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Oral history interview with Elizabeth Osborne, 1991 May 24-31

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Elizabeth Osborne on May 24 and May 31, 1991. The interview took place in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was conducted by Cynthia Veloric for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The original transcript was edited. In 2025 the Archives retranscribed the original audio and attempted to create a verbatim transcript. 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. Additional information from the original transcript has been added in brackets and given an –Ed. attribution.

Interview

[00:00:03.02]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: This is Cynthia Veloric interviewing Elizabeth Osborne for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art on May 24, 1991.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:00:18.61]

Good afternoon, Elizabeth. I'd like to begin by asking you some routine questions about your early life. First of all, where were you born, and when?

[00:00:30.43]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, June 5, 1936, at Pennsylvania Hospital.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:00:42.74]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay, here we go. Were your parents both Philadelphians?

[00:00:48.78]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes, they were. Well, no. My father was from Hagerstown, Maryland, and my mother originally from Illinois. But they lived here.

[00:01:03.94]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Where did your parents work at the time of your birth?

[00:01:08.71]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: My mother did not work, and my father was working for a paper company in Philadelphia, Garrett-Buchanan.

[00:01:25.23]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: And would you say that you had a comfortable upbringing, or were there any hardships?

[00:01:33.83]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I would say I had a difficult childhood. My father died when I was nine, and my mother died when I was twelve, and I lived with an aunt and uncle from that—from age twelve, which was not a very happy relationship, unfortunately. And it was difficult. I had a brother and a twin sister. She died when she was 19, and my grandmother, who was probably my closest supportive relative also died. Basically, everyone died in my family by the time I was 20, except for my brother, who is still living. He's a lawyer in Kingston. And I would say I did not have a particularly happy childhood.

[00:02:41.91]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: When you went to live with your aunt, were you living in Philadelphia or elsewhere?

[00:02:49.07]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I was living in the suburbs, a little suburb called Lansdowne, Pennsylvania, which was a middle-class, simple place. And I went to a Quaker school called Friends Central School, and that really was a very—for me, supportive environment and probably offset the difficulties at home a great deal because I liked the school and they liked me and I did very well, and they were very interesting. They had a very strong art department. Hobson Pittman, who was at the Academy, was head of their art department. It was a very sympathetic environment for me, and I thrived there because of that, which was fortunate.

[00:03:47.19]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Would you say then that your experience at Friends Central was the catalyst for getting you interested in the arts?

[00:03:57.43]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: No. I had—my mother was taking courses. She never finished college, so she was taking courses at the University of Pennsylvania. And she became a sort of part of a crowd of professors. They were her friends and her social life. One of those professors, Louis Flaccus, was professor of philosophy, and he became a sort of surrogate father to me. He really—he was an amateur painter himself, and he had four grown sons, and he lived in Lansdowne with his wife, and was retired. And he was fascinated by me and my work and was very supportive.

[00:04:50.98]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Even when you were a child?

[00:04:53.08]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: From age six and seven on, he gave me materials and he looked at my work, and he kind of just sort of kept an eye on me. And at times, I felt good about it. Other times, I wished he'd go away and leave me alone. But in looking back on it, it was a wonderful thing to have that person's steady interest. He, unfortunately, died when I was 19 or 20 as well. It was just ironic because everything sort of changed then.

[00:05:31.75]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Before you met him, was your mother supportive?

[00:05:34.96]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes. She liked—she was very—she loved painting, and she had reproductions around the house of Picasso and Matisse. Not very many originals of any consequence, but she did—what she had was nice reproductions, I guess, framed. And she had a wonderful sense of—visual sense, but she didn't have the money to really collect anything. And he was—Dr. Flaccus as well, you know, gave me books, and he just sort of fed my interest. And I did go, from age twelve to 17, to PCA. It was then called the Philadelphia College of Art and—

[00:06:32.86]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Philadelphia Museum School.

[00:06:34.33]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Oh, yeah, that's right. I went—I came in on a bus from Lansdowne on Saturday mornings. It was a big event for me to do that because I wasn't used to the city. And I loved coming in on Saturday and taking their classes. I did it for five years. Neil Welliver was one of my teachers, and I met some interesting teachers at the time who were very supportive. It was a very good experience.

[00:07:11.25]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Would you say you started the museum school at about age twelve?

[00:07:16.09]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I was twelve, yes. I was in the seventh grade.

[00:07:20.53]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So you were doing that simultaneous to going to Friends Central and learning from Hobson Pittman, among others.

[00:07:27.46]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Pittman. You know, Friends Central was I guess a typical Quaker school, but if you were—you could put in as much as—if you were self-motivated, you did well. You could do as much as you wanted. My daughter went to a different school. [Episcopal –Ed.] It was not—would not have been good for me. It didn't allow a lot of freedom to do your own thing. Friends Central did, which I loved. I could do as much as I wanted to do. I could go off and paint. At that time, they had a beautiful campus. It was before they built every square inch with buildings. Now it's pretty built up. I used to go out and paint a lot of the campus. It was beautiful.

