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## Oral history interview with Nicholas P. Brigante, 1964 May 25

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## Transcript

### Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with N. P. Brigante on May 25, 1964. The interview took place in Los Angeles and was conducted by Betty Lochrie Hoag McGlynn for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Archives of American Art's New Deal and the Arts project.

The original transcript was edited. In 2021 the Archives created a more verbatim transcript. Additional information from the original transcript that seemed relevant was added in brackets and given an -Ed. attribution. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

### Interview

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Would you mind saying ten, nine, eight? [Recorder clicking.] Would you mind saying ten, nine, eight? Ten, nine, eight.

[Tape stops, restarts.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This is Betty Lochrie Hoag interviewing Nick Brigante, that's spelled B-R-I-G-A-N-T-E, at the Los Angeles Art Association Building, on May the 25th, 1964. Mr. Brigante, I know that you had some watercolors in the Federal Arts Project, which we're going to talk about later. I know that you've been an active artist in the Los Angeles area for many, many years, and we're going to talk about that later, too. Tonight, I would like to ask you to tell me some of the things that you remember about the time when the Projects were started.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Well, I don't remember too much about the Project except that I was asked by Macdonald-Wright to join and contribute watercolors of my own. They're the easel type of watercolors, they're 15 by 21 inches, I believe, in size, and I contributed twice a month, I believe. The number that I did contribute I don't remember, except it's around maybe a dozen or 18. And I'm now giving you all of the photographic reproductions that Mr. Henry Glausson [ph], who was an associate director, I think, in San Diego, gave me some years back, and I'll make those—give those as a present to—for this project of yours.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, that's—the Archives will be so happy to have them, thank you.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Those photographs of those paintings—I mean the paintings themselves were used as a basis for the landscape that runs through some of my larger work. So, consequently, they have been very important as far as my development is concerned.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Had you studied Chinese painting before this time?

N. P. BRIGANTE: Well, I was very much interested in Chinese paintings from my association with Rex Slinkard, who was my former teacher and mentor, and he was one of the great dynamic characters in Los Angeles at the time and he studied under Robert Henri and he took over and taught the old Los Angeles Art League at 115 1/2 North Main Street. And he became my teacher and interested me not only in the Chinese painting but the classics, the classical Greeks and the Renaissance painters of Italy, also. At that time, I was just starting as a student. I think it was in 1914 and '15.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Had you been born in Los Angeles?

N. P. BRIGANTE: No, I was born in Italy and came to this country when I was just a year and a half old. Since 1897. Of course, we had a tight little group of our own there at the Art Students League, and it was used not as a school as much as it was used as a place for people to meet and work, you know. It was exactly just what the name implies, a league, you see. The people that never showed up for months and months would drop in and they were just like being at home, you see. It wasn't actually a school, but a place, a workshop, as it were. There they had models—they had modeling stands, and they had—oh, everybody had a locker of his own and it

would be—as I said, they would be weeks before some of them would show up and then they would paint or study for several months and then you'd never see them anymore. And that's the type of school it was, kind of, sort of, loosely run. Sometimes we had difficulty meeting our rent. Of course, after Mr. Slinkard passed away in 1918, and he died while in the services, Mr. Val Costello—you may mention his name because he's very important at that time.

[00:05:00]

He ran the school and he—when the school wasn't paying for itself, why, he would pay the rent out of his own pocket and at the same time occasionally I would help him also, you see. But we succeeded in keeping the League running for a number of years, until 1922, why, we felt that change was necessary so we turned it over to S. Macdonald-Wright. And that's when Macdonald-Wright came on the scene and took over the Art Students League and he ran it from then on, for several years.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Had he attended with you before that?

