in a boardinghouse at the top of the hill where they coincidentally filmed or -- yeah, I guess they filmed *I Remember Mama*, and after that, they tore it down. I was there about a week, and all my friends had come over to see me. Hayward is black, and in those days, I guess it just freaked them out. I was asked to leave. I was thrown out of this boardinghouse. Well, I couldn't have been more delighted. I thought it was the most God-awful place in the world.

Moved into another boardinghouse out in -- goodness, where was it -- Jackson Street, I guess. This was another fabulous old mansion that had been owned by some -- a man, a big railroad man and I remember I -- you're automatically thrown in with a roommate. So there I was automatically thrown in with this girl who went mad, and that was an incredible experience for me because she was going mad around me, which wasn't very pleasant.

In the bathroom was this safe. This man had a safe in the bathroom, and we used to keep our cosmetics and so forth in there. And I remember one day, I shut the safe and dialed the thing, and that was it. Everything was locked in there.

Anyway, that was an incredible experience, and I was plunged into art school.

[END OF REEL 1 SIDE A.]

MR. CUMMINGS: This is Side 2. So we have you now in an art school with all your friends.

MS. REMINGTON: Yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: And living in a house.

MS. REMINGTON: This, I think, was the first time I was aware of the war and the impact, the returning veterans. You see, I was now 17. Is that right? Yeah, 17 because I started school in February, mid-semester. The first people I met -- and I met Frank Waddell [phonetic], who had just come back from the army, people like that. I guess Jack Jefferson was also there, somebody who had just come back from the marines. These people had experiences that I didn't know about. I mean, the war was still very fresh in their minds. Europe, many of them had been to Europe. That was all fresh in their minds.

And again, at parties and social things, where the bars down at the bottom of the hill where one would go after school for beer and so on, they told stories. And, of course, I was fascinated by all these things, not only the war adventures but some of the more hilarious adventures. I remember a marvelous story that Frank Waddell tells about getting -- I don't know. A couple of them were in a -- took a Jeep and went out one night and drove in the wrong direction. This was in France and ended up in a town that was occupied by Germans. They simply went off and into a bar and began drinking, and everybody in the town thought the Americans had come and that the Germans had left. Whereas, in fact, it was not true, and they got totally smashed and simply left and drove back and didn't realize this till the next day.

Anyway, there were stories like that, and a great interest in France, of course, in postwar France in the art that was there or the art that was going on in the '30s, the vitality, the interest in modern art. It was still -- it was centered in what was going on in Europe for most of this. We were interested in that.

MR. CUMMINGS: Who were your instructors there the first year?

MS. REMINGTON: The first year I got there, I had -- for drawing, I had Varta [phonetic], and that experience that I -- really was marvelous. He was a marvelous teacher for me anyway. I had him for, oh, I guess, drawing, and I did a lot of painting.

MR. CUMMINGS: Was it figure drawing or --

MS. REMINGTON: We had models or no models. I mean, you sort of did what you wanted to do, but he didn't talk to me for the first something like two months. And I was absolutely astounded. I felt I was doing everything wrong and I must be horrible and I was a failure and horrible. And it seems that he didn't talk to me because he saw what I was doing, he thought it was so, I don't know, kind of astounding that it scared him. He said -- when I told him this later, he said to me, "You know, I didn't know what to say to you. There was nothing I could say to you. It just put me off."

He never got over the fact that I was only 17 years old. He kept -- then started to talk about my work and kept exclaiming to the class, "And she's not even 18 years old yet."

At that time, I met a girl, a marvelous girl who was my friend at school whose name was Lynn Williams who later married Jim Weeks, the painter, who's, of course, named Lynn Weeks now. But Varta took a liking to Lynn and me and a few of the other kids. And he would invite us over to his studio which was right, oh, a couple blocks from the school on many afternoons, and we'd make slides. We'd cut out paper and gelatins and make marvelous slides. There was a whole conviviality there.

MR. CUMMINGS: What would you do with the slides?

MS. REMINGTON: He kept them. They were almost like making -- oh, it was light, using light and

transparencies.

MR. CUMMINGS: Were they projected, though?

MS. REMINGTON: They were transparent -- projected, yes. And he kept these. He had it well catalogued at the time of who did what, and he would -- the really marvelous ones, he would show again and again and say, well, so-and-so did this and look at that and et cetera, et cetera. We made death masks. He just did this because he loved artists. He loved the life.

This was my first experience with any European and the European involvement with art. It was very idealistic involvement. I mean, here's a man who had worked with Picasso and Matisse and knew Miro, and I was at that time a real lover of Miro's work. I had just discovered Miro around that time, and he would tell stories of sailing in the Mediterranean with these people and knowing -- I don't know, just sharing life experiences. I found it very fascinating.

MR. CUMMINGS: What did that mean to you, meeting an older artist like this who knew these very famous people who were artists?

MS. REMINGTON: I was really impressed, very impressed. It was like a history book come to life, someone who had done all this and could tell you about it. And then it was marvelous. It was beautiful. It was a very good experience and something I've carried with me for all these years. It was very meaningful.

He -- to be involved that way with students, when you look back on it, there are very few people who were teachers who have been that involved. He also taught many of us how to sail. He was a man who had built sailboats and taught us how to sail in the bay in San Francisco.

Another teacher -- well, my other teachers were Ed Corbett, Elmer Bischoff, let's see, Hassel Smith and David Park, and these were people who I found to be very, very good teachers.

Ed Corbett, I couldn't really understand. This is still in the first year, let's say, I couldn't -- I had him for several classes, and he was a very gentle, sweet man. It was very hard for me to understand when he would talk to me, but he would use words or concepts, aesthetic evaluations that were just really over my head. I found -- he was more -- a very ethereal-type person and a marvelous spirit. I think that's worth recalling, the man's spirit. He was generally a very quiet, almost shy man. Would always deal with the individual student on an individual basis.

I have carried that through in my own teaching today. I think that's very valuable rather than the group critiques which I think are really counterproductive, a waste of time because all you're ending up doing is comparing. This is better than that or something like that. Well, that kind of stuff didn't go on too much at the school. We were always dealt with as individuals.

Elmer Bischoff is another person who was very important as a teacher for me. I remember struggling through, oh, I don't know, months or six weeks of painting in his class, and he didn't say very much to me. Nobody did for the first six weeks, and I thought boy, I was on the wrong track. Everybody else seemed to be getting along very well.

One day he got a book and came down, and he spent his coffee break in the morning with me out in the patio, and I think it was again raining. And he sat there, and he opened the book. And it was a book of a lot of the reproductions of abstract paintings, non-objective painting, some Picassos, some Matisses, that kind of stuff. He said -- I remember he picked one of the reproductions, a black-and-white thing. He said, "What -- tell me what you see."

And I said, "Well, it's a painting."

And he said, "No, no. Tell me what you see. What do you see in terms of shape and form?"

And I actually got right down -- what he wanted me to say is this shape is touching this shape; this shape is stronger than this because it comes forward more; the values are this, that; line is a certain way. The man in I think 15 minutes taught me an awful lot about how to perceive in a very concrete way how painting works. Mind you, I'm still a 17-year-old kid. Nobody had ever told me all this before. Nobody had sat down and outlined in a very basic way what, how shapes work, how certain elements of painting function in a very real way, what shapes touches what shape, how this form works and so on.

He built a very concrete real world for me in that 10 or 15 minutes, and it really opened up a world of painting for me. I mean, it seems simplistic when I describe it, but it was a very powerful thing for me. It was a very powerful experience. My painting immediately changed. I immediately was able to do, to facilitate what I had in my mind that I couldn't get out. And I guess he saw that.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you make a change, in what?

MS. REMINGTON: Simply because I was able. I felt now that I had some tools to work with. I was able to put into concrete form what I was thinking in my head. I couldn't get it out before. I didn't know how. I didn't know how to visualize, and mind you, I'm speaking pretty much in abstract terms, although not purely because I was working both representationally and non-representationally in those days.

I would work -- sometimes I'd paint the model, or I'd paint a human figure just from memory. Very often, I'd work non-representationally, non-objectively. One had that freedom. It was very good. One didn't have to become something immediately or have a star or this or that. You got to play around with certain forms.

David Park was marvelous for both drawing and painting. He gave me, oh, I guess concepts, critiques, certain ideas that I carry through in my painting today. I can go back and pull out stuff from my student years and look at it. There are remnants, for instance, of things in those paintings in my early student days that are in my work now. For instance, a portrait or let's say a figure, there will be, let's say, a red line across the shoulder or a green stripe in terms of part of the hair. Certain -- the way I use lines now to define and light shapes, they're there in the early work. Almost everything is there. Certain angular things, certain rhythmic things about my work were there.

A lot of this, I think, is due in part to the formation I had largely from David Park who had a marvelous way of seeing. He expressed himself very easily and clearly. He was at that time a representational painter. I guess he had just gone back and more or less founded the school of San Francisco --

MR. CUMMINGS: (Inaudible) yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, the figure or representational painting, Diebenkorn came along later and so forth.

But he was very good in terms of drawing, taught me a lot. They were all very good. They encouraged. They -- Hassel Smith is another one, a man with tremendous vitality, tremendous interest in what you were doing, a marvelous perverse man. You'd come up with a painting you'd think was marvelous. I remember something -- in art school, if a painting doesn't work, well, you turn it upside down and you look at it feverishly to see what's wrong as if you're going to be able to see

the magical -- the turning of a painting upside down is the magical cure-all. You are supposed to immediately be able to see what's wrong with the painting.

I was doing this one day, and it was a representational painting. And Hassel Smith came by, and he said, "What are you doing, painting a man standing on his head?" He said, "That's not the way to deal with a painting. If something is wrong, you turn it back right side up. You don't turn it upside down. It's never going to work."

And began to shoot all my ideas about what you should do. And in that sense, he was marvelous. I mean, every time you'd come up with something, he'd shoot it down, and it would make you dig further, dig further, search more, ask yourself more.

MR. CUMMINGS: He was a provocateur?

MS. REMINGTON: Very much, very much so, always making you dig harder, dig faster. So you had - - I had at that time in my beginning years at that school a good rounded group of people around me who were marvelous, were very rounded.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you feel like there was any particular overt modern tendency amongst these people? I mean, there was no -- there were really no old academic people there, were there, teaching?

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, I think so, but I don't believe I ever took classes from them. It seems to me there were a couple of them, and I assiduously stayed away from them for some reason. They were not doing what I thought I wanted to do, and I was learning how to draw, okay. And no, I think I steered clear of them.

Later -- anyway, so I had experienced a very -- what I considered a fairly well-rounded thing. These people, these teachers were all involved in very modern painting. I mean, they were kind of pushing non-objective abstract expressionist stuff but in their own way, their own brand of it.

Then Clay Spohn came along. I adored him. He was a fanciful -- he's just a man with tremendous imagination was more toward the surrealist thing in mind, in his ideas that he embodied in his work, in what he said and how he dealt with things. I loved his work and I -- there was another -- there is another dimension to my education.

Then, of course, I guess the next year, I -- Clay Spohn was there. I was studying with him, and then Clyfford Still, I was studying with him. Now, he scared me half to death. He scared everybody half to death because he would pick out -- he would come in, I guess, on one or two times a week and pick one student per week to demolish. And he would come in in his spats and his very often striped trousers and cane and dressed very properly, sometimes with a hat on. He was a very formidable looking man, very handsome looking man, a very stern person.

He would hold, oh, golly, not critiques but like group sessions where everybody sat around and talked about painting. I would sit there a nervous wreck hoping he wouldn't call on me to give my opinions because, I mean, they were such esoteric discussions as stop signs, what that -- how that visually related to the rest of the world and so on and so forth and all these esoteric things that I really at that time was not into. I was not interested in. Listened to it, understood what I could do. I was now 18 years old.

Anyway, he would come in and pick one person a week and really for three hours tear your work apart. The guys would end up down at the bottom of the hill getting drunk, and the girls would end

up in tears in the patio, right? You'd always know who had gotten what that day. Just his presence, I think, was important around the school.

MR. CUMMINGS: What did people think of him? I mean, what did you think of him when you --

MS. REMINGTON: Well, he was always presented, I guess, to us as the great painter, the great kind of overseer, the keeper of the great works of art. I don't know. Kind of a god figure, I suppose. It was a little blown out of proportion.

MR. CUMMINGS: Had you known about him before you were there?

MS. REMINGTON: No, no.

MR. CUMMINGS: So it was all --

MS. REMINGTON: This was all brand-new and fresh, and I think that's why it was kind of marvelous. I didn't have any preconceived ideas about any of these people. My -- we had confrontations with them. The way I related to them was all very fresh and new, and I think therefore very valuable. I don't know what they got out of it, but I certainly got a lot out of it.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, at some point, you must have gotten criticism from Still.

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, I think I did. It's very strange. I don't remember as much -- I didn't have that much contact with him. As I said, it would be once a week for one person, so you might get him once a semester he'd really talk about your work. Therefore, I didn't get that much.

My relationship with him was not, let's say, as often or as -- the occasions he would talk about one's work, not only mine but other people's, it was not that often. Whereas you'd get these other people sometimes every day, five times a week kind of thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: He wasn't accessible outside the studio, either, was he?

MS. REMINGTON: Not terribly. He was to some people, but I was not one of them. I don't think, however, that he was really that accessible to anybody.

No, the comments he made to me were really projections of his own work. I mean, certain space concepts, certain ways to use bits of colors here and there, certain ways form worked. A lot of things about space and form and really how the world related to his own work. I mean, he didn't relate to anybody else's work that much.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, how did you find these different people who were by that time quite well formed in their own ideas and attitudes? Did you find it a conflict for you choosing over the constant enrichment, the variety?

MS. REMINGTON: It was constant enrichment. I don't -- I never made a choice of this one is more favorite than that one. I was always very open and always accepted all of them pretty equally. I never leaned toward one or the other. I mean, some kids did, and I think most of us didn't. That kind of thing was not encouraged. You got from a particular person what you got, and this went on actually for -- I think it was three years, something like that.

MR. CUMMINGS: So there was no implication that this week you had to paint like David Park, the next week --



MS. REMINGTON: We all did, sure. I mean, I remember doing a series of what I consider Ed Corbett paintings. I did (inaudible) painting. I did that. I did some David Park paintings, a lot of David Park-type drawings. You couldn't help it. I mean, you'd be drawing when he'd come up and say, well, look, the angle on the face is this, that and the other thing. All of a sudden, you had a David Park drawing that you had done all by yourself.

I did Varta paintings for a while, that kind of thing. Collages really would be where it touched. I definitely remember doing Hassel Smith paintings. I think one did paintings of everybody. You worked your way through it, and you knew what it is. Well, that's a Hassel Smith painting or a David Park. Fine, that's not me, but there's nothing wrong with doing that. You worked your way through it. You got out of it what you wanted, let's say, that would relate to your own work, and that was the end of it. You didn't do that anymore because you had done it, and you knew that if it happened again, you could realize it and see it. And you didn't want to do that. It wasn't you.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, how -- here again, you were in a new town, too, in a way. You've given up Pasadena for the most part. How did you like living there?

MS. REMINGTON: I loved San Francisco. I love -- there's a mystery about that place that I think still is ongoing for me in the fog and the -- I don't know. It was my first, what, encounter with North Beach, with that marvelous large Italian section which was again very European, old Chinatown which was again very obviously very Oriental. It wasn't very European. A fascination with these enclaves of people and culture that could exist side by side.

There was at that time in San Francisco a lot of experimentation. A lot of poets were there. I met Duncan. I met Jess Collins, who was the art school, and through him, I met Robert Duncan. A lot of poets were around. Some photographers were around. There was a good melting pot of people and ideas. It wasn't separated.

I think later on in San Francisco when that school ceased to be the center -- it wasn't only the center of student activity but just people who lived in San Francisco who were interested in the arts and what was going on. The MacAgys were there. As a center of ideas, when the school ceased to be really the center of ideas which it did in the '50s, all of that kind of fell apart. The poets then had their world, the painters had their world and so on.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, that generation had --

MS. REMINGTON: Had, yes, dispersed.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- (inaudible) out. Were the MacAgys in evidence when you were there?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, they were very much in evidence. MacAgy, I remember his telling -- when Lynn Williams got married to Jim Weeks, he had a long talk with her. I think she was all of 18 years old or something like that, 19. He had a long talk with her which she told me about later afterward, that you couldn't raise children and have a family and be an artist, too, and she better gamble and make up her mind right now.

Well, she then became -- she then immediately got pregnant and had -- I think they had three or four children. I don't know. Well, actually, I mean, that's what she did with her life. It's perfectly fine, but I mean, he would counsel women in this. You can't do both. He's absolutely right, by the way. I agree with him 100 percent. I've never seen -- never really seen a woman be able to involve in really a deep, strong professional situation where your life is basically dedicated to your work, whatever,

let's say a painter, where there are children that you have to raise and give emotional time to as well as with the work. To me, it's a conflict of interest. You can do both, but something has got to suffer.

MR. CUMMINGS: Why do you say that?

MS. REMINGTON: In my experience, that's what I've seen.

MR. CUMMINGS: Because I've had so many women argue that point.

MS. REMINGTON: I know, but that's the way I feel. And I just -- it's just -- I mean, speaking, let's say of Louise Nevelson. She sort of agrees with that very much. I mean, she didn't really get going until after her son was grown up and kind of out of the way, and then she began late in life, was in her 40s, I suppose, or her 30s --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, 30s, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: -- to really get into it. And this is what she has also said. There's a definite conflict. I don't see how you can 100 percent of yourself to two areas, and you have to. I mean, to me, the human being comes first. I have always -- I have elected not to have children because of this very thing. I don't -- for me, I don't think I could handle both of them. I couldn't give what I give to my painting, which I really give an awful lot, and give that to, let's say, a life that you're trying to form and raise. I mean, you are totally responsible for that life of that child, and the molding of it, you really have to give too much. And I think that the kid suffers if you don't give the whole thing. So I've just elected not to do it that way.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, I want to continue with school, that little aside. See what I mean, it goes off -

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, I do.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- in all kinds of directions.

Who were the people you met there? I mean, you came there with some friends. But who were the kind of fellow students you met there who interested you or you found provocative in those days? Are there any you remember particularly or --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, I think Jess Collins, who I just mentioned. I loved his work. Joel Barletta is still a painter on the West Coast. Boy, let me think.

I'm trying to think of people who -- very few people that you meet in art school end up in later life as being painters. It's very sparse. I mean, even with that large bunch of people like Frank Waddell who influenced me, I think, very much. We were friends through that whole period. We're still friends now. He's, I guess, the head of the graduate school at Stanford now.

He was a big influence on me. He's the one who taught me how to stretch a canvas for another practical. I mean, in art school, one was not taught those practical things. One was told, well, you paint. One was not given a special list of colors or brushes or this or that or anything. I mean, you just showed up with whatever you had, and if you didn't know about it, then you asked one of the students. The teachers couldn't be bothered.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MS. REMINGTON: Of course.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, that's interesting.

MS. REMINGTON: Teachers couldn't possibly be bothered telling you anything technical. I remember my first oil painting. I had heard that in between coats of oil paint -- I mean, you painted the canvas white, right? Well, nobody ever told me you were supposed to let the white paint dry. So I would scrape off the painting that didn't work, paint it white, and then start the painting. And I couldn't understand why all my colors got with the white in there.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, marvelous.

MS. REMINGTON: And finally, after weeks of this, I think this is in Elmer Bischoff's class, he told me, "Well, you had to let the white dry."

Oh, said I. That explained a partial problem with color I was having because it all turned out like icing. It was terrible.

But these practical things were not taught. Really, it wasn't until three or four years, maybe five years ago and with the help of a marvelous woman named Margaret Watherston, who's the conservator of paintings at the Whitney, did I really learn technically what I should be doing or not doing in terms of the way I work with oil paint. She's been marvelous. Any questions, I call her up. Oh, yes, this, this, and this.

I have pulled out paintings from art school. We were not told that, well, if you paint it this color over that color or fat over lean --

MR. CUMMINGS: Uh-huh, right.

MS. REMINGTON: -- white over red, all those --

MR. CUMMINGS: Old academic tricks.

MS. REMINGTON: Right. So I pulled out some marvelous paintings. Let's see. Last fall, I pulled out some really early stuff and upset because a lot of it had peeled, flaked. Set about doing my own restoring projects on my work.

One wasn't -- you see, here again, the returning, the war constituted a large -- and to a large degree, I think, how -- it constituted the attitude. Made up what in those days was the prevailing attitude toward art which meant do it today, the hell with tomorrow. If it falls off the canvas in two weeks, so what? You're not doing this for posterity. There is no posterity. Life was very short. There is no --

MR. CUMMINGS: We just blew up posterity.

MS. REMINGTON: That's right. Security doesn't exist, which I agree with. I mean, security is really right here somewhere located in the midsection of one's body. This was the attitude that I encountered as a 17-year-old kid of tomorrow doesn't matter. Live for the day. The hell with it, blah, blah, blah, I mean, it's all --

MR. CUMMINGS: But then you had students who were many of them 10 years older than you, weren't they, again?

MS. REMINGTON: Almost every student at that school with the exception of Lynn Williams, who is Lynn Weeks now, she was my age, and that was the only person I think who was my age with the exception of a few other girls. The girls who were in art school, we were a minority, obviously. The majority of the student body was made up of returning vets. I mean, really majority, because they could all get the GI Bill and so on and so forth. So very -- Lynn is really the only person that I can think of who was my age.

My student days were all spent with people older than I who had much more experience. I learned an awful lot from them, just about life, the life experiences. This is the first time I had been out on my own in the world. Questions and answers, I mean, I felt like these older people brought me up, so to speak, because all, I had left home when I was, oh, I guess 17 and never did return. I never went back home. That was it. I mean, I learned not only from the teachers, but from these students.

By the way, the teachers at that time were often pretty close in age to some of these students. This may account for some of the reason why there was a tremendously good basis of communication between the faculty and the student body. These were not separate. I mean, a part -- the teachers were all at the parties, or the teachers gave the parties for the students. There was a great Dixieland band. David Park played piano, and Elmer Bischoff played coronet. Douglas McCade [phonetic] was the drummer.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, yes, a marvelous drummer. They played for all our school parties. They -- so you'd have a living experience with these people. We were always taken to their houses. I mean, I remember going with David Simpson -- and Wally Hedrick played banjo with the band. We would go out to Elmer Bischoff's house, just a small group, when they had rehearsals for the Dixieland band. Hassel Smith often gave parties and invited the students and so forth.

There was a marvelous kind of interrelationship there that wasn't -- you didn't have school isolated over in school area and life over in life area and students over in --

MR. CUMMINGS: No compartmentalization.

MS. REMINGTON: None. Everybody -- there was a marvelous freedom. I can't, what, stress that enough. I think this was very important, and this was one of the most important things during those years that I can pick out as being -- everybody benefited from it. The teachers benefited from the students and so on and so forth. Now a kid can come up with an idea or the teacher would be talking to you and say, yes, but such and such or blah, blah, blah. And they'd come back two days later and say, I really thought about what you told me, and it's this and that.

They would often show us their work and say, hey, what do you think about this painting, what do you think about that painting? Let's talk about painting. I'm having a problem with this painting. And you got to talk about their painting or their work the way they were talking about your work, but it was always a one-to-one basis.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's interesting. There seems to be no competitive atmosphere going on, or was there?

MS. REMINGTON: There wasn't. Oh, I think some of the really strong Clyfford Still students, there was a competitive thing for the apple in the master's eye, I think, but that went on amongst a very

small bunch of -- the kind of war veteran types who were -- who thought "painting was serious business," unquote. I once remember somebody saying that. And they were hard drinkers and hard livers, and all of this was right in conjunction with this attitude. They were very competitive amongst themselves. That didn't rub off too much on the rest of everybody. They weren't really competing with anybody but themselves for this certain kind of recognition, I would say.

MR. CUMMINGS: No, it's fascinating because when I was in college, I remember the veterans being sort of a separate segment of the school, and there were thousands of them. (Inaudible) all over the place and in everything. And those five years, six, seven years, 10 years in some cases, differences and, of course, the war they'd been through and all this, there was a very obvious line, at least to me, in those days. And I was wondering if you had that similar kind of experience or observed --

MS. REMINGTON: I didn't experience that personally. I really didn't experience that line. It's very interesting because also, I was one of the only women students who -- I mean, really one of the few, two or three women students. I guess Lynn was the other one who were taken seriously by the male painters, by our peers. We were not treated as odd or strange or put down.

MR. CUMMINGS: (Inaudible) just doing something.

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, and we were treated -- if you were serious about your work, if you were able to make good paintings in their eyes, let's say, you were treated absolutely on an equal basis. I was never in those -- in my student days, I never felt discriminated against because I was a woman. If anything, they would help me. They would encourage me. They would also tell me, well, it's a hard life for a woman and this, that and the other thing. But no one would ever dissuade me or discourage me or show any kind of attitude toward me that I was not good enough to be among the heavyweights of that period because I was always included and counted in there.

I went to school the first semester. Unfortunately, I had to pay for that. I could not have gone through school without scholarships, and for the rest of my time through school, I got -- I received scholarships. I also in my -- oh, let's see. I guess toward my -- toward the end of school, I got something known as the Fletcher Cup award, which was an award given to the most outstanding student of that year or something. And I remember getting that, and that was a silver cup where your name was engraved -- upon which your name was engraved. Ed Corbett had that. I think he was a student at the school, and his name was on there some years before mine.

It was really fascinating. I was supposed to give that cup back at the end of this little ceremony, and somehow the woman got lost to whom I was supposed to give it. And I ended up taking it out of the school and going to Marble Square and drinking beer out of it. And when -- they would die if they ever knew. I had to wash it out the next day and return it because there were these frantic phone calls. "Where is the cup? Bring it back to the safe."

So that was delightful, but I felt no discrimination being a woman in my student years, absolutely none. There were never any comments toward me about, well, you're not going to make it and you'll graduate and just go out and have babies and all that sort of thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: I don't think people were interested in making it then the way they have become -  
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MS. REMINGTON: Right.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- because economics have changed so greatly for one.

MS. REMINGTON: I think out of all of the women students in that school, I'm probably the only one that I can think of offhand who went on to really become professionally involved, to really dedicate my life to it which goes back to my whole thing when I was nine years old and when I decided this is what I was going to do with my life. By God, that's what I was going to do with my life. That's how it worked.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, how did you then switch schools, didn't you after three years, or what happened?

MS. REMINGTON: Let's see. I think --

MR. CUMMINGS: You left to the Art Institute there.

MS. REMINGTON: Graduated with a certificate of completion in 1952 was when I -- that was a three-year stint you went through at the school.

Now, when I graduated or in those days, there was no BFA program or anything like that. And I think in '52 or '53, something like -- no, it must have been '52 or '51. MacAgy left the school, and he had a marvelous way of -- he's the one who brought that school together. He's really, as far as I'm concerned, responsible. I mean, that's all been well documented, but it's true. He's the man who had an organizational ability to run an art school with all these diverse people, and you're also dealing with high school kids and war veterans. And he put this all together, and he made a very good thing out of it. You know, has gone down in history as a very important time. The man ran the school beautifully.

He left, and I think David Park took over directorship of the summer. He didn't want to do it, but somebody had to do it, so he did it for a summer. Then Ernest Mundt came along. Oh, I better backtrack a little bit. Ernest Mundt was also a teacher at the school during these three years when -- the California School of Fine Arts. Now, he was a man who had come over, I guess, in the late '30s from Germany, and he was very steeped in the Bauhaus. So from him, we got all of the Bauhaus thing, I mean, the history, the tradition, what it was.

I took shop from him, mind you. I made a table in shop, and Ernest Mundt brought in all of his European tools, these marvelous hand tools and taught me how to work with wood. Anyway, he was another aspect, another side of this education. I'm sorry. I forgot about that before because he was a very marvelous man, a very meaningful, a good teacher. He really -- he gave us certain sides of our formation that nobody else could give us because he had that European background and that tradition and so forth.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you think that was important, having again a European instructor?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, I really do because you got an entirely different viewpoint. Again, it was a whole -- it was another level that was opened up to you, another world of experience that was available to you and something for one to draw up and take out of it what you wanted and do with that what you wanted. I mean, when you put these personalities against each other, you on the one hand had Ed Corbett, who was this very shy, quiet, lyrical person. On the other hand, you had Ernest Mundt, who was a very, what, well-formed, well-school Bauhaus type of person, and everything was down to earth --

MR. CUMMINGS: Practical --

MS. REMINGTON: -- practical, Constructivist kind of -- you were given that on the one hand, and you were given this other soaring kind of fanciful world on the other hand. And then you had Clay Spohn which was -- he was off in another direction or -- (inaudible) and Bischoff and Smith who were off in another direction. It was very good for me.

Anyway, I left school, let's see, like --

MR. CUMMINGS: Fifty-two, maybe '2 or '3 there?

MS. REMINGTON: Probably '3, right.

MR. CUMMINGS: What do you want to pick up with?

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, getting out of school.

MR. CUMMINGS: Okay. Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: All right. I got my certificate of completion from California School of Fine Arts, and let's see, I guess that was the summer David Park took over for the summer and then in the fall, Ernest Mundt. And I had left in, I guess, the fall of that year, somewhere along the line around in there, and met a man who was a writer and a poet named Don Johnson. Of course, fell madly in love with him, and a couple of months later, we were married. And that would be, I guess, January of '53, and we moved up to the country to Healdsburg, CA where his aunt had a cabin which we somehow winterized and sort of went through that winter and the spring and the summer and so on.

Well, this was, of course, set up to be the ideal thing where I would paint and he would write, which is exactly what we did. The marriage lasted all of about one year. I was very young. I certainly wasn't mature-wise. I certainly -- I really did not mature until much later than that. I was not ready for this. It didn't work out. I think the one thing I came out of it with was a decision never to get married again because it didn't make any sense and I had already decided I really didn't want children.

So I think that's the main thing that came out of it. He was a very sweet, dear kind man who -- I don't know. It just -- I found --

MR. CUMMINGS: Was he much older than you?

MS. REMINGTON: No, he was about five or six years older than me.

MR. CUMMINGS: So similar.

MS. REMINGTON: So very similar and we shared very similar ideas and so on and so forth. I suppose when I look back on it, I was a little bit the stronger of the two in -- oh, I don't know, in where I was going, what I was going to do and making decisions and so forth. He was very nice. He just sort of went along with whatever I thought or this or that or the other thing.

Anyway, during that time, I painted. I had met Jess Collins in school, and Jess and Robert Duncan had opened a gallery in San Francisco called the King Ubu Gallery. And this is where I had my first show in 1953. I was making prints at that time. I had a couple of prints accepted in some museum shows and so on, even a couple of years before that, etchings and whatnot. This was really kind of the beginning of so-called professional life where I was really beginning to show a piece, a piece

there in groups shows, always in museums. Oh --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, there weren't that many dealers around California and --

MS. REMINGTON: No, there was almost nothing in terms of galleries at that time, and I wasn't really interested in having a formal show. I did this in the King Ubu Gallery, which was an old garage. It was perfectly fine. There was a certain kind of -- this was really my first --

MR. CUMMINGS: Who belonged to that gallery? Because that was a whole group of people, was it not?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, now, you may be mixing that up with the Six Gallery, which I'll get to in a minute. That's -- was started by a few of my friends and myself, six people, and in deciding what to call it, I said, "Well, why don't we call it the Six?"

And that's how that happened.

Anyway, I was showing a few prints here and there, around. Anyway, that's where that was.

The marriage lasted about a year, and I moved back to San Francisco. And, well, I was back in San Francisco. Going -- painting, I had begun to -- my work, I don't know, it was after this thing broke up. There was -- on my part, anyway, there was a whole new interest in painting, a whole new interest in my work.

Right around that time, I met a guy whose name was Dick Brodney. He's no longer a painter, but at that time, he was a painter. Oh, we shared a lot of ideas, and he was a really very vital-type person, a very interesting guy, very humorous guy. When -- I really love people who are very humorous. I don't know. He kind of got me painting with very bright, beautiful colors, greens and reds and almost lacquer kind of colors out of cans which I hadn't done before.

And there was a company in San Francisco that made some terrible paint, and I remember we were all using that. And it came in kind of pint cans, and I can't remember what it was called.

MR. CUMMINGS: (Inaudible) somebody else has mentioned that company.

MS. REMINGTON: Yes. I mean --

MR. CUMMINGS: And they couldn't remember the name.

MS. REMINGTON: The name, it was more like Bay Area Paint Company or the --

MR. CUMMINGS: I thought he has a block against it.

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, oh, it was terrible paint. I mean, it was dirt cheap and you went out there and you bought it by the gallon or the pint or something. It was during that time when everybody was slapping paint around.

Anyway, Brodney got me very interested in, I don't know, garish color would be the way to put it, and I did a whole series of paintings. This will be about 1953, I guess, '53, '54, somewhere around in there, of very bright, very non-objective paintings. I had pretty much given up realism by this time completely. Even -- well, a few drawings now and then, but the major body of the work had turned to non-objective, non-representational painting. And I was doing that, working. I had an apartment.



I was working in one of the rooms which I had set up as a studio.

So 1954, the California School of Fine Arts, somewhere around in there, changed its name to San Francisco Art Institute, and they instituted a bachelor of fine arts program. So I went back to school in '54 and '55 to get my BFA. I, of course, the credits that I had -- the work I had done at the California School of Fine Arts was -- I was credited with that work. What I really basically needed were all the academic things, the history, the English, the art history. We actually had to take physics and chemistry.

So Wally Hedrick and David Simpson, my dear friends from the art school days, we all trooped back to -- and Hayward King, we all trooped back to get the BFA. And we graduated in 1955. I think there was a class of nine people, the first graduating class, which we were, of the San Francisco Art Institute. So I got my BFA in '55.

Now, during this time, these two years when we were in school, most of us were in the same predicament. We had all of the art credits that we needed but none of the humanities stuff. So we're all painting on our own, not in school. We were all in school only for the academic part of it.

There was a wonderful teacher who showed up at school, a poet named Jack Spicer, who was a very strong influence on us in terms of -- oh, he was very interested in us as a group and as individuals in our work. He taught us, oh, let's say, Dante, a great excursion into Dante. And when you have this man for literature, for history, he was hired -- at that time, the faculty was very small. So one had him for art history, world history, world literature, communications. You probably would have took every class you had from him.

MR. CUMMINGS: What was communications?

MS. REMINGTON: Communications was what do words mean. I think the first -- when you use words, what are you saying? Mind you, we were all painters, and we talked about the most absurd things and so abstractly that obviously -- I don't think we made any sense to anybody. One of the first thing this man did was had us all bring a painting in. He sat us all down in the middle of the room, and he said, "Take a piece of paper, and write a description of any one of these you want to. Don't sign it."

And we all proceeded to write a description of a painting. And he took all the pieces of paper, and then he would read a description. He would say, "All right. Now, which painting is this?"

And he would read a description, and we couldn't understand. It wouldn't describe anything, a great comment on art criticism, especially as it is currently. We could not even describe a painting in terms that was even basically communicable to somebody else. This was a very good way of teaching someone, hey, what are you thinking about and how are you putting these things into words? What are your thoughts? Can you adequately describe what you're thinking? If not, then you're not thinking right. Let's go back to another step, how to think.

The man, I think, really taught us how to think. He was a very strong influence on us all. We loved him. He died, I guess, some years ago, a very young man, a very talented poet.

Anyway, he and a group of us got together. Wally Hedrick was in on that again and myself and John Ryan and I guess David Simpson. And let's see. How many does that make?

MR. CUMMINGS: Five.

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, Hayward King. We got together, and we formed a gallery in the old King Ubu space, which was a space on lower Fillmore Street in the Marina. And we wanted to open a gallery, a gallery to show our work and work of other people. And we got together, and I suggested that it be called the Six Gallery since there were six of us, the founders and so on.

Now, we opened that in, I guess, in '55. It would have been that time. Right across the street from us, Sonia Gechtoff, the painter, her mother had a gallery, and I can't remember the name of it. But Mrs. Gechtoff had a marvelous gallery, and she was showing young people, young painters in the area at the time. So we had this little enclave on lower Fillmore Street that I think was sort of the only place where there was any activity.

At that time, I think, San Francisco since the MacAgy era was over with, most of those people had left. A few people were still around, but the whole core, the center was not there anymore. It was a very diversified kind of dispersed group now.

Anyway, we opened the Six Gallery, and I had a show there in 1955. I think we were even getting some critical recognition from Alfred Frankenstein, who was the critic of the *Chronicle* at that time. And he would come down now and then and review our shows, which I thought was very nice. We didn't really make any money on it. We had the gallery sit, and I don't know. It was dreadful. We each had to put in something like \$7 a month towards the gallery, and we were all broke and working part-time jobs.

So anyway, so I was still working. Let's see. Then I moved into another place in San Francisco and was still working there, leading a kind of quiet life but really working with the painting and working through. There were kind of quiet years, really.

MR. CUMMINGS: What kind of jobs did you have? What kind of part-time jobs and things?

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, dear, part-time jobs, I worked in a shoe factory for a while packing shoes and working in kind of shredded -- what's that stuff called?

MR. CUMMINGS: Excelsior.

MS. REMINGTON: Excelsior, but it was also straw. It was like shredded straw. And up to my knees every night, I would be covered with fleas. I would have to come home and get in a dry bathtub. The fleas would jump to the white porcelain, and then you would quickly hop out of the bathtub and all the fleas all down the train. This was my nightly ritual.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, gee.

MS. REMINGTON: It was incredible. I think I had a part-time job packing candles. That was -- for some reason, I seemed to be packing things. I never did commercial artwork. I couldn't bear any of the thoughts of any of that.

My mother was helping me out. My mother was now working as a nurse, and she was helping me out with the rent and small amount of money every month for food.

And I don't know. I was just doing odd jobs. I mean, I had a -- one summer -- let's see. Was this -- I guess this was after I was out of school actually, the summer of '56. I was actually the registrar at the San Francisco Art Institute for that summer. We had something like 65 students and by this time, Ernest Mundt had left and Gordon Woods was the director. So I found myself with no secretarial skills but an ability to write letters and type. I mean, I could evaluate transcripts. I did a

very good job. I was a registrar of a school for a summer.

I had a part-time job answering the telephone for a certain, you know, part-time. I worked part-time in an antique shop.

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you not want to do any art-related work?

MS. REMINGTON: Nothing, no. I've always wanted to keep -- I always have kept every job except for teaching, of course, a separate -- completely separate, separate entity from my work. I never wanted to mix the two. I saw people doing that around me. I never felt that it was that productive for the person because they would almost always -- I don't know. It affected their work, and I very carefully tried to avoid any jobs that would have any implications or -- have any feedback into my own work.

I didn't feel that I needed this, nor did I want this. I was very much really a loner. I was very singularly on my own track and very dedicated to this wherever it was leading me, I didn't know. I just didn't want any influence from a job-related thing. It just never occurred to me. I always wanted to keep them separate.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's interesting because some people like to do it and most people don't. I remember when I (inaudible) most of the painters didn't want to have art jobs. They worked as carpenters or electricians --

MS. REMINGTON: Right.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- or movers, anything but -- they didn't want to teach painting and then go home and do their own work. Didn't want the contrast.

[Audio break.]

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, how long did you live there? Because you started teaching a few years later so there was --

MS. REMINGTON: I haven't even been to the Orient yet, you see, so I'm going to pick up --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, that's just, right, before that. So once you got your degree in, what, the spring of '55 --

MS. REMINGTON: Right. Now, during that -- no, I guess it was '56, come to think of it.

MR. CUMMINGS: '56?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes. No, '55. Sorry about that. I guess in '54, somewhere along in that time, I met a musician, a man named Lloyd Davis, who was then a drummer with Dave Brubeck, a fascinating guy. He was a very fine drummer. He ended up being, I guess, with the San Francisco Symphony, but at that time, was very involved and oriented into jazz. And he became my gentleman friend for some years. He had been to the Far East on several trips working on the boats, and I had had a long time interest in the Far East, in the culture, I guess in the religions, the basic philosophies.

MR. CUMMINGS: When did that start?

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, it must have started somewhere in childhood. My mother collected Japanese prints, so I grew up with Japanese prints all over the wall, loved them. Then as I grew up, I really became aware that there was another very foreign culture, not -- our tradition is really based in the European tradition. And I became aware that there was another world to which I had no relationship, no -- I had lived in it, let's say, since we really as Americans have lived in, as I just said, this tradition-based European world, our language, our history, the way we look, the way we dress, the way we think philosophically, religiously.