[00:08:14.68]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Which Friends Central was it, exactly? Because I know there's several.

[00:08:18.19]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Friends Central out in Overbrook, Merion, you know. Not Friends Select, that's in town. This was out in the suburbs. I remember taking two buses to get there every day.

[00:08:34.49]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Wow.

[00:08:34.89]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Which I didn't love, but I was a good student. I got to ride the buses with all these working people. I remembered thinking I didn't want to wind up having to go to an office every day like a lot of those people. It was kind of good for me.

[00:08:53.70]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did your aunt support this financially? The one who was raising you. Or this was before you lived with your aunt.

[00:09:01.72]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, no. What happened, my mother died. She actually killed herself when I was twelve. Then she had written a letter, evidently, asking her brother, my uncle, to move in with us, which he did. He had no children. Well, it was very kind of him to do it, although he didn't really understand children. It was just very difficult for us. Very difficult.

[00:09:39.07]

But we all survived, I'm sure with a few scars. They moved in when I was twelve, and my uncle died not long ago. My aunt lives in Florida, and now I actually enjoy her a great deal, but it took a long time for me to come around and see what a kind thing she really did do. It just was, at that time, not working very well for us. She's really a very nice person.

[00:10:18.75]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Was religion involved in your family life?

[00:10:23.88]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, my grandfather, who lived with us for a while—he lived until he was 101. He was a very strong atheist. And he—my father, Osborne, was an Episcopalian. And I went to a Quaker school, so those were my three religious influences. I would say my grandfather certainly had talked so much about it, I guess he made a very powerful impression from when I was quite young so that I—even though I went to church for a little bit, not much, I never really became a very religious person.

[00:11:12.92]

I loved the Quakers, and I loved the way they sort of practiced what they preached. They were very kind, and helped people, and I liked meetings. If I had ever joined a religion actively, I would consider becoming Quaker, but then I just went on—when I graduated from Friends Central, I kind of put that all behind me and I never did anything. Yeah, I would say I—I can't say that I'm a religious person.

[00:11:49.79]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: And therefore, could you say that religion never really entered into your work at all, at any phase?

[00:11:57.92]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: No, no. Not at all.

[00:12:04.19]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: When you were very young, in addition to your art training in school, were you self-motivated to go to museums or to libraries and look up art books?

[00:12:18.74]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, I would say from age—I did like going to the Philadelphia Museum. I loved going to all those little rooms. Yeah, I did do that. And my Uncle Louis and Dr. Flaccus would give me art books. And when I remember—he's at the Philadelphia College of Art or whatever. They gave me a prize when I was in one of the Saturday classes, of a book of art history. So I guess I wasn't—yes, I did read and was interested. I remember at the time having a great crush on Rembrandt. I loved Rembrandt. I was convinced when I grew up I was going to grow up to be a painter like Rembrandt. I don't think I've quite achieved that, but his work fascinated me.

[00:13:32.87]

Friends Central had a marvelous—Pittman, to his credit, was very, I think, advanced in his teaching of the students there, in that we—when I did go on to Penn, I knew a lot of art

history already. I mean, we were doing what they were doing in college. And so that was nice. I had pretty good training. You know, learning all the painters and those cards where you see the reproduction and you have to learn all the dates and whatnot. I knew all that backwards and forwards. That was so—

[00:14:16.03]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So you were interested in the academic side of art history, as well as the practicing of art from a fairly early age?

[00:14:25.79]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes, yes, I was. I would—I don't know that I would ever presume to teach a course in it, but I—yeah, I was certainly interested.

[00:14:37.73]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Now, following through with Hobson Pittman, I know that after you graduated from Friends Central, you went to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. Tell me how you made your decision to go there, and what the application procedure was like.

[00:14:56.45]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, of course, I remember both schools wanted me to go—the Academy, and naturally the Museum College did, because I'd been there and I was doing well. But Hobson was very—he obviously tipped the balance to Academy. He wanted me to come there, and I did. The irony of it is when I did go to the Academy, I didn't see a—

[Telephone rings.] [Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:15:34.06]

The irony of it was that when I did go to the Academy, I didn't see a whole lot of Hobson Pittman. I had seen him so much at Friends Central, I kind of decided to see other faculty as my critics. But he was a wonderful teacher. I just didn't use him as much there as a resource as I did before. Okay?

[00:16:07.00]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Yes. Do you remember your other teachers?

[00:16:10.42]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: At the Academy, yes. My favorite teacher was Franklin Watkins, who—at the time I went there, there was a group of kind of—I'd say senior faculty who were very colorful characters. Watkins was one. Stuempfig, Walter Stuempfig was another, Francis Speight. Morris Blackburn. I did not see much of Blackburn. I saw mostly Watkins. Roswell Weidner I saw in the beginning, and he was a very helpful teacher, very honest person. I didn't like criticism a whole lot, which is—I wouldn't say is necessarily a strength. I just tended to work on my own a great deal, as soon as I was able to, which the Academy allows you to do. After your first year, you can—you have a lot of freedom, at least in those days. I think it's getting a little more structured now, which is unfortunate.