N. P. BRIGANTE: No, he never did. No, he never did. We had a consul—I consulted with Val Costello and realizing that it would be difficult for us to keep the League open because we were then, there were other schools opening and they were running a little competition for us and some of our old people that we were dependent on, they very rarely showed up anymore. So, it was difficult to meet the finances. So, we thought that Macdonald-Wright, who had a following at that time, would probably be the logical person to take it over. So, we broached the subject to him and he fell in with it and he felt it would be very good and he took it over.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Very interesting. Well, then, there's really no connection between the Chinese influence, which I feel so strongly in your work and in Mr. Wright's work—

N. P. BRIGANTE: Well, with Macdonald-Wright—I got to know Macdonald-Wright very well, and I was still in my formative stage then, and I benefitted quite a good deal with my association with Wright. So, it sort of congealed, as it were, you see. With Rex Slinkard, he died so young that it was almost impossible for me to have continued that association which I would have preferred. I liked him very much as a person and as a teacher, too. He was a very dynamic character. And when he ran the Art Students League for three or four years, why, he was just fresh from New York under Robert Henri, and he was a friend of Bellows, too, and incidentally, why, Mr. George Bellows, there's a painting of Rex Slinkard in the ringside portion of George Bellows' paintings in one of his prize fight series. Rex Slinkard. He liked to paint his friends, you know, so Rex Slinkard is a part of—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible] to me. Slinkard is one of the characters in the Bellows painting?

N. P. BRIGANTE: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, how interesting.

N. P. BRIGANTE: I didn't realize until the other night, that sometime ago, when Mr. Feitelson was showing a series of contemporary paintings, or paintings of the painters of the American painters of that period, and he flashed this on the screen and I recognized Slinkard immediately.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible.]

N. P. BRIGANTE: And Rex—I mean, Feitelson then said that Bellows delighted in painting his friends, introducing his friends in his paintings. And they became very good friends, Slinkard and Bellows. They went to all these fights—well they were kind of, you know, they were young, they didn't mind going [inaudible]—as a matter of fact, Slinkard, in his teenage years owned—ran—a saloon in San Pedro, believe it or not. And his father raised the very fine horses and Rex Slinkard used to ride them at the fairs. So, he had a little smattering—had a great deal of experience for a young fellow at that time. But his great love, of course, was painting.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Are there any of his paintings around at this point?

N. P. BRIGANTE: His paintings were held at the Los Angeles Museum for many months, and for storage reasons they requested that the people who controlled them then do something about them. So, they were given to Stanford Museum, to Stanford College.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

N. P. BRIGANTE: I believe it was Stanford in Palo Alto.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Probably have them in the gallery there then.

N. P. BRIGANTE: You see, Miss Williams, who owned the painting—he was affianced to Miss Gladys Williams, and then Florence Williams, who succeeded after Gladys died—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

N. P. BRIGANTE: —she was merely following out Gladys' wishes that the paintings be held intact.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Were they—

[00:10:00]

N. P. BRIGANTE: And there were only about 15 or 20 of them, but they were all done before World War I, while he was—he was actually the first modern on the local scene.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Hm. Did the Williams girls live at Stanford, or were they down here?

N. P. BRIGANTE: No, they were educated at Stanford. They were Los Angeles people.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's why they wanted the paintings to go there, huh?

N. P. BRIGANTE: And so, not knowing what to do with them, why—because she didn't want to separate them—she decided then that she would give them to Stanford, which was her school, along with a certain sum of money to help defray the expenses, whatever it was, that would be necessary to keep a group like that intact. They should have been remained here in Los Angeles, but at that time, why, and again, the museum director then at the Los Angeles Museum, wasn't too sympathetic towards them because he felt they were occupying storage space. So, he decided that—he requested that we—and it's a pity because they belong down here. All the paintings were done in this area.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It's a shame that they weren't kept here.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Is there any—

[Tape stops, restarts.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, it was some time after you had been at the Los Angeles Art League on Spring Street, or Main Street, wasn't it? Above an old burlesque theater?

N. P. BRIGANTE: It was right where the southeast corner of the present City Hall, that's where the building stood then.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And it was quite some time after that that the Federal Project came along.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Well, the Federal Project, the first one, came along that was the Public Works of Art Project and that was to help us starving artists during the Depression. That really—we really needed that kind of help then.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This was Treasury Department help.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Uh-huh [affirmative]. That was—I mean that the catalogs that I'm giving you I think is—that was the activity at that time. This other, the photographs, reproductions of my watercolors that you have now, they were contributed somewhere in, I think, during the year of 1937.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This would be when Mr. Wright had the WPA?