We had -- this was our world, and I became aware that there was another world. And I think all through school, I had been very interested, very quietly interested in this other alien culture, so to speak. Now, I went to school with -- in '54 or '55, I guess, I met -- I guess it was '54 -- a girl, a Japanese girl who was a student, and I began -- we became friends. There were two of them there, and I finally decided that when I got out of school, I --

MR. CUMMINGS: What were their names, do you remember?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, I think I do. One was named Iris Tonamura [phonetic], and one was named Sumera Futigake [phonetic]. Her father was a diplomat, I think.

Anyway, these two girls were in art school, and at one point, I decided, oh, probably in '54, I would like to go to Japan to live when I got out of school and study calligraphy and traditional Japanese painting. Now, I started learning Japanese. I guess in 1954, I started -- oh, from Iris, I was learning to read and write and some words, and then I began to go to night school to learn Japanese in San Francisco in '54. This went on for a couple of years.

All right. So in I guess '55, or '56, I decided that I would go to the Far East. Now, Sumera made it possible for me to go and live in Japan with a Japanese family for as long as I wanted to, and I would pay them \$50 a month. Now, they had a daughter who wanted to go to Paris to live, and at that time, there was not foreign exchange. So the money was really to be sent to her in Paris because this is the only way the family could get money to her was really through my mother sending her the money instead of my giving the Japanese family the money, you see, the \$50 a month.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

MS. REMINGTON: So let's see. Where am I? All right. So --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, why don't we just --

[END OF REEL 1 SIDE B.]

MR. CUMMINGS: It's the 18 of June, 1973. This is Side 3 of Paul Cummings talking to Deborah Remington.

So can we start with the transportation to Japan?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, I think that's where the important -- because it's hilariously funny for one thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: That will get us into the trip. Let me ask the question.

MS. REMINGTON: Okay.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you -- you sailed to Japan, you flew, or how did you get there?

MS. REMINGTON: No, I sailed to Japan because I had very little money so I had to look around for some inexpensive transportation. I began in August looking at Japanese shipping companies, and I found a firm where there were freighters. They had freighters going to Japan, and they carried 10 passengers. And for \$300, you could go to Japan. So I decided this was just absolutely marvelous, and this is what I wanted to do. So I went in, oh, late September or October, I went down and I got on this ship, left San Francisco, had a beautiful quiet sail to Los Angeles, nice and sunny, no waves. And I thought oh, this was going to be delightful and found out immediately that I was the only passenger. There were no other passengers on the ship but me.

And I had a nice stateroom and well, nice cabin and so on and took all my meals with the captain and the mates and so forth and sat there and had to do -- practice my Japanese with them, which at that time was terrible. It was almost nonexistent. And they assigned on the same floor where I was -- where my cabin was, there was a bath, and it said bath -- the whole bathroom facility. Well, I was allowed to share the captain's bathwater. I was not, however, allowed to use the captain's toilet. I had to go down two flights down to use the facilities with the mates and the engineers. So that was fun. I could share the captain's bathwater, but I dare not touch anything else nor use anything else.

All right. So we got L.A. and spent a couple of days there and then left Los Angeles going on the northern route to Japan. Well, the first day out, we hit a storm, and the storm did not let up for two weeks because the storm then became a typhoon. My first time at sea, alone in this alien situation --

MR. CUMMINGS: You were the only woman, too?

MS. REMINGTON: I was the only woman on the ship, the whole ship. It got so rough and so stormy they had to show me how to tie myself in bed at night. I would lie in bed and listen to the rudder come out of the water as we would nosedive into these huge waves that would break over the bow of the ship. This went on for two weeks.

Meanwhile, trying to go up and down two flights to the -- to share this john with the mates and the engineers. And, of course, you walk in and there would be -- the first thing you would see were just a whole line of urinals, and in the morning, there'd be all these people lined up at the urinals. And they would turn around and tip their hat to me and say -- as I passed each one, they would turn around and say in Japanese, "Ohayou gozaimasu," good morning.

I couldn't reconcile myself to being greeted by the group at the urinals every morning. By the first week, it was a little difficult. Way down at the end, there was this little stall with a door on it that had a sign which moved back -- it's a hand-lettered sign that said "ladi," l-a-d-i. And as the ship rolled and pitched, so did the sign. So I would have to make my way by the happy group every morning or whenever, whenever you'd be in there down to my little stall. I must say after a week, it didn't bother me anymore. I became very friendly, and we would use my few words of Japanese. And I talked to them and so on.

Anyway, so I spent two weeks doing that. You couldn't go out on the deck. You couldn't do anything because it was so rough and stormy. And there was one period where the winds or the storm got so bad that they ripped the lifeboats off one side of the ship. It just tore the lifeboats off and kind of took the metal railing and twisted it.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's fantastic.

MS. REMINGTON: It was very frightening, but the last -- so the last day, as I was eating my breakfast in my room, the egg, the boiled egg, that I received, I opened it, and it was rotten. And I thought, well, that's it. Anyway, this was about 6:00 in the morning as we sailed into the bay in Yokohama. And it was an absolutely beautiful morning. It was so beautiful that you could see Fuji, Mount Fuji, which was some 40 to 60 miles away. It's usually not -- you're not able to see it because of the smog --

MR. CUMMINGS: Smog.

MS. REMINGTON: -- it was an exquisite sight. I'll never forget it. It was so -- it looked like a photograph. Everything was so clear and so finally delineated.

So that was my -- the memory of my first morning in Japan was this rotten egg and this beautiful view with this awful smell from the rotten egg --

MR. CUMMINGS: The classic view, yeah, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: -- the classic view and the rotten egg from the middle of the bay.

Well, very quickly, the family I was going to stay with came to rescue me in a motor launch. I was very, very happy to get off of this situation, prison for two weeks. It was really rather incredible. So I went off with the family and they had a car and we all drove to Tokyo and had a -- I was ensconced in the house, and it was a nice lunch and so on. It was a beautiful house. It was, oh, about 75 years old.

I'm doing all right?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: It's about 75 years old and was not touched by the bombs. I mean, most of Tokyo, as you know, was really destroyed by the firebombs and such in World War II. This house had been left, and it was in beautiful condition. It was very large and rounding and very classic. The garden, the gardens in the front and the back had not been tended. They had sort of gone to pot, but the rest of the house had been kept. And it was absolutely beautiful, and I was very delighted with that.

Now, this family had a daughter -- I think I may have mentioned -- who was going off to -- she was an only child at this point because the brothers and sisters had all died, I guess, during the war of disease. They had a very hard time. So this girl is the only child of this family. I think there had been originally four or five children. She was the only one left, and she was my age. And she wanted to go off to France for a year to study.

Now, at that time Japan had no foreign exchange, so I stayed with this family and paid them \$50 a month room and board. My mother sent that money in dollars to the daughter in Paris. So it worked out. I mean, she could survive in Paris, and I could survive over there. And it worked out very well for about a year and a half, I guess I was with them.

All right. What is interesting is after she left, she was there about two weeks. When she left, that left me with the family, the mother, the father. There was a kind of another woman who lived with the family who was a marvelous woman who was very involved in tea ceremony and some of the

more traditional arts of Japan. And I guess the maid who was sort of a young country girl.

And the transformation that took place was very interesting because I automatically in about two or three weeks began in the eyes of these people to become the daughter. I--

MR. CUMMINGS: They didn't speak any English, did they?

MS. REMINGTON: They spoke no English, no English whatsoever. The father spoke a little English because he had been captured in World War I or something. He was in China and had been captured, a prisoner, something. But anyway, somewhere along the line, he picked up a little English, which he hadn't used for 25 years. So it was -- he was not -- he was a little crippled in this area. They began -- they talked to me all the time.

So this is how I learned most of my Japanese. I began to learn this way. It's very interesting because it was not learned as a translated language. It was learned as a child learns one's native -- his own native language. This is how I learned Japanese. They would just repeat, repeat, repeat these sentences until I understood that, and I passed the soy sauce or don't do that, it's bad table manners. I guess within two months, they had completely accepted me and had put me in the role of the daughter, where they would correct my table manners. They would correct my speech. They never let up on me.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MS. REMINGTON: They taught and corrected and taught and wanted to make me into a real brought up, well-mannered Japanese girl. Don't step on the black line of the tatami. They would show me how to walk, how to sit, how to kneel down and close the doors. In other words, they taught me form, their traditional social form, which it's a marvelous thing. I wouldn't have learned any other way.

Then I -- anyway, so the woman that lived with the family began to teach me tea ceremony, which I loved. I began two things. Of course, I wanted to make some money, so I began to teach English privately to people, the Japanese who want to learn English in a conversational situation. And I began to do that, and then someone asked me if I would teach a class in American slang at Waseda University to the graduate students. And I thought that was marvelous, so I said yes.

Now, the graduate students that I had at Waseda were all in commerce. In other words, what they would do is go out -- it's different than our system. They would go out for the first six months of their supposed graduate studies and work in companies, all commercial companies, shipping companies, export-import. Let's see. One was in the Chamber of Commerce. So a wide range of kids going out into commercial areas. Then they come back the last six months and correlate their studies or correlate what they found out and exchange information and so forth.

Well, I got them when they came back. It was very funny because we just had a marvelous time. I would teach there two or three times a week. One of the times, we would meet and go to an American movie and then have coffee afterward in one of the coffeehouses, and we would discuss what they did or did not understand. And I would always try to pick terrible B movies because this is the type of language that they --

MR. CUMMINGS: They wanted --

MS. REMINGTON: -- were dealing with.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MS. REMINGTON: [Inaudible.]

MR. CUMMINGS: They had studied English already, though?

MS. REMINGTON: They had studied English for about 12 years, but they could read and write. They couldn't speak, and they didn't understand slang. For instance, one of them said to me one day, "What does violin have to do with health?"

And I said, "Well, what do you mean?"

And he said, well, he had at one time -- I don't know. It was import-export business where he was working. Was an older American gentleman who had come in there one morning, and this Japanese student said to him, "Good morning. How do you feel?"

And the man replied, "Fit as a fiddle."

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, that's marvelous.

MS. REMINGTON: And this kid could never figure it out. So, I mean, this is the kind of thing I dealt --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, colloquialisms and things, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: -- with all the time because much of our language is idiomatic. It's -- actually, it is a kind of slang. It's an American language and there -- it's hard to teach. It's hard to look -- to really look at.

I had textbooks like *Alice in Wonderland*. They took all that very seriously. The thing where Alice goes down the rabbit hole, they didn't see that that was a little impossible because in America you had big buildings and huge Cadillacs and --

MR. CUMMINGS: And [inaudible].

MS. REMINGTON: -- and enormous rabbits, so obviously, the rabbit hole is -- oh, it was logical. The rabbit hole was obviously for a little girl to fit in. Here, I am six feet tall, and they're all four feet nine. And it was perfectly logical, and they wouldn't believe me that this rabbit hole was not large enough to accommodate a little girl.

MR. CUMMINGS: Marvelous.

MS. REMINGTON: And then they finally caught on to it, and they would -- really got into that, understanding that basically the English language and how it works and some of the political stuff. And some of them began to read, oh, what's his name? Mystery writer that used to -- oh, famous mystery writer that used to -- Mickey Spillane.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, Mickey Spillane.

MS. REMINGTON: Some of them began to read that, and then they would run across phrases like "one-armed bandit." What's a one-armed bandit? So I'd have to explain that and so on and so forth.

But anyway, I was able to make money to support myself doing that, and I spent, oh, I guess the



first year meeting a lot of people, Japanese, making my language better. My Japanese became within six months very good and within the next six months -- the last six months to make a whole year, really pretty good.

MR. CUMMINGS: I'm curious about when you were teaching. Did you use much Japanese there? Did you think you -- did you learn --

MS. REMINGTON: I tried not to.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. So you really didn't learn much Japanese in that context, did you?

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, I did in an interesting way. For instance, I would learn a lot about the traditions. I would set up, oh, let's say, a sort of seminar thing with the class. We usually got 12 kids in the class. We would discuss your feelings, meaning the kids' feelings on having the traditional marriage situation, having the parents pick your partner, your mate. I felt that these kids would be liberated enough not to want to do that anymore. Not so. They said they did not rely on their judgment. They felt that their elders had better judgment in these cases.

I found out a lot about how the Japanese mind works, how the system works, what happens - how, let's say the traditions jump or did not jump generations after the war, what happened. This is 15 years ago, and I expect it's a lot different now from what I've heard. But at that time, it was not. I mean, the traditions were still fiercely upheld by so-called liberated students.

These students, Japanese students, have a marvelous, I suppose, tradition of traveling with a teacher. They love to have outings for two and three days, and you go off to the north of Japan or you go off to Kyoto. Now, when we would do things like that, then I would really get to learn a lot more Japanese because we would speak in English a lot, but you go to the inn and everybody kind of stays in one huge, big room of students. And they're always jabbering in Japanese, so then I would participate and I would learn so much from these kids.

Otherwise, in class, I tried to do it all in English, and that worked most of the time. It worked very well. It was a very good situation.

Now, in -- also, my activities in Japan for the first year I was studying traditional Chinese and Japanese calligraphy from two different teachers.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you find them?

MS. REMINGTON: When I first got to Japan, I began -- when I lived with the family, they said to me, what do you want to do. And I told them I wanted to study calligraphy and I wanted to study traditional "xie yi" painting, the Chinese painting, ink painting, whatever you want to call it.

And I said, "How I would go about this is I'd like" -- private teachers in Japan at that time were very inexpensive. You had one or two -- let's see. I think I had with my calligraphy teacher, had two three-hour lessons a week for oh, my goodness, under \$5 a month.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really, a month?

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, a month. It was unbelievable. Five hundred yen a month would have been around -- let me think. Was it 5,000 yen? It was about -- I don't know. It was about \$5 a month, which is terribly cheap.

So I began studying one kind of calligraphy with this marvelous old woman, and she taught me an awful lot about -- she could not speak any word of English. She could not even read English. Her dictionaries were [inaudible] through A, B, C, how the line were -- how they indexed the thing on the side --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MS. REMINGTON: -- so you can look up B, just turn to B. Hers were all in Japanese. She couldn't even read the English alphabet.

So she taught me an awful lot about reading and writing because I began to read and write these characters, and I didn't know what they were. They were just little pictures. They didn't mean anything. So after about two weeks, I thought, well, that's dumb because I could learn to read and write. I know these characters. I write these characters a hundred times so I can get them perfect. Why -- and I memorized them. I would walk down the street and see these characters on signs.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: And say, hey, I know these characters. Why didn't I know what it means? I can't read them. I could write it all for you, but I couldn't -- I can't read them.

So I tell her this. By then, I could speak enough Japanese. I'd been there for a couple months, and I'd got ahold of her. She got ahold of me. And she began -- an interesting story, she had lost her daughter somewhere in a war or something. So here I was. I --

MR. CUMMINGS: The daughter again.

MS. REMINGTON: -- was the only to practice -- I was the professional daughter in Japan. So she began to teach me how to read and write. Now, mind you, it was again in Japanese. I learned how to write and read in Japanese, not as a translated language. Now, the reason I emphasize this is because it stays with you.

And several other languages I have studied and speak like Spanish and French, come back to me, but I don't have instant recall the way I do in Japanese after 15 years. I have instant recall. I can go completely into the Japanese conversation and just babble along. I'll forget a lot of the words, of course, but I mean, I can't do that in, say, French or Spanish. It takes me about three days of Spanish and French to get the gears worked around so that I can start, right? But it's interesting because of the way people learn differently. How you learn a language makes sense in how you repeat it through the years or how you use it to recall.

All right. So I began studying with her. Now, this would have been -- oh, I don't know. I guess it was less than three months because --

MR. CUMMINGS: This was, what, a word calligraphy, not drawing calligraphy --

MS. REMINGTON: What do you mean?

MR. CUMMINGS: -- with her? I mean, it was language, not --

MS. REMINGTON: No. It was the art. I was studying the art of calligraphy, which is an art, I mean, with brush and ink and all that. The reading and writing was just a sidelight. Do you see what I mean?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: She wasn't supposed to teach me that but, oh, okay. Now, she took a liking to me.

Now, anyway, this -- let's see. I got there in November. Actually, I must have started with her in December. It was less than I -- less time than I thought. I was really only there about a month. Well, when New Year's came along. As you know, New Year's is very important. This would have been 1957, '56, '57 New Year's.

The people involved in calligraphy all over Japan come together in Tokyo to have a big calligraphy writing celebration of the New Year. Each one will go and write. Sometimes they write characters five by five feet. I mean, it's a huge big thing, and it's all on New Year's Day. It's a very important part of the tradition. Special foods are eaten, this kind of -- that.

Now, my teacher wanted me to participate in a calligraphy writing session. I said, "Well, all right." I said, "I'm not very good."

She said, "Don't worry about it."

Well, what came about was I participated in the level of first graders. So we all came out and lined up, and I was -- again, the six-foot tall person and these Japanese children who were all of two feet tall. And you had to come out and you bowed. And you got down on your knees, and you wrote this long kind of scroll. Your teacher was on the other end pulling the paper up so that you could write.

Well, of course, the newspapers got ahold of this, and there was hilarious photographs of me in these Tokyo newspapers, this huge tall woman and these little tiny kids. And I got more fan mail from that.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, yes. (Inaudible) in Japan of -- they loved it. They thought it was marvelous because I was really into their thing. However, it was a hilarious situation.

MR. CUMMINGS: [Inaudible] incredible.

MS. REMINGTON: It really was. I mean, visually, it was hilarious, but they had a lot of respect for that kind of thing because I just got up and said, I don't care. I'm going to do it. I don't care how ridiculous it looks. And it must have looked really ridiculous. That was my first exposure.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, boy.

MS. REMINGTON: All right. So meanwhile, I went to kabuki and Noh dramas and really got into the Japanese culture and so on, had all Japanese friends with whom I would speak and so on.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you find the difference between the way men live and the way women live in that -- the shift, the [inaudible]?

MS. REMINGTON: A little difficult to accept at first because although they -- I was -- when you're a foreigner and an obvious foreigner, they don't necessarily subject you to that kind of code because -- I mean, where men come first and so on and so forth. I would --

MR. CUMMINGS: But you must have been aware of it and seen it operating?

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, [inaudible] because in the family when I began to become the daughter, the father, who would be sitting six feet away from the television, would scream at me down the hall to come change the station for him. This was considered perfectly all right. It was fine form, and he wasn't acting in any way but except to say that you're part of the family and I love you so come change the television for me. And at first, this astounded me. I almost said him, why don't you just lean over there, and you can do it yourself, for heaven's sake. But that wasn't the way it worked, so I really had a big taste of it on the home front in that respect.

But not so much on the outside, I mean, I would be aware of it because you get on a crowded train, and an old woman maybe 70 years old would get up and give her seat to an old man, right? This was very common. I don't know if it's still common anymore, but there was a definite -- an absolute, obvious preference for the male. But the system worked, and I was not in the system, so I was not upset about it.

MR. CUMMINGS: But you could still see it?

MS. REMINGTON: I could still see it. I lived with it. I saw how he, the father of the family, treated all the women in the family. He was not as hard on me as he was on the others, and that's fine. I mean, that's their system. Had I been really asked to be subjected to this, I probably would have refused, but I never really had any problems with it because, as I say, I was a foreigner and I could preserve my right to step out of the culture and say, hey, you don't get to do that to me. I'm a foreigner. I'm not part of this system.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MS. REMINGTON: But it didn't bother me. I could -- because I always had the option of out.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, you were studying calligraphy. What else -- what was the other? You studied with another person because you said there were two people.

MS. REMINGTON: Well, the woman -- well, actually there was three people. The woman taught me, and, let's see, her name was Toyoda, Toyoda [phonetic]. What was her name? Toyoda sensei, I think. I can't remember the man's name. He taught me, oh, I think, traditional Chinese calligraphy. I began writing with bamboo brush and really getting into the characters of about 3,000 years ago, pre-Han dynasty, I mean, the stuff you see on the bronzes, the form of --

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, the thin --

MS. REMINGTON: -- how that's written. The big block kind of letters, beautiful form and the endings on the strokes were much different than, let's say, the modern Chinese or Japanese. So I really went through history, visual history, of the writing, how the characters developed. I mean, in the beginning, let's say, the characters for bottle and jug would have incorporated them in some kind of a recognizable form of a bottle or a jug, and then these simply became more abstracted and what. But I really got into the history of that, and I loved it. And I began to be able to read some of the very ancient things, Chinese poetry, and then, of course, in the Han dynasty, there was a lot of it.

And I began to be able to read that with not too much difficulty. It's always very difficult because of the interpretation -- three characters together which say wall outside of town really means -- has a whole --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MS. REMINGTON: -- context. And this is difficult because I didn't have the background to be able to really assess these things poetically, and so a lot of this is what I was taught so as well as -- I mean, this was when I really got into the calligraphy. Maybe in -- a year, almost a year had gone by, 10 months or so. I had studied very hard. I worked very hard, and I got to be very good at it. I have two degrees that I received for writing calligraphy in Japan.

Now, on the other side, the woman from whom I studied, she was really more interested in Japanese poetry and so forth, and then you get into the haiku. And going back from that, I guess I went all the way back to the 7th and 8th century literary works that I was trying to get into translating. And had I spent more time in Japan and more time at this occupation or preoccupation, I would have gotten very good at it because I began to have a sense of understanding of how this stuff works. Again, it's very hard to translate because it is not literal.

All right. So I did that, and then I had a -- I studied sumi-e painting from another man whose name I don't remember, and I did that for about six months. I got very bored with it because he was a terrible teacher, but I learned technique and stuff. Mostly, he had you copying, tracing from a scroll. He put a piece of paper over it and you traced it with a brush and then you filled in color and this kind of stuff. And it's the old way that the Orientals teach. It was learning by rote, but it gets really boring after a while. So I had to kind of drop that after six months.

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you do anything else as far as painting or --

MS. REMINGTON: No.

MR. CUMMINGS: This is just really what you were doing?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, I did not -- I stopped painting when I got to Japan. I at first had envisioned maybe being able to paint, doing some work of my own, but I noticed I really didn't want to because I was being engrossed and totally immersed in a completely foreign culture, language-wise, traditions, lifestyle. That is what I really wanted to soak up, and I felt that before I can really turn out work of my own that is very meaningful to me, then I think I'd better become a much more meaningful person.

I really better stand on the other side of the fence, so to speak, and look back and myself and my culture. There was an awful lot of that going on in my head, sifting through the levels of what had produced me in terms of my culture, where I was, who I was, what visually, how this worked out. It was very easy to do because I was in a totally foreign situation. There wasn't a chair in the house. There was not a piece of familiar paraphernalia, no knives, no forks. Everything was foreign. Everything I ate, smelt, drank, said. How to all of a sudden become cut off from anything I knew, I mean, days would go by. I wouldn't speak any English, weeks.

It was very easy, therefore, to stand on the other side of the fence and assess myself and my culture and where everything was and get it all in place. I found that very important.

MR. CUMMINGS: Was this part of the reason why you went there?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, very definitely so. My work had come to a point where -- oh, my life had come to a point at that period where I felt like I would like to go and find out who I was and let's get that -- let's get me together as a person. I figured out that you couldn't paint great paintings till you were somewhat in your eyes a little bit more meaningful person.

Great people painted great paintings, I thought. So I had to go out and work on me in terms of every kind of experience I could get, and the culture of Japan attracted me and always had. I had done a lot of history on Japan before I went. So, of course, I went all over all Japan, every shrine, every temple. I loved it. I ate it up. I soaked it up.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you find the art history you learned here as far as its accuracy and relevancy when you really got there?

MS. REMINGTON: Not bad, not bad. Some people have done some worthwhile, decent stuff. I mean, it gives -- it gave me a substantial background, and then I went on with my own thoughts when I would look at the painting and the haniwa sculpture. And I would get out of that what I wanted. It was more of an emotional thing. I didn't approach any of it statistically, looking at the realist issue, scrolls. You don't realize, okay, this man is part of a certain culture, certain period in Japan, and this was going on historically in that period. And therefore, this man has this work. Yeah, I knew all that, and I'm glad I knew all that.

But more the emotional impact the stuff had, Japan, for me, was a very beautiful visual experience, just the countryside, the people, the architecture, just the way the food is presented. Everything was -- visually, it was exciting. It really moved me. It turned me around.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, what was it about, the visual stimulus, that you found so rewarding, and can you define that or --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, it's a, I think, very heightened sense of beauty that appealed to me. Now, I think in the history of the world, if you take a look at art and refine the inherent terms of taste, you probably would pick as examples -- the two best examples would occur to me -- and this is probably debatable, for sure -- but I would probably pick the French culture and the Japanese culture in terms of ultimate refinement of taste and this goes from food to the visual arts to dress to furniture to architecture. They're both -- they have been extracted into the very finest, more pure, purest quality.

The French never -- that whole thing never appealed to me as much as the Japanese, partly, I think, because I was attracted to the Japanese instead of the French in this respect because it was totally unknown. It was an unknown experience.

MR. CUMMINGS: For the adventure?

MS. REMINGTON: It was an adventure, yes, whereas if I were going to France and doing that whole thing, it's not such an adventure for me.

MR. CUMMINGS: Everybody does that.

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, everybody does that. And things that have always appealed to me are things that nobody else ever does, you see. I'm the last of the great adventuresses.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, what was there about the daily life and your work and things in Japan that you found either as answer to your questions or as catalysts to the answers to the questions that you had posed?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, I think first of all, attitude, the Japanese attitude toward life. Life, death and the whole basic philosophy is so different than ours. I think one would have to start there because everything else is simply a manifestation of this philosophy, all the art, all the -- again, I go back to

the food. The way the food is presented, it's so beautiful. It's visually so beautiful. All this goes right back to a certain attitude, a certain --

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you learn to prepare Japanese food --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- cut it and do all the things?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, oh, yes, I studied the fine art of Japanese cooking, naturally, as every well-brought up Japanese girl does. I got all of that again. I was 10 years old again. I was shipped off to the local lady who taught cooking. Oh, my goodness, yes, I learned all those fine arts, the flower arranging and the tea ceremony and the whole thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you like this business of kind of starting life all over again?

MS. REMINGTON: I loved it, the whole catharticism. It was just absolutely great because I was totally open. I had no preconceptions. I went into this thing as a babe in the woods, and they loved that because I was completely acceptable to everything. I just gobbled this up like a sponge, not worrying about my own work after a while, thinking, hey, gobble this up like a sponge, soak everything up you can get because it's all going into your -- whatever it goes into like a great big IBM machine and it's going to come out. The more you take in, the more you're going to put out, right?

Now, some -- oh, some people have written about my work, critics and so forth, have seen a lot of Japanese influence in my work. I cannot. I mean, to bring this up to deal with it, I have always said I cannot see it. Superficially, on the surface when you look at my work, where is the Japanese element in my work? You can't point to something and say, well, that's that and that's something else. I mean, it's not there.

But if you take a bit farther, which I don't think anybody really ever has, my eye had such training, intense training, for two years. For calligraphy, for instance, you write a character. If the angle of a certain stroke is the slightest bit off, you're corrected, and you do it until you get it down visually perfectly, your whole sensitivity about one stroke relating to another stroke. And mind you, this is -- what we're talking about basically is line. It's not only black and white and the certain grays that come of that, let's say, when a brush runs out of ink and you get to a marvelous gray world. But angles and relationships of one line to another --

MR. CUMMINGS: Do they talk about those things when they teach?

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, yes, absolutely. They -- every stroke has a certain function in the character. In other words, the vertical strokes, they liken very often to it has to have the springiness and strength of the leg of the stork which holds up that huge body, but yet it has to be -- it has to have life in it. It can't be dead --

MR. CUMMINGS: But you [inaudible] the metaphors like that.

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, oh, absolutely. Certain -- every stroke in there, the basic strokes, maybe eight or 10 basic strokes, each one is likened to a certain poetic kind of feeling, and you get a feeling for a stroke, that something cannot be dead. It has to have a spring to it like a twig. It has to have -- you have -- the greatest calligraphers, each character is alive because each stroke is alive.

This is the way I was taught, and I through this got a lot of feeling for line and for life and for certain movement and angles of relationships from this to that, of this to that. I got a concept of a little picture being completely contained in a character. Each character is treated as a little picture, and then you begin to put them together. And then, of course, you can get into the very freestyle where they're running together which I had studied that --

MR. CUMMINGS: Like [inaudible] --

MS. REMINGTON: -- whole thing. Yes, in the sense of how my -- the sensibilities that I was taught to these -- or the sensitivities to these certain things. I suppose those elements are in my work, but my imagery is very much my own. It's not Japanese imagery or some other nonsense that has been put on me.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really, people have said that?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes. Well, people don't look closely enough. Some critics understood -- read that I was in Japan and then --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, that's the key.

MS. REMINGTON: That's the key, see? That makes their work easier. They don't have to thrash about and really try to understand and write something sensible about my work. My work is very hard to criticize. It's very hard to deal with on a critical level because you have really basically nothing to categorize it with or a niche to put it in. They tried laying Georgia O'Keeffe on me for a while and Picasso for a while, and none of that works because it's not -- after you get from a very quick superficial response, my work is nothing like theirs.

Now, finally, people are beginning to deal with my work in a totally -- in a way that it has a uniqueness because it doesn't relate to anything you've ever seen before. I mean, you may like it, or you may not like it. That's not the point. The point is it does not relate. You cannot correlate this to, oh, boom, here, we'll put it in this category. I found people are beginning to deal with that, I mean, the more responsible critics, which is fine. I mean, it's about time.

MR. CUMMINGS: Anyway, so you were, what, in Japan for two years --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes. Well, we haven't --

MR. CUMMINGS: -- or so?

MS. REMINGTON: I'm still in Japan. Meanwhile, about six months before I was going to leave -- mind you, there was no foreign exchange, and I felt, well, I'm in Southeast Asia. I really wanted to always go to India. I always wanted to see Southeast Asia, Hong Kong and so forth. So how am I going to get enough money to take out of Japan and hopefully American money to finance a trip through Southeast Asia?

All right. So when I finally got -- my Japanese became very good. I could speak well with a good accent. I mean, over the phone, you could not tell if I spoke to you that I was not Japanese. I mean, the Japanese can't even tell. This is very funny.

I met a couple of people who were a marvelous couple, an actor and an actress, and I was teaching them English. They were in movies and television. She had a -- she was the star of a daily serial on television called *The Busy Housewife*, and it was --



MR. CUMMINGS: Just like America?

MS. REMINGTON: Just like America. It was a comic situation. Well, they decided to work me into -- I could work in television because I could make a lot of money. So they decided to work me into it. The script writers started writing parts for me as a comedienne. I was the funny lady that the husband found out in the business world somehow, right, and brought home to the family for dinner and so on and so forth. Well, that was fun, and, of course, by this time, I-- he would write the scripts in Japanese. I could read all that. It was very simple Japanese, you see. So there was no problem in terms of my working. I could function completely with -- on a technical level.

And we did so many episodes of the man bringing me home, and I would walk through the door. And naturally, I'm too tall, so I would hit my head on the door. What I did actually was --

MR. CUMMINGS: Same old slapstick comedy.

MS. REMINGTON: Exactly, it's -- and I loved it. I was the biggest ham, I tell you. I would get together with the scriptwriter and beforehand giving him material for the next couple of weeks and tell him what experiences, in fact, I did have when I first came to Japan. And I did hit my head on the door for the first week before I learned how to duck. And I told all kinds of other crazy, funny things, right?

So he would write these into the script. Well, I mean, it was hilariously funny, and I would watch these things. Well, from that I--

MR. CUMMINGS: You're a TV star.

MS. REMINGTON: TV star, absolutely. Then I graduated, and I began to work in movies.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh.

MS. REMINGTON: These are all, of course, B movies, Japanese B movies. Now, the white, the parts that white ladies get to play in Japanese B movies are the reverse roles that the dragon lady Oriental, mysterious woman played in the mysteries of the '30s and '40s in America. They were always the bad ladies, the exotic Eastern creature. They were always the bad ladies, the head of the spy ring --

MR. CUMMINGS: The spy, yeah, [inaudible].

MS. REMINGTON: Well, that's the kind of parts I got in Japanese movies. The funniest part --

MR. CUMMINGS: What did they call you in these films?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, whatever it was in the film.

MR. CUMMINGS: No, but I mean were you given credit and things?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, of course, yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: But how did they say Deborah Remington in Japanese?

MS. REMINGTON: You can write it out phonetically.

MR. CUMMINGS: What is that?

MS. REMINGTON: (Speaks Japanese.)

MR. CUMMINGS: What does it mean?

MS. REMINGTON: Just they wrote it out in katakana, which is how they deal with foreign words. There's an alphabet. Luckily, my name is easy to write. Ray, ming, ton, day, bo, ra, there are syllables for those for writing those things so that was very easy.

But the funniest part we had in the movies, I played of a dose -- the head of a dope smuggling gang from Hong Kong. It was really terribly funny because my henchman. Let's see. There were three Russians, one American and some other nationality. This was my gang. I couldn't speak Russian. The American couldn't -- we would talk, but, I mean, otherwise, the language we had to communicate in was Japanese. So all these funny foreigners running around the set talking to each other in Japanese, it was just bizarre. Anyway --

MR. CUMMINGS: Like a surrealist play.

MS. REMINGTON: Very much so. You did one take. I mean, these were cheap movies. They'd gone by in a couple of weeks and you'd go and you'd do your thing. You'd run through it, and then you'd have a take on it. The name of the movie translated would be *Nightmare's Bad Dream*. Isn't that great?

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, marvelous.

MS. REMINGTON: Anyway, one part of it was where I was riding up and down the Sumita River in a motorboat with this guy that looked like Fu Manchu, dressed up in this gown and these long funny things hanging off his chin, supposedly hair and so on. Oh, I was in stitches. I couldn't keep my -- I couldn't keep a straight face. We would come up the river, and he was kidnapping me. I would get off the river, and I would just be in hysterics. And we had to do that thing, I think, eight or nine times. "All right. Turn it around. We want you to go back. Let's try it again."

We'd get near the cameras and then start to laugh. So he finally -- they finally solved the problem by putting my back to the camera and letting me laugh all I wanted to. It was just very funny.

MR. CUMMINGS: What did your family think of you as you started doing all of these public events?

MS. REMINGTON: I had moved out. When I started working in television, I said to the family, "Look, our agreement" -- let's see. That was for a year. I said, "Our agreement is kind of over with now, and I really like to" -- the actor and actress had an extra space in their house.

And they said, look, you want to come live with us. And I said yes because they were young and interesting, and they were into the film thing and theater, a lot of -- they were more people my age interested in what I was interested in. I had done all my homework with the background and the language, and I was ready to graduate.

So I did that. The family wasn't too enthusiastic about that, I'll tell you, this nice middle-aged family I left. So I sort of went into semi-hiding. I wouldn't -- they'd call up, and I would never be there because somebody else would answer the phone and say, no, no, she's off in Kyoto or something.

And so that part of it worked out pretty well because they really wanted me to come back, and I didn't want to do that because in Japan you --

MR. CUMMINGS: Times were changing.

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, and they got very upset if I came in after 10:00 at night because nice girls didn't stay out after 10:00 at night. So that and a few other things began to be very weighty, and I felt my freedom was being encroached upon. So I wanted to move out into another situation.

Now, while I was living with the actor and actress and doing all this --

MR. CUMMINGS: Who were they because you haven't mentioned their names, do you remember?

MS. REMINGTON: I'm trying to remember. I remember their nicknames. I mean, that's 15 years ago so I'd have to look it up and I --

MR. CUMMINGS: Anyway.

MS. REMINGTON: Well, all right. Anyway, I wanted to make more money and have a way to change my Japanese yen, you see, because the studios paid in yen. I had to change that money into American money to take it out. I would send -- sometimes I would send -- yeah, maybe not. Well, sometimes I would send it out of the country, the yen, and have somebody trade it, change it into money. That was possible for a short while, but that stopped. So I decided I'd get a job in a Japanese nightclub as a bilingual M.C., which worked because I was at that time completely bilingual.

So I did that, and I worked in the nightclub for, oh, three or four months, and the reason I did that was because, of course, a lot of the patrons were Americans. And I was able to change money with those people. That's why I wanted to be there. So every night, I'd make my rounds and go up and say, hey, I'm a poor girl trying to get out of the country, and I'd change the money with them. I really moved all the cash reserves I had. I would change money in the nightclub, and sometimes if I didn't do well that week, I'd go out to the airport one day and stand there and get the people as they came off the plane. And it was perfectly fine. It all worked out.

Once in the nightclub, the boxing champion of Southeast Asia who was a Korean came in with all his henchmen, right? So he decided that I looked like a steak sandwich to him, I think. So he decided he was going to take me back to Seoul, Korea to set me up in a nightclub.

MR. CUMMINGS: Just what you wanted.

MS. REMINGTON: Just what I wanted. It was a very frightening moment because I was asked to join them and I said no and I was -- the manager said, well, look, you're really going to have to do that. He's a very important guy and so on. So I went to join them and realized -- the guy said to me -- by the way, the Koreans are like the gangsters of Southeast Asia. That's to Asia what the Mafia, organized crime is to here.

And it was very frightening. This guy really meant business. He wanted to take me back to Seoul, Korea. That was it. He sent one of the guys out to get airplane tickets to go back with them.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right now?

MS. REMINGTON: Right now.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, fantastic.

MS. REMINGTON: The whole thing was set up. I was not allowed to move or leave. All right. So I thought, well, obviously -- so something came into my mind. I thought, well, I've got to get out of this some way. Now, this guy doesn't drink obviously because he's in training and so forth. So I said, "Well, fine, let's celebrate. Let's have sake."

Well, in about an hour, they were all -- almost of them were just flat on the table, henchmen and everything, because I would keep proposing toasts and downing these little things, little cups of sake. At that point, I said, "Oh, I must go get my coat because it's cold outside." It was cold. It was the winter. I said, "I must go get my coat, and I'll be right back to join you."

I got up, and I went upstairs. I got my coat, left by the back door, and I never came back to the club or anything else. That was one of the -- it was really an incredible situation. I just decided that was it, and it was my time to get out of Japan more or less.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you like the men in Japan?

MS. REMINGTON: How did I like the men in Japan, what do you mean?

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, you'd been in personal relationships or was it --

MS. REMINGTON: Well, I had a very nice relationship with one Japanese man that went on for a long time. The personal relationships, they're actually very nice because they don't -- the younger people or at least at that time and I'm sure it's even better now, they don't treat you as a subordinate creature. You're treated very much as an equal.

This, by the way, it's very interesting because the outward -- the way the Japanese men and women treat each other in public is a bit different than the way they treat each other at home. At home, the man sometimes will wait on the woman. The man will treat the woman very, very nicely, but out in public, it's strictly according to a certain structure. Woman is here; man is here. But in the home, it's much different in a personal relationship, and it's better now with the younger people.

So I had a very nice relationship. I mean, there was no problem in that respect. It'd be very funny. We'd go out. I don't know, go visit relatives of his or something, and then it all became very Japanese, but that's all right. I can play that role very well, and I enjoyed it.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: It was kind of -- not really enjoyed. I thought it was funny. It was humorous.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, you spent, what, two years there?

MS. REMINGTON: Uh-huh.

MR. CUMMINGS: And you were just absorbing the culture and language and whatever, calligraphy -  
-

MS. REMINGTON: The whole thing, living.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- and not -- you never started doing any painting --

MS. REMINGTON: No.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- in a Western term?

MS. REMINGTON: No, not in terms of my own work. No, I did nothing. I took a lot of photographs which I think was very rewarding. I took an awful lot of photographs, and I'm not a photographer. I mean, I still don't consider myself a photographer, but I think that became a way of personal expression for my eye. Hey, I can point the camera at that, and that's mine. That's my expression of me, you see?

So I documented my trip very well with slides and black-and-white photographs, and I really loved it.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, where did you go now that you're beginning to leave the country?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, what I wanted to do was go to Taiwan. I had some Chinese friends from Shanghai whom I had met along the way somewhere in Taiwan -- in Taipei. So they said, well, if you do come to Southeast Asia, come to Taipei and for a week or something, we'll show you China.

So I decided to do that. Now, mind you, I had all this American currency, which I had bought. I had to get that out of Japan. So being a very tall woman, I went out and got a '60s size brassiere and stuffed all this money into it, and nobody ever said a thing, this large lady with this big bosom. So off I waltzed on Thai Airways out of Japan and into Taipei, and in Taipei, it was very good because I could buy certain currencies on the black market. So I really financed my trip to Taiwan there. I got a lot more -- almost twice as much as the foreign exchange.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, I was just going to ask you one thing about Japan. You never got involved in the American community that lives there.