N. P. BRIGANTE: When Mr. Wright had it, yes, uh-huh [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That was the other—

N. P. BRIGANTE: It was just during that year, I think, that—just a small portion of that year that I

was—that I became a part of it. It wasn't very long. Because I think what they were interested in more than anything else was the production of murals, you see.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes.

N. P. Brigante: And there are quite a few WPA murals spread around this area, from San Diego, and I think that Boris Deutsch—do you have his name?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, I do.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Boris Deutsch, I think he did one in—did he do the one in the post office building?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: No, Ed Biberman and—

N. P. BRIGANTE: Oh, Ed Biberman, I see.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —Lucian Lebaudt did the two that are there.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Oh, I see.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I have it in my little file here.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Well, then you have a better line on it than I have.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I've written to him but I haven't heard from him.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Who, Lucian Lebaudt?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: No, Deutsch.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Oh, Deutsch. Lucian Lebaudt, of course, is dead.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, he was killed in the war.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Biberman, but you can contact him.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, I have, I've taped him.

N. P. BRIGANTE: I don't know what else I can say.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What happened to the paintings that you're giving us the photographs of? Do you know where they are?

N. P. BRIGANTE: That I don't know. I mean, after I turned them over to the Project, why then, what happened to them, I don't know. They said they were going to public buildings, some federal buildings and hospitals and so on. I mean they said that apropos of the first art project also. I know one wound up in the high school in Monrovia and another wound up in the Santa Monica high school, and those are the only two that I know of. The others—what became of the others I don't know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: If I see any more I'll let you know. [They laugh.] Looking around. Did you know Lucian Lebaudt when he was—

N. P. BRIGANTE: I met him once in San Francisco when I was there in 1928. That's the first time I ever met him then, when I was in San Francisco, visited there for about six weeks and I became acquainted with him then, but that's the only time I ever met him. However, I did meet his wife. She was down here about a few months ago.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: At the time the Project started, were you teaching or going to school still, or—

N. P. BRIGANTE: No, I wasn't teaching.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You had your studio [inaudible], working—

N. P. BRIGANTE: No, I was just working, yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And I wanted to ask you another question about Rex Slinkard, when you were studying with him. Were you studying just watercolor, or oils and drawings—

[00:15:03]

N. P. BRIGANTE: I started watercolors because when I was in the war, World War I, it was the least bulky to carry.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

N. P. BRIGANTE: So, I'd put a little pad in my shirt and a canteen of water over my back and I'd go out and stalk nature that way, you see. Because the package was small, you see, so in that way I would be able to practice, you see. Because I was still a student and I wanted to get in as much study as I possibly could. So watercolor—I mean, that's how I drifted into watercolors. While I was with—while I was studying under Rex Slinkard, of course there was the usual charcoal drawings that we were doing studying the figure, you see. But primarily, the most important was my contact with him, personally. He was such a—he was so helpful in that he took many, many hours, you know, to talk to me and direct me. He pointed—pointed, direction more than anything else, you see.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Must have been a fine teacher.

N. P. BRIGANTE: So, he was a very dynamic character, a very splendid person.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: There are some other people who have been on the Projects who are dead now that I thought you might know. I'm trying to find out as much as I can about them [coughs]. Excuse me. I just wondered if you knew Hugo Ballin.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Now I know of Hugo Ballin. He did some work—I think he did some work at the County Museum, the County Fairgrounds. Do you know about that?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: No, I don't.

N. P. BRIGANTE: I think there's some of his work there. I believe. I think in the form of tile or something of that sort. Millard Sheets might be able to straighten you out on—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, I've written to him and haven't heard yet.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Are there any others there?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, Ben Berlin.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Oh, Ben Berlin. Ben Berlin, I knew Ben Berlin. He was in that first show that we had. We had our first modern art show in Los Angeles in 1923.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: For goodness sakes.

N. P. BRIGANTE: And it was the first organized modern art show event. And Ben Berlin was a very important part of it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Now, had he been in the group at the old school with you, or was he—

N. P. BRIGANTE: He visited quite frequently. No, he was with the other group that was at what we called the old Lyceum building. That was right next door to where the Art Students League moved to after Macdonald-Wright took it over.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, this was a third group, you mean.

N. P. BRIGANTE: That was another group that—see, that was a building that was used as groups of studios, and, uh, there would be—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, no teachers.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Well, there was a little school there called the Cannon Art School, but I don't know if that would be of interest to you or not, but he was part of that group in that building. The Lyceum Theater building is what it was, then I think a lot of the lofts on the side there were small rooms that were used as studios. Al King can straighten you out on that if you ever—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, did he go there?

N. P. BRIGANTE: —see Al King. Al King had a studio there at one time.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

N. P. BRIGANTE: That's the first time, I think—the first time I ever met Al King. So, he might straighten you out on that activity there, in the Lyceum Building.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I'll ask him about it. And Ben Berlin had been in that group.

N. P. BRIGANTE: And Ben Berlin was of that group. He was—Ben Berlin was unfortunate, I think he was—he drank quite a good deal and he neglected his health, you know, to the point where he was incapacitated. I mean, I think he died as a result of, you know, that type of living. But as far as his painting is concerned, he's one of the very finest we've had here and I have great admiration for him. All of us that knew Ben Berlin felt that he was probably one of the most talented of all the moderns in that time.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What was he working in, what medium?

N. P. BRIGANTE: Oil paintings. There's one or two of his paintings on this Long Beach tour now. There was one or two of his paintings here in early California, Los Angeles show that we had here, oh, about a year ago, I guess. And, Lorser Feitelson has one or two of them, and I had a very fine little pencil drawing that Ben Berlin gave me and I gave that to Lorser Feitelson because I wanted him to have—I wanted him to have the Ben Berlin intact, you see.

[00:20:25]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Is this Long Beach tour at the Long Beach Museum right now? Is that what you mean?

N. P. BRIGANTE: Well, it's the Long Beach Museum that organized the tour of the early Los Angeles, early Southern California paintings, and they're on tour now. Where they are now, I don't know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Would this be Fred Black, the director here who organized—

N. P. BRIGANTE: Black, that's correct. Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I'll ask him about it. This would be something to see and study the paintings.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Well, now there's some reproductions, a catalog on that show. There's a reproduction, one reproduction of each of us, that one of mine is in the abstraction that—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, yes.

N. P. BRIGANTE: —that's included in that show, that's included in the catalog also. Maybe if you could write to Black and ask him if he has an extra catalog he'll send you the catalog, he might give you one.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, I'll go down and see him.

N. P. BRIGANTE: I only have the one catalog. Otherwise, I'd—if I had known about it I would have brought that along with me. But—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Thank you very much. It's close, you know. I'll run down and see him. What kind of work did Ben Berlin do? Was it—

N. P. BRIGANTE: He was very modern. He was—he anticipated Picasso, he anticipated all the French moderns without actually being influenced very greatly by them. He knew, of course, that there was that type of activity going on in France, but I think communication was—there wasn't much communication between Los Angeles, which was considered very provincial in those days, between Los Angeles and Europe. So, whatever he did, he developed himself.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Had he studied in France?

N. P. BRIGANTE: No, I don't think he ever left Los Angeles. To my knowledge, I don't think he'd ever left Los Angeles. He is very fine. He has the admiration of all of us that knew him as a painter and as an artist. A very fine artist.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: A nice record to leave behind, for people to feel that way.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Oh, yes. I don't know what's happened to his paintings. They're distributed. Unfortunately, there's no one collector that got ahold of his paintings to preserve them. But he was down at—he did work at the Grand Canyon. I think he was doing those primarily to develop something that he could sell, you know, to earn a living by. But this other work that he did that we all like, that was the character that was distinctively superb.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Speaking of the Grand Canyon, didn't Jimmy Swinnerton do some Grand Canyon things about that time?

N. P. BRIGANTE: Swinnerton did a lot of desert paintings. I don't know whether he did any Grand Canyon work or not.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: He had a character, kind of a cartoon strip, called *The Canyon Children*. It was in women's magazines.

N. P. BRIGANTE: I don't know that. But he did have a comic strip in *the Examiner*, I think. They sent him out here to die and he came out here and he went out on the desert and I think he's still living.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I wonder if he was part of the Project at the time.