MS. REMINGTON: Never, never.

MR. CUMMINGS: On purpose or --

MS. REMINGTON: Well, I tell you, anytime I ever had contact with Americans, it's very funny. After about a year and a half, I got very homesick for things like milkshakes and chocolate sundaes and chocolate sodas and banana splits. I mean, it almost drove me up the wall. So one day, I decided I would pass myself off as an American dependent, and I went to Hardy Barracks, which is in the middle of Tokyo. And naturally, once you go through the gate, you're one of them. You're an American. You're round-eye.

So I didn't know there was something called -- what is it called -- MPC, American -- it's the post currency, the military post currency. MPC, I think it's called. Well, I didn't know anything about that, right? So I head for the cafeteria immediately, and sure enough, there's milkshakes and chocolate sodas and so on. So I saw this funny money going around. I thought, my God, I can't go up. It's a crime to go up and try to buy money from these people, see? It's against the law.

So I have to have my milkshake and my chocolate sundae. Actually, it was a soda and a sundae I wanted. So I picked out what I thought was the most general-looking-type man with all the decorations and all the business, the ribbons and the stars, and I asked -- I picked one, some old guy, and so I got in line right beside him. And I got my soda and my sundae, and we get out to pay. And I'm first, and I said, "Oh, I left all my MPC in another purse. And oh, my goodness, what am I going to do?"

You know, turning to this guy who said, "Oh, little girl, don't worry. I will pay for it."

"Oh, sir, you're so nice," I said.

I immediately swept away with my fast melting sundae, trying to get away from this guy whose following me all over the cafeteria.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MS. REMINGTON: I bought you a sundae. Now I get to sit with you kind of thing. Oh, Lord. Anyway, I finally got away from him. I don't know. I sat there and ate my ice cream and had a lovely time.

And after that, [inaudible] American or got anywhere near them because they were -- they really were some kind of foreign element to me. I didn't have anything to say to these people. They were all military people. I didn't want to get -- what do you say to them? What do they say to you?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah. So you went to Taipei?

MS. REMINGTON: So I went to Taipei, and I stayed in Taipei about a couple of weeks. I possibly picked up typhoid. I don't know. But anyway, a little later I came down with typhoid, but I have a marvelous time in Taipei running around with the two sons of the Chinese family. One would take me around by day, and one would take me around by night. So I just --

MR. CUMMINGS: Had you going.

MS. REMINGTON: They kept me going. I had a great time.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you find the difference between the Japanese and the Chinese?

MS. REMINGTON: As different as the Japanese and the Americans. The Chinese are much more like Americans than the Japanese in attitude and the way they approach things, the way they think about things, much more.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MS. REMINGTON: I found them much closer -- even the language is closer to the way English is stated. I mean, just the way the language is structured. For me, Chinese, the language is much easier than Japanese. Japanese is a very hard language. You start out with the subject and then all these adverbs and adverbial clauses and all these things strung together with no verb yet and finally at the end of the sentence, boom, the verb.

MR. CUMMINGS: Like German or something.

MS. REMINGTON: Or two or three verbs, depending on if you're going, bringing, shopping. Then you get blah, blah, blah going, bringing, shopping.

MR. CUMMINGS: I see.

MS. REMINGTON: You see?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: Chinese, on the other hand, is very much more like American. I'm going to the store. That's the way -- this is the way it's set up rather I store to going, or very often, the subject is left out so it's store to going.

MR. CUMMINGS: And since you're saying, it's obviously you, right?

MS. REMINGTON: It's obviously you which makes a lot of sense, but sometimes when they're talking about other people, two, three other people, and then they start dropping who they're talking about, you really have to keep up with it. It's -- it gets a little thick and heavy at that point.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: But we had a marvelous, very interesting time once in Taiwan. The family, we were all going off to the hills, the mountains, the nearby mountains 20 miles away for a picnic. And we all got together, and off we trotted up in the mountains and so on for the picnic. It was out in some lovely little cove. And the Chinese have picnics, it's not like us. I mean, you have a lovely boat on a lovely lake and someone serves you tea and so on and so forth. So, I mean, there's always somebody around, some small place or something where you get your tea and your boat and this and that and the other and all the refined amenities of life.

Now, we got up there and these people spoke Fukan-ese, and my friend spoke Shanghai-ese, and they could not communicate with each other. But I spoke Japanese, and the island had been -- that's how I got around Taiwan, by the way, because the island had been occupied by the Japanese for 50 years. So if you got a person of a certain age, they all spoke Japanese, and it was very easy for me to get around. I could communicate with no -- really nobody spoke much English except the educated people, and you're not going to find them in restaurants and so on.

So I got the family, I guess, the older people and just began communicating in Japanese. So here I was translating in Japanese between these two -- acting as -- between these two groups of Chinese and then speaking English to my -- the family that I was with and Japanese with this other group. It was very funny.

But I loved Taipei. I didn't stay there that long, but I loved it.

MR. CUMMINGS: And you went on then --

MS. REMINGTON: Went on to Hong Kong, which, of course, again, I loved. I stayed in Hong Kong for a couple weeks that time I had and later on came back to Hong Kong. I came back to Hong Kong on my way back to Japan. But I stayed in Hong Kong and loved it and ran around and did all the things you do there. Stayed in a very funny little Chinese hotel in the Kowloon side.

And from there, I went to --

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you know people there or --

MS. REMINGTON: No.

MR. CUMMINGS: So that was a different --

MS. REMINGTON: That was a whole different thing, yeah. From there, I went to Bangkok, and in Bangkok, I started to feel funny. This is when I started to come down with typhoid, and that was an incredible experience. Anyway, for the first three or four days there, I was feeling very strange and high fever and then no fever and then chills.

And in the middle of all this, I decided to go to Cambodia to see Angkor Thom and Angkor Wat. Now, again, the money markets in Hong Kong and in Bangkok were very good. I could -- this is one

reason I went to Hong Kong was literally to play the money market. I'd buy and sell maybe four, five different currencies in a day and come out with enough money to finance my trip by great old Thai Airways from Hong Kong to Bangkok. And in Bangkok, the money market at that time was extremely good, and it was very -- it was probably better than Hong Kong. It was the biggest one in Southeast Asia, certainly.

So the first three days, I wheeled and dealt on the money market and got enough money -- well, Cambodian money again at about twice the exchange rate in my favor and financed a trip to Cambodia again, carrying my Cambodian money in my huge brassiere. It was so funny because they always ask you at the border, how much Cambodian whatever it was at the time do you have to declare. And I said, well, here, declared exactly what I was supposed to declare, but they never knew. I mean, there was no way to check.

So I went to Cambodia, ran around Angkor Wat for a while. It was just delightful. And coming back on the border, the exit station or the border station -- how are we doing on tape?

[END OF REEL 2 SIDE A.]

MR. CUMMINGS: Side 4.

MS. REMINGTON: On the border.

MR. CUMMINGS: We have you on the border.

MS. REMINGTON: Border coming out of Cambodia back to Taiwan. No, back to Thailand.

MR. CUMMINGS: Thailand.

MS. REMINGTON: And on the border -- in the border station, there was this Frenchman named Jean-Pierre something or other, right? He was a very handsome man. They had thrown him out of Afghanistan. He was flying planes for the Afghanistani Air Force. He had some absolutely great daring adventurer-type, right? Now, he couldn't get out of -- they were throwing him out of Cambodia for some reason. He couldn't get into Thailand for some reason without a sponsor.

So I don't know, to make a very long story short, it took about three hours with these -- talking to these border types. I said, "Look, the man only wants to stay there three days. Then he has" -- he did have airplane tickets to go off somewhere. I said, "Why don't I just sponsor him for three days?"

Well, that was not very legal, but it solved their problem. They didn't know what to do with him. They had to get him out. They had to move him out. They didn't know what to do with him. So fine, so this guy and I go back to Bangkok together and that --

[Audio break.]

MS. REMINGTON: And we got back to Bangkok. My French adventurer proposed that we go out and have a marvelous Chinese dinner. Well, mind you, I'm beginning to be very, very typhoid ridden at this point. Didn't know what was wrong. So I thought, oh, that would be delightful because I'd eaten -- I was really struggling. I was not living very well and living in a cheap Chinese hotel in Bangkok. So I said, "Well, that's fine."

So we met, and we went off to this marvelous Chinese restaurant. And meanwhile, I was really coming down with the typhoid, the fever and the chills. Well, when I would get chills, I would feel



marvelous because it was so hot, and we would dance and eat and so on and so forth. I just had a mad time, and then I would get -- the fever would start to come back, and I would have to go throw up all this food because I felt so terrible and so sick and would come staggering back and sit there until I got the next wave of the chills. And then I would eat and dance and carry on.

Well, needless to say, the evening ended, and I was feeling pretty awful. I went back to the hotel and for one week really just laid there in the throes of typhoid fever, which is very high fever and chills. And it hurts. I mean, it's a disease where -- have you ever had a typhoid shot?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: Your whole body feels like your arm -- it hurts, and it's a bone-breaker disease. You can't move. You can't touch. I ate nothing. I ate drank nothing. I just -- I was very sick, and in that week, I had one thought because after I -- I had two thoughts. First of all, I had the flu, and then I decided after about Day 6 that I didn't have the flu. And I thought -- then I had one other thought. Lord knows where this thought came from. I had no idea. It was terramycin. If I can get some terramycin, I thought to myself, my fever will go down, and I'll be able to think.

Now, why I picked terramycin, I don't know. It happens to be the one -- one of the mycins that -- I think the only one that touches typhoid. It doesn't cure it, but it reacts --

MR. CUMMINGS: Calms it down.

MS. REMINGTON: -- in a certain way so you can function. All right. Here I am, living in this cheap Chinese hotel. I had to get -- I knew I couldn't get the pills, right? So I had to get the girl next door, some Thailand from upcountry, spoke no English, and I spoke at that time some Thai, very little. It just -- what I picked up. So I drew pictures of drugstore and wrote down terramycin and made it obvious that I wanted her to go and get me these, which she did and came back with these things.

All right. I took them, and sure enough, the fever went down. And I thought, I'm sick. This is not the flu. I'd better get some help. So again, I prevailed upon this girl next door. I said, "Take me to the Seventh Day Adventist clinic here."

They have a very marvelous clinic.

MR. CUMMINGS: How'd you know about that?

MS. REMINGTON: I don't know. I passed it on one of my walks or -- anyway, I knew it was there. And she said yes, sure enough, there was something like that there. They were all over Southeast Asia anyway. They're very common, and they're very, very good. They run hospitals and clinics, marvelous.

So by this time, I couldn't stand up straight. I was bent in half. I had no -- it's a very mentally depressing disease. It's physically debilitating. I couldn't move -- I could hardly move. So she takes me off to the clinic in a rickshaw, helps me out of the rickshaw. We go in this huge room, just full of these screaming children and people. I thought, oh, my God. There must have been 40 or 50 in the waiting room. I thought, by the time I wade all through that, I'm not going to be alive.

In the middle of all this, some doctor, not an Asian, a Western man, wandered through, took one look at me and said, "Well, you better follow me." So all right. He said, "Sit down here. You have to have a blood test and see what you have."

So a man in a loincloth appeared with a needle and took this blood out of my arm, and sure enough in a few minutes, he said, "Well, you have typhoid." And --

[Audio break.]

MR. CUMMINGS: So there you were with the doctor.

MS. REMINGTON: There I was with the doctor, and after informing me that I was, in fact, going to live, he gave me some pills. I patched myself up, got a little bit stronger. It's a very easy disease to cure.

MR. CUMMINGS: Once you know what it is.

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, they just give you pills and, boom, it kills the -- whatever, the bacteria or whatever it is. So that's fine.

So shortly after that, I decided to go to India. Well, I was on my way to India. Now, I had the name of a family in Calcutta with whom I could stay. I got the name of this family from an American girl in -- well, six months before who'd stayed with this family in Calcutta when she had gone to India, and I wrote to them. And they said, well, yeah, fine, come and stay with us for 10 days or however you long you want to stay in Calcutta.

So I left Bangkok and flew off to Calcutta and landed there and was met by somebody I didn't know, some turbaned individual in a little loincloth number in the middle of Calcutta and taken off to this -- to live with this family for about 10 days or so.

Now, this -- can you turn --

[END OF REEL 2 SIDE B.]

MR. CUMMINGS: So this is Side 5 on the 26 of June, 1973, Paul Cummings interview of Deborah Remington. We're going to begin with your --

MS. REMINGTON: Going to India.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- going to India and where you went in India and who [inaudible].

MS. REMINGTON: And I left Bangkok, and I went to Calcutta. And during my travels, I had met a girl who had stayed with an Indian family --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MS. REMINGTON: -- in Calcutta and one in Bombay. And she -- these people were very good friends of her, and she wrote to them and asked if I -- when I went to India could I stay with both families. Of course, one's on the east coast, and one's on the west coast. So that was very good. Could I stay with them, and they wrote back and yes.

So then I began corresponding with the family at that time in Calcutta. They said, yes, come along. We'll take care of you. So I got to Calcutta, and they met me and took me home. And I stayed there with them for a couple of months. I stayed in Calcutta. They were very involved in the theater, in contemporary theater in India. And all of that is centered in Calcutta, so I saw an awful lot of plays in Hindi. And I [inaudible] the language as much I couldn't understand. They would go

on for five hours, and I'd fall asleep. I was a terrible guest.

Anyway, and my introduction to India through Calcutta was quite interesting. And just really, when I went to India, part of it was to discover how I felt about the human condition. Having -- I had lived in Asia now a couple years. Now, to me, going to India, seeing what was going on in India was like almost experiencing humanity in the way I put it at the bottom of the barrel. This was -- these ways were completely foreign to me, the caste system, the whole thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MS. REMINGTON: People living and dying in the streets. You walk down the streets at night, people have certain places on the sidewalks staked out for themselves. Literally, many times, I saw people die. I saw -- twice I saw women having babies right on the street, et cetera, et cetera. I mean, everybody knows about India.

At first, this was really horrible. I mean, I couldn't adjust my -- my value system and their value system were totally at odds, and I realized this.

MR. CUMMINGS: What were you trying to discover, though, by putting yourself in this situation?

MS. REMINGTON: Really, I think a much more wide, a larger perspective of humanity, a greater dimension to it. I felt that this would feedback into my work with a great deal of importance because I would really experience again what I would have -- what I considered something absolutely alien to what I was brought up with, what Western man is brought up with, one's concept of reality, one's concept of humanity, you name it. It's not only different. It's absolutely opposite.

And living with the families, with the Indian families, they wanted to help me. Oh, we talked about a lot of this often. I mean, they spoke English. They were just middle class families. The men were in import-export businesses. These were not rich families. These were -- they weren't terribly poor. They were just average, middle class people who happened to be a little bit -- the family in Calcutta was really into theater, into theater arts.

Nothing really visual in terms of visual arts was going on in India, at least it wasn't at that time. Anything that was going on was centered in Calcutta but was really meaningless for me.

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you travel around, though, to see the sculpture and the buildings and --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, yes, I did a lot of that. I also then began to use Calcutta as a base, and I would go -- once I went 300 miles down the coast to -- I can't even remember the name. There's a marvelous temple that's almost on the sea. It's one of the best temples in India, and it's absolutely beautiful. It's a Hindu temple. I went down there and wandered around. Did a lot of photography.

In India, I did an awful lot of photography. I did no drawing. I didn't work on my own stuff. I did photography, and when I was in the big cities or even in the north, up in, oh, around Delhi, anywhere up in the north for thousands of miles radius, you have very small museums sometimes in these old palaces which have marvelous, small, beautiful collections of Indian miniatures from all different periods. I spent a lot of time looking at art in India, just looking. I mean, the country is so rich in art, and I really loved it.

I also learned Indian cooking which I love and I think I do fairly well at, and I don't know. Just this kind of thing is how I spent my life in India.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, what -- it sounds like it was sort of a planned/unplanned activity. Did you have a plan when you got to India, the things you wanted to see, the particular temples, the places you would go?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, yes, definitely, I really wanted to see almost everything in India.

So after Calcutta, I took the train, and I went to Bombay, straight across India where I stayed with another family. And they --

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you find traveling by yourself there with the different languages?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, you have to remember the British were all over India for so long that all the older people speak English. I mean those who were educated. Now, this usually goes into railroad stations. Almost -- there will be always somebody in the most remote, strange, little place that will speak English. Also, the police stations in tiny, tiny villages, you could always find someone who could speak English.

I learned enough Hindi to order food to get around and that kind of thing. I wasn't interested in -- this is one language I wasn't interested in or I would have learned Hindi. Hindi is not a difficult language, but I was not interested in it. I just did not -- and I didn't need it. English was just adequate, and so even the small children now with the families I stayed with, those children all studied English at school. So that was really not a problem.

Anyway, I went to Bombay, and I stayed there for a while. Again, traveling, using that as a center of traveling up and down. Then I decided I wanted to see south India. So I hitchhiked all through south India. Now, that doesn't mean getting out in the road with your thumb sticking out because that's not the way it's done. But in a certain time of the year, Indian families travel. They'll get a car, and they'll travel. They'll make pilgrimages to certain temples or to certain areas, to certain regions. Maybe one of the members of the family happens to be from another part of India, et cetera, et cetera.

What I did was I got a ride out of Bombay fairly -- oh, a good distance into the south to the first place where I wanted to go. I stopped there, and I saw what I wanted. And then I went to the police station and the railroad station, and for some reason, they will always fix you up with a ride. Usually, the police station because they know. Cars in south India, there aren't many, at least there weren't 15 years ago because you have to have money to drive a car. You have to have money to have a car, and most people in India do not have that kind of money.

So they would always know if a car was coming in, if a car came in, they would stop them and say, hey, can you take one more. So this was good because I often got rides with people. Again, I would -- it was another exposure to people, to certain other kinds of Indian families but other --

MR. CUMMINGS: Were they curious about why you were there and what you were doing?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, they asked me exactly what you're asking me, and I told them I really wanted to see their country, their temples, their custom, religion. That was perfectly acceptable. They're very -- as long as you're really sincere and deeply interested in their country and in their ways and you're not making judgments of, well, you people let your people starve and you people do this and you people do that. As long as you don't do that and I wasn't interested in doing that. That's not why I was there, to make judgments. They were very, very civil and very, very sweet to me and very helpful.

So I went all over south India in this manner, and when I got to Madras, I was feeling very ill. Actually about 10 days before that when I was in -- let me think. Oh, here I again, I can't remember. It's the jumping off place for the Ceylon -- the train that goes to Ceylon, the Indo Ceylon express. So I got into that town. I was going to go to Ceylon on the train. I got into the town.

I went to the railroad station to get my ticket on the train which left the next morning at 6:00. I was feeling very weak and awful. And they said, well, you can't buy your ticket now because it's third class, and you'll have to buy your ticket tomorrow morning at 6:00 in the morning. Well, I was so sick the next day, I couldn't get up. Actually, it was all right because that train that I would have been, that I was going to go on, was blown up in the hills in Ceylon because they were having a language war. So one of the tricks in a language war is to blow trains up, I don't understand what it has to do with language --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: So they blew the train up, and there were -- a lot of people were hurt and injured and killed and all that, and the train fell off a mountain. And it was awful. So luckily, I escaped that by some unknown reason.

Anyway, I was feeling terrible. So I went to an Indian hospital, and they discovered that I had amoeba dysentery, acute and chronic, and put me in bed. So there I was in bed in an Indian hospital, and the nurses were all dressed in 19th century nurses' costumes. It was just a riot. And the doctor -- my doctor was a woman doctor in a very beautiful --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MS. REMINGTON: -- fancy sari who would walk around with her stethoscope carried for her by a kind of acolyte who held a pillow, and the stethoscope rested on this pillow. And this woman would wander around to these very sick people. And in India, very often when a member of the family goes to the hospital, the family comes to take care of that person because, you see, each caste, each sect has its own food. And no dietary kitchen or no kitchen in a hospital can cook the food --

MR. CUMMINGS: Like [inaudible], yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: -- which would be in a sense kosher to every little, particular family and sect from every little of this, this, this. So the families come and cook for their people, which, of course, makes a lot of sense, but all of a sudden [inaudible] junction, you have this chaotic mass of people in courtyards, outside of windows, outside of -- there's all kinds of squatting down, waiting. There's a sense of waiting because between meal preparation, there's nothing to do. So they all sit around. It's very, very hot.

Anyway, I wasn't fortunate enough to have any of that. They gave me something called aloe root congee, which looked like gallons of --

MR. CUMMINGS: Glue.

MS. REMINGTON: -- wallpaper paste. It was awful. My God. Anyway, it was marvelous, and my food would be served to be on a banana leaf, little bits of gruel. I mean, you can't eat much, but when you can eat, it's usually a rice gruel thing. And they would bring that in on the banana leaves, and if you could get it down before all the flies and bugs got it, that was fine. It was very interesting.

The bathrooms were completely communal. Everybody wandering in and out of these bathrooms, including all of the families and so on and so forth, and it was just really terribly chaotic for a hospital. But somehow, it went on and --

MR. CUMMINGS: Lots of humanity.

MS. REMINGTON: Lots of humanity, everywhere in India. So I finally got a little bit stronger, and she said, "Well, okay. We've killed your amoebic dysentery."

So off I wandered, right? And I thought, well, I'll go back to Bombay. I mean, this is months I was wondering on down in south India. So I went back to Bombay. I thought, well, I'll go back here and I'll recover. So I stayed there for a couple weeks and did what I thought was recovering, and then I took off again and started an all-night train trek up through north India.

Now, north India, the distances are so great between towns. It's much larger. Physically, the area is larger. Much of it is desert. It's not inhabitable the way the south is. The south is very lush and full of people and tiny, tiny villages everywhere. I mean, it's very crowded, whereas in the north, although it's still crowded because India is a very heavily populated country, it isn't that crowded.

So I thought, well, I'll do something terrible. There's something in India called ticketless travel on the trains, and what you do is everything -- all facilities at train stations are inside of a gate. So when a train comes, all activities on the inside -- now, in between trains, there's no gate master, no gatekeeper. So you simply walk through the gate and go into a tea shop on the inside of the station. Now, when a train comes, it's really like Wani Junction. People are hauling cows off of the trains, and there's -- it's just unbelievable, people on the roofs and everything else.

So there's -- all of a sudden, there's a half hour of intense activity and people movement and thick and crowded. And during those periods, I could just walk over and get on the train. I'd know what train was going where because, of course, I'd ask all the information. They never ask you for your ticket when you ask for information.

So I'd get on the train, and I would ride along. Now, luckily in India, there is no passageway between cars. So if you're on a car, you're safe until then next stop. There's no way the conductor can get on your car --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, to get on and off the railroad cars in India, you have to get off the car onto the platform, walk down, get onto the next car. There is no -- you see, it's very good.

So we pull into the station. I'd look out the door. I'd see the conductor. And if he was coming in one door of my car, I'd just get out the other and wait till he got out, and then I'd get back on. So this is how I traveled in north India, I mean, for thousands, two, three, 4,000 miles. This is how I traveled.

MR. CUMMINGS: But a lot of people do that, though, don't they, though?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, it's completely against the law, but enough people do that. The Indians really frown on it because they think it's immoral, and I suppose it is. But nevertheless, I did it, and no one ever asked. No one ever suspected me.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MS. REMINGTON: I think it's because the British indoctrination of these people had to do with if you have white skin, you're honest, and especially if you're a lady with white skin, you are never to be questioned. And the people who ran the railroads were still people, the same people who had been trained under that system diligently for 50 years. And they were very nice and helpful and respectful. I knew they'd never ask me for a ticket, absolutely never. I mean, how could you do that? And they never did. It was just hilarious.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, what's it like being a single lady traveling around? I mean, there are not many people who do that.

MS. REMINGTON: True. In the north, it got a little hairy at times. For instance, you'd get on a car and the train would pull away and you'd never know who you were on the car with. A couple of times I -- and there was nowhere to go. I mean, there was no escape. You can't just jump off the train when it's rattling along.

A couple of times, I got stuck in cars with -- oh, there are always -- there were always more than one person. There was always more than one person so that was okay, but a couple of times, I really started to have very bad scenes. I mean, one time, there was this man who was a very religious Hindu, and I was eating my food. And I pulled out a hardboiled egg, and I thought he was going to have a fit because he was telling me that that is not godly food, you see. It's ungodly food. It's the devil's food, and he went on to this big harangue. This lasted 10 hours. This guy was just really --

MR. CUMMINGS: I'm sure you were.

MS. REMINGTON: I couldn't sleep. I couldn't eat. This guy would have fits. And drinking milk, oh, my Lord, so I think I existed on tea for about 10 hours that way.

And then once, I got into a car with some guy who thought I was the greatest thing in the world, and he wouldn't leave me alone. So all night long -- actually, for about a day and a half, he was trying to persuade me, I don't know, to go home with him or something. I just -- it got a little frightening after a while, and we didn't reach a station. I don't know. It was something like 12 hours between stations in one stop, and I just couldn't wait to get -- we came to that station, I got off and got on another car, and that was sort of the end of it. But the guy got very menacing and frightening. Somehow, nothing ever happened.

MR. CUMMINGS: But aren't these cars jammed full of people? Is there --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, mostly they are, except this one time, a lot of people just got off this car, and there I was left with this guy. And that was sort of it. So that was a little frightening, but that's about the only thing in terms of the traveling on trains that I ever had happen.

MR. CUMMINGS: How'd you like northern India? Because it's quite different than the south.

MS. REMINGTON: It's quite different. I liked it. I liked it quite a bit. It's more Persian in influence and so forth. That old -- things like Fatehpur Sikri, the old abandoned town, they're fascinating. Also, the -- at that certain period in India, 15, 16, 1700s, they were very interested in astronomy. And I still have beautifully built out of stone and inlaid with all kind -- the markings on these instruments are all inlaid with ivory and mother of pearl, and these are all outside.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, those great big outside --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes. Plus in many of the smaller castles or forts, really, many of the smaller forts and these are not English forts, but I mean the sheikhs and the rajahs and all that business, their forts, every fort had a little kind of tower for observation, very small, maybe six by six feet. But there the instruments were and for observation. Fascinating, I really liked it. I loved north India.

When I got to Delhi, I began to feel that old terrible sickness again and went to -- the American consulate is useless. They don't help you at all.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's the first thing you learn when you travel.

MS. REMINGTON: First thing you learn, yes. I mean, the German consul, the English, they're fine. They'll help you. So the German consul that I guess helped me, sent me to a -- I thought I had maybe dysentery again because I really felt terrible. So they sent me to a pathologist there, first a doctor who was an English who turned out to be very good. And he sent me to a pathologist. He said, "Look, this guy is very good, and he's the only one that can really diagnose maybe dysentery."

It's a little hard to discover. So I went to him. Well, this guy thought I was marvelous, and here I walked into his laboratory. And so while after he was -- after we had done all the tests and so forth and were doing the tests, he was showing me, well, see, that's an amoeba. That's an -- under the microscope. Well, that was kind of interesting. Meanwhile, he's starting to chase me around the laboratory, literally, and I feel terrible. I can hardly move, right? And this guy is making these amorous advances, just unbelievable.

Meanwhile, I go -- I finally get out of that. I go back to the doctor. The doctor says, "Well, it may have gotten to your liver. So we'll have to give you -- we don't want it to get to your liver so we'll have to give you arsenic."

Now, mind you, at this time in Delhi, they were having a heat wave, and it was 120 degrees outside. I mean, nobody was out. And that old thing about mad dogs and Englishmen really holds true. There I was taking arsenic and something else to kill the amoeba and running around in this heat because arsenic works on me, at least, like eating a handful of Benzedrine. And I lost 15 pounds. I was very thin. I was very browned by the sun and wandering around Delhi madly with wide open eyes out in this hot sun at noon, and nobody else in the streets. And there I am zooming around.

And then naturally, I ran into the pathologist again, Dr. Lahl [phonetic]. I'll never forget him. Dr. Lahl accosted me on the street again. Here I was with my arsenic, zooming around. So Dr. Lahl proposed that we go for a drive in the country, and I wanted to go see some old ruined fort. So he said he'd take me there, so he did. It was nice. Then he chased me around this old ruin. I was fortified with my arsenic. It was very easy this time to get --

MR. CUMMINGS: To [phonetic].

MS. REMINGTON: Yes. Anyway, so I went back to Delhi, and then I decided what I really wanted to do was go up to Nepal to try to recuperate. So I did my ticketless travel on the train up to the border town of Patna, which lies between India and Nepal. And in Patna, I was sitting in the train station having tea because there's no way to get into Katmandu unless you fly, and I really didn't have the money. So I was sitting there, and this huge German man with a beard and a backpack comes through the door and says -- I don't know. We talked. He spoke English. He was his way to Calcutta for supplies, and this man at this time was head of the Swiss technological advisory team to Nepal.



So I told him I wanted to get to Nepal. He said, "All right. If you go by oxcart across this river," and he laid out this whole thing. "And then go here and up here and try to get a ride. Our Land Rover is coming down from Katmandu for supplies, and that would be about halfway between Patna and Katmandu. So if you can get up there by day after tomorrow, you can get a ride back. Here's a letter," so on and so forth.

Mind you, I'd been on this train for something like three days, and I was just dead, dead tired. But I started -- I slept in the station that night on a wooden bench, and I got to be very good at that because I carried nothing with me. I carried a camera and a small like an airline bag, and that's what I traveled with.

So I slept in the station. The next morning, a foggy morning, I got up, and I -- here's where I really could have used some Hindi because trying to make yourself understood for the fact that here you are, an unlikely person, wanting to ride in an oxcart up to a certain point, they just couldn't believe that. I mean, that was just too far out.

But anyway, to make a long story short, I got the oxcart, and I went across the river. And this took ages. It's -- boy, travel in those ways was just impossible. So then I got a ride -- of course, we were riding on various and sundry other rides, really by oxcart through a day and a half. I traveled continuously. I finally got up to this place where the Land Rover was. I met them as they were leaving town. By the skin of my teeth, I met them, and they took me to Katmandu.

I supported myself in Katmandu by cooking for this Swiss technological advisory team. Now --

MR. CUMMINGS: That's marvelous.

MS. REMINGTON: -- for all these Germans and Swiss, right? They gave me a beautiful room. It was really nice because I could relax, and it was quite good except I had to cook. Now, in my -- I was supposed to be teaching the Nepali cook how to cook European food. Every day, they would bring you a big hunk of water buffalo meat, period. And the only thing I had was, let me think, was salt. I didn't know how to -- I didn't speak Nepalese. I didn't know how to get herbs. So I would go out every day looking for herbs and I found bay leaf and I found all kinds of stuff growing wild up there that I guess they don't -- they use other spices, but they didn't use some of the ones I wanted. They all grow there.

So I came back, and I would have to work with this water buffalo meat. I'd make water buffalo burgers and I'd -- all kinds of weird stuff.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's a great idea. Maybe run McDonald's --

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, run McDonald's out of there. I don't know. The stove I had to cook on was just this kind of iron plate with branches stuck in there. So bread, I'd have to bake on top of the stove, and you wanted it hotter, you pushed the branches in. You wanted it less, I'd pull them out. Oh, my Lord. Well, I did that for a while.

Then at this time, a Swiss German, really a German Swiss, more Germans than Swiss, mountain climbing team came by to go into Tibet and climb Gyala Peri, not Gyala Peri. I wanted to go because obviously, I couldn't get into Tibet any other way. So I thought, well, this is really great. I'll try to get on with them. Well, they didn't want any part of that. No woman and I couldn't climb and oh, forget it.

So I thought, well, that's true. Let's see if -- the way to a man is through his stomach. Boy, I cooked,

let me tell you, for two weeks like you wouldn't believe, feasts. So as the two weeks drew to a close, I kept saying, look, can't I get on? I'll cook. I'll carry my own pack and -- well, I don't know. There was this sort of discussion around it, but they finally agreed to take me into Tibet to walk to the bottom of the mountain and to walk out again. And that was all I just wanted to do anyway. I'd cook and this kind of thing.

So I did. I walked through Tibet, part of it Tibet, not a whole great deal but really into the mountains, into the really foothill kind of thing. There was no hard climbing or any of that, but it was good. And we stayed in villages, and I really got to see what -- pretty much what the Tibetan life was like and so on, an extremely interesting thing. I mean, we'd go -- and there's a taxation system in Tibet where -- which says that when travelers come to a town, the travelers, there are no inns or hotels. There is nothing like that. So the travelers have to be provided for and put up overnight on a rotating basis in private homes so that each party gets a different home each time.

The cattle live in the houses downstairs. Upstairs, the family lives. And we were always, of course, taken up there, and they couldn't believe -- we all had light hair, and, of course, they couldn't believe this. These people are beautiful people. They had never seen anything like this before, and they would touch our hair. I mean, they were simple, beautiful, naïve people. They thought the idea of toothpaste was extraordinary, and they would taste our toothpaste because they had never tasted anything like that, right? A comb and brush such as we had, these were all great oddities to these people. And, of course, their oddities, their things were the same to us.

And I remember one night sitting around this long table with -- all the family lived together, I mean, from the oldest down to the youngest. The son married; he'd bring his wife back. This is a huge family, and we couldn't speak to them. Anyway, we sat around, and we drank this awful, oh, God, stuff, very strong like local whiskey. We sat around and drank that, and it was very funny because after a couple of these, it's like a peace pipe. I mean, they fill the cup, and each person gets it. And then you pass it to the next person and that kind of thing.

Well, after a couple of rounds of this -- and the stuff tastes terrible. It's just like white lightning going down your throat.

MR. CUMMINGS: Boom.

MS. REMINGTON: Boom, take the top of your head right off. It's white. It's like, I guess, the rawest liquor.

MR. CUMMINGS: Alcohol.

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, very much. Oh, after a while, I began noticing that everybody was talking to everybody in his language. Like, I was speaking English to people who were speaking Tibetan to me. You'd hear German being spoken. You'd hear Swiss German and Tibetan being answered. Oh, all these great conversations going on. We all thought we were making absolute perfect sense and communicating, and we were sort of turning off a little bit and hearing all this language thing, realizing nobody is understanding anybody. But, boy, we were all talking to each other and had a great sense of communication there. It was just very convivial and jovial, and I don't know. It worked out very well, anyway.

So I went up to the bottom of Gyala Peri with them climbing, and I made my base. And I stayed in the base camp there, and they went up and climbed the mountain and didn't make it to the top. And there was an avalanche, and they all fell down. But nobody got killed, so it was all right. Then

they decided, well, we better get out of here. So we came -- walked out back to Katmandu.

And then I was going to go back to Europe with them. There was this -- somebody had decided to stay in India so there was a seat in the Land Rover which -- so anyway, from Katmandu back to India, I drove in the Land Rover, and that was really incredible because at one point, oh, we got caught in floods in the river. This was the town in the Ganges, the Ganges floods and everything.

Crossing the Ganges at one point, there are little boats that -- they look like very large canoes with pointed ends, and they have poles and paddles, and they pull up the river. And they get into the flood, the main flood stream, and they just come down the river with -- using that as kind of impetus. Then they try like hell to get out of the main stream and head over to the banks at the right moment so --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: -- you see. Well, this is precipitous at best. I mean, it's a little tenuous.

All right. So I get on this -- we sent the car -- the Land Rover went over first, and that made it. So the Land Rover was over on the other side of the -- with one of the German boys. And one German guy and I came over on the next boat. I mean, the boat then comes, they pull up the river, out of the stream. They get out. They get in the thing, and then they head for you. You hope they make it, you see. This is how you go back and forth.

So they picked us up, and there was a man with cows on there and a few other local people who wanted to go across the river. We get on this thing. We go up. We get into the stream, and we come down. There is old pontoon ridge, which is -- which had broke -- had broken apart in the flood. And part of it was still attached to the shore, the opposite shore, and part of it had spun around and kind of, I don't know, placed itself in the river in a very dangerous position. Well, just at that moment, our boat lost control, and we headed towards these big pontoons sideways.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, great.

MS. REMINGTON: Naturally, the boat hit the pontoons. We took on a lot of water. The cow fell overboard. The man went over after the cow. It's the last we saw of them. Mind you, this is in raving floodwaters, raging floodwaters. There was a lot of confusion, and stuff fell overboard and so on and so forth.

So finally with the boat in bad shape, listing and so on, they pushed us with the poles, got us disentangled from the pontoons. The boat spun around back into the main stream again, and sure enough, we head bright broadside for the next piece of the pontoon. Well, that did it. The pontoons hit, and we sank.

Well, I'm a good swimmer, but in that current, I don't know, it's whatever happened anyway. I remember going down three times, and it's true what they say. The third time, your whole life passes before your eyes, and I thought, what the hell am I doing in India? I could go home and paint. And that flashed through my head like a computer printed it. I want to go home and paint.

At that moment, this German guy I was with grabbed me. He had made it onto the bridge and somehow came out the other side, and he just grabbed me and lifted me from the jaws of death, believe it or not.

Well, imagine the state I was in, unbelievable, pretty shaken up. So he -- finally, I decided, well, I

really didn't think I was going to go all that through Parisian and blah, blah, to Europe. So I really thought I'd go back home via Japan.

Anyway, I got to the railroad station, and they couldn't get me a ticket on the train. This was the situation where you couldn't -- for some reason, I couldn't get into the train station so I couldn't do the ticketless travel. Well, all right. So I remember having to rely on my old feminine wiles, and I began to cry. Well, when you cry in India, it throws the Indians into just an absolute panic.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MS. REMINGTON: All they all want to do is get rid of you. They couldn't give me a ticket to get on that train fast enough. Here is the ticket, get on the train, goodbye, out of my life.

MR. CUMMINGS: Why do they --

MS. REMINGTON: It's very embarrassing for them. In other words, they think that you're just going to go to pieces right in your train station.

MR. CUMMINGS: And they'll lose face or something?

MS. REMINGTON: No, I don't think it's that. I think they start to feel very inadequate because their dharma, their social responsibility is being infringed upon. They're not going to make it too well in the next life if they don't take care of this. So they better do -- take care of the responsibility toward a fellow human being. It has something to do with that. It's very sensitive and very strange.

So anyway, I got on a train and was heading back to Calcutta, and I decided, well, what am I doing? I really want to go to Darjeeling. So I got on a train, and I got -- I did my ticketless travel number, and anyway, I finally went up to Darjeeling for, I don't know, a week or so. It was just beautiful. It's extremely beautiful.

I got back on the train and went all through the tea plantations. Anyway, I finally got back to Calcutta. And somewhere along the line, I had met a friend who worked for Thai Airways. So he said, "Look, if you can get from Calcutta to Rangoon, I think I can get you on a flight from Rangoon to Bangkok."

And that would save me time, et cetera, et cetera. So I said, "All right."

So I finally got from Calcutta to Rangoon, and it was in the middle of monsoon season. And I went to the airline office, and he said, "Okay. You're just going to have to wait here in the office. I don't know how long. You're just going to wait here, and I'll get you on a flight."

So I waited there about 12 hours, and sure enough, he said -- and this is about 9:00 at night. He said, "Look, I've got a little D-3 leaving for Bangkok."

I was thrilled. It's one of those things you walk up the end of the plane, right?

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, right, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: So I walked up, and I sat down. The seat broke. And I'm the world's worst flyer. I'm scared to death. That didn't go over too well. So I got up and got another seat. All right. Fine. Sitting by the window, a little round window, and people, passengers, get on, mostly Burmese, some Chinese. And some little old Chinese man who must have been -- he looked like he was petrified,

he was so old, and he had really turned to stone. This little old man sat down beside me. He had these long Fu Manchu whiskers and this whole -- he was really a beautiful person and scared to death, just the way I was, right?

So this plane takes off, and we're all merrily on our way to Bangkok except it wasn't very merry because the plane, the ride was so stormy and so bumpy that it -- we were just scared to death. This Chinese guy and I started to hold onto each other, believe it or not. I cut my head on the side of the plane because I was thrown into it. All of a sudden, the Burmese were counting their beads and chanting and going through this thing.

And all of a sudden, I looked out the window, and the wings were surrounded with this purple light. I thought I'm dead. I know I'm dead. I'm not alive anymore. This is what it's like. And all of a sudden -- and other people had begun to notice this, and it was just really frightening. Then I looked out in the aisle, and there was this blue fireball about -- how big is that in diameter?

MR. CUMMINGS: Eight or 10 inches.