N. P. BRIGANTE: That I don't know. Well, I think that he was earning enough money as a cartoonist, it wouldn't have been necessary for him to get on. I think those projects were primarily to help the artist financially, even the second one. Those people that were on it then, they welcomed the opportunity to get on the Project, to earn a living by. But, Swinnerton, I believe that he was always so well paid, being on Hurst's payroll, that it probably wouldn't have been necessary for him to desire to get on the Project. However, as a western painter, a painter of the desert scenes, I suppose he's done some very fine paintings.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What was Val Costello like?

N. P. BRIGANTE: Val Costello was—well, he painted the California scene, his typical California landscape, but then his best work are studies he made in pastel of the human figure every Saturday afternoon. I own one or two of them myself. And one of the Val Costello pastels is on that Long Beach show now. And every Saturday afternoon, Val would do one of those pastels, on a sheet about this size. They were very beautiful. I think as a pastelist, I think he surpassed anyone working pastel at that time.

[00:25:25]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Probably very good at anatomy like de Erdely too.

N. P. BRIGANTE: He had a very lyrical quality in what he did. Sort of a poetic concept of a figure that he developed that caused it to transcend being just purely a figure, you know, an art school study, or something. It became, actually, became a very fine work of art in its own right, in spite of the fact that it was done in an art class, you see.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What about Arthur Durston. He's another one.

N. P. BRIGANTE: I don't know him.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Didn't you know him?

N. P. BRIGANTE: I know who he is, but I don't know him.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Okay. He did some of the work for the Project and then died.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Oh?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Do you know Horace Deutch [ph]? What about Hideo Date? D-A-T-E?



N. P. BRIGANTE: Hideo Date. Well, he left—he was a very fine draftsman and a very fine watercolorist. Very exquisite, oriental, Japanese type of—style of renderings. But he left for New York and I never heard of him since.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see. He did some murals on Terminal Island with staff of Macdonald-Wright and Mr. Wright couldn't remember where Terminal Island was and we got mixed up and thought it was up in San Francisco, but I think it's San Pedro.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Terminal Island, San Pedro. I don't know if there's a Terminal Island in existence anymore now.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, it isn't on the map. That's why we had trouble.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Terminal Island was in existence then, but I think that with all the activity in building up the harbors as they have in the last 20 or 30 years, why Terminal Island has disappeared, they've done something to it. Either they've dug it away and widened the channel for the entrance, the exit for—

BETTY LOCHRIE HOAH: Freighters.

N. P. Brigante: —boats, see. But there was definitely a Terminal Island at one time. What he did there, I wouldn't know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It was a school. I have the name of it, and it was murals that they did. But it came to an impasse.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Fletcher Martin did the mural right across from the, in the post office there right at San Pedro. Do you have that?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I have it in my file here, but [cross talk] I haven't been able to find where he is.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Well, he's in New York. He lives in—you can contact him by writing Woodstock, New York.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, I'll tell the people at the Archives. They have a researcher in New York who will go and see him then.

N. P. BRIGANTE: He's in Woodstock, he's definitely a part of that group in Woodstock.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

N. P. Brigante: Although, I've never met him myself.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, you haven't?

N. P. BRIGANTE: No, But he did that mural there at San Pedro post office.

[Recorder clicks.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible] riding, instead of English riding. Do you know someone named Frasper who was active?

N. P. BRIGANTE: No, I don't.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: F-R-A-S-P-H-E-R.

N. P. Brigante: No, I don't know him.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Several people thought that you might. Is Phil Dike still in this area?

N. P. BRIGANTE: Phil Dike is—I think he's in the Claremont area. Claremont, you know that group of colleges? Pomona College, and those?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: He helped with the original art committee [ph] here, too.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Oh, he did? That I don't know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Well, he's one of the main teachers in one of those colleges there. Either Scripps or Claremont or one of them. I don't know just which one. He's there.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And I believe he goes down to San Diego or someplace every summer and teaches, too.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Oh, he does?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible.]