MS. REMINGTON: Eight or 10 inches in diameter very slowly moving up and down the aisle. I mean, it seemed like it took an eternity. In fact, it probably took a few minutes. A lock on a small valise under a seat attracted it, and it went over. And it landed on this lock on the valise and melted it. But it dissipated.

All right. So we finally get to Bangkok, very, very shaken, and I found out later that the plane, in fact, had been hit by lightning and what that was was St. Elmo's fire, which is very, very common in Southeast Asia. But who knew?

So not only me, but can you imagine all these other very superstitious people on the plane watching this being --

MR. CUMMINGS: Fantastic.

MS. REMINGTON: -- banged on, boom, all of the sky with -- my head was bleeding and cut. I mean, everybody was hanging onto everybody. It didn't -- it just didn't matter who you were. I mean, you just hung onto somebody. Anyway, that was an incredible experience.

And from Bangkok, I then went back to Taiwan. Now, Taiwan, it so happened at this time to see the Chinese family I'd stayed with. It seems that at this time, they were bomb -- the Chinese in the mainland were bombing Quemoy and Matsu, if you remember that.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MS. REMINGTON: Well, all civilians were evacuated from Quemoy and Matsu. I mean, everybody that could leave was evacuated forcibly which means they came and got me and said, all right, you have to go to Tokyo. We're going to fly you to Tokyo on a British jetliner. Well, I thought that was just great, a British military jet, and it was free.

Because otherwise, I would have had to make my way back on these dumb boats I'd been traveling on with deck passage. See, I'd been traveling like -- it's very cheap, and at certain times of the year, it's very good, not during monsoon because, of course, it always rains. So your deck passage means you've got a little piece of the deck, and you are there. That's where you eat, sleep. That's where you spend your time.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's where you live, right.

MS. REMINGTON: That's where you live, and that's fine at certain times of the year but not during monsoon. So this was an answer to an prayer.

And off I went in this British military jet, and it's marvelous because they fed us beer all the way back and went by Fuji, Mount Fuji. And I got beautiful pictures of Fuji, and I don't know. It was really quite exciting. So I ended up back in Tokyo. I stayed there only long enough, a couple weeks. I got a ship, and I came back to America. And here I am.

So I landed in San Francisco where my mother was and decided, well, I then -- I wanted to start painting again. I really wanted to start working because I was just full of all this experience in this past four years. I had done nothing so --

MR. CUMMINGS: But how had you made a living during some of this time? I mean, besides the cooking for people and --

MS. REMINGTON: Well, that's just about it because remember, I had left Japan with the money I had made in Japan.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MS. REMINGTON: Now, that sustained me.

MR. CUMMINGS: I see.

MS. REMINGTON: Of course, I lived with families, and I didn't have to give them anything. In India, again, that's part of their social responsibility to take care of people. I mean, this is part of their religion. It's a very strong part of their religion.

So I was -- and then travel in India didn't cost me anything. So it would be wherever I stayed which was always someplace very -- really cheap, just 50 cents a night, that kind of thing, 25 cents a night plus your meals which again were very cheap at that time. So it really didn't cost me very much for that whole long time I was in India. I was very lucky. I had to set it up that way, or I couldn't have stayed, you see.

So all right. I come back to San Francisco. I have no job, I'm broke, and I have no place to live. So I went --

MR. CUMMINGS: And lots of photographs.

MS. REMINGTON: And lots of photographs and lots of experience. So I stayed with friends for a while until I found a place during which time I got a job teaching at the San Francisco Art Institute. That's the school where I graduated from, right?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: And they thought that was fine, and they let me teach. So I supported myself for a while doing that and got back into working. And when I got back into working, I started doing, oh, kind of pen-and-ink drawings. I think there's -- you saw one of them as you came in.

MR. CUMMINGS: Uh-huh.

MS. REMINGTON: Anyway, I was very interested and became more and more interested with isolating the image from the edge. I became really interested in, I suppose, portraits of shapes. This had always fascinated and interested me in art school, and I never -- I could never get it together.

Now, after all this study and all this stuff I'd seen in Asia, I was able to pull it together. I was able to -- it was able to congeal a little better. I was able to understand a little bit more what I wanted. I couldn't still do it technically because I was --

MR. CUMMINGS: Why do you think that was caused?

MS. REMINGTON: What do you mean?

MR. CUMMINGS: I mean by the traveling and things in the --

MS. REMINGTON: Well, I think part of the idea of isolating an image so that one could really see it, it's in putting it in a certain kind of space. I didn't yet -- I wasn't yet into what I'm -- into the way I work now. This was still all very gestural, still going into the abstract expressionist thing. But I was trying to isolate the image.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you think then this, what, three years that you were away and didn't work, that that was just a hiatus in your work?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: And you started with the -- very similar to what it was when you stopped.

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, I would say it, but many -- the strains picked up. That's why I had to go. I had to start somewhere. So I started a little bit with the way I worked before I left.

All right. So I started in with that and found it very interesting. It was very hard. Some -- it was really hit and miss because I was after something that I, in fact, myself didn't quite know what it was. I had spent such a long intense period studying calligraphy. Looking at those characters, each one as one tiny little picture, and I think maybe some of this had to do with my appreciation of the isolation of an image because, in fact, when you study these, each character has to be taken individually. Each character has to be studied and isolated --

MR. CUMMINGS: They [inaudible] --

MS. REMINGTON: -- and then it's put together and you see. After a while, it's, of course, all put together, and then you study everything together in one thing in relation to another. But nevertheless, there is the concept of uniqueness, of the uniqueness of this certain character, something that can be absolutely beautiful. I think, looking back on it -- I didn't figure this out at that time. But I think, looking back on it, a lot of that had to do with it.

I became very interested in drawing from nature but not representationally. I would go out, and in San Francisco near the ocean, the trees are all bent in a certain direction and the grasses and things from the wind and the constant of the battering of the wind against the coast. You have this -- all of these elements in nature that are all bent and gestural and very lending -- things in nature that lent themselves to linear interpretation, let's say. Now, I built up forms during this time with pen and ink, but it was -- the forms were always made up of many, many, many pen-and-ink strokes. In other words, these things were built, and I was working only in black and white.

MR. CUMMINGS: But were you looking at the landscape and using --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- the angles of the trees or the beach or the --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, right. The gesture, in other words, the actual physical gestures that these presented, but, of course, I would work very non-objectively. I didn't work representationally, nor was I interested in it.

So I did many of these drawings, and I'd go to the park and draw. I'd go anywhere and draw. And this went on for about three or four months, and then I started painting and began -- was very interested in strictly restricting my work to black and white and maybe three colors, four colors.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you choose those?

MS. REMINGTON: Reds, yellows and blues and then cobalt blue, cadmium, red light, cadmium red medium, maybe cadmium red dark, ultramarine blue, cadmium orange. These are basically colors I still use. So I painted for, oh, I don't know --

MR. CUMMINGS: Is that arbitrary or did you --

MS. REMINGTON: Well, I suppose picking these things was arbitrary. I simply wanted to reduce everything to a very simple -- color-wise to a very simple formula, in a way, so that I could really explore the form. The form is what I was interested in. How could I make this form work? How can I get the isolation? How can I get the space? These are the things I wanted to work with.

Color at that time seemed secondary. Color was an adjunct, simply icing on a cake. I was really interested in the cake because I knew that what I was after really had to do with that. Until I could work that out, until I could resolve it, a lot of color made no sense. It just got in the way.

So from those couple of years of working with black and white, I think I really learned about what color is. Black and white with grays, I mean, there's so many. There's just a world there that people -- most people don't use the whole range of grays, and then you get like a marvelous cobalt blue in here in a small amount or a marvelous orange in a small amount. You have, to me, what became a very exciting experience color-wise.

Much of my color evolved. My use of black and white and grays and limited color in the work, in some of the work, came out of that period of exploration, again, of trying to say, hey, let's reduce everything. Let's -- I wanted to find out what color was to me in a personal way.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, did you take the drawings that you were making outside and use them as a basis or painting or were the paintings --

MS. REMINGTON: In the beginning, yes, I did.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, you did?

MS. REMINGTON: I worked not from them exactly but --

MR. CUMMINGS: They provided the milieu of images and shapes.

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, yes.



MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MS. REMINGTON: I would start working that way, and, as I said, the paint was still very thick. The work was very gestural. I was still interested in the movement of form to be painted in a movement, the gestural thing I had been working with in the drawings went into the work. And I was working, oh, fairly large. I was not working -- none of the paintings were small. They were six, seven feet, which isn't that large, but, I mean, they were large enough. They were as large as I am. They were all vertical paintings.

MR. CUMMINGS: [Inaudible.]

MS. REMINGTON: Pardon?

MR. CUMMINGS: An easy reach but --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, but, I mean, on a scale, in other words, a big, human scale. I was not working smaller than myself, my human scale. I guess the smallest thing would have been four by six feet. And they were all a little bit larger than that. I was doing --

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you think that was because it was school and the time and -- or did you just feel comfortable with those sizes?

MS. REMINGTON: At that time, I felt comfortable with that size. I simply wanted to -- here again, I'm still thrashing out my -- the image thing and I felt I couldn't do it on a smaller scale. I had done some of the drawings on a smaller scale. Then I began to do drawings that were five by six feet. I mean, very large things, still black and white.

MR. CUMMINGS: But in the studio, not outside?

MS. REMINGTON: In the studio. Oh, no, in the studio.

MR. CUMMINGS: Were they related to the outside drawings or --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, they were still the pen and ink. Then I began to use white paint like white gouache which I mixed with glue because it had -- like Elmer's Glue because it had -- it wouldn't crack so easily, you see, because these -- I did them on paper, and then they would have to be mounted. When we began to mount these things, unless they were really put together well, the stuff --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, it would all fall off, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: -- would drag and fall off. And anyway, this glue and white paint business worked out. So I had three elements. I had, like, the white paper, the white glue, and the pen and ink business which I --

MR. CUMMINGS: What kind of pen -- you mean on the large thing, you used the pen?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, yes, and I used a Speedball pen, and I would hold the bottle of ink and constantly dip the pen in it because I could use pen points with wide strokes or thin strokes, that kind of thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, the lettering kind.

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, and a few -- the drips would get on there, and this was all part of it.

It was a really exciting time for me, that couple of years of trying to paint and work my way out of what I was -- visually what I wanted to get.

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you have a sense of what you were driving at, or was it only -- did it only become apparent as you worked and then you looked at what you'd done?

MS. REMINGTON: Both. I always had some kind of a sense of what I was driving it. I wouldn't -- and I wouldn't know whether I had realized or had been successful in what I was driving at until it happened. In other words, I would have to work through it. But I always had a sense of where I wanted to go, where and what I wanted to do.

Now, this is all apropos of how my work developed now because I guess some people think that, oh, overnight, I began to paint the way I paint now. This is not true. It took years.

MR. CUMMINGS: It never happens that way.

MS. REMINGTON: It never happens this way. It took years of working out what I had been doing and working into something that I had. It's like a light at the end of a hall. I knew there was something there. I knew I wanted to get there. I didn't quite know what it was. I didn't know how to get to it. I got to it step by step only by realizing, let's say, from working when I would get something in the work. I'd say, hey, that's what I want. Now, I'll take that, and I'll try to work toward --

MR. CUMMINGS: An element or shape or --

MS. REMINGTON: Right, certain things would happen with the space or with the shapes or so on and so forth. Oh, my goodness, I must have worked about four years before what I -- the way I paint today began to synthesize.

All right. During that time, let's see, I guess about 1960, the enrollment of the school dropped considerably, and so I was really the last person that was hired. I was the first one to be let go when the registration could not support -- there were several of us that were let go, but, I mean, the registration would not support.

MR. CUMMINGS: What did you teach?

MS. REMINGTON: I taught design and drawing. This was the first job.

MR. CUMMINGS: How'd you like teaching?

MS. REMINGTON: I loved it --

MR. CUMMINGS: What was it like teaching in the school you'd gone to, though? I mean, was it --

MS. REMINGTON: Well, you see, I'd been away now for some three years, and all of the student body had changed. There wasn't that much difference in age or -- from the kids that I taught, but I guess it was sufficient enough so that I had no problems. The kids loved me. I could relate to them because I was more their age. I knew what I was talking about. I had a way of delivering what I was talking about, and I found it to be a very beneficial experience.

MR. CUMMINGS: But there were people still teaching there that you'd studied with, weren't there?

MS. REMINGTON: Uh-huh.

MR. CUMMINGS: How'd you like --

MS. REMINGTON: That was fine. They didn't -- there was no problem there. They didn't resent me or anything else. It was just -- they were very happy that I could have that job.

Anyway, the job folded, and I had to make a living. So at that time, no one was hiring women. Now, here we get is really the first time in my life I had ever felt prejudice from institutions in terms of hiring women to teach. This was not done at that -- around that time.

Well, a little bit -- all right. So I began to -- I had to support myself so I started waiting tables. I became a waitress. Mind you, at this time, all my friends had cushy jobs in universities and were teaching and so on and so forth. And they would ask, hey, I know somebody who needs a job, and she's a good -- she, we don't hire women. A friend of mine did this at University California Berkeley and was told at three different faculty meetings that they simply did not hire women because back in 1939 they had had a woman on the staff and she had had an affair with one of the students, and that was the end. They would never hire a woman again.

Mind you, from then --

MR. CUMMINGS: I bet it doesn't work the other way around.

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, you know what happens in university with the male teachers and the female students. That's fine, you see, but women were just absolutely not hired, not even thought of being hired.

All right. So I was -- I waited tables for about a year and a half, and then I was hired -- I was asked to teach in the night school at the San Francisco Art Institute. So that was fine. I got back into teaching. It was certainly not enough to support myself, so I still waited tables. And somewhere along in there, somebody asked me -- somebody who was teaching at University of California at Davis asked me if I would like to come and teach drawing there. I couldn't believe it. I mean, who'd want to hire a woman?

MR. CUMMINGS: Who was that?

MS. REMINGTON: I can't even remember his name. Isn't that awful? This pioneer in women's right really, and I can't remember the man's name. Anyway, so I accepted a job at Davis. I was teaching at Davis. Now, this would have been about '62.

MR. CUMMINGS: '62, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: I was teaching at Davis, teaching at the Art Institute at night, and I still had a part-time waitress job because at about this time, I had stirrings of wanting to be very patient and quiet and bide my time to get out of San Francisco in about two or three years.

MR. CUMMINGS: Why was that, do you think?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, I'd have to go back and tell you that when I got back from the Far East, Jim Newman, who then had had opened the Dilexi Gallery in San Francisco, which was a marvelous gallery and it was very well-known. It was the best gallery in San Francisco. He told somebody he liked my work. He had seen it when I was -- before I went to the Far East. He liked my work, and he

wanted to get in touch with me about showing.

So anyway, to make a long story short, we got in touch with each, and I went with the gallery and began -- he represented me, began to show my work. I got good write-ups, good critical reviews and so on. The sales were meager. I mean, nobody in San Francisco sells paintings. They didn't then, and they don't now. I found this very frustrating because what I really wanted to do with my life is devote myself to a professional career in painting. I am a painter. I wanted to paint. I did not want to have to support myself being a teacher. I am a very good teacher, but I'm not first and foremost a teacher. I am first and foremost a painter.

And I looked around out there, and I -- there was nobody who wasn't teaching even --

MR. CUMMINGS: [Inaudible.]

MS. REMINGTON: -- at that whole California school. I mean, Diebenkorn teaches. He doesn't have to, but he does. He teaches anyway. Elmer Bischoff teaches. He's a marvelous teacher. He's one of my teachers, my ex, someone who taught me. Everybody, Frank Waddell teaches. There isn't one person out there who can make a living off of his art.

So I thought about this for a couple years, and I thought, well, this is not working. It doesn't make sense to me. What I wanted to do, I had decided at the time, was develop my work to a point where it was very peculiarly and particularly mine. And I thought, well, when I get that together and I really nail down this whole thing which I was after which I had started to do in 1962, by '62, the early -- the way I work now, the early stuff had started to really form. And I knew I had something, and I knew that this was what I wanted to do and the way I wanted the work to go.

That was really good, and I wanted to just lie low, work for a couple of years, very quietly because San Francisco lets you do that. San Francisco is a very good place to go and develop what you want to do because nobody is going to beat down the doors. Nobody is going to bother you. A few friends that you have, you can invite over and say, hey -- to get some feedback that way. You can show the work. Not much is ever going to happen. All right.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, what about the milieu around there? Who did you know when you came back and you set up your own shop and who were you seeing?

MS. REMINGTON: Who did I know? Well, my old friend Wally Hedrick, whom I had gone to school with. There had been Jay DeFeo, and Wally and Jay were very good friends of mine. And another painter, Joel Barletta, if you know Joel, he's still a very dear friend of mine. We were all -- let's see. Jay and Joel Barletta and I were in the Dilexi Gallery. I just -- I knew a whole -- almost -- it's a small town. One knows everybody. Let's put it that way.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah. What was it like being in that gallery because that was the only kind of official San Francisco gallery that people around the country knew about.

MS. REMINGTON: Right, right.

MR. CUMMINGS: Were you invited to other shows by having been there?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: People saw things that were --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: I mean, it did some purpose.

MS. REMINGTON: It did serve as a focal point, a place where people could go and get information about you. I had a show in San Francisco at the Dilexi in 1962.

I also had one, I guess, in 1961 at San Francisco State College, which I was astounded that San Francisco State College called up one day and said you would please have a show here. I think that was delightful. I said, "Well, goodness, yes."

Now, I showed the drawings that I had been working on, the pen-and-ink drawings and the paintings that relate to that. I had a show there.

And then in '62, I had my first show with the Dilexi in San Francisco. And that show was very successful in terms of reviews and the feedback I got, and let me think, maybe one -- there was a strange story. There were two paintings, I think, sold out of that. Now, Jim Newman, who ran the gallery, was a marvelous man. He was very dedicated and committed to his artists. Unfortunately, he was a terrible businessman. People would come in the gallery and want to -- I mean, you'd have to beat him over the head to buy a painting, literally.

Some woman walked in -- the reason I know this story is because she went to a friend of mine to ask him how she could buy a painting of mine. She walked in. The painting at that time was a very large painting. It was \$600. She wanted to -- she loved the painting. She got out her checkbook, and he said to her, "Now, don't you think you better think this over?" Jim Newman said to her, "Don't you think you better think this over? This is a big step for you."

And she said, "No. I know just where I'm going to put this painting."

Well, he wouldn't let her give him the check, and she was extremely frustrated. And, of course, I hit the ceiling when I heard this. She went to a mutual friend, and the mutual friend said, "Look, I'll buy the painting."

It turns out that he bought one for her and he bought one for himself. This is a man named Harry Hunt, who's been in and out of -- I mean, he's from San Francisco. He's been around San Francisco in and out of the art world for a long time and a man who liked my work, recognized my talent in the beginning, collected some. He wasn't a big collector, but he has a very nice collection.

This is what it was like being with the gallery. I mean, on the one hand, you certainly couldn't make a living from it, period. You could -- my reputation was very good, but I couldn't make a living.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, people don't buy art in San Francisco, do they?

MS. REMINGTON: People don't buy art and they --

MR. CUMMINGS: They go to the opera.

MS. REMINGTON: They go to New York. That's where they buy art.

MR. CUMMINGS: But I mean, there are not that many collectors there.

MS. REMINGTON: That's true, of modern painting and modern art so far. No, there are not, but

there's a little bit of activity.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, did -- were there any collectors who were involved with the artists the way they are, say, in New York or Los Angeles to some degree?

MS. REMINGTON: Not to really --

MR. CUMMINGS: There's no art world society is what I'm --

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, there is in a sense, but in that art world society thing, people -- so-called on the society level almost always have a foot in painting or sculpture. For instance, there's a very good artist there named Nell Sinton, and Nell Sinton has been around for years. She's a middle-aged woman and a marvelous artist. I mean, she is really good artist who probably will never be recognized for everything, for her real worth as an artist. She's a wealthy woman.

Here again, it touches into society. Now, Nell is a great supporter of the artist. I mean, she supported me morally. She bought a couple of drawings from me. She would always throw parties. I mean, really nice beautiful, elegant parties where she would invite her society friends and her artist friends. She was a marvelous woman who really, I think, through her, the door to any kind of the so-called society of San Francisco, those interested in art in some degree. And that was through Nell's social situations that the art world and the society world got together, and that's one. There were several others. But she was, in fact, involved very strongly in the art world as an artist herself.

[END OF REEL 3 SIDE A.]

MR. CUMMINGS: Side 6. It's about Dilexi and the sense that what did other artists in the area think of it, was it the gallery to be with? Was it an important place to have exhibited?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: Was there competition to get into the gallery?

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, I think so. I mean, the gallery was held in high esteem by other artists, by collectors, by everybody that knew about the art world. I mean, if you were with the Dilexi, you had made it to the top in San Francisco, period.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MS. REMINGTON: Absolutely, that was the gallery with the prestige, with -- he had a marvelous -- Jim Newman had a marvelous way of making this gallery a so-called class gallery. He had very catholic tastes, which I'm glad of. When he chose an artist or asked an artist to become a part of the stable, he did so with great conviction and great dedication to that artist. Even though, let's say, other artists in the gallery wouldn't care for that person's work or something, Jim would stand up for that person. He really had his taste and his eye.

He has a very good eye, very good taste. I mean, he would pick people usually because they were fairly individual. He had a gallery consisting of not of a school but of a lot of individuals who painted individually, and I think this is what made the gallery exciting. There were no manifestos. There was no kind of one kind of art in this gallery. There were just all kinds of art in this gallery.

He had a knack of what I consider picking the best people. I mean, he may have overlooked a few, of course, but he really did pick people with deep concerns about their own art who were very

serious people, very serious painters.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well --

MS. REMINGTON: Roy De Forest was in the gallery when I was in -- was with the gallery. Now, Roy's work and my work couldn't be farther apart.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's true. There's quite a difference.

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, quite a difference, but we both have a great deal of admiration for each other's work. We both like each other's work a lot.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, what happened to Newman after he closed the gallery? What'd he do?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, let's see. Now, when he had the gallery, he opened the gallery on -- down in the Marina. Let me try to think of the street -- Union Street, I guess. Is that right? Yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: Then it moved at one time, didn't it?

MS. REMINGTON: Then in 1965, he moved down to -- you're going to -- I think Clay Street, lower Clay Street in other words, down in the financial district. And he gave me the inaugural show of the gallery. In other words, I had the opening show of that gallery in 1965. This show was in the fall. Let's see. I guess it was late September, early October. Now, I put the show up on the wall and left for New York.

This is going a little quickly because we were back at somewhere about 1962, right?

MR. CUMMINGS: '62 or '3, right.

MS. REMINGTON: 1963, so before we get to this part, I'd like to cover that area.

MR. CUMMINGS: Uh-huh.

MS. REMINGTON: Anyway, I had a show in '62 with Dilexi, and in '63, I had a show with Dilexi in Los Angeles. Now, at that time, a man named Rolf Nelson, who you might know, had come out to San Francisco. Jim was looking -- Jim wanted to open a gallery branch in Los Angeles so he was interviewing people and so on. Well, Rolf Nelson showed up on the scene, and Jim hired him to handle the Los Angeles part of it.

So I had a show there in '63. Again, the reviews were good. I'm not even sure if I sold anything. It was just -- it was very strange. Now, that show in '63, that was the last show, I think, I had of the real what I consider the tail end of my abstract expressionist period. However, these paintings were -- they were very gestural paintings. The images had already begun to be pulled away from the edges. I had pretty much began to isolate these images away from the edges, not so much in space the way I do now. I hadn't begun to handle light the way I do now. These were still paintings with thick, heavy impasto, very gestural, very expressionistic but my kind of expressionism. It wasn't thrown paint or watery, running paint. Everything was put down with great determination. I knew where everything [inaudible].

And I'd work, work, work, work on these paintings till I got them around to where I wanted to do. I have never been -- well, let's see. I was going to say I have never been a person to do paintings quickly, but really, that should be amended to say in my mature years as a painter, beginning I would

consider when I got back from the Far East, I began to slow down in terms of my execution of paintings. I found that I wanted to work into them. I didn't want to simply accept two or three, four times working on the surface, working on the canvas because I wasn't getting the depth that I wanted.

Depth is another thing that I was very interested in. I was intrigued by. Something in the Far East I had learned was patience with building something. These people, especially from the Japanese, the whole Japanese/Chinese concept, really in India, too. These people were very patient. Their lives have gone for thousands and thousands of years.

You've got the same culture, and here, you look back at what you are. You're a product of some 300 years of America because we are really American. We are not European anymore. And you look back on such a short kind of situation where everything, boom, boom, a couple of wars, the Civil War, boom, all of a sudden, there's America. A few other things, the Industrial Revolution and all this -- this whole thing went down.

And there you are. You're a product. You're sort of belched out the other end of this 300 years, whereas in these other cultures I had been living in, there were -- there was a sense of an ongoing endless kind of thing that went on for --

MR. CUMMINGS: Did that appeal to you, that tradition and that --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- and --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, it did. I think it makes a lot more sense than this kind of --

MR. CUMMINGS: Tomorrow's another deadline, Harry.

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, well, I mean, I lived my life by deadlines, too, but it gives one a sense -- a little bit more of where one is placed in terms of history. I mean, I happen to be a history buff, but one realizes that one cannot exist without having other things happen before and after and so on and so forth. And you really are made more aware about your surroundings in the Far East. Hey, well, who are you, and what do you exist in? And let's take a look. Look at yourself.

This is one of the things I had gone over there to do, as I think said before, was to find out concrete ties to myself, who I was, what I wanted to do, what I wanted to go after in terms of my work really and in terms of myself.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, did you pick up things like Buddhism or Zen or the various philosophies?

MS. REMINGTON: I didn't pick that up in the sense of really following them. I didn't become a devotee of any of these things. I went through them as they would pertain to certain, let's say, certain ideas of sculpture, certain ideas of Zen philosophy, for instance, as it worked out in the art in certain periods in Japan. Yes, and I went into Zen, and I looked at it so I could understand the basis of why certain art appeared over in certain years and then it would fade out and so on and so forth.

But I never adopted any of the Far Eastern philosophies, per se, none of them. I went through them, I read them, I talked about them, I hope I assimilated their concepts, but I was not -- I didn't want to practice. This was not what I wanted to do. I did not want to practice Zen. I did not want to practice other forms of Buddhism, Hinduism and this -- that's not what I was about.



MR. CUMMINGS: Going back to the painting, one thing I wanted to ask you about was when you had an exhibition, did you paint things for the show, or were they drawn from work that you had already completed?

MS. REMINGTON: I think in that -- at that time, there were certainly drawn from works that had been completed, plus I would finish up a couple. I'd hurry up and try to get some more paintings done before the deadline.

I wasn't really involved in working or setting deadlines up for myself in order to create a certain structure within which to work the way I do now. I really have to set up shows in the future, or I must say, this past year, as of the fall, I will have had three years. It's too much. But I found I have to set up shows ahead of time in the future so I have a deadline so I can -- it kind of forces me to get in and work for that deadline.

I like the pressure. I like working under the pressure. It's -- many of my friends agree this is the way they work. Some people don't work that way. Some people have other ways of working, but many artists really like to work with that deadline.

MR. CUMMINGS: They like to know --

MS. REMINGTON: That's right.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- next November.

MS. REMINGTON: Because often, you say, well, there's no deadline. Why should I go in there today? Why should I paint? I'll go do something else. Whereas if you have a deadline, you say, well, come on, you better get -- you better straighten up. Get in there.

MR. CUMMINGS: [Inaudible.]

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, exactly. So anyway, in '63 at the Dilexi show in Los Angeles with Rolf Nelson at the helm, this was the last time I showed this more or less abstract expressionist paintings. And this was a strange time to do this in Los Angeles because pop art had come in and a certain -- I mean, the art, hard edge, so to speak, had come in.

So my paintings were, although the reviews and the reception -- the way the paintings were received was very good, they were -- it was an odd time in Los Angeles to do this. I had been working on some paintings. I had sort of worked my way out of these paintings that I was showing, and the new work, which I didn't show because it would have been very incompatible.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, were these older things still related to the drawings that you'd done from nature but with more gestural --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, it was much -- there were stronger, still -- a lot of them were still -- a lot of black and white, but I don't know, yellows and oranges. I still kept the colors down to -- I kind of at that time refined the colors. I really basically use a lot of the same colors today. The cobalt blue, Prussian blue, ultramarine blue, those are really the only three blues I use. 1960 to '3, I guess 10 years ago, '62, I was using those colors. A certain small range of reds, I like the pure colors, the cadmiums. I love alizarin crimson. Most people don't think that's a pure color. I guess I don't, either, but it's a very beautiful color. It's a very rich color.

I wanted to get, for instance, the maximum out of the minimum. So my palette is pretty limited. It

still is today, but what I'm about to get out of it is exactly the way I want to use color. It's a very personal way. I don't like all the browns that come in tubes. I don't like all the greens that comes in tubes. These, to me, for my use are very synthetic. This is not color for me that's pure, that's refined.

Now, this is the way I felt for 10 years. I may change my mind. I don't mean to imply I have a rigid, dogmatic approach to color. I do only as it will still serve my needs. If it ceases to serve my needs the way it exists, I will then change it.

MR. CUMMINGS: Have you developed a theory about your use of color, or are you interested in any of the traditional color theories?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, I don't know. I guess I haven't really gotten a theory. I mean, I don't know what theory I would apply except something having to do with the maximum, getting the maximum with the minimum of means. If that's a color theory, I don't know if it is or not.

MR. CUMMINGS: It sounds like [inaudible] theory. All red means this and blue means that and if it's dark, it means this.

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, Lord, no, I don't think I can really -- color theory or color interpretation in terms of meaning just doesn't apply for me. I mean, it may subconsciously, but consciously, I cannot sit down and say, well, red is this or -- I mean, I can visually. I could say, look, I have an area here that is intense and it burns. It's almost -- people look at my work, and they say, gee, that area is hot. It's on fire. However, that area might consist of an area graded from gray to white which then goes into some very small, very hot lines of light reds, dark reds, and then it will go into, let's say, a cobalt and a Prussian blue. So the main qualities of the color here are cool, yet people say it burns.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: I like using color in a very perverse way. I like using -- I like to make it do something it's not supposed to do. Where white and blue meet, how do you make that burn? You see, it can because it can evoke the idea of -- almost like dry ice which really is cold, but in a sense, it's hot. It burns. It steams. I like using color in this way.

I like taking -- well, form, color, anything I do with the work, I like to approach it in a very nonconventional way. A part of this whole thing when I came back from the Far East, part of the things I was working with were -- oh, in art school, you're told, well, don't put anything in the middle, and don't put the horizon line in the middle. And don't do this in the middle, and don't do that in the middle. And I attempted to do everything like that. I put everything I wanted smack in the middle. I would then attempt to make it look like it wasn't in the middle.

Don't divide the canvas down the middle. Well, I spent years dividing the canvas down the middle. The work now is not so divided vertically the way it was, oh, let's say from basically about '64 to '69 or '70, '64 to '69. The work was divided more vertically left to right, but, of course, I would never make anything balance. I mean, everything looked like it was in balance so that what you saw -- if you thought you saw something on the left, you would look over on the right and there was something there, but it was not the same thing. It was not a mirror image.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MS. REMINGTON: I like to play very subtle tricks with destroying the mirror image but making the painting balance. I like any kind of perversity. The way I use color, the way I use form, I try to -- I am,

I guess, very perverse, and this reflects itself in the work and how I project this. These things interest me greatly. I love to take something and break it. I mean, take something and present it but then destroy it.

MR. CUMMINGS: What do you mean "break it"?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, this is what I'm trying to get at. Present it so that when you first look at it, it hits you a certain way, but on second look, it's not at all what you thought it was the first time. And that's what I mean by breaking it. In other words, taking a certain appearance and presenting it, but somehow leading away from that particular image what is around the image visually, let's say, in the painting or around a certain image to make it -- to deal with it totally unexpected.

I express certain humor in this way in the paintings. Some people find my paintings extremely -- some of the paintings, not all of them -- some of the paintings extremely humorous. And when I look at some of the paintings, I have to agree. Some of them are terribly humorous because of this perverse element.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you see that afterwards or while they're happening?

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, I very often see it when I begin the drawing on the canvas of the painting. Something will happen that will amuse me, and I think, oh, boy, that's not supposed to be there. That's something right out of left field. I'm going to leave it, you see? Certain things creep in when I draw.

Now the paintings are really worked out very -- for a long time in the drawing. Back in the early '60s when I started, my work began to come in with the kind of imagery I have now. I didn't work from -- I didn't draw on the canvas first. I would just start in and then build the ideas. This involved repainting, and that was fine at that time because the surface -- I still was using thicker paint, and the surface was thicker and heavier impasto. Then I began to have trouble, though, with these gradations. I'd paint over something, and all of a sudden something would show through.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MS. REMINGTON: I began to get these ghosts which I didn't mind for a while because that showed that the surface was being manipulated and so on and so forth, a little bit more painterly. And then I began -- that ghost kind of thing began to annoy me because it began to drain or take away the emphasis of the imagery that I was trying to get across, and I was trying to get this across in a very strong way.

I began to realize that the way that I -- what I was coming up with, let's say, by '64, by '63 really, what I was coming up with and began to get going in late '63 was something very unique that I had never seen painting like this before. A lot of my favorite paint -- well, Vermeer is one of my favorite painters, and I at that time was looking at Vermeer very heavily. Bosch, another one of my favorite painters. I guess in a certain way some of the color and some of the way that Vermeer used light crept into my work.

Now, image-wise, I really have nobody whose paintings that I relate to image-wise, and where this imagery came from, I can't really say. I mean, it was -- in the beginning, it developed out of the need to isolate these images and refine them and refine them, and then hard-edged painting came in. And I began to see that what I wanted was something I could get a little bit better if I refined my surface, if I started to eliminate the heavy impasto paint in favor of a flatter surface in the sense of

not having the texture of the paint get in the way because this began to be very disturbing.

And I then began to realize that I had a certain concept of light in these gradations, in these areas that were graded that I wanted to develop and I wanted to use. The heavy impasto paint did not lend itself to this kind of thing. So I began to refine the surfaces and refine them more and more and more.

I had not shown the new work yet. In 1964, several of us were asked to be in, oh, a show at the San Francisco Museum. What they really did was gave each person a kind of room or half a room, so they were really one-man shows. I don't know, eight or 10 sculptors and painters, this kind of thing at the San Francisco Museum.

Now, this is the first time this work was shown. Mind you, all this time, I really felt I was out in left field. I didn't know -- a few of my friends look at it and were astounded. I mean, where did this come from? Where did you get it? Some -- most of them were very supportive. Most of them, however, were absolutely dumbfounded. They didn't understand what this painting was. They couldn't relate to it. Not only -- I mean, not especially that it had been done by me, it didn't have anything to do with it. It was just here was this work, and they'd never seen anything like it before. How can you relate to it?

So I showed it in 1964 at the San Francisco Museum. Well, I thought people were going to have heart attacks over this. I mean, I got phone calls in the middle of night from friends saying, well, I'm very upset. I saw your work, and I don't understand it. What do you think you're doing? Or I got calls from people saying, I don't understand what you're doing, but I'm really astounded by it. I mean, I guess I like it. I've never seen anything like it before.

People had just many different reactions. People who were interested in very -- in a person's being unique, let's say, in terms of painting. A friend of mine who was about to become, I guess, at that time the director of the San Francisco Art Institute, Fred Martin, who is a very individual painter, he liked my work because he saw that it was an extremely individual kind of stuff. Jim Newman liked it. Jim Newman loved my work. On the basis of this work is why he gave me the inaugural show of the new gallery.

I had many people supporting my work. They loved it, but how much support can you get in San Francisco? Here again, it goes back to I couldn't make my living doing this.

MR. CUMMINGS: You were really aware of that you were in a little cul-de-sac.

MS. REMINGTON: Very much. I guess by the time '64 rolled around and I was teaching at that time again at the day school in the Art Institute and I quit the waitress work and so on, I was really back into the mainstream of art, and I realized that, oh, I really -- I was really about at the top of where one could go in San Francisco professionally, and that means that you level off, you top out, and you get yourself a university job. And you settle into a comfortable chair for the rest of your life, and I didn't want to do this.

Now, in 19 -- let's see. I guess in '65, I was asked to teach a drawing class at San Francisco State College. Now here, again, they had never had a woman on the faculty, and this is long before women's lib came along. They asked me to teach because they liked my work. They had seen the drawings, liked the drawings that were more consistent with what I'm painting now.

In other words, the surfaces of the drawings had quieted down. I started using very soft graphite in

sticks and in pencil, shading the areas dark to light, using one orange crayon for a certain kind of emphasis in the drawings. And somebody --

MR. CUMMINGS: Why was it orange?

MS. REMINGTON: Pardon?

MR. CUMMINGS: Why was it orange? Because I noticed the orange --

MS. REMINGTON: Because I think I wanted something warm. I tried blue, and it didn't work. So to me, it had to be one or the other. Yellow was too close to the white of the paper. I wanted something that was --

MR. CUMMINGS: Did the images appear more formed in the drawings before the paintings? Do you know?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes. During '63, '64, I began to do a lot of paintings. I also had a drawing, a show of my drawings in '65, I guess, at the museum along with one or two other people. My drawings at that time were -- really portrayed the wellspring of my imagination in terms of the imagery. They were -- it was much easier for this to happen in the drawings, and in those days, I took much -- let's say, I would take a drawing, and I would take certain elements or certain things that interested me from the drawings. And I'd develop these into the paintings. The paintings really in those days were very tied to the drawings.

Nowadays, they are not at all. The drawings and the paintings are distinctly separate. I don't even draw much in my -- in a sketchbook or a drawing book anymore. I do all the work on the canvas directly right from scratch, all the drawing, everything. Everything is planned out and hashed out in the drawing before -- on the painting before I begin to paint.

Yeah, I guess the drawings would be a way that people began to get into my work. They were easier to get into more than the paintings probably because of the color. You're really dealing with -- you're eliminating most of the color. People can sometimes identify more easily --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, it's smaller, too.

MS. REMINGTON: And smaller, right.

MR. CUMMINGS: Sometimes people can --

MS. REMINGTON: People -- it's easier to understand drawings than it is paintings, and I think this is consistent throughout history. Although many people don't, let's say, collect drawings. They would prefer to collect paintings. Drawings are easier to understand. There are so many elements that have to be by definition eliminated, you see, and I guess it's more simple to deal with fewer elements to get to the heart of the matter.

And this is basically what drawing does. I'm not talking about drawing in the sense of small paintings which look like great big paintings but since they're done on paper with gouache are not considered drawings. This is not what I'm referring to, but I'm referring to really the traditional sense of grays, blacks, whites with a little bit of color, the traditional sense of drawing.

Where was I? All right. So I showed these paintings, and somehow I felt good about it. Although I think there were a number of prizes awarded at that point and they were all \$600 and I didn't get

one, naturally, even though I wanted to come to New York. Peter Selz was jurying that show, and I guess he didn't understand the work at all. He thought it was really strange work. However, last year, he bought a painting for his Burbank museum, so I guess he doesn't think my painting is that strange anymore. I guess he found out he likes my work very much now.

But that just shows you how people can come to your work and not understand it and reject it in a certain way, but you --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, it takes time, too. If he was --

MS. REMINGTON: It takes time.

MR. CUMMINGS: If he was such a specialist in one area, then it takes time to spread yourself around in a way, too.

MS. REMINGTON: Right. So, this is the kind of thing that happened.

All right. At that point, I began to really realize heavily that I -- oh, well, anyway, wait a minute. San Francisco State College offered me a job teaching for a semester teaching this drawing class, which I accepted, and I had a great time. And I did marvelous things with the students, and they liked it so much they offered me a permanent job, some assistant professor or something. And I said no, and they couldn't believe it. They said, look, you have no -- nothing else. Why -- you're silly. So they had a conference, so I understand, and came back. They sent another person to ask me, somebody more my age, right? Somebody with [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: And raised the money, how much they were going to pay me and so forth, and I said -- and I found myself actually saying this for the first time out loud to this person. I said, "Look, I do not have in mind for myself a comfortable chair in some university for the rest of my life."

And that, being able to say that out loud, I think was the point where I understood, look, I better get out of here. I really felt very secure in terms of my painting. This would have been late '64, '65, and I talked with my dear friend Joel Barletta who had come back to New York several times and couldn't make it and gave up and went back to San Francisco. He's happy out there. He likes that life. Didn't like the fast pace of New York and so on and so forth. He's a very fine painter. He would have just had to stick it out a little bit longer.