N. P. BRIGANTE: I know he's been very active in this area for 30, 40 years. For a long time.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What about Eric Gill? Is he still—

N. P. BRIGANTE: Gill? I don't know him.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: He's an illustrator, but he, again, [inaudible.]

N. P. BRIGANTE: Dalzell Hatfield could probably—he's dead, but they could get some information from them.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What about Jason Herron. Do you know—

N. P. BRIGANTE: Jason Herron? I only know her, you know, just by having met her once or twice. She used to be active in the Los Angeles Art Association here some years ago. I think she's a sculptress. Now, if you can—she's around somewhere but I wouldn't know how—I haven't seen or heard of her in quite a while.

[00:30:10]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Rico Lebrun, of course—

N. P. BRIGANTE: [Cross talk.] He died just recently.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, I know he did.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Was he active, too?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: He did some work for the Project and he's so well-known. Unless you remember something about the project days there's no point in going into it, because so many people know him.

N. P. BRIGANTE: No, I didn't know that he was on the Project. I thought that he was just recently out there. But if he was on the Project here, that's, let's see, that's in the '30s, late '30s.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What about Knud Merrild?

N. P. BRIGANTE: Knud Merrild, the sculptor. Isn't he a sculptor? Oh, no, Knud Merrild!

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: K-N-U-D Merrild, M-E-R-R-I-L-D.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Oh, I don't know too much about him. Lorser Feitelson I think is the—could tell you more about him.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: All right.

N. P. BRIGANTE: He died, too, didn't he?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, he did.

N. P. BRIGANTE: He's been dead. No, he was active in the Los Angeles Art Association, too, when we were down on Figueroa Street.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, he was? Buckley Mac-Gurrin.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Buckley Mac-Gurrin? Yeah, I think he's around. You'll have to contact him

through Dalzell Hatfield. I think they know where he is.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Sherry Peticolas was a sculptor, [inaudible]. I'm going through all of these people hoping that—

N. P. BRIGANTE: Well, other than I advise you to seek Mac-Gurrin through Dalzell Hatfield. Did you know that? I mean—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Helen Wurdermann had told me that.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Oh, right.

BETTY LOCHRIE HAOG: And I hadn't gotten over there. I hoped maybe if I brought up his name that you would have remembered him from the Project.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Well, he lives out in the El Monte way somewhere, over in that area. You might be able to find him through the telephone books, or through the directories of some kind. I think he lives over there.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I'm sure that if that's who [inaudible, cross talk]—

N. P. BRIGANTE: He was a very capable writer, too, that fellow.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, he was?

N. P. BRIGANTE: Very capable reviewing art shows, also. Very, very, very talented.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: An art critic? I didn't know that.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Yes, uh-huh [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: He did the L.A. County Museum cafeteria mural.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Oh, he did?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Which is still there, looked at every day.

N. P. BRIGANTE: I'm sorry I can't be of more help to you, but as you run through that list of names—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, you're a great help.

N. P. BRIGANTE: —some of them I know and some of them I've just heard of. Like Rico Lebrun. I didn't know he was here that early. See, I'm just learning something about him, too.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: We'll look it up afterwards. (Note: Mr. Brigante was right! -Ed.) It's obvious, of course, that the Project was a great—projects were a great deal of help to the artists as far as just plain eating, but as far as influence goes, do you feel that it did a lot for the Los Angeles community, bringing them together or anything? Do you have any—

N. P. BRIGANTE: I can't offer you an opinion because I wasn't too close to it. I delivered my two paintings a month and, again, whoever it was received the two paintings and then they told me to go at a certain place and get my checks, and that's all that I—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, didn't they exhibit the paintings for the public sometimes?

N. P. BRIGANTE: Not that I know if. That second show, I don't think they did.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see. Some of the other cities did. They were—

N. P. BRIGANTE: Probably did. I think the dates on the two catalogs that you have there, the one in Corcoran, maybe that was—the one at the Corcoran Galleries in Washington, maybe that could have been a result of the second Public Works of Art Project.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It would be interesting to know whether it helped make the public more aware of the art—

N. P. BRIGANTE: It could have. And—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: For the mural painters, it must have, the sculptors, because it was right out there. But the easel painters, you didn't feel that there was any of that?