But I spoke with him. He gave me very good counsel. He was very helpful to me in making a decision to come back to New York. I made my decision, and I didn't tell anybody for a year. I simply wanted to work very hard to get the paintings together, to work enough jobs to get enough money. I realized I better come back to New York with a little bit of money because I had no job, no place to live and no reputation. Nobody knew my work back here.

But I realized that I had come to the top of where I could go professionally in San Francisco, and this is -- my decision was based on that.

MR. CUMMINGS: And it wasn't enough.

MS. REMINGTON: It wasn't enough. It absolutely wasn't enough. I had seen people try to carry on with the gallery in New York yet live in San Francisco. It never works.

MR. CUMMINGS: It doesn't work.

MS. REMINGTON: It never works. You have to live in New York, or you have to live someplace near New York at least. And I thought, well, that's frustrating. I had seen certain friends come and go in that situation, and that never works. So I thought, all right. You better get yourself together and try to get back to New York. Well, that's what I worked towards. So this brings us up to '65. I'm still teaching at the Art Institute, and I was to have my show in the fall with the Dilexi.

That -- early that summer, I wrote -- I knew two people in New York. I knew a guy I had gone to school with named Dick Brodney, who was a painter, lived on West Broadway, and I knew Sonia Gechtoff and Jim Kelly, who I had also known years ago in San Francisco. And they had come back to New York. And I wrote to both of them saying, look, if you know of any lofts available, let me know.

Well, Sonia and Jim at that time lived at 361 Canal Street, which is this very block on which I live. I got a letter back from Sonia saying, "We found a place. We want to sell our loft. It's \$500 for the key money."

And I had already seen the loft. I thought, well, that's fine. And the rent was \$65 a month. Well, I thought marvelous. At least I'll go back to New York, if I have nothing else, I can drive. I'll put my key in the door, and I have a home. This is great, a big problem solved.

So fine, all right. To make a long story short, I took the loft. Have the show in the fall of '65, and it went very well. By that time, the work was accepted and liked and several paintings sold, and that was good because it gave me money to come back. That helped the cause.

So late September, early October, I packed everything up, and I came back to New York. And I drove up to my loft and put the key in the door, and there I was. I had a home, and it was strange and wonderful and so on.

All right. Jim Newman had made a -- had come back here, I guess, in the spring to the Whitney Museum, and one thing he always did for his artists, he always tried to get us in the Whitney Annual and this kind of business. He had brought slides back, and they picked, I guess, of all the gallery artists that year, they picked Joel Barletta and me to be in the Whitney Annual. I think it opened December of '65.

MR. CUMMINGS: Sixty-five, yes.

MS. REMINGTON: Sixty-five, right. All right. I had gotten my loft. I had moved in and so forth, and I had kind of begun experiencing New York and looking around. And I don't know. It was -- the experience was very good. It was very positive. I felt I had made a very positive move. I was not frightened in any sense of the city. I mean, you must remember, I was born and raised most of my life in New Jersey.

So this was -- my friends in California couldn't understand how I could back and live in this life that they didn't understand that I had ever known because as a kid, I had gone to Philadelphia so much. The way of life, the attitudes, these are eastern attitudes. This is an eastern way of life. And this, thank heavens, is what I was brought up in, and I knew when I came back to New York that, by God, I was a confirmed easterner. These were my roots. This is what I understood.

MR. CUMMINGS: This is what you could --

MS. REMINGTON: These attitudes, this is what I felt comfortable with. I mean, even being shoved into the subway, somehow it was this honest. This body contact was honest. It wasn't get in your car and drive around endlessly in California where you never touch anybody and you never -- the streets, nobody walks on the streets. This is unreal to me. I came back here, and there was something. There was meat in this life, the way it was lived back here.

MR. CUMMINGS: It's all dissipated out there in that --

MS. REMINGTON: That's right.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- non-involvement.

MS. REMINGTON: It's like it's total non-involvement. I think this is what finally upset me about the West Coast. Although the period of years of my development out there, I think was very good because there was no pressure. One wasn't forced to do this, that and the other thing. One could be left alone to nurture and develop in one's very own individual way, and this is very important.

But I got back to New York and realized that, in fact, I was a New Yorker and I loved it. I ate it up. It was like so much food for me, and it still is. I haven't gotten over this love affair with New York City, and I'm in it. I'm committed to it. I love it.

All right. Now, we went to the Whitney, the opening of the Whitney Annual, and I didn't know anybody. It was a strange position for me to be in because when I would go to museum openings in San Francisco, I would know almost absolutely everybody there, hundreds of people. And I know it was a very strange thing going there. I went with a friend at that time who was my gentleman friend, a man named Richard Hurwitz [phonetic].

And we went to this opening, and I remember feeling absolutely isolated and totally alienated. I didn't know anybody there, not one person. I remember saying to myself, gee, I wonder in a few years if I go to these others, I wonder if it's going to be any better. Am I going to know any more people?

All right. So I came back to the loft, and I had begun painting then. I guess after I had gotten settled, I think I began painting again after a period of not painting for about three months. I began painting again in December, January. Now, in January, someone, strangely, from the West Coast, bought this painting that was in the annual.

And I got a call from somebody at the Whitney, one of the curators, and I can't remember what his name. It was [inaudible]. He said, "Well, somebody had bought this painting, and the Whitney wanted a painting of mine. And did I have any more?"

I said, "Yes, you come down. I'll show you three or four."

So he came down in the studio, and we talked. And he looked at the work, and he said, "All right. I'll send a truck for this two and we'll take them up and we'll decide which one we wanted."

Well, they decided on the bigger of the two paintings, which the Whitney owns now. They showed this in their spring show in the spring of '66, the new acquisitions show. Meanwhile, everything had been very quiet. I had not attempted to get a gallery. I had not attempted to do anything.

One funny thing did happen. A teacher of mine, Hassel Smith, at that time was with -- had had several shows with Emmerich and had -- I guess he was about to move to England. Anyway, he



wrote to Emmerich -- and this was, I suppose, in about January of '66 -- saying there's somebody whose work I'd like you to see. If she calls, will you have the courtesy to look at her slides, et cetera.

So I called, and he was very nice. And we made an appointment, and I went up. Well, he looked at these slides of my work, and he couldn't believe. He couldn't -- I guess the poor man could not understand it at all and kept -- went through all this thing very quickly. It was a miserable experience for me. I didn't like this business with the slides and having somebody look at it.

Then I became very impatient, and I said, "Well, thank you very much. Goodbye."

And as he walked me to the door, he said -- I guess he had second thoughts. He said, "Well, listen, if I ever change my image, I'll call you up."

I think that was the strangest thing to say to somebody. "If I ever change my image, I'll call you up."

I said, "Well, that's fine. Goodbye."

Well, that turned me off of any taking slides around or anything. So I was just very quiet. Now, when the -- for the next few months. One painting, the painting was shown in the new acquisitions show. My phone never stopped ringing. I had dealers all over town calling me up. Can I come down to look at your work? And I must have had 10 or 12 dealers trooping through the studio, and one day Klaus-- I got a call from Klaus Kertess who at that time was going to the Bykert in the fall of '66. And he was going around looking at paintings. He liked my painting.

He came down, and he and I hit it off immediately. I had not really hit it off -- I mean, I hit it off with the other dealers. That's not the word, but I really didn't find that I wanted to show in these galleries because, I don't know, there were certain problems. They wanted to pick the work, and I really wanted to pick the work. And I wanted to have certain say-so about what I showed.

Klaus came down, and we got along famously immediately. And he said, "When would you like a show?"

And I said, "Well, how about a year from now?"

And that was the spring of '67. Well, fine, all right. The gallery opened in the fall of '66, and that went on.

Now, I want to backtrack a little bit because I forgot to say something about meeting Darthea Speyer, who is my dealer in Paris. In 1964, a woman out on the West Coast named Paula Anglim, who does really -- she puts together projects, big, big projects, mostly dealing with sculpture, placing sculpture in new buildings. And she's kind of a liaison between architects and sculptors. And she does -- she works all over the world. I mean, she'll handle Picassos and all the way down to certain sculptors, local sculptors whom she -- whose work she happens to like.

Now, Paula Anglim is French Canadian and hangs around with lot of French people, right? So she knew Darthea. Darthea had come to the West Coast, I don't know, to visit or something, or she was just looking around. She had brought down -- she had been cultural attaché with the embassy, the American embassy, in Paris at that time for about 18 years, and they cut the funds down from something like \$100,000 a year to \$10,000. It was something you couldn't work with. You couldn't put shows on.

And she had done a lot of meaningful work in Europe, meaningful in the sense of through her many,

many American artists were beginning to be seen for the first time in Europe. Nobody else really was handling these people, and she would always show them in context with -- not always but I think for the most part --

MR. CUMMINGS: [Inaudible.]

MS. REMINGTON: -- context with European artists. All right. She came to San Francisco. My friend and Joel Barletta and I were invited over to meet her, and there were a lot of artists around. And she was making plans to see many people's work the next day. And she turned to me, and she said, "What do you do?"

I said, "Well, I paint."

And she said -- or somebody said, yes, you should look at Deborah's work. It's very interesting. And she said, "Well, I don't know if I'll have the time, but I will certainly try to come by at 10:00. I cannot guarantee it."

Well, sure enough, at 10:00, up pulls a cab and out pops Darthea the next day. She came upstairs and said, "I have exactly five minutes to stay. The cab is waiting for me."

And she came up, and I showed her paintings. Well, 45 minutes later, she was still there. She loved the work. She really at that point fell in love with the work and said, "Look, keep in touch. I'm really interested in your work. I do want to open a gallery in Paris, and anyway, let's just keep in touch."

And we did. All right. We're writing back and forth. I come to New York. We're still corresponding. 1967, I had my job. And she had -- I guess she came over about that time and bought a painting, a small painting, from the show.

The show did very well. He sold out my first show in New York rather easily. I mean, I was astounded after coming from the background of San Francisco, coming to New York and not being known. A lot of interest in my work and I was very pleased because all of a sudden, here was acceptance in New York City. And one had, as you could understand, great trepidations about the first show and being unknown.

This was fine. Darthea wanted to know -- well, we had -- she was going to open her gallery. I think she had finally found a place, and she wanted to know if I would be interested in coming to Europe to live. She could find me a cheap studio in Paris in '67, '68 because she wanted to show me at some point in Paris. And yeah, all right. I'll think about that.

Well, it turned out that I decided I would go to Europe and live for -- I had never been to Europe. This is what's so curious. I mean, people couldn't understand I'd never been to Europe. Of course, I couldn't understand they had never been all over the Far East. I mean, there are snobs, and there are snobs.

Anyway, let's see. That was rather funny.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, what was it like? I want to talk about the Bykert show for a second. I mean, here you were, you'd come to New York. You'd been in the Whitney. You were picked up by a brand-new gallery which everybody was interested in. You had a show which was a great success. And all the right things were happening one after another without, it seems, an enormous amount of energy expended on your part.

MS. REMINGTON: It was almost no energy. It's a fairy tale, I mean, the way everything happened for me in New York. I never -- except for that one experience with Emmerich, I never had the problem of taking my slides around to galleries and knocking on doors. I never had this kind of frustration. I mean, whatever success story, let's say, I have is really almost like a fairy story because here I sat in my loft on Canal Street totally unknown and the phone would ring. Oh, I'm so-and-so. Can I come look at your work? That part of it was really astounding. I have never gotten over that to this day.

I am living evidence of someone who has never had that awful, awful uphill struggle that you hear so much about, the story about how people come to New York.

MR. CUMMINGS: Anyway, now you did no teaching or anything. You were just really sitting in New York in your studio working with the phone ringing constantly.

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, with the phone ringing. That's about the way it went. I had met Dore Ashton on the West Coast in 1965, I guess, in the spring, and she had known my work. This woman has a great ability to ferret out work, I mean, in the provinces and everything. She had known my work, and she liked it very much. And she had written, I guess, a few things about it.

When I came back here, she was enormously helpful. She has always written what I consider very meaningful things about my work. I don't mean to say that they're good or bad, but they are -- more or less to emphasize that they have been extremely meaningful. This is a woman who understands the work. She can get into the work. She can see what it is. She can see the perversity in it. She can see the so-called, I don't know, magic in it. The inability of people to understand, she can cope with that. The it's this but it's not this, it's that. Well, it's not that, either, but it's -- she can cope with that, with not being able to necessarily have to have a slot to put it in in order to convey what it means.

She has done very responsible writing about my work, very responsible. Again, I emphasize I don't -- in her case, it's always -- it isn't the fact that it's good or bad, but she writes responsibly in trying to -- in these sense of the traditional critic who looks at work and tries to understand and convey what -- where it lies, where it -- the impact of the work, the meaning of the work, this kind of thing without putting value judgments on it of good and bad, which I think is absurd. This doesn't say anything about the work. She has done very responsible writing.

I want to backtrack a minute to bring a very -- not very good experience, a not very pleasant experience to mind, but something that was -- had very profound meaning for me. In 1966, right around New Year's, I became very ill and went to the hospital, and I was, oh, hemorrhaging and losing a lot of blood and so on and so forth. And it seems I had something called hyperplasia which is -- it's the beginning really of malignancy.

And at that time, I met a young doctor who was very, very committed to -- he still is, a very dedicated man who really saved my life. I was on the operating table for, I don't know, two or three hours, and my heart stopped. And this was really a frightening experience. The man's name was Gideon Panter. He really did save my life.

I came out of this experience, of course, being very weak and very ill, but nevertheless, I painted a painting right after that that the Indianapolis Museum owns. And it's a very strange painting because I look at it now, I realize that the central image could be -- relate very strongly to a coffin. And somewhere along the line when I found out, okay, that my heart stopped and they really had a hell of a time with me, hooked me up to some machine that pumped my heart for me, I wondered --

all this I found out afterward, and I didn't really -- I wasn't aware of this really consciously.

But after I had finished this painting -- this painting is a very frightening painting for me to look at. I mean, it's very austere, one of my more austere paintings. It's very strong. It's extremely intense, almost to the point that a lot of people don't want to look at it because it demands too much. It's a frightening thing, and that kind of coffin imagery, I realized had come --subconsciously had come out of this whole very meaningful experience. It was -- something went on for about three months.

It was during this time that I had painted this painting, and I found this very profound experience because it threw me back to a whole consideration of life and death. How there is no such thing as permanence or security. And I really understood that there was no such thing as security when you live in Far East and one day you see in the floods there was a village there, a thriving village the day before, and the next day, there's nothing. These people learn to live with security not in the sense of any, relating to anything western man knows. In other words, security in the sense of the house, the car, the bank account and so forth or the emotional context that we make through our lives to give us a certain kind of security.

It forced me very strongly to consider again what security is, that one really carries it within oneself and there is no -- it is false to rely on any outside the situation. And this related very strongly with my work because, oh, all during this time, I mean, I guess up until pretty recently and I suppose I still have these feelings again, you get kind of, what, unsure. Is this work I'm doing maybe is so far out that I'm -- am I really sure that -- where is this?

MR. CUMMINGS: Where is it going? Where am I going?

MS. REMINGTON: Where is it? Where am I going? What is this? What am I doing? I belong to no school of painting. No school of painting belongs to me. I mean, it's hard to be -- to go along and have the strength to propel yourself in a very singular -- in an activity you know is very singular. It doesn't really relate to much else.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, have you been able to explain the images to people if they look at you and they say, well, what's that painting about and what does that shape mean or why does this balance that side but not really or the top or the bottom or the colors? Have you been able to --

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, I mean, if somebody asks the right question, they'll get the right answer. And somebody asks the responsible question, they'll get responsible answers. I think I can talk about the work.

People see in the work certain biomorphic things, certain -- many people see sexual imagery in there. Many people see mechanical imagery, automobile hoods, polished automobile hoods or a certain --

MR. CUMMINGS: It's the light they're seeing, not the hood necessarily.

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, exactly. It's my use of light. I use -- I like to use light and dark. I like to use shaded areas with flat areas. It's that whole thing of trying to balance the unbalanceable, of trying to work very perverse elements together and make them work. People still get the sense of looking at my paintings and saying, hey, you can't do that. What are you doing that for? You can't do that. And yet I've done it. I think I can do it to reconcile diverse elements in my work.

MR. CUMMINGS: What kind of things do people say you can't do that you've done? How can you -

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MS. REMINGTON: Oh, sometimes, sometimes the imagery really upsets people. In my recent Washington show which was just last May at the Pyramid Gallery, for instance, a woman came up to me with tears in her eyes. And now, this is a very -- like a middle-aged, middle class woman. She -- for -- I don't know what she did. I never found out her name or anything else, but she looked like she was somebody's dental assistant, right? This is how she appeared physically. She came up to me with tears in her eyes and said, "I've just had a very meaningful experience looking at your work. I'm scared to death of it. I don't know what it is, but it's really moved me a lot. I don't say that I like it or dislike it. I feel right now very frightened by it, but it has moved me more than any work I have probably ever seen in my life."

Mind you, she still has the tears in her eyes, and she said, "It's hard for me to talk about it, but I'm going to come back tomorrow."

Now, this is -- the reason I bring up this experience is that I've had this happen a lot in many different phases. People have been extremely upset by my work. It's -- some people don't like it, and some people get that upset about it. They just [makes inhaling sound]. It offends them, but it upsets them. It's not just I find this work offensive. That's not it. It goes right in there and right into -- as far into somebody as you can go. And really the experience they get from it, they find extremely upsetting, emotionally upsetting.

MR. CUMMINGS: Have any of them ever been able to explain that to you? Do they tell you what it is about --

MS. REMINGTON: Most of them cannot explain it. I think it's because it relates to something very personal in them that they can't really bring out, you see?

MR. CUMMINGS: Or don't want to or --

MS. REMINGTON: Mostly, yes, some people say, well, the imagery is too strong. It -- really, it's there. There's no way to get away from it. There's no place for it to go. It is stated very strongly, very surely. Sometimes the imagery itself upsets them, and this is where I say it gets into the personal area. Some paintings more than others will upset people. Generally, however, my work doesn't upset people, let's say, more toward the negative thing like that.

Of course, I don't consider those experiences negative. I mean, if somebody is that upset -- and usually, these people even if they don't like the work, they really understand that they are upset because of something very real and very meaningful. Most people don't get upset in the sense that they don't like it. They get -- they have a very productive kind of experience where they will like the work. I mean, it has meaning to them. It's hard for people to say exactly how it has meaning for them except that it has been a very deep emotional experience. It's just as hard for people to say that as it is for critics to write about it.

MR. CUMMINGS: It's there you are, and people don't like to be displayed.

MS. REMINGTON: That's right, exactly.

MR. CUMMINGS: It's very difficult, being seen.

MS. REMINGTON: That's right. Okay. So in 1967 in the summer, I went back to the hospital in June to have another operation. The checkup and everything was all right. Yes, everything was all right.

So off I went to Europe to live, and Darthea had found me a studio in the cite internationale des art which is a new building built by the French government, very -- right across from the Ile Saint-Louis to -- the French government built this is an attempt to bring art back to Paris. In other words, a new building which provided studio space for artists from all over the world, not only visual artists, but there were writers in there. There were musicians in there.

MR. CUMMINGS: The West Bath idea.

MS. REMINGTON: The West Bath idea, probably one of the original West Bath ideas. And you could rent a studio in there and living quarters and everything else for \$75 a month. For winter, everyone had heat that worked. For a Paris apartment, that's unbelievable. In the summer, it had air conditioning which didn't work, but so what? It had a brand-new bathroom, a brand-new kitchen which was literally about two feet by two feet wide. It was impossible to get around in. A couple of army cots which served as beds and a few chairs and tables and it was perfectly adequate.

And beautiful, the studio I had had a beautiful view of the Ile Saint-Louis, the Seine, Notre Dame, the whole thing, and I thought this was just great. I didn't especially, however, care for Paris or the Parisians. This is not my kind of city. It's not my kind of town. It's not my kind of people.

MR. CUMMINGS: What --

MS. REMINGTON: However -- well, I felt that Paris was terribly precious. I didn't -- I never bought the mystique of the wonderful, the wonderful French. I mean, they're rude as hell. Not to foreigners, but to themselves. If you watch these people go about their daily routines, they're just terribly rude to each other. I didn't want to live with all that.

And I found them very unsocial. The French never invite you home. They always meet you in cafés. I mean, that's all right up to a point, but the -- what kind of an experience can you have with somebody, for instance, if it's always conducted in a café? I mean, you never - there's a barrier in the relationship of friendship. There's just a barrier.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, always in France.

MS. REMINGTON: You know? Which I found curious.

MR. CUMMINGS: Formality and all that.

MS. REMINGTON: The Japanese are very formal, but the first -- I mean, they're even more formal than the French, but the first thing they'll do is invite you home. Even to the most humble rooms, a student will invite you to the room, and a really, poor humble thing, a student will invite you there and give you tea. You see? It's a whole different concept.

Well, this wasn't exactly the kind of thing I loved, but so I stayed in my studio and I painted. Again, I began to have the inaugural show of Darthea's gallery which opened in, I think, it was around May 8 of 1968.

MR. CUMMINGS: Sixty-eight, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: And so I had a year of working ahead of me. I also wanted to use Paris as a base from which to travel around and see Europe. So the summer I got there, Richard Hurwitz, who I had mentioned before, had come to Paris to stay with Mademoiselle Boulanger, who was a musician, a trumpet player and composer.

And we decided we'd take a trip up to -- oh, as far as Norwegian Lapland which was absolutely, astoundingly beautiful, and we drove all the way up through Denmark and way up to Norwegian Lapland where there was no night. The sun never sets. I found this to be astounding. Back through Sweden. Anyway, back to Paris, my year was filled with trips like this.

I loved Holland. That fall, they had a big -- this is the fall of '67 or the spring of '68. It's hard for me to remember, but there was a big Bosch show in 's-Hertogenbosch, which is Bosch's hometown in Holland. And I went up for that, and that was a very, very moving experience for me because Bosch -- they had gathered everything from the Prada, a lot of stuff from Russia, things from all over the world, drawings, paintings. It was one of the most moving experiences I've ever had in terms of seeing somebody else's work. It absolutely knocked me out. They had drawings there, actual pieces of paper with 400 different ways to draw a nose on there or --

MR. CUMMINGS: Fantastic, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: -- things like have never been reproduced really in books or anything. They did a beautiful catalog on that show. And I happen to love Holland, and my background is kind of half Dutch. And I really got into the Dutch thing. I just loved Holland.

I loved anything but Paris. I even loved the outskirts in France. It was really nice. The country French are different. They're much more to my liking.

Are we okay?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, we have 10 minutes.

MS. REMINGTON: Okay. So I spent the time at least late '67 and early '68 up until the time of my show painting but really working hard and not having too much contact with the French. And a few Americans were living in the cite and that was --

MR. CUMMINGS: Were there any good experiences you had with the French in Paris, or you just couldn't --

MS. REMINGTON: I would say not in Paris. I mean, I --

MR. CUMMINGS: Didn't work [inaudible].

MS. REMINGTON: It didn't too well for me. I remember Darthea -- this is a very funny story. Darthea gave a very fancy party for me to introduce me to the art world in Paris, and she invited all these fancy museum people. This one, I should know that one and this critic and blah, blah, blah. And they would say to me, well, madame, how do you like Paris? And I would say things, terrible things like, well, I don't like Paris. The light is awful. I have to shut the curtains and set up electric lights to paint in because the light changes all the time. It's true. The clouds, and then there are no clouds, it used to drive me up the wall.

So I'd tell them, I think it's an awfully gray northern city. It's really not my kind of town. And Darthea finally midway through the party had to come over to me and say, "Listen, can't you keep your mouth shut? These people, you're supposed to be making a good impression on these people, not telling them how horrible Paris is and how much you hate their city and everything else."

So dear Darthea told me to keep my mouth shut, and so I did that. I mean, she did it in a nice way. It was very funny. I mean, she couldn't believe that actually I was telling these people all these --

MR. CUMMINGS: Absolutely what they didn't want to hear.

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, no. I said -- I trained to explain to her. "Well, then don't have them ask me these questions because I'm not going to lie to them."

But then I had to calm it down a little bit. Well, that worked out.

No, I really didn't have any good experiences with any of them. I -- that's not my thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: Anything -- what about Americans who were there? Did you meet many of those because there were people around.

MS. REMINGTON: A few, there were a few people around in the cite. A couple of people wanted to study with me, a girl who's still a very good friend of mine, Dorothy Black, I met her there for the first time. She became a student of mine, and I taught her drawing, painting, et cetera. She came back here and went to school and is really working hard at painting now. I feel very good about that because when I met her, she was only 19 years old, 18 or 19 years old, and didn't really have much direction at the time but had an awful lot of talent. And I really -- I felt good that I was able to bring it out and show it to her in the sense of, see, you really have a lot of talent.

That was very good, and there were a couple of other people there that -- a couple of people in the music areas that I became friends with, but I made except for Dorothy no lasting friendships with Americans over there. I really was interested in working, and I liked to walk around Paris. I thought that was interesting, and some of the stuff was quite beautiful. But I didn't really care to talk to anybody.

And all right. Anyway, so around the time of my show, the student riots were happening in the French Quarter, and it got really very bad in Paris. So I left and went to England for a while and went all over England, drove all over England and Wales. I really loved that. That was another side of me because the other side of me is English and Welsh and that kind of stuff. So that was again like visiting the homeland from whence I had come thousands of years ago and all that baloney.

And I love ruins, so, of course, I did Brittany, and then went over to England and Stonehenge and all this stuff. And that was very marvelous for me. I got to see all that for the first time, and some of the museums. I loved England. That was fun.

I came back to Paris and prepared to pack up and drive through Italy. There was no gas to be had in Paris so -- nor even outside of Paris. So I thought, well, if I go east towards Switzerland, then I'd find gas, and I surely did. Maybe 50, 60, 100 miles out of Paris even though there was this riot going on, really, these people had no idea what was really going on.

And so I packed up and left Paris. A couple days before I left, naturally with no gas and no transportation, I had to get -- I wanted to go to the gallery again. Where I was living on the Right Bank, I could walk. It was about a 20-, 25-minute walk to the Left Bank to the gallery. Being very careful not to get near crowds so I'd get tear-gassed and so on, I was walking down a side street all deserted when my eyes started to water and I started to smell the smell of apples. Because a lot of the student riots were going on right near the cite and I knew that smell of tear gas, and I got tear-gassed. Somebody had rolled a canister down the street.

MR. CUMMINGS: There you were.

MS. REMINGTON: And oh, boy, it's one of the worst experiences in the world. I mean, your



membranes in your nose and throat and your eyes water, and it's so painful. It's just terrible. So I'll never forget that experience. Dear old Paris. My near next to last day of getting out of the place, and I get tear-gassed. Oh, boy. But -- how are we doing with --

[END OF REEL 3 SIDE A.]

MR. CUMMINGS: So this is Side 7. It's the 3 of July, 1973, Paul Cummings talking to Deborah Remington.

Why don't we start with some description of your -- of the opening at the gallery --

MS. REMINGTON: Okay.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- in Paris and what happened and who was there and what marvelous things did you say to the French.

MS. REMINGTON: The opening, I think it was --

MR. CUMMINGS: Did she ever give you a reason why she wanted to open with you?

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, not really. I mean, we discussed -- that didn't seem like [inaudible] she tell me why she wanted to open with me. It did come up in December of 19 --

MR. CUMMINGS: Sixty-seven.

MS. REMINGTON: -- '67 when we had a long talk in a café down the street from the gallery, and I told her that I really didn't care for Paris and I wanted to go home. And she said at that point that she was considering opening the gallery with my show. I said, "Fine. Then you better get that figured out. If you want to open the gallery with my show, I'll stay here. Otherwise, I want to go back to the U.S., and I'll just send the paintings."

So she thought about that, I suppose, for a couple of weeks, and it ended she had been thinking about this for quite some time and discussing this with people who she felt she could get wise and good counsel from, including her brother Jimmy with whom -- upon whose judgment she relies greatly.

After a couple of weeks, she came to me and said, "I have decided definitely to open the gallery with your show."

And that's when she said to me that some people had told her that she was nuts not only to even with an unknown American but an unknown American woman. That did not seem to bother her. I assume -- I never asked her this. But I assume that she was completely dedicated to the idea of my work. I mean, I know she likes my work very much. I suppose dealers have favorites in the gallery. I mean, they have commitments to artists for -- because they like their work, but I would assume that they would like some work just a little better than other work.

And I think that she -- although, as I said, this was never clarified. I think that she really liked my work in a very deep way and felt very committed to try to do something with it and me in Europe. I think that would clarify it. She wanted to present me in a big way even though I was astonishingly unknown at that moment and try to build me. Darthea is a builder. She takes someone and will stick by you year after year after year and build, build, build. This, I think, is the right way to do it, of course. You don't get somebody unknown and if their first show or second show doesn't do well

just say, well, goodbye.

I mean, she believes in people's work enough to stick by them, to try to build you into something. And it's worked with me. She's done a lot in terms of exposing my work.

MR. CUMMINGS: You've had how many shows with her?

MS. REMINGTON: Let's see. I had a show in '68, then in the fall of '71, and now I will have one again opening September 26 of 1973, this fall. This will be my third show.

MR. CUMMINGS: Has she always had paintings in a gallery between shows and --

MS. REMINGTON: Unfortunately, rarely, because she sold the first show out. I think it took her about a year to sell the first show out. She sold everything in the first show. That was '68. Now, she didn't get any more work from me -- I think she got two -- a couple of small paintings, but she really didn't get another body of work from me until the fall of 1971 when I had the second show with her.

Now, that show sold out in about six, seven months, she had sold everything. And she has only one painting. She had only one painting from, let's say, mid-'72 until the winter of '73 when I sent a small painting over with a friend. So she has not had many paintings in between, and there's a demand for them. I mean, I have other galleries, and I can't produce that much to have her supplied with a full supply. So she'll get the next batch of work. It will be sent off in August. That will be eight paintings, three very large, three small and three medium and a couple of drawings, some charcoal drawings.

I hope -- but probably the same thing will happen, I hope, since there's a boom in France now, and I'm much well-known. I hope the same thing happens. She'll sell the show out in X number of months, and then unfortunately, there's -- she runs out. I'm going to try to -- she complains bitterly, but there isn't anything I can do about it because I always have another show scheduled.

You see, after the '71 show, I had a New York show scheduled for '72. And that's where all the work went, and then a spring show in '73 in Washington. So I have to produce the work for these shows. It's very hard. I produce with help, with studio assistance. At least half to three-quarters of the year, I produce between 12 and 15 paintings, but this can range between eight-by-eight feet down to 18-by-20 inches.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really, that few?

MS. REMINGTON: That few. The paintings, I have to paint everything twice in order to get the luminosity. Can I sidetrack and discuss how I work for a minute?

When I -- most recently, I have not been working from drawings. I simply approach the canvas maybe with an idea. Let's say I have something I want to do with a central image, a certain shape I want to use. Oh, let's say it's a circle that's intersected -- not an absolute circle, but I mean a roughly drawn circle that's intersected maybe by a bar. I'm sitting here looking at a painting that looks like that.

Well, I'll place that with the drawing. I'll draw it on the canvas, and I'll place that. And that will -- I'll place it in a way that's off center and adjust it to the kind of space I want. Then I don't know where it comes from. Somewhere along the line, I start seeing shapes around it, and I draw those in. I spend a lot of time with the drawing, adjusting the drawing to where I want, how I want it [inaudible]

trying to develop the painting in the drawing, a lot of it in the drawing because

I can work out a lot of the problems of the painting in the drawing because they're not painting problems. They're essentially drawing problems. If I don't get what I want, I--

MR. CUMMINGS: The shapes and planes --

MS. REMINGTON: The shapes, the planes, the forms, how things work, how things relate, balance, imbalance, I want to throw something off here and balance it by putting something in over there. There's constant changing and moving. I can spend as much as a part of every day for maybe three weeks on putting a drawing on a canvas and with the infinite adjustments, and I sort of build from that very sparse beginning in terms of the line drawing. I draw with pencil and a charcoal pencil.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you see those -- do you see, like, the canvas there with the drawing on it, do you see that in terms of color at this point?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: You do?

MS. REMINGTON: As I put the drawing on, certain things reveal themselves to me, and I say, well, I want to maybe make this central image, oh, a deep, dark red, a very voluptuous satiny, deep, velvety red. And you grade that up to a very, let's say, a deep alizarin crimson and maybe grade that up to a very hot cadmium red medium. And certain grays around that and the top will develop into something else and the bottom and the background. But the color does -- the forms and shapes as I put them down do suggest to me then how I want to approach this color-wise, very definitely.

MR. CUMMINGS: But the whole image develops, what, from the central form or the central idea?

MS. REMINGTON: Sometimes, I took that idea of a central form. Now, sometimes I'll stretch a canvas and sit in front of this pure white structure, and I won't get any image from the center. All of a sudden, my eye will see something in the top -- let's say at the top, and I'll go up and I'll draw. I don't know where it comes from. It's almost like something in my eye projects an image which only I can see onto this white canvas, and I will get up and draw that. It's a very quick thing. I will draw that, and then maybe that will suggest something else.

Very often, I'll go in -- then I'll say if that's the top I see, then I'll start maybe working down into the center. Sometimes I have a lot of problems solving the bottom or if I -- I go through periods where the top and the center, let's say, will be easy. They'll just come very easily. And the bottom and the sides and certain other things will take a long time to adjust and to happen or to appear. And I sometimes have to work very long and hard on certain areas.

MR. CUMMINGS: I've noticed that most of your canvases are almost square. Sometimes they're vertical ones.

MS. REMINGTON: They're a little bit more vertical than horizontal. I have not painted horizontal paintings in at least 15 years. I think it's because I'm a vertical person. I'm very -- I think this has something to do with how I relate to the space. Living in New York City is a very vertical city. Everything -- at least I can only speak for myself. Everything I sense or see or relate to is pretty vertical. You don't have a sense of flat broad distance.

MR. CUMMINGS: Great horizon line.

MS. REMINGTON: Right. I mean, where is the horizon line? If I go up on a roof, I might be able to look over to Jersey and see something [inaudible] horizon line. Otherwise, everything is intersected with vertical feeling, and I think this has a lot to do with it. Plus being six feet tall, I think -- I don't know. It has something to do with my tall feeling. Up and down, vertical appeals to me more than side to side. I don't know why. I mean, if I want to make a wide painting, it will be as wide as it tall, maybe two or three inches taller than it is wide. I simply relate to space that way.

MR. CUMMINGS: There are very diagonals really except for little --

MS. REMINGTON: What do you mean?

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, there's not a strong --

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, yes, there have -- I have done -- diagonally, I have done -- oh, since 1971, I've always wanted to do a painting with a great big triangle in the middle of it which, of course, would be -- two sides would certainly be diagonal. And I was never able to pull this off because it's very hard to place -- it was very hard for me to place a triangle in such a way that I could work around it and work with it.

Then in 1971 before I had a show with this gallery in Boston, that sort of [inaudible] Parker Street, when I had a show with Obelisk in the winter of '71, I stretched up a almost an eight-by-eight foot canvas and was staring at it. And somebody went up to it and drew a very -- a rectangle -- sorry -- a triangle on it a little bit off center, a little bit askew, and it worked. It worked immediately. I didn't have to redo the placement of this. This worked into a very -- what I think is a very nice big painting which is now owned by the Addison Gallery of the American Art in Andover, MA.

After that, I did two more small, very small 18 to 20 inch paintings which had triangles, and that's all. I mean, I've been able to pull off three of them, and I will do it again. I'm fascinated with the triangle, how it sits. It's very challenging.

MR. CUMMINGS: How it divides the canvas up into all the different shapes.

MS. REMINGTON: Very difficult to do something with.

MR. CUMMINGS: But where -- at what point do you start putting in color? The design, the layout, the form is pretty well defined.

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, when it's pretty well defined, I start putting color in.

MR. CUMMINGS: [Inaudible] much change is out till you start painting after the drawing?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes. When I start painting, I put in large areas first. In other words, I don't put in the lines right away. I put in the large areas because I pretty much have that figured out of, well, I want this one to go from dark to light and the two sides to go from dark to light in a certain way. So it's to produce -- whenever thing gets joined together, it produces a certain feeling.

Now, I'll use lines, and sometimes I use them strictly as lines. They are perceived very linearly as well there's a line, and other times, I use them -- and most of the time, I suppose, I use them on edges of shapes to expand or buffer certain shapes color-wise, in between shape to shape. Very often, they amplify shapes, edges to make them hot or cold or come out or recede. I really can do an awful lot

of adjustment.

MR. CUMMINGS: I sometimes get the feeling that they're almost fissure to light --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, yes, the lines are really intended to be used as an adjunct to a form in terms of light, in terms of molding. I sometimes can take a very flat form and make it look rounded or lit from a certain way or molded, bring part of it forward, push part of it back. I love this kind of thing. It never ceases to interest me, to take space and color in that space and mold it and -- it's almost in a way to fool the eye because you look at it and you see something, and then if you look again, well, that isn't really what you see. You're seeing something else.

Those things are usually put in after I get some of the larger shapes in because then I can begin to mold and adjust and plan and move. That is where a lot of the change comes in. Sometimes I will change a large gradation. Let's say if I graded it from dark on the bottom to light on the top, I sometimes will turn it around if it doesn't work and grade it dark on the top and light on the -- I don't like to do this because I try to avoid doing this. That's why I go slowly and plan it all out because it does something to the surface that I don't like, and secondly, I mean, in terms of the buildup of the surface, it does something there.

And in the color even though I try to get it off, the color that eventually goes over the top is never quite as brilliant. I don't think anybody would notice it but me, but it's never quite as brilliant as it would be had it simply been put over the second coat, put over a light coat underneath.

MR. CUMMINGS: Does it change -- do the images change a great deal as the painting proceeds from what the original drawing was underneath it?

MS. REMINGTON: No, the images don't change essentially from the drawing. They change in terms of when I add color, then I add dimension, and this light and this play of light and dark, then the images change because they move forward or backward or they change spatially. They don't really change their forms too much. That's where I do most of the adjustment in the drawing.

I never used to do it that way. I used to simply start out and start painting, and then I realized -- and I did this up until, oh, as late as 1965, 1966, and I realized that the surface that I was dealing with was being hampered really by all these painting adjustments because there were always ghosts underneath --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, right.

MS. REMINGTON: A flat area would always have ghosts in it which I grew to dislike. I didn't mind in the beginning because I was still laboring under the delusion that, well, the surface has to look worked. And that became nonsense when -- it didn't hold water when I began to develop the paintings. The surface became very important as the paintings themselves developed in many respects, I mean, in many areas.

I finally wanted to eliminate that look of having the surface agonized over and ghosts appearing which would interfere with the image that I finally ended up with. And therefore, I started making more and more of the adjustments in the drawings before I got to the paintings.

Now, color-wise and paint-wise, I do make adjustments, but it's mostly with the lines and the color of -- do I want a hot color here? Do I want a cold color there? Do I want to pull this forward, push this back? How do I want to bend it spatially? I can do an awful lot with the lines that I add? And I change those very often. I put them in and they're too strong or they're too small. I have to beef

them up. I have to make them wider. Sometimes a line is too strong, and I have to go and make it smaller. Very final adjustments like that are very critical in my work.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, the paintings, going back to the surface, really, they developed a rather smooth, even surface. I mean, you [inaudible] massive brushstrokes and things.

MS. REMINGTON: Now, in the beginning when I started working this way 10 years ago, I was still working out of the abstract expressionist thing with the thicker paint and the textures and the whole thing. Now, which I love, I love thick, gooey paint. I'm the first person to say I love it.

But for what I was doing with the imagery, it simply got in the way, and you were looking at a painting which had thick texture --

MR. CUMMINGS: The image was lost in the paint, though.

MS. REMINGTON: The image was lost in the paint, exactly. Now, did I want that or -- paint, to me, is a means to get something across. If what I want to get across is dependent on a certain kind of strong, thick pigment, then fine. But I felt little by little that what I wanted was not dependent on the thick paint. It was, in fact, the antithesis of where my painting led me, and in a way, it really led me. I didn't sit down and make decisions of, well, I have to do this and I have to do that.

MR. CUMMINGS: What do you mean, it led you, in what way?

MS. REMINGTON: Because the more I would paint just physically, I would work some of the -- everything you do is always worked out in the work. Some of it can be decided beforehand, but then when you're working in the work actually doing it, putting the paint on the canvas, a lot of the problems with the work, not only that particular painting but a whole consistency of painting from the last painting to 10 paintings from now -- well, you work through certain things.

When I was doing that, it simply became harder and harder to accept and to keep the thick pigment. It got in my way. I simply began eliminating, eliminating, eliminating. Now, to get the richness that I get with the form in the paintings, this is one reason why it takes so long and why I turn out only between 12 and 15 paintings a year which I personally think is enough. It's certainly enough for one or two shows, well, two shows, I suppose. I paint everything twice. In other words, once I get the painting completely -- the surface completely covered and all the adjustments made, like this line here and that line here and this one is thinner and that one is thicker and pull this out and push that back, all the gradations are in, everything is done.

I then go back and do it all over again. In other words, each painting is painted twice. The surface is gone over twice. That's how I get the richness because that's -- the pigment is built up not by one thick coat but by two thin coats, you see? I attempt to get the same richness in pigment, although the surface is quiet in paint texture. It is not the paint, although it looks thin. It is not, in fact, that thin because there are two coats on everything.

And if you were to look at one of the paintings -- for instance, that small painting, the dark painting down there, it has only one coat all over it. Right now, it doesn't sing. It isn't alive. It isn't up to that finite point where it really begins --

MR. CUMMINGS: Balance, really.

MS. REMINGTON: -- to balance, to be alive, to be vibrant and pulsating. There's a certain kind of life that isn't in there yet and has not been breathed into the painting at this point by me. Part of it

is physical, and I have to do another coat over the whole thing.

I think this explains two things, why it takes so long to do the work, and secondly, why I get a particular kind of glow I get from the surface. People don't realize that it is -- everything is, in fact, painted twice.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, what -- these are oil paintings, right?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes. I don't work in acrylic because I don't -- for two reasons. Acrylic won't stay wet long enough for me to physically work with in the gradations. I have to have that paint stay wet so I can maneuver it, and I do not use an airbrush. A lot of people think I use an airbrush, but, in fact, I don't. What I do is all by hand and all with the brush.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you use a blending brush or --

MS. REMINGTON: No, I just -- I use bristle brushes, fairly stiff bristle brushes because I can maneuver the pigment around. I do all the gradation on the canvas. In other words, I do not mix colors except right on the canvas. I don't mix colors on a palette. I work out of tuna cans. I have all my friends and all my friends' friends saving tuna cans for me, and if anybody has a cat, boy, they're really in for it --

MR. CUMMINGS: Because you will ask them.

MS. REMINGTON: I'm constantly after tuna cans. Now, I have worked this way since the early '50s. I think I mentioned before a friend of mine I met in art school, a man named Dick Brodney, who longer paints. But nevertheless, one of the things that he showed me was that --

MR. CUMMINGS: What does he do now?

MS. REMINGTON: What does he do? He used to work for Bill Krauss years ago, and then I think left over something he thought was not moral --

MR. CUMMINGS: Design or something.

MS. REMINGTON: -- or something, yeah. I don't know. But anyway, he now, I hear, is living out in New Jersey somewhere. He's disappeared from the world.

But anyway, he showed me that, look, you can take tuna cans, and you can mix up paint in here. In other words, if -- and it's especially helpful for me now. I still use this method. I can take the can. I mix -- I squirt the tube of -- squirt whatever color paint I want, and I mix it with a medium, a third [inaudible], a third stand oil and a third or actually more of turpentine. And I use just the standard medium for the first coat, and the second coat, I use the standard medium plus tiny, tiny bit of drier which makes the surface a little bit harder. I think it's all right to use the, in fact, the paint is thin. It's evenly applied. It's allowed to dry under natural circumstances, and as I say, the drier -- the amount of the drier in the paint is very small, but I think it helps the durability of the surface rather than hinder it. I don't use enough so it's going to crack.

All right. I put the color with the medium into the tuna can, and I can work, let's say, with two colors if I'm grading an area from gray, a very dark gray, up to white. Then I work out of two cans, a can of black and a can of white. I begin that area by taking with the brush, sticking the brush in the black, smearing it on the area and sticking the brush in the white and smearing that on the area and making -- mooshing it around right on the canvas until I get the proper amount of gray, the color I

want.

All right. That's fine. From there, I start working. I work up, a little bit. I put black on and a little bit more white, and then I blend the two colors together. In other words, the lighter married with the darker like I had originally put on and so on and so forth up to the white. It sounds difficult, but I have done it for so many years that I am good at it. I am really, really good at it.

MR. CUMMINGS: You know how much you need where.

MS. REMINGTON: I know exactly how much I need where and how, and I'm getting better at it. I mean, you do this for 10 years, and you get damn good at it. Your eye gets good. The creations get better.

But my facility to work this way -- and I -- last year, I explored using airbrushes and thought of using an airbrush or a spray gun. Now, by the time, I cut the templates and masked out areas and mixed up the paint and sprayed it on, sure, it's going to take me five minutes to cover an area that takes me two hours to paint. But by the time I get the spray gun set up and I clean it and I --

MR. CUMMINGS: That actually takes more time --

MS. REMINGTON: -- I've cut the template and put such-and-such on. I've turned the fan on, and I've pulled all the curtains around me, my spray booth. I mean, I may as well just forget it and do what I do which is very good because it's a good exercise anyway. I've got my arm going. It's very good exercise. So that's -- I decided not to use the spray gun for that reason plus the fact that I don't like the way it looks, and the surface is much colder. I really want it --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, it sits on the surface rather than going into --

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, going into it.

MR. CUMMINGS: It [inaudible] seems to.

MS. REMINGTON: Right. Well, I felt, well, I could do more paintings, and I really looked into it. I went around and talked to artists in the neighborhood who used spray guns, and everybody was very helpful. And one of them said to me, "Look, you don't know what you're getting into. What you do by hand, you do very well. How long does it take you to                   such-and-such?"

And I would tell him, and he'd say, "Fine, now let's sit down and figure out how long it's going to take you to do this, this, this and this."

I'd come out just about the same.

MR. CUMMINGS: [Inaudible] control.

MS. REMINGTON: The control wasn't there, exactly. So I figured, well, all right. I'm satisfied. My mind's at ease. I'm not wasting time doing it my way, and I'm just doing it my way.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, have you ever thought of where and how the images have developed over the years from the --

MS. REMINGTON: I've been asked that question so many times. Where does your imagery come from? That's the first question everybody asks me. I once was asked that by, I don't know,



somebody. I thought it was just the worst question in the world. It was some dealer, and so I turned and said to the dealer and said, "I get -- my imagery all comes out of *Scientific American*."

And believe it or not, that answer was accepted with mouth open and eyes wide. Oh, that's the answer to it.

My imagery comes, I think, over a long, long period of years, all, everything, my travels to the Far East, every life experience one has seems to go into wherever it is. I don't know. I think of myself really as a great IBM machine of some sort, a great computer, because all the stuff just gets fed in. And what happens in there, I don't know, but I think it's where the -- how the image -- how all this experience is transformed into the imagery, has something to do with some way of conditioning it goes through, the process it goes through in my mind, somewhere in my mind.

Going back to what we were discussing, the late '50s, early '60s, I said I was very concerned for many years of trying to pull the imagery away from the surface.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, from the edge.

MS. REMINGTON: And I was doing this back in -- actually in the mid-'50s before I went to the Far East, but it wasn't something that I really cared that much. It's something that fascinated me and interested me, the ground, the space that I could make an image work in. Then I came back, and I really started to push this more and more.

Then when the painting, as I worked now, really got off the ground in about '63, '62, '63. The images became completely isolated from the surface. There's one reason where there's a certain dictate, something dictated in terms of the images what happens when you isolate something. You don't have the opportunity to thrust something out toward the edge and out where it can be carried on. In certain paintings, the life of the painting carries on outside of the actual --

MR. CUMMINGS: Frame, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: -- the frame, exactly. Now, when you deny that, when you say all right, you're going to have the whole life and the whole world of the painting within the frame, strictly contained, but you're going to try to expand it in another way, expand it spatially, expand it up or back, backward and forward rather than sideways, although I think some of mine do expand sideways. And maybe they did go out of the edge. I don't know.

This necessarily dictates a certain kind of form or at least it began to. Working with planes, working -- my recent work, I've reassembled from the late '60s and I began to get into the ovals in the middle and the circles and triangles and squares. And I don't know, whatever that is. What would that be like?

MR. CUMMINGS: What, the cup shape?

MS. REMINGTON: The cup shape.

MR. CUMMINGS: [Inaudible.]

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, and I began to get into these things. I don't know. I can't explain where my imagery comes from. I mean, everything I see fascinates me. It simply goes into my brain and somehow comes out into something that when I'm drawing, I see something that fascinates or pleases me, and I say, okay, that's going to stay. A lot of the imagery has to do with -- it's a little

perverse. It's a little, what -- it's everything. It's everything I am.

MR. CUMMINGS: But I noticed one thing in some of the earlier paintings from, I guess, the '50 where those thickly painted, flat, there are similar forms and shapes apparent in those in the sort of rough outlines where even though it's done with bigger brushes and all that more material or something, it's sort of as if these shapes and forms are underneath those in a developing way. Does that make sense?

MS. REMINGTON: Right. Yes, that's what I think I tried to say in the '60 and the mid-'50s and '60s. Yeah, I kept trying to refine this and cull out of all of this thick paint and slap here and this --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, because very often they had [inaudible] and there was a base around --

MS. REMINGTON: Exactly. I kept trying to refine this, and, of course, it took a number of years. This stuff doesn't happen overnight. It really did take, oh, easily 10 years of sometimes consciously trying, sometimes not consciously trying, but it was always there.

MR. CUMMINGS: What do you do when you consciously try? I mean, how do you -- do you say I don't like that anymore or this bothers me and what can I do about it, or is it really worked out in the actual mechanics of it?

MS. REMINGTON: I think both. It would have to be. I mean, something -- even now when I say I'll try something, oh, with a triangle with a circle or something, and that's really consciously trying to make a painting. I've always wanted to make a painting where a triangle would work, and I never could do it. And this one time, I hit it off and I --

MR. CUMMINGS: It worked, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: At that time, it was the size because this is almost an eight-by-eight foot square painting. The size was right. I could explore the space. I mean, it was -- the space was large [inaudible], and it was a physical thing, among other things. I could work with it. The triangle was large. I mean, like four-by-four-by-four feet kind of thing. It was something that you could, if you wanted to, make one and pick it up. And it's -- it was big enough I could identify with it physically.

And then the other two that I did of the triangle were 18-by-20 inch paintings. They were very small, but I could work. I have tried on several occasions again in the drawing of canvas to do something with the triangle, and I haven't been able to pull it off. So I've actually been to do only three. Why, I don't know, but I've hit it off.

MR. CUMMINGS: Next month, you never know.

MS. REMINGTON: Sometimes with some of those -- every time I do a triangle and it comes off, it -- the drawing is very easy. I'll put the triangle down, and then the whole drawing of the painting is almost set in one session. It'll come out very easily, whereas some of the other paintings I do which I consider very successful will take weeks to get the drawing adjusted, but not so with the triangles.

MR. CUMMINGS: People have asserted that your paintings are surreal in any way [inaudible].

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, some critics have said all kinds of things about the paintings, that they're surreal. But I -- it doesn't make any sense because they don't relate in any way and in a surreal way to some kind of known imagery. This imagery is, in fact, non-objective. It is totally non-object.

It does not relate.

MR. CUMMINGS: But it has the spirit of surrealism rather than the literary images [inaudible].

MS. REMINGTON: It has the spirit, right. Yes, people say, well, it relates somewhere to the surrealism, and that's fine. I don't think imagery-wise, but probably they mean spatially or in the fact that some of the forms are light from mysterious places. And there's a lot of contradiction in the work where light sources come from many ways and you can't pin something down, and then you just -- when you think you have something set, you look at in another area, and something will completely obliterate it or make you decide that, well, what you saw over there wasn't really what you thought you saw. It's something else.

MR. CUMMINGS: One thing that really has interested me in the paintings since I first saw them, I guess, in the mid-'60s is that the images always in a sense was the size of the painting. It's not an image in the back of your head that fits in the space of the triangle in the sense of a form like Ad Reinhardt's are right there. Does that make sense to you? It doesn't make sense to you.

MS. REMINGTON: I don't quite understand that. You mean the image is right there?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, it's the full size of the -- it's not back in space. It's not forward.

MS. REMINGTON: Some of them are. If you look at that one over there which is not -- the one on the top which is not even finished, that's much more back. Can you see the pencil at the bottom?

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MS. REMINGTON: That's much more back and up to the left. The space around that is not as even as, let's say, the other three.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, but it depends what color those around it.

MS. REMINGTON: No, I think you're trying to get at something which I as yet don't understand. I mean, I --

MR. CUMMINGS: Okay. I was [inaudible]. All of which has gotten us a long way from [inaudible].

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, dear me. Back in Paris, on May 6, I think it was, of 1968, of the first day of the big student riots, Darthea opened her gallery at 6 Rue Jacques-Tetreault. It's a very small street on the Left Bank, and Darthea, of course, was giving a very, very fancy champagne party with the most beautiful champagne at the opening, by the way. I mean, really good champagne. I think she invited everybody in Paris, and I think everybody in Paris came.

And what is really strange about it is that when I say the first day of the student riots, it was a very dangerous day. People were crossing student lines. People were crossing police lines, and people were getting hurt all over Paris this day to come to the opening, which I thought was great.

The opening took place in the late afternoon, and I went. And, of course, I didn't know absolutely anybody. I mean, I knew three or four of my old -- about five or six of my American friends and Darthea would introduce me to people. It wouldn't mean anything. I'm alone. That was it. So I sort of spent the opening standing in the back with people, with my -- some of my American friends, and this was about it. Darthea was the center of attraction, which was just fine, and she's spoke with

everybody, greeted everyone and was kind of the grand dame. And people would -- I saw her several times pointing to me. Well, there is -- obviously, there she is.

And I -- some man walked over to me and said, well, he was absolutely surprised that I was the artist. I mean, I got a lot of that. Like, oh, you're a woman. And then somebody said to [inaudible]. "I thought you were Algerian because that's what your photograph looks like."

I mean, I just got [inaudible] far out comments. I mean, they didn't know what to say about this painting. They'd never seen anything like this. And some guy leaned against a painting. I was rushing over, trying to get him away from the painting, and he didn't really realize I was the artist. And go away, little girl, don't bother me. I'm going to lean against this painting. I mean, that's how I spent the opening. It was really sort of dumb.

And at one point, Darthea introduced me to Bernard Buffet, who came in. He sort of stood in a corner with his group, and then I was in another corner with my group.

Everybody was drinking champagne. It was delightful. I guess it was a very good opening.

There was a marvelous visual thing that happened. When we left, it was late afternoon in Paris. And we -- Darthea was giving a dinner party for me at her place that night, and she and I and a few of my friends and her friends were the last to leave the gallery. And all the people were out. As we walked out the door, on both sides of this very small street, which runs, in fact, only one block long, there were automobiles parked on both sides. And on top of all the automobiles -- and I'm not kidding you. All the automobiles for one block on the side of the street where the gallery is, every car had a collection of champagne glasses on top of it. And the sun was kind of setting. The whole street was golden and lit by this marvelous light, and as you walked down the street, the light would go through these champagne glasses. And it looked like the cars had sprouted some kind of icicle things that were catching and refracting and reflecting light.

MR. CUMMINGS: Little crystal mushrooms, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: Strange, yeah, strange mushrooms, I don't know.

MR. CUMMINGS: Fantastic.

MS. REMINGTON: It was very -- it was really incredible. It made an impact on me visually to see this because it was -- that was surreal because you couldn't really determine that these were, in fact, champagne glasses. They were clear, crystal, some kind of clear crystal shapes that were transformed by the light of the day and the setting sun and the golden. Everything was very yellow and golden. It was quite beautiful. So off we trotted, leaving the champagne glasses on top of the cars for posterity. And --

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you meet many artists there besides Buffet or --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, other artists came by. I didn't know a lot of these people. It didn't register, and I stood there feeling very foreign. But it's very strange to be a foreigner at your own opening. I mean, they're really here -- I guess they really all came because of Darthea and the gallery. They didn't know who I was.

Now, it's different. I mean, they go to the -- I have not gone to any of the openings -- well, the opening of the '71 show, nor will I be going to the opening of this show this fall. So I don't know. I assume now they would come to see the work, according to what Darthea says. There's a great

interest in the work. The people come to see that. Maybe they still come to see her.

I felt very -- that was a very -- the opening was a very surreal thing for me because I felt completely not a part of it. It was not my scene. It was not my people. I didn't want to talk to these people in French or English or anything else. I tried to go through it and bear it happily and smile, but it was a little difficult because I just didn't relate to anybody or anything. It was very foreign. I felt like a Martian dropped in the middle of something that I had no understanding of what was going on and no relation to this thing at all. And people were kind of looking at the paintings like, wow, this is right out of left field here. What is this?

The French liked my work. For some reason, my work appeals to the French mentality or interpretation of art. I don't know why, but somehow it does. The Italians like my work. And when I say like my work, they like my work. They're fascinated with it. They're fascinated by it. The French and Italians are absolutely fascinated.

The Dutch are fascinated, and I think that explains -- I mean, you could see how my work would relate to something the Dutch would like. I think that follows. That seems logical and normal. The Germans don't seem to relate to my work at all on the other hand. They say it reminds me of them some German. I don't know, some guy they say has the same kind of surface as I do, but the imagery is very different.

MR. CUMMINGS: Don't know who that is?

MS. REMINGTON: But the Germans don't particularly relate to my work. The rest of the Europeans do, the Belgians, the Dutch, the Italians. The Swiss love my work.

MR. CUMMINGS: How do you like being represented in European collections and the fact that you are not all limited to America?

MS. REMINGTON: I like it because for one thing -- I better preface this. I'm very concerned about where my work goes, what collections my work goes into because I only do 12 to 15 paintings a year. I want to know that these are in collections where they will not be buried away, where the paintings will be cared for and really appreciated. First of all, I think museums are the greatest things because they really take care of the work and the work is shown. It's not hidden away somewhere.

Now, in Europe with Darthea, she has always gotten me into the best collections, and the French are starting to buy my work now, which I think is very curious because the French usually don't buy contemporary American artists, especially somebody who -- I'm not -- I don't have a superstar reputation.

MR. CUMMINGS: You have [inaudible] for 20 years.

MS. REMINGTON: Exactly. But the French are starting to buy my work, and the good collections. The Swiss buy my work, the Belgians, the Dutch. All are very good collections. I'm very pleased with that. Darthea's -- she's very careful. She's very concerned. She really -- she takes this concern of mine to heart. She doesn't say, well, it doesn't matter where it goes. All that matters is to sell the work. That's not what she does because that's not really what I want. She has placed everything in very good collections or very good museum in Europe.

Sometimes the work comes back to America. It's very interesting. For instance, in the case in 1971, the museum at Berkeley, University of California at Berkeley, that museum that Hans Hofman set

up, the director is Peter Selz. Peter went to Europe, saw my show and bought a painting out of that show for the museum. Several other paintings have come back to America in the form of collections so that not only -- I would say about half the work comes back to America of each show, maybe not quite that. Maybe not quite that, about 60 percent stays in Europe, and probably 40 percent of it comes back. In Chicago and Pittsburgh, this painting out in Berkeley, Florida, somebody owns a painting. It's very strange, but I guess it's the time and place thing where if somebody is in the right place at the right time and sees something, they buy it. And that's fine.

I'm very pleased with Darthea as a dealer. We've had a very good relationship for nine years, very good working relationship. We respect each other's opinions a lot. We have never had any problems. It's one of those ideal dealer-artist relationships, and believe me, they are few and far between.

MR. CUMMINGS: You maintain a separate relationship with each dealer, don't you?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: I mean, you don't have one major representative.

MS. REMINGTON: No. I prefer to deal with each gallery personally because I think that it's important. I mean, I am involved with a gallery. I really don't want someone else representing me. I want to do it myself. I'm a fairly good businesswoman, and I have to have -- there has to be, for me, a personal rapport with the gallery dealer. I have to know that they are going to respect my wishes in terms of placing the work in good collections where the work will be appreciated and respected. I don't want to get with a gallery that will treat my work like they're selling it through a five-and-ten cent store. That's not my -- that's not the way I can work. That's fine for other people, but that's not good for me. You see what I mean?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: It's a very personal thing, and when I can get a good working relationship with a gallery, then usually, it continues for years. It's not a flighty thing, but lots of times, gallery dealers will come to see me from Europe and America. And we'll talk about a show, and they want to pick such-and-such a work. And I say, "No, I reserve the right to absolutely pick and show what I want to show. This is my work, and I feel I have the best knowledge of what's good and what's bad."

I don't, for instance, turn out bad paintings and destroy them. I work on a painting until it gets to be a good painting, a painting that I am very satisfied and happy with. It may go through bad periods, and sometimes I get very frustrated because I look at a painting and I think, well, that's the worst I've ever seen. That's got to be the ugliest painting in the world. I really do go through ugly stages where I can't resolve things and nothing works and it's gross. And the image, it's [inaudible] barren. It's not full yet. It's not realized in any way.

MR. CUMMINGS: It hasn't come alive yet.

MS. REMINGTON: It doesn't come together. It doesn't work. Why doesn't it work? And then I'll hassle this sometimes for months, but by God, that painting will not remain the worst painting in the world. Sometimes those paintings turn out to be the best paintings that I've done. So I reserve the right.

For instance, when I'm sending Darthea the work for this fall, I reserved a right to send her eight paintings. I'll tell her the sizes. Fine, she trusts me that I'm going to send her a good show. I do the

same thing with Bykert who's here in town. He can come look at the work, but I can't work with anybody who's going to say, well, I want to pick eight paintings out of 30 paintings. That's impossible.

There are certain limitations to working with a dealer and some of them will accept and some of them won't. And if they don't, fine. Then they can go find somebody else. I mean, there's no hard feelings. It's just the way I work.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, and there are other dealers.

MS. REMINGTON: There are other dealers, exactly.

MR. CUMMINGS: Sure, sure. How have you found -- because you have had shows in Washington and Boston and various places around the country, but you haven't shown in California lately, have you?

MS. REMINGTON: No. I was supposed to have a show with Hansen Fuller in San Francisco in 1969, I think -- no, in 1970. And I just decided that really, I had lived in San Francisco for so long. I know the art scene there. There isn't much sense in wasting a show on the West Coast. Now, this means Los Angeles or San Francisco. In a gallery, the sales will be meager at best, and I'm really not that concerned that my work gets that kind of exposure on the West Coast.

Now, if it were a museum show, that's different, but I am not at this point concerned about -- it's not paramount in my mind. It's not -- it doesn't take precedence over showing in other places, a show in California. There isn't that activity. I know what's out there. I lived out there. I experienced the good and the bad of it. In San Francisco, the good for me was being left alone for years.

MR. CUMMINGS: To work.

MS. REMINGTON: To work and develop what I wanted to develop with no outside pressure. If I didn't want anybody to see the work, nobody saw the work. Nobody called up, oh, I have to come over and see your work. They'll leave you strictly alone. That was fine, but the activity, the interest isn't there.

In California when a collector -- and this has happened to me in the past five years. When a collector wants to buy a Remington, they go to New York or Paris, and they buy a Remington. That's all. If I had a show out there, they might look at -- let's say the collectors would look at the work and say, gee, that's marvelous. It's fine. I think next year I'm going to be able to buy a painting. You might never sell anything. I just think it's a waste of dead time unless it would be in a museum or until the collecting in Los Angeles and San Francisco comes back to, let's say, the level of excitement that existed in the early '60s in Los Angeles. San Francisco's never really been a town where there's much collecting going on.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, I'm curious. When you show paintings, are they seen once, and they you don't show them for a while? Or if you had paintings that were, say, not sold in a show in Washington or someplace, would you ship those to Paris or not?

MS. REMINGTON: Sometimes, it depends. Now, I just had a show in spring of '73 that opened May 8th in Washington at the Pyramid Gallery. Now, they sold four paintings out of, I don't know, seven or eight paintings. Seven painting, I guess, and I sold four. Now, by all rights, I should have left the rest with them, and I would have except that I got sick and was not able to really produce as much as I would have liked to for the Paris show. So I got back -- I asked them. I said, "Look, can I get

these paintings back?"

Because this is the summer. They were redoing the gallery. I thought -- we discussed this. I said, "Look, how much activity is there going to be over the summer? Can I get these paintings back? I'd like to ship them to Paris."

Because they were brand-new work, done in the spring of '73. "Can I send you something in the fall?"

And they said, sure. So I usually don't do that. I mean, usually -- every show I have sells out. I have to leave the work. Rarely does a show sell out three or four weeks that it's on the wall, but in the next six months, little by little, the work goes. And I usually like to leave the work with a dealer because I think there's a certain commitment there. The dealer has gone to all this trouble, et cetera, et cetera. And I've gone to all the trouble to make the work, and I think it's real --

MR. CUMMINGS: It has to go off and do its own work.

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, exactly. I think it's real to leave the work or to leave that show which was committed for that gallery there.

MR. CUMMINGS: One of the things that we haven't talked about a great deal except in one of the earlier reels is artists whose work appeals to you, whether they're living or Old Masters or whatever. Are there particular artists through history whose work has interested you more than others?

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, yes. I think Vermeer and Bosch very definitely. I am very attracted to their work. I'm absolutely in love with Vermeer and Bosch.

On the other hand, I've always been very attracted to and love the work of Franz Kline. Did I mention that in an earlier one?

MR. CUMMINGS: No.

MS. REMINGTON: I love Franz Kline's work, maybe because of the use of black and white, the way he gets color out of grays. This interests me and always has interested me. His imagery interests me. It somehow somewhere along the line relates to what I had -- my concept of what imagery is, although mine looks very different. Now, I've always been a very big fan of Kline's. Unfortunately, I never got to meet the man because he died long before I was really in New York or anything.

At my show in 1972 at the Bykert in November, a man -- I can't remember who it was, but somebody walked up to me and said -- this is an artist, and I can't remember the guy's name. It was a person who knew Franz Kline very well. He said -- and this is right out of the clear blue sky. He said, "If Franz Kline was alive, he would love your work."

And I said, "Why?"

And he said, "There is something in the work that is -- that relates from one work to the other." He said, "He would love your work. I know. I was very close to him. I know what he felt about painting."

And I said, "That's the nicest compliment anybody could ever give me."

Because this man had no way of knowing my feelings about Kline's work. I think in the beginning if there were any influence, I mean, when I was a student, I suppose Kline and Still. Let's say --



obviously, I had influence from the teachers, but I never had Kline as a teacher. But I suppose that his work was an influence. Certainly, not color-wise where Vermeer was very influential on my work light-wise and color-wise.

MR. CUMMINGS: When did you get interested in Vermeer?

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, about 1962, '62, about '62, '63, I really -- the Vermeer suggested certain kinds of light, a certain transformation that -- he could transform a painting from one thing into another by his use of light and color. Plus, of course, the precision with which this is all done, the pristine. It just -- I don't know. It drew it up from -- it makes Vermeer's work very much aside and apart from other artists that I have liked throughout history.

Now, I love some of the Italian Renaissance painters, I really love and some of the early Renaissance painters with the landscapes and all that crazy. They were just going into perspective. Plus, oh, Botticelli, I love Botticelli, but I don't think there would be a person who I would say has influenced my work in any degree. I mean, possibly, he has. I don't know.

I'm trying to think of other people whose work I --

MR. CUMMINGS: Are there many contemporary artists whose work interest you, European or American?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, and --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oriental or --

MS. REMINGTON: I'm trying to think.

MR. CUMMINGS: Are there any Japanese artists?

MS. REMINGTON: Not contemporary artists, no.

MR. CUMMINGS: The possible one.

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, I think Sesshu, of course. I probably have felt a great deal of influence from a painter like Sesshu. Some of those big screen painters of the Momoyama period, even possibly some of the color in that Momoyama screen painting period. Going back before that, of course, Sesshu and the people, his contemporaries would be, I think, probably influenced me a lot, although they only worked in black and white, basically, mainly in black and white with the ink and the different colors.

MR. CUMMINGS: It's interesting. You've talked about black and whites so often through this, but yet the color in the painting is so bright and -- I don't know what, not black and white in a way.

MS. REMINGTON: No, not black and white, but I think from -- when I came back from the Far East, if you recall my mentioning this, I worked for some time almost using no color or only two or three colors as simply attempting to get as much color or as much out of the use of black and white and the combination, which, of course, gives you any number of grays.

I haven't worked like that for years, although I don't consider, let's say, black and white. Black and white are not colors, and yet when I work in a painting that's basically black, white and gray where the only color in the painting would be in the lines, not in the areas themselves like that painting

over there, I would have to say to myself that what I am getting out of that painting in terms of color is basically in the blacks and whites.

Now, I can make the whites look cold or hot. I can make the blacks look warm or cool by the color of the lines that I use around. Let's say I can heighten or subdue. I can change these colors into very hot areas or very cold areas, but I do find black and white and gray to embody color, although I would not -- this is very contradictory. I would not say that that black and white are colors, but yet when I use them and I combine them, I have to say I get a lot of color out of the gray. So therefore, when I use them and to get certain grays, yes, I think it's full of color.

I think when a man like Sesshu uses the grays, the inks, the whole thing, it's very colorful for me. But it's strictly black -- the white paper, the blank ink and the grays that come out of it.

And this is one thing I also teach when I teach a drawing class, which I will be teaching advanced drawing at Cooper Union in the fall. I restrict those kids to absolutely black and white, the traditional media of black, whites and grays for at least half the semester because these kids don't know what black, white and gray -- they don't know that there is color here. You see? And I love to teach them. Look, you can get -- you can say a lot with a very little if you know what you're doing, and let's find out what you're doing.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right. That's true.

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: It's very hard to teach that, though, and so few teachers seem cognizant about it.

MS. REMINGTON: Few teachers are cognizant of it, but I remember [inaudible] back then and training in the Far East where you work with black and white [inaudible] ink. You don't even work with white paint. And you have to get the maximum out of the minimum, and you are taught over and over and over again. I did this for years. Every day, this is all I did. And I don't know black and white, I don't know who does.

When I teach it, it's in the sense that the student takes what I'm telling him and interprets in his own work. I don't just set up models and all that kind of stuff. I mean, each student is an advanced student, and he interprets in his own work what I'm trying to tell them. And, of course, they all think they know it all, and after a couple of weeks, they realize that they don't, you do. And they're very receptive. It's a marvelous thing to teach people about black and white and the color in black and white, which is not really a color. It's marvelous. I love the contradiction. This plays right into my hands, you see.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

[END OF REEL 4 SIDE A.]

MR. CUMMINGS: This is Side 8. So where do we have you, Paris?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, Paris after the opening and then I went to England and drove around England and Wales and came back to Paris. And the show was still going on. Darthea was very brave and left her gallery open, kept it open during this whole student rioting period.

And the ORTF television wanted to do a short piece on me and the work, and so that was agreed upon. And I went to the gallery at the precise day and the time and so on. And the television crew

showed up with this little director who smoked a cigar and was at least half my size. He took one look at me and decided that since this was Irish week, mind you, in Paris -- yes, this gets very abstract. You have to understand the French mind.

He took one look at me and started interviewing me in English and said, "Well, you're Irish."

And I said, "Well, no, I'm really not Irish. A small part of me might be Irish, but I'm mostly Dutch and English. And on the English side, there's a great deal that's really Welsh."

No, he decided I had to be Irish because this is Irish week in Paris, and there was some trade fair. And so he started introducing me in his monologue while he was photographing me as being of Irish descent, and this whole thing went down. It was just factually untrue, even though I had just told him what was true.

Now, he decided since I look the way I look, he would put me in the middle of a lot of palm trees. Now, this gets more ridiculous. You have to bear with me. This is the -- one of the few original surrealist movies that was ever done by ORTF television. He decided that what he would do was put me in a chair and photograph me with a lot of palm trees and plants. So he put me in a chair, and then he proceeded to pile all these plants on top of me. And he instructed his cameraman to start at my feet and photograph me working up to the legs and to the knees and the dress and all up the body to the face through all this garbage, all these palm trees.

And so here was this person sitting in a gallery, and he's photographing me through all these palm trees. And then he told me, "So now while we're doing this," he said, "you have to look up and look around very dreamily." He said, "You have to act as if you're in a dream."

So there I was sitting in the middle of the gallery in the middle of all these fake palm trees and other various and sundry plants looking up, looking dreamily into the future. And his cameraman is grinding away, and then he's simply making up all this stuff about me, about where my imagery comes from and how I paint and so on and so forth. And then they went on, and they shot all the paintings.

Well, what came out of this was that there was this creature buried in the palm trees who was obviously Irish because it was Irish week, but she was really American, looking dreamily. Then they showed the paintings with all the tops cut off of all the paintings.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really? Weird.

MS. REMINGTON: It was the most incredible thing I have ever been through. I kept telling this guy, "Look, it's not really the way it is," and this, that and the other.

It didn't matter. He did -- he made out of me what he wanted.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's fantastic.

MS. REMINGTON: And this is how they report -- this is called reportage. I mean, this is --

MR. CUMMINGS: Creative reporting.

MS. REMINGTON: Creating reporting would be more like or absolutely nonsensical reporting, but I thought that was very good. That was my television debut in Paris.

And after -- anyway, that was enough. After that, I left Paris and drove, oh, to Switzerland because there was gasoline out that way.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, right.

MS. REMINGTON: And, mind, you, this was --

MR. CUMMINGS: In 19 --

MS. REMINGTON: And got to Switzerland and then immediately went down into Italy and drove all over Italy looking at all the old painting and going down to, oh, the graves and the grave paintings of the people that were there before the Romans, the --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, anyway. Etruscans, right.

MS. REMINGTON: Tramping through fields looking at Etruscan sculpture and going into the tombs. Orvieto has marvelous tombs where the paintings and the best Etruscan painting is. And that fascinates me.

Then I went down to Cerveteri and saw the, oh, a lot of the grave sculpture. I'm really hooked on Etruscan stuff, if that means anything, but I'm really a frustrated archeologist. And I just tramped all over Italy down one coast and drove over after -- let's see. I went down to Paestum and drove over the other coast and all the way up the other coast.

I spent about two hours in Rome because I didn't have enough money to see all of Italy and Rome, so it was all of Italy and Rome some other time because I thought that was easier.

Loved Italy, really loved the painting, a lot of the painting that I saw, which I saw an awful lot of painting. And drove from there up through Austria and Germany, back to Holland to get the boat to come back to New York.

And I came back to New York in the fall of -- no, the summer of 1968 and immediately went out to California to teach at the Art Institute for that summer because I really needed the money. And then I came back to New York to really settle down and work in the fall of 1969.

MR. CUMMINGS: When did you move into this studio?

MS. REMINGTON: No, I'm sorry. Fall of 1968 when I still had my loft on Canal Street, 361 Canal. My mother had stayed in the loft while I was in Europe and thought that was just great.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MS. REMINGTON: This is my 65-dollar a month loft which then had gone up to \$85, my mother stayed there for a year. And then I came back, and she vacated. And all right. That was late '68.

This area which was not designated as SoHo was about to be called SoHo because many people had -- many more artists had moved down here, and the community, the art community, was really kind of getting together to ask the city planning commission to legalize living for artists down here. All that was very exciting. I got involved in that in --

MR. CUMMINGS: The whole AIR business, the --

MS. REMINGTON: No, the AIR business is something else.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: That really was not ever legal living as condoned by the city. You can't live in lofts, or you couldn't live in lofts even with an AIR legally because it was against the zoning regulations. But we -- what happened is that the state legislature changed the zoning laws as it pertains to this 26-square block area known as SoHo to permit artists to live and work in lofts along with light manufacturing simply because we convinced the city planning commission that artists were, in fact, light manufacturers. We were manufacturing a product that was quite saleable and, in fact, brought in billions of dollars in sales tax to the city of New York every year, et cetera, et cetera. So they agreed on that.

Now, when that -- that hadn't come through yet, and I wanted to get into a co-op. Co-ops were beginning to happen, and I'd call up some friends and called around and asked if anyone knew of a co-op I could get into and finally found a group who -- they were looking for a building, and they were looking for a building off of Bowery and here and there and everywhere in New York. And anyway, I had really seen this building that I live in now on West Broadway, which is -- I would look out of my window on Canal Street at the back of my loft, and I could see the back of this building. And it was -- I always thought it was a beautiful building.

Anyway, to make a long story short, I interested the group in looking into this building. Yes, it was for sale for 150,000. We wheedled it down to 130,000 and bought the building in a co-op situation. And that was in 19 -- that was in August of 1969.

I was -- let's see. In '68 when I came back, I had made arrangements with the Bykert gallery to have a show in the fall of '69 in October. So for all that year in '68, I painted. That summer, I went down on the Jersey shore with some friends, and we rented a house. And I painted in the garage. It was a very nice three months in the Jersey shore painting in the garage and swimming.

And anyway, that worked out. Then I came back and got into the co-op. Had my show at the Bykert in the fall of '69. I guess that was October.

Then I really stopped painting for a year because I got into building this loft and was really deeply committed to it and found that I would come over here and work eight hours a day just doing physical labor and that -- was just too tired. I couldn't work. I was too tired. I was -- I guess all my energies and interests were going into building this loft because I owned it. I wanted some kind of feeling of permanence. I realized that in order to stay in New York, I mean, this kind of thing had to happen.

And luckily, this was really a risk, a financial risk, getting into this co-op because I did it and bought the building, my floor in the co-op, before living in SoHo was legal. If they had not legalized living, we would have been living here illegally and never able to get a certificate of occupancy for multiple dwelling, which means we would have had to try to get a [inaudible] for studio and -- it's very illegal, and it would have been really a pain.

Anyway, that worked out. My first real estate venture worked out, speculative as it was. And in the fall of 1970, I guess, I really got into, oh, the battle, the last part of the battle to legalize living here, and it worked and so on.

MR. CUMMINGS: How was that accomplished?

MS. REMINGTON: What?

MR. CUMMINGS: Legalizing the living.

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, a lot of work. Some of the artists in the area -- I came into it late, as I said, but there was a lot of work with the city planning commission showing them it's not going to drive business out. We want to take over lofts that are 3600 square feet or smaller because industry won't use them. There are so many buildings still sitting in SoHo vacant because industry can't use anything that small. They want something larger. And working, working, working. I don't know.

Finally, when I got in on it, I had to -- what I did and the people with whom I worked in this, but I mostly organized it, the city planning commission was threatening to not legalize this block and 100 foot of frontage down Canal Street on the north side between West Broadway and Broadway. They wanted to not legalize that, those areas, to keep them open for redevelopment. At that time, the anathema of SoHo had appeared in the form of a man named Chuck Low who is a real estate developer speculator whose never done anything, but that's what he likes to call himself. He bought this old railway express lot next to my building and wanted to --

MR. CUMMINGS: [Inaudible.]

MS. REMINGTON: No, this was pre-sports palace. He wanted to tear this whole block down and redevelop it, plus the 100 foot of frontage along Canal Street. And we fought him. There was collusion. We yelled collusion with the city planning commission. In fact, we think there was, but they never let us prove it because they re-included our block and the frontage rather quickly when we got that close to home.

And they legalized SoHo anyway in January of 1971, thank heavens.

MR. CUMMINGS: And that means what now, that --

MS. REMINGTON: That means that --

MR. CUMMINGS: -- buildings can be legalized to live in?

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, that means that you can legally live in SoHo. I mean, the inspectors don't come around knocking on the door and threatening to kick you out and you're living here illegally and blah, blah, blah.

I guess in 1969 when I got into this co-op, there were maybe eight or 10 co-ops already in SoHo. Now, there are -- we have 60-some-odd buildings that are cooperatively owned by artists, and it's really a comment on how an artist can exist in New York because the average rent or maintenance, let's say, because you own the building, the average maintenance is about \$100 per thousand square feet.

Now, my loft is almost 3600 square feet, but my maintenance is only \$250 a month. And you have to consider where can you get space in the middle of New York City, I mean really good space to work and live, where you pay \$250 a month. It's impossible because people are paying \$250 to a dinky little room.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, true.

MS. REMINGTON: Small apartments. This is -- I think it's interesting in terms of history because I don't think there's ever been anything like this in the history of the western art world that I know of where the city has set aside in a sense a ghetto for artists, and it's a ghetto by simply definition of

involvement of art. If you don't work in the arts, you don't get to live here. It's really an arts ghetto, and I don't think anything like that has ever been -- has ever existed in history. Probably the 16th century communes, that communal living that happened in Belgium, Holland and so forth, the crafts. That was really mostly in crafts, but that would be the closest thing.