N. P. BRIGANTE: No. I mean, I can't answer that question because, as I say, I wasn't immersed in it. Now, there were quite a few of them that were. Especially in the doing of that big mural in Long Beach, that tile. They used tons and tons of that stuff, colored tile, breaking them up into small pieces and getting that stuff together so that they could put it on that wall. I think Al King was very much a part of that.

[00:35:27]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes. It must have been a terrific project. [Cross talk.] You were supposed to be able to see it—

N. P. BRIGANTE: Bob Boag, I think he was in on that, too, Bob Boag. Boag. B-O-A-G. Do you have his name there? They're in—he's in Paris now. He's trying to recoup his youth, which I think is almost impossible. Recapture is the word. And she's living in Nannette Beach. I believe it's Nannette. It's one of those near Redondo. Bob Boag was part of it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Was he an easel artist, or—

N. P. BRIGANTE: An easel artist, yes. I think primarily he was—he went to an architect school in Paris in his younger days. I think he became an architect, and I think he became very much influenced by Macdonald-Wright and became a part of the Art Students League. And I believe that he did some painting while he was active there.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Who were some of the other people who were at the school? Do you remember—who are still around? Do you remember any of them who were active at the Art League who are still here painting?

N. P. BRIGANTE: No, I don't. Of course, if you can contact Don Totten, Don Totten can give you more information than I could ever give you.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Where was he all this time?

N. P. BRIGANTE: Well, he was doing part of the—he and—he was doing some of the murals that we're talking about.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I just wondered about the schools, if he was teaching or—

N. P. BRIGANTE: Oh, well, no, he was—Jimmy Redman, I think, James Redman, do you have his name there?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, he was killed in the war, wasn't he?

N. P. BRIGANTE: He was killed in the Battle of the Bulge. And he and Totten were associated in the Art Students League. That's when Macdonald-Wright then dropped out. And it became strictly an affair between Jimmy Redman and Don Totten.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, they took it over after Wright.

N. P. BRIGANTE: That's where some of the murals were painted, right there, in sections.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

N. P. BRIGANTE: And Don Totten and Jimmy Redman, I don't know whether they worked together or whether they had their own murals they worked separately on. That, I couldn't say. But Don can give you quite a good deal of information on the activities that took place there, then.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I'm going to see him tomorrow, so—

N. P. BRIGANTE: Oh, you are? Well, that's good. Are you going out to his place?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

N. P. BRIGANTE: To his house at 112th Street?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Right. I have it marked in my map. And Mr. Wright said that he sent James Redman up to Montana with Frank Stevens, who you were mentioning a while ago.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Yes, that's right. And I didn't know that Redman was there with Frank Stevens, but Frank Stevens was there, and Frank Stevens, of course, he was with this Kennedy, they were part of the Project, too. Kennedy who was part of the Board of Director of the Montana Museum, you see.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, I didn't know [cross talk; inaudible].

N. P. BRIGANTE: Montana Historical Society in Helena. I think he was on the writers end of it, though. And both he and Frank Stevens did quite a deal of traveling around Montana, I think, Wyoming, wherever it was necessary for them to—are you going to cover that phase of it, too?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Are you?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, I am. And also dance and theater. Stevens was only on an administrative thing in Montana. He was no artist.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Oh no, he was—I suppose you would call him associate director, or something, or a regional director.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I wonder what Jimmy Redman was doing up there?

N. P. BRIGANTE: Jimmy Redman could have been maybe painting. and doing a mural. I don't know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: He may have had a commission.

N. P. BRIGANTE: He probably was doing a mural.

[Tape stops, restarts.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mr. Brigante, thank you so much for this evening.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Well, you're perfectly welcome. I hope that I was some help to you.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Indeed you were.

[00:40:02]

N. P. BRIGANTE: I wasn't able to help you with quite a few of those names, but as far as the few that I did remember, I didn't know whether they would be of any need to you or not.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: They were a great help. And I look forward to talking to you next Monday night.

N. P. BRIGANTE: Well, thank you very much. I would be very happy to cooperate with you.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Thank you. Good night.

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]