So I think it's very exciting living and being a part of something in history because it really is unique. It's also unique in the sense of what people have done with the lofts in terms of urban and redevelopment. You don't tear buildings down. You can make old buildings beautiful again, and we've done all this. And we've not asked the city for a penny.

And I think that it's a credit to artists to show that people who are essentially an almost hysterically individualistic, really protective of being -- of keeping that individual approach to life alive. You don't want anything to bother you. You don't -- artists don't join things in the sense of becoming socially involved with organizations or groups. Artists, they never work like that really in history where it hasn't to do with art where you're -- artists get together and have a salon de la fuse [phonetic] show or something like that. That's not what I mean. I mean in terms of just living.

And so many people said to me, well, this will never work. Artists owning a building together? It'll never work. Artists trying to maintain a community? It'll never work. It has worked, and it's working very well. And even the city is very happy with it.

Anyway, that -- I didn't paint for a year to try to get my loft together.

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you make drawings or do anything?

MS. REMINGTON: I did nothing.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MS. REMINGTON: I absolutely did nothing. When I stop something to do something else, as when I went to the Far East, I don't do it. I feel like I don't have to do it.

All right. That would be from about the fall of '69 to the fall of '70 where I absolutely did no work. I -- then in the fall of 1970, Phyllis Rosen and Joan Sonnabend came to me from the Obelisk gallery in Boston and said, we like your work, and we've always wanted to show it. Will you do a -- can we do a show? So I said yes, in the spring of 1971, we set it up for April.

And I immediately began to work again in my studio. Now, let's see. A month before that -- and that was probably September. The month of August, I had gone to France. There was a show at the St. Paul de Vence in France called --

MR. CUMMINGS: So that was that big American show?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, L'Art Vivant Americain. That was 1970. And some of us were invited over. Well, I lucked out, I guess because I was invited over, and it was great because they just -- I had never been to the Rivera, and they put you up. Well, they didn't feed you, but they paid your transportation and your room and board, which was just great. And several people had cars, so we'd always get together and run around. I spent a marvelous month in the south of France away from all of this nonsense, this building.

By the way, I had moved into my loft here in the spring of 1970. The loft, as it turns out, was not to be completed till the spring of '72. So I was living in a situation that really looked like a construction

site. Nothing -- the bedroom really wasn't finished, but it could function. The bathroom wasn't finished, but it could function. My studio was the most finished thing. I finished that first so I could work in it.

So all right. Fall of '71, no, this the fall of '70. I started back to work with great trepidations of good Lord, will my hands work? Can I do these gradations without a lot of problems? And have I lost my technical facility? I knew I hadn't lost anything in my -- in terms of the work, the imagery or anything because I keep all that. Whether it comes out or not doesn't matter. It's just all in there.

But I really -- I had a great little concern for my technical ability, but that proved to be ridiculous because I never had -- I just started right in as if I hadn't stopped, as if the day before was the last day I had painted. It's very strange. It showed me something that I really have a certain facility, and when I need it, I can conjure it up. And it was just as easy to do those difficult gradations. They're really never easy, but it was just as -- I did it with as much facility as if I had never stopped.

Image-wise, I really at that point started to get into developing the oval. I had discovered -- well, I think I had done two paintings with central images of ovals in the 1969 Bykert show. And then I stopped painting. I had still carried my interest for the central image of the oval through this whole year, and, of course, if I wasn't painting, I was thinking about it. I would lie in bed and think about different things.

So when I started in, I had a lot of fresh material and a lot of interest in the oval. I did a couple of paintings with the central image of the oval for that show in Boston, plus that big -- the painting with the triangle in the middle which went to Andover.

Anyway, the work proceeded very well and very easily. At that time, I realized that I needed a helper in the studio, and my friend who I had met in Paris and taught. Remember my mentioning Dorothy Black?

MR. CUMMINGS: Uh-huh.

MS. REMINGTON: And she was in New York, and she came to me. It was very funny and a very opportune time and said, "I want to study with you again. Can I make some arrangement to work in the studio if you will teach me?"

And I said, "Sure, that's fine" because I really needed her.

MR. CUMMINGS: You had never had an assistant before?

MS. REMINGTON: No, this is the first time I had an assistant, and I realized that I was really wasting a lot of time. I was, for me, wasting a lot of time doing work like taping out areas. It just takes hours, and somebody can learn that skill. They can follow my drawings, or they can follow -- they can read the lines well enough.

So Dorothy began to work with me, and her facility with her hands, her ability to tape out areas became very sharp and very heightened, and that saved me a lot of time. I was actually able to turn out more work in less amount of time, and that really helped me considerably.

MR. CUMMINGS: How much more work do you think an assistant allows you to produce?

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, it depends if I have somebody every day. Let's say I'm working on five or six paintings at a time and I have somebody every day, it would be as much as twice as much work.



MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, at least twice as much.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's a lot.

MS. REMINGTON: I usually don't have somebody every day. I mean, I go through periods where I have somebody every day when I have an assistant from the Great Lakes College Association and they are an apprentice to me. And they can come every day. But when Dorothy is working with me, she used to come maybe three or four times a week on the average, and that was fine. And that was enough, but the more help I have, the more I can turn out because more of this so-called menial stuff can be turned over to an assistant. And they can do these -- they can perform these things just as well I can. There's a certain skill in taping out areas.

I sometimes let them paint lines the first coat, let's say. I want a red line here, and I tell them, look, tape that out and paint it. And there's nothing -- after I can teach them that, there's no big secret about it. They don't do anything else on the paintings. I always stretch the paintings. I'm very concerned about how the work is stretched, so I always do all that myself.

MR. CUMMINGS: How long have you used tape?

MS. REMINGTON: Since about 1964, I learned that I could use tape. It's very difficult when you're using -- when you're grading these areas because physically, if you don't have a barrier, you simply run up, and then you have this nicely graded thing in the middle with no definite shape. And you have to kind of go over that and cut it down and trim it. I learned the hard way, I must say, running out and -- it just became a big mess.

Somebody said to me, I guess back, then, well, you dummy, why don't you use tape? And I thought tape was a dirty word. I mean, one didn't use tape. We're all taught in art school you can't use anything like that. It's absolutely awful. That's too mechanical. It doesn't have anything to do with art and so on and so forth.

And then someone explained to me that, in fact, Hans Hofman had used anything he wanted to use, and if he wanted to use tape, then he used tape. And I thought, wow, if he did it, I can do it. He must -- because that's a legitimate painter, as far as I'm concerned. So I thought, well, then tape -- then tape became legitimate to me as a tool. It's really a tool, and that's how I use it. I use it as such.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, how do you find living in SoHo in a co-op building with other artists in a neighborhood where there are so many active, very busy artists? It's a different ambience from San Francisco.

MS. REMINGTON: You mean how do I like living in the ghetto?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, right.

MS. REMINGTON: When we put the co-op together, of course, you're dealing here with seven different people and assorted wives and husbands and so on, but basically, seven different people. The co-op had problems. I mean, so many co-op meetings in the beginning you'd go to, and they'd be like group therapy sessions because we'd all spend the time yelling at each other. You did this and why don't you do that? And who do you think you are and I have to do all the work and you don't this and you don't -- oh, you'd yell and scream at each other for about -- really for about a

year.

And nothing ever got done till somebody came up with the bright idea of assigning hours. Now, this is very interesting in terms of how the artists' mind works. I mean, nobody is going to do anything, right? Two of the people in the co-op got stuck doing everything until somebody thought of, well, look, we'll have an hours system which means that everybody has to put in so many hours, and at the end of the two or three years or however long it takes to get our building in shape -- now, when I'm talking about hours, I don't mean working on your own floor, but I mean working on the building, on the basement, on the stairway, on the fire escape, whatever.

If the roof leaks and you own a building, you fix it. There's no landlord to call. It's astounding. It's horrible in the beginning. There's nobody to call. I mean, in the middle of the night when the boiler breaks down, you don't know how to fix it.

MR. CUMMINGS: Who do you call?

MS. REMINGTON: Somebody -- so we have a boiler man and an elevator man and so on and so forth.

We're all assigned basic duties then, and someone was assigned to keep track of the hours. And that system worked very well. We -- at the end of each month, we would do our jobs. We'd be assigned. We had a person who assigned everybody jobs, and we would do our jobs and turn in the slips at the end of the month saying how many hours we did. And the minute we started that, there was no more -- there was still a little conflict but very little.

That worked out. Now we have our -- we're the only building in SoHo that has a certificate of occupancy for multiple dwelling which is really something, from the city of New York. Every building is supposed to have that to make it really legal. We're the only building that does. Now, we worked very, very hard to get that.

Some of my duties, I was assigned to go to court for the co-op. For instance, some -- a building inspector would come by and give us a violation on the elevator or we'd have a sink in somebody's floor that was not -- that was an illegally put in sink, right, and we'd get a violation on that. So I'd go down to criminal court and sit there with all these landlords from all over the city of New York, and it was just hilarious being the only woman.

I was always the only woman. I mean, these guys would get up, and they'd own 28 buildings [inaudible] up here or some -- it was just hilarious because they'd all -- all these landlords, New York landlords, would all dress in the most ratty clothes to pretend they didn't have any money. And the judge, of course, would always give them these horrendous --

MR. CUMMINGS: [Inaudible.]

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, they would always give them these horrendous fines. I mean, you don't own 28 buildings and look like that, look like a bum. They'd given them these horrendous fines, \$60 and it has to be paid and this, that and the other thing.

Well, the twice I went to court, the first time, I got away with a 10-dollar fine and the last time with a 5-dollar fine because for some reason, they saw me and the judge would start to click with me. And there would be an exchange, and it would be good because everybody could laugh. And then he'd say, okay, well -- I explained to him the whole thing, and he'd say, "Well, okay, 10 bucks and get it fixed in two weeks" or that kind of -- well, that was one of my jobs.

I did have a number of other jobs I do with the co-op, but that anyway, that part of it, of the owning property with other artists, mind you, none of us knew each other very well when we got into this thing. And it's just a miracle that the ship didn't sink, but it didn't, although we have a lot of disagreements. This is consistent with every other co-op I have ever known. The group therapy screaming sessions, you go through that in the beginning, and then things quiet down. And then you go through another series of inter-relationships.

And anyway, everything kind of settles down, and this is absolute consistent behavior with every co-op I have ever had been in contact with. And I have been in contact with a number of co-ops in SoHo. A lot of my friends live in various co-ops.

All right. Now, the second thing that I think has been marvelous -- and I've discussed this with other people in SoHo -- is that living in this neighborhood, which is our neighborhood, it's our ghetto, we are building this. We are trying to maintain it. But we are building it. We're trying to get right now landlords' designation for the whole area, which we hope will come through before July 20th when they promised. We're trying to make this area a beautiful area again and reconstruct and rebuild.

Now, when you work with people in the neighborhood -- and I met a number of other artists in various areas. I mean, sculptors, painters, multimedia people, any -- all kinds of conceptual artists -- people are really interested in this concept of SoHo. I met a lot of these people when we were working on defeating the sports palace in 1972. I have made some of the best friends I think I will ever make in my life.

As I said, I've discussed this with other people. In this particular way of why it's a beautiful experience living in SoHo. It's like some of your best friends that you know you're going to have for the rest of your life live two or three blocks away from you. And it's a nice kind of secure thing. It's almost like a little suburban community with all these nice middle class people settling in except it's in SoHo and we're artists. That's the only difference.

We are there. We -- a lot of -- there's a lot of socializing on weekends. Almost every weekend, really every weekend, I go to a dinner party or I give one or I give a small party. Or somebody gives something, people -- they're usually small, 10 or under. But every weekend, there's some kind of socializing, which is good because during the week, everybody is very serious. Everybody works. Friday and Saturday night, there's usually getting together. There's some kind of thing, and it's beautiful because it's all in the neighborhood. Nobody -- if you go home late, somebody's always going to walk you home.

There's a protective sense. We protect each other. We help each other. If somebody gets sick, my recent bout with illness since April and being in and out of the hospital twice, people in the neighborhood have taken care of me. My friends in the neighborhood, there isn't a day that goes by somebody doesn't call and say, hey, I'm going to grocery store, what do you need. This has been going on for two months, and people have had me for dinner or come over and cooked for me. And I've done the same thing for other people when they've gotten in -- with problems or illness or something.

MR. CUMMINGS: How do you find the development of the galleries and the shops and all of that affecting?

MS. REMINGTON: We love the galleries because it adds a dimension to a very professional neighborhood. People down here, for the most part, are professionals. There's a professional attitude. Of course, there are a lot of students that come in and out every year. Like, it's

marvelous, the influx. They come to New York in June, and they're going to make it big. And they've just got their MA from some dinky college in the Midwest, and, boy, they're going to come to New York and make it. And the next year, off they go, and then somebody else comes and takes their loft.

I mean, that's marvelous because it keeps a certain young, creative spirit here. It keeps a spirit of optimism, of hopefulness. There's something new about these people, new blood everywhere. And for the most part, they all go back and get teaching jobs in the local high school or something. I don't know.

The galleries, we love because it brings not only another dimension to the professionalism, but it brings another dimension to the neighborhood. I mean, it completes the cycle. The light manufacturing of the art and the shops where -- let's say the gallery is where it can be sold.

We're not too happy with the little boutiques and the little dumb stores.

MR. CUMMINGS: There's a record store [inaudible].

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, no, really?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, on Greene Street.

MS. REMINGTON: The reason we don't like the influx of the boutiques and the dumb little bars and the record stores and the -- they're dumb -- is that we don't want it to become another Greenwich Village. Now, in the fall, I think we're going to -- a group of us are going to get together. We've already discussed with somebody at the city planning commission. Somebody in the economics department has been very helpful to SoHo, a woman named Adriana Kleiman, who in the beginning was heard to stand up and proclaim, mind you, in 1970 that all of SoHo should be torn down. That's how she felt about SoHo.

Now, today, this woman has seen the value of what we're doing and has become really our friend in the city planning commission. She is the one who warns of us impending danger. She is the one who goes to bat for us. She is the one who calls us. She has been invaluable. She's been a princess, a queen. What can you say? This is somebody who has -- her area of concern in life is city planning, the economics of city planning. She has nothing to do with the art. She doesn't even know -- now the woman has become sensitized to art, to people.

MR. CUMMINGS: What do you think did that?

MS. REMINGTON: Her association with us, with the artists, breaking down the barriers of --

MR. CUMMINGS: You mean the person-to-person image rather than a cliché?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, yes, breaking down the clichés of artists are this and artists are that. You can't work with them and they're not -- they don't have their feet on the ground. They have their head in the clouds. They're not practical, every cliché you can think from the ivory tower on down. She found it was absolute nonsense. And, in fact, artists are very practical people because you have to be and so on and so forth, and we are very responsible people.

She's not the only one, let's say, who has come in contact with SoHo who has had her head turned around in a very good way saying, hey, this is a very real and beautiful thing and I'm going to help with it.

Anyway, we've discussed trying to change some of the zoning again, and I think in the fall, we will be getting together with her. And it may take about a year, but we're going to try to write out any more boutiques, record stores, and all this junk that's moving in because it brings a bad element. Down here in SoHo, we have the lowest crime rate in the whole city of New York. One of the reasons is there's no reason for people to come down here at night, so there's nobody on the street. So there's no muggings. Oh, a few muggings a year.

MR. CUMMINGS: Cars get broken into.

MS. REMINGTON: Cars get broken into, that's about it. Some of the lofts are now beginning to be ripped off, along with some of the small businesses, the safes in these stores. We don't want this, and we want to keep out the element that is attracted by these little dinky dumb businesses. What do boutiques have to do with art? They --

MR. CUMMINGS: [Inaudible] --

MS. REMINGTON: They address themselves to the tourists and the busloads of women from out of town who come down to look at SoHo every day and go to the galleries. It's unbelievable, and this is --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really, [inaudible].

MS. REMINGTON: Right, this is what we want to keep out. We want to -- fine, you want to open a gallery down here. Great. We don't need the dumb crafts stores. We don't need the sandal makers. We don't need bars that bring in the idiots.

MR. CUMMINGS: There will be pizza parlors and Flag Brother shoe stores.

MS. REMINGTON: Well, we already have pizza parlors on Canal Street. That hasn't -- that's been there for years.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, but I mean it will move up into Broome Street --

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, no, thank you. That's the stuff that we want to try to keep out of there and keep it for professionals.

MR. CUMMINGS: Business.

MS. REMINGTON: I mean, keep it for business. That's what we're doing here. We're not here to -- we don't want another Greenwich Village. We already have one. I think that's fine.

MR. CUMMINGS: True, the Coney Island of Manhattan. But you like the fact that, what you can walk around here and run into people in the street and --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, I love it.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- and do things and --

MS. REMINGTON: I always run around and find people. My stretcher hanger is up the street, a man named Lou Scroy [phonetic]. And he makes beautiful stretchers and keeps the prices down, and he's been doing this for years. I went out there the other day to pick up some stretchers, and I think on the -- we had to make two trips because we couldn't carry it all, and in both trips, I ran into about

four or five different people I hadn't seen in a while. And it's great. I'm standing there with my stretcher in the cart, blah, blah, blah, talking to somebody. And it's really a neighborhood where everybody -- it has the real feeling of a neighborhood, you see? A new neighborhood, this has been created out of nothing.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MS. REMINGTON: But it is a marvelous thing, and there's a good feeling among people who live down here.

MR. CUMMINGS: One of the things that you've done which we have not touched on much at all is the teaching. And I'm curious about what your ideas are about what you can teach and you've taught and whether you -- the practicality of it and if you have developed an idea about what can one do as an art teacher for students.

MS. REMINGTON: Well, that's a good question. Let's see, I first began to teach, I guess, back in --

MR. CUMMINGS: Fifty-eight.

MS. REMINGTON: -- oh, yes, '58, but, I mean, before that, I started -- I was teaching children, children's classes in 1950 and 1951 at the Legion of Honor Museum in San Francisco. They had children's classes, and somebody came to me and said, would you like to teach children. I said, "Yeah, I don't care. I don't particularly love nor hate children."

But, I mean, it's someplace I felt for me to start. I had to practice on somebody. So I got a bunch of five-year-olds and gave them paint and learned a lot from them about teaching because there's certain things you can teach those kids and there's certain things you can't. And I think this carries on. It's really consistent when you start dealing with college, art-school-college-type kids.

MR. CUMMINGS: How much do you think you can teach a child at that age?

MS. REMINGTON: You can teach them a little bit about attitude. You can teach them a little bit -- I mean, they're always going to have questions about why doesn't this work. Well, I put this down here and this paint here. Why doesn't it work? Sometimes you have to explain to them, well, if you have two things of wet paint one beside the other, they might run into each other.

My approach at that time was not that it's bad, but, look, hey, it's good. Look what can happen when the red meets the blue or when the yellow meets the pink or when something -- you can kind of guide them. I never like to use the word "teach." I really think about teaching in the sense that -- in the old Greek sense of guide, being a guide rather than a teacher. And I think that point is very important to define my approach to teaching.

I don't want to get into what's good and what's bad because I'm not a -- don't think I'm really a tastemaker, but, I mean, you can point things out to people. You can guide them and say, hey, look, isn't this marvelous and isn't that -- let them decide whether they like it or not because it's always a personal -- a preference takes over. Personal taste is as much a guide in our work, I think, as anything else.

So I did that and did lots of fun things with the kids. I did so well out there that the art institute -- well, the California School of Fine Arts at that time put on a -- no, I guess it was called the art institute by then. Put on a -- oh, let's see, a class taught by Hassel Smith about sort of training teachers, and there must have been five or six of us in there. And we had neighborhood kids would

come in every Saturday morning, and we'd each have a class. And we would teach them.

And that's where I really had fun because I would play music, and sometimes I would read to them while they painted. I never told them, hey, okay, today we're going to paint flowers or something. I would do it more of an interpret -- as an interpretive art at that point. I'd play music, and they'd paint. I mean, sometimes they'd all paint houses and trees and all that kind of stuff, and sometimes a lot of them really got into non-objective painting. An awful lot of them did, as a matter of fact. Not from because I pushed them, but simply because I said, hey, it's possible. Because they would say, well, do we have to paint houses and trees and people, and I'd say, "No, you can paint whatever you want."

And that always threw them. So I had fun in that kind of a sense. Then when I came back from the Far East -- well, I started in 1959 teaching at the art institute, as I had mentioned earlier, and taught, I think as I mentioned, all the way up about 1965 when I came to New York. I came to New York, and I went around here looking for teaching jobs. And, of course, that was absurd because there's --

MR. CUMMINGS: Forty thousand other people --

MS. REMINGTON: Forty thousand other people ahead of me who people knew. All right. So I gave that idea up. I didn't care. I got a gallery instead, and I figured that was much better anyways.

Anyway, last year -- yes, last year would be -- so very late part of 1972. Dore Ashton, who was the head of the department of painting and drawing at Cooper Union, called me up and said, "I need a good teacher. Will you come and teach?"

Because she and I had for years discussed what we thought should be taught to kids in art schools, so she knew my feeling about it, what it was, what I wanted to do and so on. So she said, "Would you teach advanced painting?"

And I said, "Yeah, that's fine."

So I began that doing this spring of 1973, well, the February, the spring semester. And I had about 15 kids, and I teach in a way -- this is advanced painting. And I teach in a way that's kind of an ongoing tutorial. In other words, I have sessions, private sessions, with the kids. I never do group displays of the work, group critiques, because I think they're very counterproductive. I have never been in one myself I thought was any good, and you always end up in an awful lot of hurt feelings.

I don't think this is the way to deal with an individual's work, by comparing it to another individual's work. It doesn't mean anything, and therefore, I think it's not productive or counterproductive. So I treat each individual as just that, an individual. They all worked outside of class. I met with them four -- once a week four hours, which there were never breaks. I mean, they would simply bring their work in, and I would talk to each kid about his work for anywhere from a half hour to 45 minutes. So I saw each kid about once every two weeks, but they worked very hard for me.

Sometimes I would talk to them as a group in terms of attitude. I mean, some of them wanted to get into attitude about --

MR. CUMMINGS: What do you mean, "attitude"?

MS. REMINGTON: Attitude, approach to painting. They'd ask questions like, is it important to have style? Do we all have to have -- they all went through a panic period of, oh, we all have to have a

style by the time we graduate from art school. And you have to spend time explaining why this is not important. In fact, why this can be very detrimental because their growth is only beginning, it is not ending. And explaining to them what maturity is and not to be afraid of it, that it's fine. Over 30, you're going to love it much better than [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: That's a secret.

MS. REMINGTON: That's -- well, yeah, it's hard to tell a 20-year-old kid this or 21-year-old kid and make them believe it. However, I think I had very good luck. Of course, with many of my -- the female students, I was the first female teacher they'd ever had, and this opened up a lot of doors for them. What it's like to be a woman going into the art world, and I never kidded any of them, male or female students. Look, it's hard. You're all going to have to straighten out and get yourselves some kind of a dumb job, be a waitress, be a carpenter, be a typist, do whatever you can. If you're going to go into this thing professionally, you have to understand how to support yourself.

I would sit them down and give them the hard, true facts of life, the street smarts. And to the kid, they would sit there with their mouths open saying, nobody ever talked to us like this before. Nobody ever talks straight to us. Nobody ever talked to us about us, about our -- who we are, how we relate to the work, how our work relates to us, how when we grow, the work grows. Or when we stop growing, the work stops growing. How we can get the most out of ourselves and then in tandem, the most out of our work.

This is what I mean by approach and attitude. So many of the kids said to me, look, we've always only had teachers who told us about, well, you push the red back and you pull the green up and that hand over there is not painted well. And I don't think this is -- should -- this kind of stuff should be the concern of -- or the concerns of teaching advanced painting. My idea of teaching advanced painting is preparing people to go out into the world, and my approach is a very professional approach.

I'm probably one of the few teachers at Cooper Union and I mean very few of two or three people who has a very active professional life. The kids love this. It's very exciting for them to talk to somebody who just had a show in New York, who is having -- working on a show for Washington, is going to have a show in Paris in the fall. This is real to them. They --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, that's what they're striving for.

MS. REMINGTON: That's what they're striving for. Therefore, they can ask me practical questions. How do you go about this? How do you go about that? And they ask a lot of these -- in every school, there's the old bunch, the deadwood people. Well, that's fine. What do you do with them? You can't put them out to pasture exactly. It's all right. They're there. But the kids are very excited by having somebody a little bit -- with a little bit more vitality and experience in the real world where they can talk to me about galleries and critics and how do you this and how do you do that and very, very practical things.

MR. CUMMINGS: But what you've been doing at Cooper must be different from what happened at San Francisco, teaching there, isn't it?

MS. REMINGTON: No, I really taught that the same way. I always deal with the person individually. I rarely deal with a class. I most always have taught advanced draw -- advanced painting or advanced drawing, but I teach that a little bit differently. But advanced painting, I don't think you can do it in a group situation.



MR. CUMMINGS: What about drawing?

MS. REMINGTON: Drawing, I teach where I like to have the class there, and I like -- in other words, as different from the painting, I don't care where they paint as long as they bring it in all the time and I -- the quantity and quality of the work is kept up. And I think this is good because it puts the kid on a more real level of responsibility to himself. These are kids who are going to get out of school in six months to a year. They have to learn how to rely on themselves to work, to go home and be alone and work, not in a classroom situation.

That's why I prefer to teach advanced painting like that because it more simulates what's going to happen to them when they get out of school. I feel very responsible about preparing these kids to get out of school and to cope with and to handle it because I was not prepared. When I got out, it took me two years, at least two years, to get myself together because nobody had dealt with this. Nobody told me, hey, you have to do it this way, this way and this way. I had to --

MR. CUMMINGS: What were the rituals and systems, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: Right, I had no -- I couldn't talk to anybody about that. I mean, if you did, they'd -- yeah, what do you mean, kid? You just get out and paint. What do you mean?

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, what about -- what do you teach in a drawing class? Do you give them figure drawings, still lifes, whatever they want?

MS. REMINGTON: No, I don't -- since it is advanced drawing, I don't have them draw from anything. In other words, I will give them concepts, or I will give them a certain technical thing. Most of these kids have never learned to, let's say, technically to use a Japanese or Chinese brush, traditional ink painting. Well, there's a lot of technical stuff in there that these kids could use in their drawing. Now, I'll cover something like that, just show them technically what they can do with water, with ink, by holding the brush a certain way, by bending it a certain way, by not bending it, by having too much water and a little bit of ink or a whole lot of ink or a little bit of water or only water and no ink and so on and so forth. I mean, it's just a world of technical ability there that I can teach them.

And then I say to them, all right. Look, you're on your own. You interpret it in whatever way you want. If you paint representationally, fine. You don't need a model. If you can't draw a model in advanced paint -- in advanced drawing class, forget it, you shouldn't be in here. I want you to work in here, and I want to interpret -- you to interpret what I'm giving you.

MR. CUMMINGS: So it all comes out of their head.

MS. REMINGTON: It all comes out of their head. I think this is very important because a lot of problems come out along with this. There are certain problems in painting that, in fact, are not painting problems. They're drawing problems. I would say my association with kids and this goes all the way back to when I was teaching in San Francisco -- I would say probably 75 or 80 percent of the problems one encounters in painting are not painting problems.

They're drawing problems. The kid can't resolve something because the kid doesn't know how to draw. The kid can't conceive form, shape or the lack of form and shape. Let's say if somebody is working in color field or something, unless you arrive at that by a certain logical process of elimination or addition or subtraction, so to speak, it doesn't mean anything. They don't know what they're doing there. They don't know how to work it. They go, why doesn't it work. You have to in some ways go back to the very beginning.

And I like to teach drawing in a fairly traditional way, not in the sense of models, still lifes, forms and all that kind of stuff. But in the sense of teaching them again, what I said before, what black and white is.

MR. CUMMINGS: This is what you can do with a pencil and this is a crayon, charcoal --

MS. REMINGTON: Right, exactly. And what I like to do is have them do things with a lot of mixed media using very soft pencil and maybe charcoal and maybe ink and maybe black and white gouache, anything, any number of combinations that you can think of as long as it's pretty monochromatic, as long as it pretty well sticks to the black, white and gray.

These kids, you'd be surprised, have never really fully explored all of this, and I do try to do this for maybe half a semester. I'll give them other concepts. Let's say, I might explain to them what Chinese perspective is. In other words, conceive of perspective as you would, let's say, from a bird's eye view, that maybe have many horizon lines. They don't know about things like this, and I say to them, now, you use it. See what you can do.

And I don't mean paint landscapes, you see, but how do you control space. I might say to them, all right. Look, today, we're going to deal with foreground, middle ground, background. Now, you'd be surprised how many advanced painting students are going to stand there and look at you, what do you mean?

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MS. REMINGTON: And I'll say, all right. Foreground, middle ground, background, you're not going to do this. You don't have to do this in terms of landscape or something representational. In fact, it's harder when you don't, but I want to see if you can manipulate space, if you can make forms or spatial concepts work in a situation of foreground, middle ground, background and everything in between so that you can put that up on the wall and I can read it. And the more non-representationally they work, the more challenge it is. And we might spend a couple weeks on that because they think they know it in the beginning. They think, oh, easy, right. Two weeks later, they're still scratching their heads because it does get very hard and very complicated.

I do things like that maybe for the first half of the semester, and then we begin adding a little color. I sort of open the door. I say, okay, now you know this. Now you do it. Bring color in if you want. I don't put any --

MR. CUMMINGS: No palettes or anything --

MS. REMINGTON: No. I mean, whatever you want. If you want to burst into full color, fine. If you want to bring one or two colors in and still continue with your black and white, fine. If you don't want to work with color, that's fine, too. I don't care.

The first half of the semester, I tend to be a little bit more structured, and the second half, although it's very structured, it's much more open to them because then a lot of their problems in painting, mostly, will come out in the drawing. And then I can take care of that.

It's very nice at Cooper because most of my kids who will be taking the painting class will be taking the drawing class, so I have a -- I haven't insisted on that before, but I think maybe from now on, I might suggest that that's a very good tandem arrangement because I can deal with a lot of things.

MR. CUMMINGS: How do you give them credit on their work?

MS. REMINGTON: How do I give them credit?

MR. CUMMINGS: I mean, you have to give them -- pass them or give them kind of --

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, I have to give them grades. It's very difficult. Well, my feeling about grades is -- especially at Cooper because the school is a strictly -- run strictly on the basis of scholarships. That -- you'd be surprised. When kids don't keep their work up, there's no more scholarship. You don't get to go to school anymore. So you don't have -- when I've taught in other art schools, you have -- there's an element of the little rich kids who don't do --

MR. CUMMINGS: They just sign the check --

MS. REMINGTON: They play. They play. They don't want to get into something that's going to be terribly mind boggling, so they go into art, and they play. And basically, they're F students. They don't try.

With my kids, I really feel that most of them are A or B students. Occasionally -- because right in the beginning if they don't work, I ask them to leave. I don't want to deal with them. I don't want to give people Fs or Ds or Cs.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, and it takes your time, too.

MS. REMINGTON: On the quality of their work, it's very -- it's practically impossible to say, well, you're an A quality or you're a C quality. It's almost impossible. What I have to do is grade it on the basis of achievement, how far they've come with me, how much they're really gotten into the work, how much -- not really how much they produced but what they produce. Are they taking in what I'm saying? Are they seriously involved in the work? I can tell this.

When we talk in these half hour to 45-minute sessions, I get everything from -- I mean, I get all their -- very often a lot of their personal problems because their personal problems are getting in the way of the painting. And I try to say, hey, look, you can solve that. I don't solve it for them or I'm not there to give them advice in their personal life, but many of them do feel that they have to tell me all these things.

Very often, these kids don't have anybody to talk to. Their parents, they can't talk to their parents, and they're very troubled about a lot of things. And when it starts to get into the painting where they can't work and -- because the problems are bigger than the work, then all right, then I have to deal with that. And I've been able to, I think, deal with all that pretty effectively.

MR. CUMMINGS: It's always interested about so many art people are very -- and practically all that I've talked to have always or at some point had great problems in relating to their families and to the world. Have you noticed that amongst your students?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, I don't know if -- all my students have problems.

MR. CUMMINGS: One kind or another.

MS. REMINGTON: One kind or another and some of them are very severe. I mean, some of them tell me all about their drug habits and then their boyfriends and their girlfriends, all this stuff. I mean --

MR. CUMMINGS: Is there still a lot of drugs in --

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, a lot of them regulate their bodies with the uppers and downers and everything. And I don't say, well, that's very bad for you and you shouldn't do that and you're naughty and everything because I think there's another way to deal with that. This is the stuff they get from their parents, so I don't deal with it that way. But I almost don't say anything the first couple of times they tell me all this stuff, and if they persist at it and want to discuss it, then we discuss it.

But, I mean, what they do with their bodies in terms of drugs is not up to me. I don't -- this is not my area as long as they don't do it in class. And they're all -- these kids are all very bright and really pretty responsible kids.

Most of them do have problems relating to their parents. They're all -- almost all of them, not all of them, but almost all of them are in strong rebellion against the parents and the home situation, and many of them are from out of town. And the ones that are -- well, I think probably the ones that comes from out of town -- and out of town could mean New Jersey -- are much more in conflict with the parents than the ones who still live at home. I still had some of my kids who were living at home that didn't feel such a conflict or need to get away and be free and fly as a bird and all this junk, right.

I didn't -- I really have not been aware that students or artists in general have a lot of problems with relating to the parents or the home. I mean, I've never -- I suppose so. I mean, who do you meet that doesn't have this kind of problem? I just sort of took it for granted, not only people in the arts but other people, too.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, it's -- maybe their resolution of it is different.

MS. REMINGTON: That's possible. That's quite possible.

But I teach because I really -- I love to teach. I love to be able to give. I keep my teaching down. Now I will be teaching seven hours a week, and to me, that is just plenty. I can't handle any more than that.

MR. CUMMINGS: What is that, two days?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, that's two mornings, four hours for the advanced painting and three hours for the advanced drawing, but I think that's just plenty. I can't do any more than that because when I teach, I give a lot of myself. I just give everything, and I do it because I love these kids.

And the kids, they're marvelous. They'll really do anything for me. Like, last spring I was getting ready for the show in Washington, and I needed some help. I really needed studio help. I didn't -- Dorothy was helping me somewhat, but it wasn't enough. Well, I just happened to mention it in class one day, well, I had so many people offer to help me, and two of the girls, I sort of called at because of what they could do and the attitude toward my work, what their attitude would be. Those kids came religiously and helped me.

This summer, it's very interesting. One of the girls is back in school, but the other one graduated. And she called me up after she graduated and said, "Do you need some help this summer? I'd just love to come and help you."

This girl has a full-time job, and she comes at least once a week and helps me. I said, "Look, what are you doing this for?"

She said, "I love it. I just love being here. I like -- because I can talk to you about my work and your work."

These kids really learn this way, and I've really found them to be marvelous individuals. It's a great -- I suppose I get something back from them.

MR. CUMMINGS: Where did you get to know Dore Ashton?

MS. REMINGTON: I first met Dore Ashton in 1965 when I was still living in San Francisco in the summer. I was invited to a dinner party at the home of a painter who also teaches at University of California Berkeley, a man named Erle Loran. And at that time, Dore and her husband Adja Yunkers had come out to teach. Both of them were going to teach that summer at Berkeley, and she was going to do something at art history. And he was going to teach painting.

I met Dore there, and we just sort of felt each other. It was marvelous. She had known my work. Nobody knew my work at that time outside of San Francisco. But Dore had delved into this and had seen my work and had been fascinated by it and was very happy to meet me, blah, blah, blah. And we had a couple of nice long talks over that period.

I was getting ready for my Dilexi show in the fall of '65 and getting ready to come to New York. And I told Dore. She said, "Look, when you come to New York, look me up."

And Dore has written a lot of what I consider very responsible art criticism about my work, and we've also been friends for this number of years, I mean, good friends where if there are problems, one of us could talk to the other one kind of thing. Not that I see her that often.

And then she became head of the department at Cooper and asked me if I would teach simply, as I said before, because she knows my approach and my feeling toward the kids. It must work because last -- I have only taught there one semester, and my fall class for the painting class, there are more kids that signed up for that than has ever been. And they told me this, that's ever been in recent history of Cooper Union. So something must be happening.

[END OF REEL 4 SIDE B.]

MR. CUMMINGS: This is Side 9. It's the 9 of July, 1973. Paul Cummings talking to Deborah Remington.

If we could just continue a bit talking about the life in SoHo and how you feel it is useful to you or affects you and the relationships with what is becoming a large art community.

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, the Greenwich Village of the '20s is about to be born again in SoHo. I think it's good socially because everybody is close together. You can meet a number of people, let's say, in the neighborhood. In 19 -- I think about 1971 a mutual friend -- actually a boy that was going some carpentry work for me -- who knew Lowell Nesbitt, studied with him or something. Maybe not studied with him, anyway, he knew him. This is a for instance.

I have always loved Lowell's work and vice versa. Now, I have never met Lowell. So this kid one night said -- invited both of us over and introduced us to each other which was marvelous. I mean, it was like meeting an old friend you've never met before. You know what I mean?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: Lowell and I sat down and just proceeded to unfortunately exclude everybody else from the conversation, but it was like someone's parallel career who had run parallel to your own. There was so much to talk about, his work, my work, his life, his galleries, my galleries, et cetera, et cetera. Now, Lowell happens to live on the corner of Broome and Wooster Street, and there, for instance, is someone, now we've become fairly good friends. Is someone who is -- there's a nice exchange between not only friendship-wise but, what, professionally.

In other words, Lowell is the person who introduced me to the dealers at the Pyramid in Washington and brought them over, and then I subsequently had a show. Now, this would have been in '72, and I subsequently had a show at Pyramid in the spring of '73. I also -- I have introduced Lowell to my dealer in Paris, Darthea Speyer. I think that was a nice relationship. They're getting to know each other. I hope that she would give him a show. It's very nice.

There are things like that that go on in the neighborhood, and it's very convenient because then they can call up and say, hey, can I bring a dealer over. And it's two blocks away or four blocks away. It's good professionally in that sense. Social, professional kind of thing because a lot of -- as you know, a lot of business is done socially and a lot of professional business is done socially.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MS. REMINGTON: This makes it very convenient because there isn't this uptown and downtown business and a lot of time wasted. There's also a cohesiveness in the neighborhood when you can walk from one studio to the next.

Very often people will come down with, let's say, gallery dealers from Europe. Someone last spring brought several dealers, different dealers from Italy, a woman named Anna Canova [phonetic], who is an artist and she deals privately, lives in SoHo, is Italian. And Italian dealers contact her for people to see, let's say, in New York, not especially in SoHo. But it's very easy for her. She -- they come down, and she --

MR. CUMMINGS: Block to block, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: -- trots them around and takes them to lunch in the neighborhood, that kind of thing. Now, this is on the increase, this kind of thing where --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, what about where there's a, say, clash of aesthetic ideas? Do you find that that --

MS. REMINGTON: Well, I think that's healthy. I mean, that's --

MR. CUMMINGS: But, I mean, do you find that people group themselves here, that certain kind of figurative painters might go off and have a clique? Is that noticeable, or it's pretty --

MS. REMINGTON: I suppose so. I don't notice it that much because when I socialize, I generally tend to socialize with all different kinds of artists, and I don't -- that doesn't come up so much. I think in the beginning when you're just starting out when you're a student, that kind of thing is much more prevalent, the clique idea and the manifesto. We don't socialize with anybody who doesn't believe in our kind of painting.

But I think when you really get into a solid professional level and you respect another person's work and his ideas, although they may be absolutely opposite from your own, you can still socialize with a person like this or with people like this and have a very interesting and good time exchanging

opposite ideas and exchanging conflicting views. And I think this adds to the dimension of a person. I find this extremely beneficial.

It's part of the idea of going out and plugging into something because it's something different and something -- somebody else's ideas, somebody else's views, and I think that's always helpful. I don't want to talk to people who agree with me all the time or who have the same views as I do. I think that's very boring.

MR. CUMMINGS: There's no enrichment, either.

MS. REMINGTON: There's no enrichment. There's no pushing out. There are no new frontiers to be introduced do when you're just kind of in this solid mass of Jell-O, and you never get out.

MR. CUMMINGS: What do you think is going to happen because of the increased population here and increased transformation of buildings into lofts and cars -- and costs in real estate and how it's going to affect, say, the next -- the younger groups of artists as they keep appearing?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, unless the younger groups of artists have a lot of money, I don't think they're going to be able to get into SoHo. It's very interesting because SoHo, the 26-square block area, is the greatest single implement in the state of New York in real estate in the past four years. Can you imagine that?

MR. CUMMINGS: Really? What is that -- it's bounded by Canal, Broadway --

MS. REMINGTON: Canal -- no. Canal, I think it goes over to Lafayette Street on the east, Houston on the north and West Broadway on the west.

MR. CUMMINGS: It doesn't go over to Sixth Avenue?

MS. REMINGTON: No, it does not go to Sixth Avenue. It's just strictly to West Broadway. There may be a little jogging in and out here and there, and it may go to Sixth Avenue for one block and come back again. In fact, I think it does, but essentially, that's the main body of it.

Real estate has really, really risen down here. I think it's leveling off a little bit. A friend of mine just got into a co-op and the -- I saw the building. It's a very good building, and it was only \$150,000 on Wooster Street in good shape, which is very cheap. These are -- this is going back to 1968 and '69 prices, but most of the buildings, let's say, that you would pay \$150,000 for are now today between, oh, 3, 350, \$400,000. And this is -- to co-op --

MR. CUMMINGS: But that's after the improvements and everything, too, isn't it?

MS. REMINGTON: No, that's just the raw building.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, the raw building. People are much -- have gotten much smarter in terms of the price they can command for all this. Now, until that levels off and I think it's beginning to level off because money is a little tight, it's going to be very difficult for people to buy into the co-ops.

And this is one thing in the fall that SoHo is planning to do in connection with the city planning commission is to work on rezoning SoHo. We want to try to zone out any further encroachment in SoHo with the things you find in the Village, the craft shops, the boutiques, the restaurants, the bars. We don't need all that down here. I mean, what is here gets to stay here.

But we really want to slow it down and try to stop it because this drains our industry. It brings a certain element into the area where the streets become more unsafe at night. There's something for people to hang around and do, and this is really not what we want. This is a professional neighborhood really to be reserved for professional people, including the little businesses who are here during the day.

I really hope that this is going to work. I think it will.

MR. CUMMINGS: How do you find the small business people that you've talked to or met over the years who've been here for 20 years, say? Do they like the artists?

MS. REMINGTON: I've met some of them who've been here 40 years.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, well, you know.

MS. REMINGTON: And so on. Most of them don't mind the artist. Some of them during this summer of '71 when Chuck Low, the great land speculator, developer, ha, ha, when he came down here to put a sports palace up, he went around and tried to do a great PR number on the artists down here, telling them this -- the artists were terrible and we all had rats in our lots and we threw garbage in the street and so on and so forth.

And some of the businessmen believed it. Those who wanted to did, and those who didn't want to didn't. And many of these businessmen have been into some of the lofts and are astounded because they are so beautiful and well-kept and clean and neat and no garbage and no roaches and no rats running around. I think that all in all, the businesspeople down here, probably 80 percent would be for the artists and maybe 20 percent neutral and/or against.

But most of them are -- most of the small businesses who do any kind of retail business where the artist can be involved anywhere from, let's say, a sporting goods, which there's one on the corner of Canal and West Broadway, to a tinsmith to an elevator repair company, these people can all use the new business from the artists. These people tend to like the artists. Anytime where their business has noticeably increased because of the influx of the artists or artist-related people, they tend to like it. And they tend to like the artists. So I think all in all --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, it's pragmatic, too.

MS. REMINGTON: Right. I think in all in all, it's a pretty -- there's very little hostility with SoHo between the businesspeople and the artists. There is some hostility between the Italian communities on either side and the art community because they can no longer run SoHo. I mean, before SoHo, let's say, only had a couple of hundred people years ago, when we voted and we're all in the same political districts, when we voted, we almost had no voice because we had no people.

Now, we're about 3,000 people and heavily Democratic, heavily liberal Democratic, and we do have a very strong vote. And we are starting to -- our candidates who run against the local Italians are starting to make inroads. Some of our candidates are starting to win. And this is bringing a little bit of friction, but I don't think it's -- it really isn't too bad or horrendous or overwhelming or anything like that.



And also, the Italians tend to be very conservative, and some of the people wandering through Little Italy, I guess with the strange clothes and so on and so forth, they tend to be a little upset about all that. But it's nothing that's -- there's no warfare yet.

MR. CUMMINGS: Because in a sense, SoHo has really split that community which ran all across the top of Canal Street in a way.

MS. REMINGTON: No, the community -- I mean, the Mulberry Street Little Italy and the Sullivan Thompson Street Little Italy have almost been split because the different mafia families don't get along. I mean, all the families operate in the Mulberry Street Little Italy pretty well. I mean, you have number runners from different families on each corner and they coexist and they have for years.

But Thompson Sullivan Street, there's pretty much always one family in control of that area, and, oh, we had a old gangster here killed in Brooklyn awhile back, not Joey Gallo, but the other one. Tommy Eboli, Tommy Eboli was really the godfather of the Thompson Sullivan Street area. He'd been born and raised on Thompson Street, and there was some problem. And his -- he pretty well controlled that area, and the number runners in that area really belong to him and so on. And then he was killed. I don't know exactly why, but, I mean, evidently, now control has passed from that -- from his control, that family to something else.

But it's pretty quiet. At least they don't kill them in the neighborhoods. They do it nicely in Brooklyn, which I think is considerate.

MR. CUMMINGS: Let's pursue the chronology a bit. What -- we talked about mostly exhibitions, right, in the last -- we had covered all the exhibitions and --

MS. REMINGTON: No, I don't -- let's see. Did we?

MR. CUMMINGS: We talked about the Obelisk and Bykert exhibitions, Dilexi.

MS. REMINGTON: Wait. In '73, we had [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: No, not --

MS. REMINGTON: -- talked about.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did they go?

MS. REMINGTON: Let's see. The year 1972, that was rather horrendous for me in a -- a -- bad year in a way because -- let's see. In June of '72, I broke up with someone, a man I had really been very close to for seven years, and this is, of course, very hard to take. Immediately that summer -- and I also got into a very intense relationship.

Meanwhile, I'm working on my show for the fall. At that time, I had -- in August of '72, I had a marvelous studio assistant who came to me from the Great Lakes College Association who name was Marjorie Egey [phonetic]. Now, Marjorie came from DePaul University in the Midwest and was very anxious to come to New York and be my apprentice, and we had spoken with each other and everything. Well, she came in August and helped me. I was working very large paintings for the show and working very hard, I mean, physically, which I guess is very good. It agreed with me.

The show opened November 18th, and the beginning of November, my mother, who was living here in New York, called up and said that she was going to the hospital. And for two weeks, I tried to find

out what was really wrong with her. The doctor didn't know, wouldn't tell me. On the 16th of November, she died. That's two days before my opening at Bykert. Well, you can imagine. That really threw me off because it was also kind of a shock and I had been working so hard, I hadn't been able to get to the hospital enough to see her because I was working 12, 15 hours a day at this time.

So just about the time she died, my assistant Marjorie had somewhat of an emotional upheaval, and I don't know. New York was too much for her, the pressure, the show, et cetera. So she kind of fell apart, and here I am left with this -- everything falling apart around me. It was really a very horrendous thing. I didn't realize until later.

All right. Then I went into the show. I hadn't had a show with Klaus since 1969, and I found through this that -- going through this show, his attitude had really changed over the years. Since I hadn't had a show, I really didn't know what his attitude was. It seemed to me that he was a little more withdrawn than he should have been in terms of handling the collectors, the press, et cetera.

I would call him and say, "Well, who came in today?"

And he'd say, well, so-and-so.

And I'd say, "Well, what did he say?"

And he'd say, "Oh, I don't know. I didn't talk to him. I don't get along with him."

So little by little, the role unfolded where I found that Klaus who was probably still very idealistic about finding and presenting art, when he -- when you got to a certain point in the gallery, he kind of lets you drift on your own. This is hard to explain. Certain of us have gotten to a point, the ones who've been with him for a long time, he doesn't really push you anymore. He kind of lets you drift because he feels that --

MR. CUMMINGS: You've been launched.

MS. REMINGTON: You've been launched, you're secure enough to make it, your ship will float very well. I'll just kind of wander around during this thing. Well, I found this really upsetting because it wasn't giving -- I wasn't finding the support I needed from a dealer. I mean, a dealer has a certain role to play, right, whether he likes it or not. I mean, he really should play it. But I found that Klaus had gotten out of that.

And I've spoken to other people about this who have found the same thing happening with him. He seems to have not lost interest in but simply maybe lost interest in performing his function as the dealer to promote the artist --

MR. CUMMINGS: I think he's lost -- from my conversations with him, I think he's lost interest in doing a lot of the activities that a dealer should do on a continuing basis.

MS. REMINGTON: That's right.

MR. CUMMINGS: Whichever exhibition he happens to have.

MS. REMINGTON: That's right.

MR. CUMMINGS: He's very --

MS. REMINGTON: Withdrawn.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, constantly. He sits back there in that little room.

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, it's become a -- he's become a little withdrawn from the things that he should do. He's not doing for the artist, the ongoing thing, the ongoing promotional thing. He's not doing it.

Now, this I found disappointing and frustrating. Between his withdrawal -- I mean, where he really lives now still is in finding young unknown people and launching them, and this is really what he should do. That's exactly what he's interested in, but once you're launched and once you're sailing along, he totally -- he kind of turns off.

He doesn't get along with an awful lot of people in the press. He would tell me certain critics came in. Like, he said Tom Hess came in twice. Now, Tom Hess did not review my show, but if the man came in twice, which I found very interesting. I don't think -- if he were not interested in that work, why come back?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: And I said, "Well, what did you say to him? Did he take any -- did he get any photographs from you?"

Klaus said, "Well, I didn't talk to him." He said, "I don't get along with him."

And Pincus Witten came back twice from *Art Forum* and the same thing. I said, "Did he take any photo -- did he get any photographs from you? What did you say?"

He said, "Well, I don't get along with him. So I didn't give him any photographs, and I didn't talk to him."

So these people have to rely on the secretary. Well, the secretary is a nice girl, but she does things like -- people have told me they've gone up to the gallery after the show to see some work, and she'll pull work out of the stacks halfway so you see half a painting. And then she'll push that back in and pull another one halfway out.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, dear.

MS. REMINGTON: And this doesn't really encourage sales.

MR. CUMMINGS: It drives you crazy, no.

MS. REMINGTON: And it drives people crazy. So I've had a lot of complaints about that. I've had two wealthy collectors gone in and called me up and were astounded at the rude treatment they got from Klaus. He's -- they said he was absolutely rude.

Now, on top of everything else I've had, I have had during that year so far, this was another frustrating obstacle in my life because I had put up what I considered, still consider to this day, the best show I have put up to date. That was the best show I've had to date. It was the most important show, most -- really some powerful paintings there and I showed five drawings, five pencil drawings.

MR. CUMMINGS: And nothing happened.

MS. REMINGTON: And nothing happened. I got good reviews, although they were short. Somebody wrote it up in the *Times*, the *Saturday Times*. And *Arts* reviewed it and *Art News* reviewed it and they were all good reviews, but there could have been and should have been more reviews, more activity. The show, which I considered very important and I put so much work, time and energy in, went down not as noticed as it should have, and I found this an extremely frustrating situation.

In December, I decided to take a vacation because I felt I really needed since what I'd been through. Meanwhile, my studio assistant had pretty well cracked up and gone back to Wallingford, Pennsylvania to recover from the horrors of New York. And I took off for South America and went to Colombia for a couple of weeks and wandered all through Colombia.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you pick Colombia?

MS. REMINGTON: I wanted to go somewhere which I considered not the ends of the earth, but almost. Somewhere where I could really feel I could get away.

MR. CUMMINGS: Primitive.

MS. REMINGTON: Primitive but I speak Spanish well enough, so there's no language problem. And Colombian Spanish is really the most beautiful Spanish spoken in the world.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, I mean, ask Spanish speaking people --

MR. CUMMINGS: In what way?

MS. REMINGTON: -- that. They speak with a very clear definitive accent. They speak very correctly. I mean, I'm not including when you get down in the coast like Cartagena and Santa Marta and places like that where you have an awful lot of dialects. I mean, I can even understand that up to a point that's workable. I can get around that. Then when you get to Bogota, they speak the most beautiful Spanish, accent-wise and correctness and the whole thing. And it's peppered with beautiful expressions that, let's say, they don't have in other Spanish. I mean, the Argentine or something, the Spanish is different.

And, of course, Puerto Rican Spanish is almost not Spanish. It's another language. But nowhere do they speak it as beautifully as Colombia. And I had had [inaudible] Colombia -- a professor of Spanish from Colombia so I remember that he had said this, and I thought, well, he was just bragging. But no, in fact, it's true.

So I went to Colombia. I went to Bogota, saw, I don't know, a lot of the gold. The gold museum there is great and wandered around there, and then I went down to the coast and to Cartagena and Santa Marta. And it's very slow and beautiful, and I did a lot of swimming. Thought I relaxed a lot. Hoped I did. This was a couple weeks.

And then I came back in December, and about that time, my dealer from Paris came over, Darthea Speyer. And that was a very pleasant to see her because she's -- I think I mentioned this before. She's been my dealer now for nine years, and we have a very special and very good relationship. And I have her a big party in January, which was kind of fun, lots of people from the art world and so

forth. And she went back.

And then I launched into my show for the Pyramid, which opened May 8 in Washington of '73. And I started working very hard on that. I started teaching at Cooper at the time, and anyway, I did another what I think is a good body of work.

Somewhere I had mentioned in the summer of '72 that I had gotten involved with another man in a very kind of intense relationship. Well, this broke up in March, the latter part of March, and I guess that was the straw that broke the camel's back because about three weeks later, I ended up in the hospital.

Falling apart again and going to the hospital, it seems that because of all the stress and strain which I, of course, was not aware because I'm a superhuman wonder woman. I learned the hard way. I hit myself over the head, go to the hospital, and understand that I really had better slow down.

I had forgotten something. Last summer, the summer of '71 -- wait. The summer of '72, the marvelous man about town Chuck Low, who I have discussed before who bought the old railroad express lot beside my building, decided he was going to put up a 21-story sports palace. This would have no windows in it. It would just be a nice big block of cement, a slab in the middle of SoHo, and we all got very upset.

Did I cover this before? I don't think I --

MR. CUMMINGS: It sort of woven in and out in bits and pieces.

MS. REMINGTON: It's woven in and out. But anyway, I launched right into this in June of '72. I was really together with our lawyer Charles Jurist -- he's the volunteer lawyer for the arts and volunteered to help us in this. Volunteer lawyers for the arts are people who are interested in the arts who take no money for their fees. I mean, they generally help dance companies, theater companies who have legal problems. And Charles, who is more interested in visual arts, has helped SoHo through a number of things.

But this was a major battle, and this, I worked on together with another artist here in the building, Ron Levinson, and another artist, a media artist, Roger Carsons, who's in the Grand Street co-op, and a few other people, but mostly -- Charles Leslie was in on this before he went to Europe that summer. And a few other artists who did a lot of, oh, kind of peripheral work. But, I mean, the core, our core, did just about -- oh, Linda Lutz was also in on it. She also lives in this building.

We fought this all summer for -- most of us worked about 12 years day. So I was doing that and trying to paint, wearing myself out and worrying about this horrible, horrible thing and going down to the board of standards and appeals, which he -- to which he applied for certain variances. Now, the fight was difficult and long. He had his lawyers who were Lindenbron [phonetic] & Sons, who just do work with the board of standards and appeals. They're a law firm where if you want a certain kind of variance in real estate, you hire them because it's automatic that you get what you hire.

All right. So he -- Low was granted was all of these variances from the board of standards and appeals. Now, the EPA had come out very -- the Environmental Protection Agency had come out very much against this. Certain other groups and people in town had come out very much, very strongly against this. I mean, everybody from landmarks preservation to the EPA and so on and so forth felt that this would, of course, be the end of SoHo. Spell -- it would just open the door for

every -- any and all developers to come in and tear down buildings and do what they wanted because, of course, we had not at that time any protection in terms of landmark designation. We still don't, although they've promised to do it by the 20 of July.

All right. So we've lost to the board of standards and appeals. Now, under Article 78 of the city charter, there is provision that a citizen or a group of citizens can sue any city body of the city of New York on the grounds of capricious and arbitrary action. Well, we thought obviously that the board had acted capriciously and arbitrarily and that -- giving him all of his variances even though there were obvious payoffs. So we knew what we were in for. So we took him to court under Article 78. We actually sued the board of standards and appeals, and he had a right to -- his lawyers could intervene on his behalf in terms of bringing evidence and so forth.

While we started litigation, I think, in -- what, that would have had to have been somewhere in November, and the city -- the corporation counsel which was the legal arm of the city of New York. It has to defend board of standards and appeals, and then Mr. Low and his lawyers can intervene or his lawyers can intervene on his client's behalf with evidence or whatever.

Now, the first hearing was scheduled for January. That was postponed either because the city -- the corporation counsel was not ready. To make a long story short, we have never had a hearing yet. It keeps being postponed. It's now up to July 24. And he meanwhile, of course, when a developer is in any kind of litigation, he cannot raise his backing. So he couldn't raise any money for the sports palace.

So anyway, that seems pretty well dead. Recently, this past spring, he came up with another harebrained idea of artists' housing where you could buy --

MR. CUMMINGS: If you can't beat them, join them, right?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, if you can't beat them, join them. Well, the Italian community to whom he had promised jobs in the sports palace, 80 jobs plus free time for certain children and this, that and the other thing, they were outraged. They absolutely went against the artists' housing. Of course, we were against it on economic grounds, but they were against on other grounds. If we can't have our sports palace, they're not going to have their artists' housing, right? Well, we were perfectly delighted. We had not counted on the Italians coming to our rescue. They thought, on the other hand, they were shooting us down.

So anyway, I spent a lot of the time over the past year doing this. Realizing I was not superwoman, lying there and flat on my back, it seems that under stress, certain of my chemical systems have not functioned, and this brought on all kinds of problems, some of which could have been -- which were very serious. And the doctor who saved me in 1967 saved me again. Gideon Panter came to my rescue.

Anyway, this whole thing had a very profound -- it was very profound in terms of running through this because I got -- let's see. I came home from the hospital, and about four weeks later, the same thing happened again. And I went back to the hospital. This was in June, the beginning of June. Again, he saved me, et cetera, et cetera.

I really realized that I had been almost immobile between hospital visits. I couldn't get around very well, and it was -- really spent a lot of time flat on my back. And having done that for almost two months, one gets a lot of time to think because there's nothing else to do. And I think it was -- it had done something really profound in terms of my thinking, my whole rehashing of my whole life

situation. And it was a very profound turning point in certain ways in terms of my attitudes, in terms of working out a lot of things that I hadn't had time to do.

And for instance, mother's death was still bothering me in a very bad way. I couldn't deal with this up until that time because I didn't have time. I didn't have the mental time to do it. I was much too engrossed in other things. You can't -- I mean, one of the lessons I learned is that you just can't go through very horrendous earth-shaking personal tragedies, which I had gone through this past year, very -- a lot of them without something happening. You just can't brush them under the rug and dismiss them like I thought one could.

So I found that superhuman woman, me, ultra-strong, ultra-everything was, in fact, very fallible and very human. And that was another thing that was a revelation to me. All through the years of having to fight and struggle and survival to be an artist, a woman artist, okay, with no women's lib, nothing like that to help you and you become very strong because you learn to rely on yourself. Your security is based within you, not without you, if you follow --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MS. REMINGTON: You --

MR. CUMMINGS: You're not a part of a structure that takes care of you and you do your thing and it does --

MS. REMINGTON: I'm not part of any structure, and my work is not part of a school. So I find -- I would find no compassion or support from people, let's say, whose work identified with mine because I wasn't part of a movement. I wasn't part of abstract expressionism or a part of something else where you could really find a great deal of reassurance --

MR. CUMMINGS: Group support in a way, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: Group support, reassurance. There were many times and I guess there still are in my life where I feel that I'm absolutely out in left field all by myself in terms of my work because I don't identify with a group, nobody identifies with me. It's a very singular path, and this tends through the years to make you strong. You either sink or swim.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MS. REMINGTON: You either survive or you don't, and I mean survive physically and also artistically. It's a very complicated web, things that I have really stopped to consider until this whole -- I got sick and this whole horrendous thing happened, but I got time to really stop and draw some of the strings together, sort them out a little bit. And I found that for the first time in my life I had to learn how to say help to people which is very difficult to me. I couldn't say to a friend, help, I really need help. I have to talk to somebody, or I have to -- I can't solve my problems all by myself like I used to be able to.

It was a -- in this way had a very meaningful -- and meaningful impact on me because I really learned how to go out to other people in a way that I was not used to because I was always super strong. I could take of all my own problems, and I've done pretty well through the years with that. But I guess this past year had really been just too much. It had piled up --

MR. CUMMINGS: Everything happened --

MS. REMINGTON: -- too fast, too furiously, boom. And it was an awful thing to go through, but in a way, it really opened up a lot of areas in me. And I think that I'm better able to cope with a lot of things. And I said to the doctor, "Why do I have to go through this?"

And he said, "Well, because stress and strain react on the body. Any kind of stress, the body will react to in a similar way. In other words, wherever your weak spot is -- now some people" -- he said, "It's -- some people get ulcers. Some people go mad." He said, "Yours just happened in this particular way. I mean, some of the chemical systems didn't function." So he said to me, "Well, you can either have this, have an ulcer, or go mad. What do you want?"

I said, "Well, I guess I'll take this. It seems to be a little better than anything else."

Anyway, I got out of the hospital the first time. That was in late -- no, that was in early May, I guess. And pleading them to let me -- pleading with them to let me out so I could come out and finish my show for the Pyramid, which I did. I had about three paintings to finish up. And I finished those up in time for all the work to be shipped off to Washington. And I went down to Washington on the Metroliner, which was just great fun, and stayed in Washington for about three days and found them very hospitable.

Everybody in Washington was very sweet. Southern hospitality, you don't really realize you're in the South, but you really are. I mean, all of a sudden, people started to speak with a southern accent and so forth.

All right. So I -- the dealers at the Pyramid are two Cubans -- well, I'm sorry. Two Cubans named Ramona Suna [phonetic] and Luis Bostra [phonetic]. Now, they're very nice and very sweet and ultra-charming and just very difficult to do business with, and I found this adding to my frustration. I mean, difficult to do business with where they don't answer the letters. They --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, yes [inaudible].

MS. REMINGTON: They promise to call you back, and they don't do that. And this gets misplaced, and that gets misplaced. They have a great reputation in Washington of really pushing you and selling your work and so forth.

Well, at this time, as you know, Watergate had broken. We're beginning to be in the middle of that, plus the dollar was not doing very well. And I had not had a show in Washington before. This is my first show. So the show, they only sold a couple of paintings, right, whereas I had thought they would do a lot better. And they were complaining the prices were too high, but these are New York prices. I mean, if they can't sell it for that, I'm not going to --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MS. REMINGTON: -- lower the prices. That's their problem. But it's a constant thing of trying to chisel you down on your percentage. In other words, we had agreed on 40/60. They would take 40 percent, and in the middle of a sale, they then absolutely demanded that we do a 50/50 thing because they had given the -- supposedly given the -- one of the collectors so much off and so on and so forth.

I found this adding to an area of strain and stress, which I hadn't yet -- I hadn't been back to the hospital the second time so I hadn't really figured out that I should eliminate all stress from my life, at least at this moment.



All right. So that -- anyway, I got a very -- supposedly got a very good review from a reviewer in Washington named Forgey, Ben Forgey. And I think he writes for the *Star News*. They called to tell me that I had this marvelous review. Well, I had asked them at least 20 times to send me the review. They still have not done it, and we're in July.

All right. I come back from Washington and fall apart again. Go back to the hospital. And when I get out the second time, I was even in worse shape than the first time, and I couldn't handle anything. So I asked my lawyer, Charles Jurist, who's the volunteer lawyer for the arts for SoHo -- he had become a very dear friend of mine. And I said, "Will you be my business manager?" because I knew -- everything up to this point was so reminiscent of some problems I had had with Obelisk in Boston, the same thing.

The pattern is always the same. They never get your letters. The phone calls are misplaced, and when you call, nobody's there to talk to you. Try to get your money, forget it. Invoices get lost. Receipts for work don't exist and so on and so forth.

And I really saw the writing on the wall, and I thought, well -- because I had some problems Obelisk. They tried to -- really tried to beat me out of over \$700, and this was last -- another marvelous story. This was last December. And I had waited for the money for a year and a half, which I thought was sufficient. It showed that I really was dealing with them in good faith. I called them on the phone, and actually I finally got the accountant. And we went over the books, and there were many, many mistakes. And she started to admit, well, yes, we didn't send you enough money on this sale and that sale and this and that.

And the painting, this is -- I'm still talking about Obelisk. The painting Obelisk had sold to the Addison Gallery of American Art, the price on that painting at that time in 1971 was \$4500. Now, unbeknownst to me, they sold the painting to the Addison not for the usual 10 percent off, but for a flat \$2,000. I was horrified when I found this out, and they had sent me, I don't know, something like \$1300. And this is -- or 1400, I don't know. And this is where most of the discrepancy lied.

I felt this was very dishonest and I told them --

MR. CUMMINGS: How could they do that without calling you or telling you?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, I don't know, but, I mean, this is what you get when you get into galleries that --

MR. CUMMINGS: They did it.

MS. REMINGTON: -- in the case of the Obelisk, I think they had really high principles in mind. I mean, this is Phyllis Rosen had made the sale, and I think she really had high principles in mind. She wanted that particular painting, which is really a magnificent painting. It's one of my best paintings. It's the big triangle I keep talking about. She really wanted that painting to be with that gallery because it's a kind of prestigious museum. They have one good painting by Homer and one good painting by Kline and et cetera, et cetera.

MR. CUMMINGS: It's a good collection.

MS. REMINGTON: It's a good collection. It's American artists and so forth, and she really was -- she did very well in getting the painting into the museum. Now, unbeknownst to me, the museum didn't have any more than \$2,000 to pay for it. Well, that's not my problem. That's the gallery's problem. Minus the 10 percent, I would have still been out about, I don't know, 21 or \$2200, and they were to

get the rest. Well, they were complaining they didn't make any money on the sale. I said, "Well, that's not my problem," et cetera.

So finally with the help of my friend Charles Jurist, I got the money from them, but it was the -- anyway, to get back to the Pyramid, it was exactly the same kind of signs. I was recognizing all of the signs there --

MR. CUMMINGS: Seen this all before.

MS. REMINGTON: -- from -- [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: I mean, other galleries and, of course, I've heard other people talk very negatively about not only the Obelisk but also about Pyramid. One of the stories I've heard about Pyramid is that they -- their favorite trick is taking young artists, unknown artists, buying their work and really exploiting them because they buy their work very cheaply and sell it not so cheaply.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do it [inaudible], yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: Do anything they want with it. And then they started haggling with this money and that money and this percent and that percent, and I finally -- that's when I said to my friend Charles, "Look, you want to be business manager for Washington?"

"Okay. Fine," he said.

Now, here's the situation like my doctor, my two doctors, my internist and my gynecologist. They both take paintings. They both collect.

Now, Charles is a young lawyer with Dewey Ballantine, has a, I guess, great future. He's extremely bright, Yale, Oxford educated and so forth. He collects, luckily. He happens to love my work. Had loved my work before he met me. So anything he does for me, I give him, oh, a drawing, and he really loves drawings and prints, mostly etchings. And he has some beautiful things, although he hasn't been collecting for more than, I guess, a couple of years. Since he really got involved with SoHo over the sports palace thing, his eye has opened up, and he's really come along in terms of visual education.

Anyway, so I gave him a drawing, and that part of it all worked out. Then I thought, well, I'd have nothing more to do with Pyramid, and then I thought, well, that's kind of silly because if Charles is doing all the business. And he got money for a sale from -- of a small painting. He got it out of them in three weeks, which most people say that it takes at least a year to get paid for anything at Pyramid. So it's worth having a lawyer take care of it.

Anyway, I got what I wanted out of the show. I wanted exposure in Washington, and that's exactly what I got. And I understand from not only the dealers but from other people that the show was really well received and people were very interested and so forth and lots of people came into look at it, and this is what I really wanted.

But this past year has not been exactly easy for me in dealing, another dimension of my life in dealing with galleries. I mean, I just have this kind of withdrawn thing from Klaus, and then to get into a nasty business thing with Pyramid. And that's what made me really think, well, look, I really need a business manager. Certainly not with Klaus because there's no -- really no problem there

with the business, it's just the -- just his lack of involvement, really his lack of involvement.

So that added another dimension, awful dimension to my life, and anyway, I hope I got that cleared up. And now I'm in the -- trying to keep myself together physically and feeling that I accomplished a lot in ironing out, straightening out a lot of things that I let go for a year, finishing up work to send to Darthea in Paris for the show in September.

And then I'm going out to Tamarind because I have a fellowship to Tamarind.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did that come about?

MS. REMINGTON: I guess in about 1967 I got a letter from June Wayne, who was then head of Tamarind in Los Angeles, and we corresponded for about four years. I never could get a time where I could go to Tamarind, and then it kind of stopped. All right. Then right after my show in '72 with -- at Bykert, my [inaudible] showing, received a letter from Clinton Adams, who is now head of Tamarind in Albuquerque, New Mexico. And he asked me to come out and left the dates open, and I couldn't see my way clear to that.

And then I -- so I never answered the letter, and six months went by. And then I got sick, and I thought I was going to go to Paris for my show. And with all this illness and so forth and the money and the fact that the last two shows didn't do exactly as well as I'd expected, I was very short of money. And I thought, ah, Tamarind, a pay vacation with a daily activity. So I go nuts sitting around if I couldn't do art, and then when I couldn't lie around someplace for six weeks, I would just go bananas completely.

So I wrote to Adams, and I said, "Hey, look, at the last minute, I would love to come out in August and -- half of August and all of September."

And he wrote back and said, "Well, we just had an artist cancel for that time slot."

Isn't that lucky? I really -- after dickering with this since 1967, now that is luck.

MR. CUMMINGS: At the last minute, it worked.

MS. REMINGTON: At the last minute, it worked. So I'm going out in mid-August and coming back on the first of October.

MR. CUMMINGS: You haven't made prints for years, though, have you?

MS. REMINGTON: I haven't made prints for years. No, I had a very bad experience with -- over a professional lithography shop in San Francisco, oh, much like Gemini and Tamarind, et cetera. This was called Original -- what's it called -- Original Press, I think. And it was started by Ruth Berenstein [phonetic] at the Key Gallery.

And I went out there, I guess, in 1968 to teach at the art institute for the summer, and she asked me, "Look, would you make a print? We pay \$500 for a print" and so on.

And it was a professional shop and what not. So I did a print, and the printer couldn't maintain the gradations. He lost them. They all got black and horrible in the printer and got awful. And I just was very discouraged by the printmaking.

Now I hear that at Tamarind they're really super good about very difficult technical things and --

MR. CUMMINGS: Because of Antreasian who does the graded color of his own prints.

MS. REMINGTON: Oh, really?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: But I hear that they can tell you what to do, they're very patient. They're very good, and you really work hard, which is good. I like to work hard. So I'm really looking forward to going out there and seeing again if I can do something.

But with color lithography, it's -- it becomes really difficult because registering all the different colors and the lines --

MR. CUMMINGS: I think you'll be surprised, though.

MS. REMINGTON: Really?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, I -- it's a long way from your friendly little printer down the street.

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah, it'd better be because that's what I've had. It's very [inaudible] --

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: -- except for making lithographs in school. And that was in my more expressionist period where if the register was off a little bit, that was even more marvelous, and you never knew what you were going to get. And I used to pull editions of maybe two, two color lithographs. But there was a time in my life where I really showed a lot of etchings and lithographs, well, in the early '50s. All the way through the '50s, I guess, from the beginning to the middle, and I was doing a lot of etching and lithography, really showing all over the place and then stopped. I mean, even some people thought I was a printmaker now and later.

MR. CUMMINGS: You had mentioned women's lib hither and thither through this thing. Have you been involved with that? What's --

MS. REMINGTON: No, I've not.

MR. CUMMINGS: Have you had any interest in it or ideas about it?

MS. REMINGTON: I've not been involved in it at all. I mean, I often get letters about come to this meeting or do that. It always comes at a time when I really don't have time. I don't know.

My feeling about that, I think I've mentioned this even before, is that economically I can really relate to women's lib. I think it's done a great deal. It's helped a great deal because now universities and art schools and any place where there are jobs available for teaching, they not only like to have women, it's almost a must. Women are no longer considered freaks in the bad way, but they're considered freaks in the good way. You have to have -- and I mean this is in the sense of you have to have a woman on the faculty and a black on the faculty, and if you can get a black woman, that's even better, right?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, you've got two in one.

MS. REMINGTON: Two in one, exactly. I mean, this is consistent in -- my Lord, look at your news programs. I mean, you always have like a minority woman on the news program and so on and so

forth. In that sense, I think it's good because it has opened tremendous opportunities economically for women. Universities no longer say we don't hire women. I suppose some of them still don't hire women, or they're hiring a token woman. But at least it's a start. It's somewhere.

I never had a problem, I think as I mentioned, professionally. I never had a problem with getting into a gallery. I was the only woman in the Bykert for a long time. Dorothea Rockburne is now in the gallery, and I'm talking about in the stable. I mean, Klaus shows other women now and then, but not in terms of being hard and fast artists in the stable. I never had a problem with that, and goodness, I went with Klaus in 1966 when there was still a lot of anti feeling about artists. Some of the other artists in the gallery at that time, I suppose, were a little upset that he had taken a woman. I mean, I heard this.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MS. REMINGTON: It didn't bother me at all. I didn't feel that these people were very valid as painters. One of them, in fact, isn't even painting anymore. I mean, he left the gallery, or Klaus let him go or something, I think, in the late '60s. It's usually from this kind of person that you get the whole insecurity about women. I mean, they come up against a woman painter whose work they immediately dislike because there's a lot of -- there's something to it, and it goes back to the whole security thing. They really can't stand that.

But I really have never had any bad experiences except not being hired by universities. And even that stopped because San Francisco College asked me to teach, and that was long before women were asked. And I was the first woman ever asked to teach in the department. I don't know. I assume that [inaudible] other women teaching there, but this is long before there was any women's lib.

Some of the rest of it in terms of pushing themselves, I think if you take a look the work of some of these women, they need all the help they can get. It's not really up to the level of a professional. It isn't up to the level -- it's too early. They haven't developed. They haven't blossomed. There isn't anything really personal there. It's I paint and here it is and if you don't like it, you're --

MR. CUMMINGS: Anti-woman.

MS. REMINGTON: You're anti-woman, exactly. But I really haven't gotten into it. I don't have the time. I really don't have the interest. What can I say? I do a little bit of not really women's lib, but, I mean, when I teach, as I mentioned before, a lot of the women students have never had women teachers. And there are a lot of questions they want to get straight about their approach when they get out of school and this and that because they've been -- a lot of these kids have been taught that, yeah, you'll have to push and men are terrible and this and that and the other thing.

And they tend to segregate themselves, separate themselves from the male students, and I discourage this. I mean, I think that being in school is a time where you have to have communication with everybody. I want to make them more secure in terms of themselves rather than identifying with a group, and you don't have to separate from this, you don't have to separate from that. [Inaudible] do better to get in, do it.

But I don't know. I've always thought that it doesn't matter about being a woman. If you can paint as good or better than most men, you're never going to have a problem, absolutely never. And I really never have in the professional sense except in the teaching area. I mean, I suppose if -- I'm not involved in women's lib because really in effect, I don't need it now, you see?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, yeah.

MS. REMINGTON: It's a selfish thing to say. However, I don't need it, and I'm not in a position where I have the time or the energy to go out and campaign for women's rights actively.

Certainly, I have a very honest feeling about it. Certainly, if a women's group, let's say, asked me to come and talk to them about what it's like to be a professional woman painter and having done all this without the help of women's lib, I'd go and talk to them. I would try to be very helpful unlike a number of woman artists who have so-called made it who don't do that. And I think that's bad. Now, Louise Nevelson is good at that, and she'll go and talk to --

MR. CUMMINGS: She's always been a committee lady, too --

MS. REMINGTON: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- in 1940 or something.

MS. REMINGTON: But, for instance, Georgia O'Keeffe, I think was approached recently by some women's group and they wanted to interview her about what it's like to be a woman, blah, blah, blah, and she said, "I have nothing to say to these people."

In a way, I can see that. She's already said it. But in a way, I think that's a denial that is not legitimate. I mean, look, suppose you've said it all and you can say it all again because after all, you do repeat after a certain point in your life. You're going to repeat a lot of it an awful lot of times, many, many, many times. That's the way it works.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's true.

MS. REMINGTON: So I really think that in that sense it would have been good if she had let somebody come and ask questions because maybe there was a new approach. I mean, some of the questions had not been asked before. What's wrong with giving somebody an interview? It's a couple of hours out of your life. It might help somebody. In that sense, I think -- or in speaking to a group of people, yes, I would be interested in doing that.

MR. CUMMINGS: I heard somewhere that you're related to the other Remington painter. Is that true or is it fiction?

MS. REMINGTON: Well, I have been told that he was my granduncle, in other words, my grandfather's brother. And, of course, he died long before I was around, but I remember when my grandfather died, I think I described some of the paintings and things, drawings, a lot of Frederick Remington stuff was in the attic. And a lot of it was taken off to the junkman to be sold with the rest of the -- believe it or not, nobody knew the worth of these drawings -- to be sold with the rest of the junk in the attic, right? The marble top tables which were at that time no longer in fashion. In fact, they were thought to be awful.

I think there were four small Remingtons. Now, I was a kid of nine or 10 at this point, but I do recall that there were four small paintings, I think, which supposedly, I think, were divided among the four children living in the family. That would be my father, my Uncle Jay, my Aunt Dorothy and my Aunt Elizabeth. And whatever happened to those, I don't know because I don't have that painting today. And whether that was sold at some point, I don't know. It may have been sold exactly at that time, but I have no idea about that.

MR. CUMMINGS: Was that ever a topic of discussion when you were young and becoming to want -- wanting to become an artist or anything?

MS. REMINGTON: Yes, now and then, it would be. It would be something like, well, it runs in the family type thing. You see what I mean?

MR. CUMMINGS: I see.

MS. REMINGTON: And it always skips a generation so that --

MR. CUMMINGS: They were saved.

MS. REMINGTON: They were all saved, yes, including my Aunt Dorothy who was always touted as a marvelous good painter. In fact, she was. I mean, she was a Sunday painter, and she painted, I think, flowers. But she did paint very well with a lot of verve and gusto for a woman, an aunt, who painted now and then on weekends. I remember seeing some small things. They were surprisingly good.

I thought as a kid, I thought -- I don't know. I mean, even when I was going to art school, a Sunday painter was a bad word. So this was when I was really nine, 10, 11, 12. Some nice things I remember seeing, and I sometimes went and looked at her stuff with an eye of I know this is going to be awful, but I'll say it's nice anyway. And I really thought that I liked most of the things that she did. There was a surprising amount of surety in the work. She was a strong painter.

This is somewhere -- and then my cousin June also went to art school. She's a cousin who's eight or nine years old than I, and she had gone on to art school, to some commercial art school. But nevertheless, there it was again, the art thing.

And my father had designed elevators for Otis Elevator before he became a stockbroker. So there was always art in the family. I mean, everybody drew. My grandfather used to -- when I was a tiny, tiny child, I used to sit on his lap, and he would draw pictures for me. And I think I mentioned that before, but even as a child, there were people around me who drew. My father drew pictures of -- well, what's such-and-such look like? And he'd draw you a picture of it, a very accurate picture. He never considered himself an artist or even a draftsman, but he could draw.

And my mother was somewhat artistic, but mostly in the areas of sewing and -- she was very creative in that kind of sense. She could draw to the extent of -- I guess my mother could draw a little bit, actually, some of the things I'd seen her draw. But that was never developed. That talent was never developed.

But it was always kind of around you, at least on the Remington side of the family. The idea that -- I mean, it was always lurking in the background. The idea that, well, you know where you came from, although me being a girl, I was never expected to become a professional painter. I'm sure that those of the family left are probably -- would fall over if they realized -- well, my cousin June knows I'm an artist.

I think everybody else is dead. All the aunts and uncles, I've lost touch with it. But I'm sure they're all pretty well dead and gone because they were much older than my parents. My father was the baby, and the rest of them -- my father now would be, if he were living, would be something like 79. So the other ones would be way in their 80s, and I'm sure they're all dead and gone.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, that's about --

[END OF REEL 5 SIDE A.]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

Top of page

Last updated...June 11, 2009