[00:17:25.97]

But in those days, you could just work as hard as you want or as little as you wanted, and that's kind of the way it was when you get out of school. It depends how much you're willing to put into it. Watkins I liked because he was a little more worldly and less involved with you as a personality. Pittman kind of kind of wanted to own you, you know, get you in his little group and you'd have to see him all the time and go out to his house. Watkins really looked at your work, and that was fine with me. He was pretty objective about it. And he was a very articulate man and very—I just admired him a lot, and he was very helpful.

[00:18:23.43]

Of course, I think for me at art school, I learned as much, or even more, from my peers,

certain of my peers. One was Lou Sloan, who was a year ahead of me. And probably my closest friend was a Black artist, Ray Saunders, who's out on the West Coast now—and we were very close friends, and still are friends. And Ray just was a fascinating character and a very interesting artist, and we just had a great rapport. And I have—we just made our—became friends and stayed friends for many years.

[00:19:18.02]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: I'd like to go back to your teachers for a moment at the Academy. Was there any particular philosophy about art espoused by any of them which you distinctly remember, and which shaped you in your formative years there?

[00:19:38.28]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well maybe some less than others. For instance, Stuempfig—you know, briefly I was fascinated by this Philadelphia landscape kind of—you know, neighborhood landscape that Speight and Stuempfig did a great deal, and I flirted with that a little bit. But I think I always returned to figurative work and was less interested in that kind of—kind of muddy landscape painting. It didn't really hold my interest for too long.

Watkins, I liked his range of painting in that he loved still life and he loved the kind of quirky, figurative things. Very—a little broader range, maybe even more European influences in his work. I would say the downside of all the faculty at that time for me was there was not much interest in abstraction, and I had very little—what's the word—input, or kind of discussion about pure abstraction, which I wish I had had more of, and I didn't. The Academy was much more focused on figurative, the realist tradition, and still life and figure.

[00:21:33.13]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: And more still life and more figure.

[00:21:34.81]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: And at that time when I was in school, Franz Kline was coming down at the PCA as a guest instructor, and you know, they were very much in evidence, the Abstract Expressionists, but not at the Academy, unfortunately. Even in their collection, unfortunately. They missed out on them. But you can't have, I guess, everything.

[00:22:02.68]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So you could say then that avant-gardism was not discussed nor practiced at the Academy in the mid '50s?

[00:22:12.23]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: No. Not at all. At least I was not aware of it. I remember when I got out of school, learning about the California artists like [Richard] Diebenkorn—the figurative artists out there, and [Nathan] Oliveira and [Elmer] Bischoff. And I was fascinated by their work and very influenced by it, only through books and the few things I would see in New York, or their shows. And I considered—I'm sort of jumping ahead—going out there. But I probably—I don't know how my work would have maybe been quite different if I had studied out there as opposed to studying at the Academy.

[00:23:00.91]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Well since that was the case, then, did you in any way feel stifled as a student at that time, or were you simply not aware of it?

[00:23:12.95]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I didn't feel it. No, I wasn't aware of it. And I would say in record, looking back, I wish I had had the exposure, a broader exposure. Now, I suppose the upside of it is that it was a very solid foundation, and I learned to draw, and I learned composition and I learned kind of basic things. But I wish I had learned more of the other side as well. And I suppose today if I were a student, I would have gone to graduate school as so many do. Go to Yale or California and then you get—go further. But I didn't do that.

[00:23:58.61]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Could you be more specific about exactly which classes you attended?

[00:24:05.38]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: At the Academy?

[00:24:06.14]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: At the Academy.

[00:24:08.08]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, I remember the first year, you were required to take certain courses. You had to take a little of this and that, printmaking and drawing and a little sculpture, whatever. So you got a kind of cross-section. And I was taking courses at Penn at the same time. I was trying to—working toward a BFA, which at that time was not encouraged a great deal at the Academy.

[00:24:39.38]

They thought—a lot of the old senior faculty thought it was a waste of time to go out and look for a BFA. They thought, you know, you're an artist. You go shut yourself up in the studio and paint. You don't go out there and learn philosophy or whatever—science, or—I guess they felt you could do that on your own.

[00:25:01.72]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: And yet, they offered it as a joint program with Penn.

[00:25:04.80]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah, they did.

[00:25:04.92]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So there had to be someone there who supported that.

[00:25:07.63]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Luckily, there was. But there were very few students at that time who participated in that program, and even I found it—you know, it was a strain to go to school all day at the Academy and then go out to Penn in the evenings or in the summers, and there were periods when I felt I wanted to drop it. I just wanted to paint.

[00:25:33.01]

But I will credit my uncle, whom I said was difficult, in just saying, "You may not quit. You must finish this." And I did. And I'm glad that I did. And I would recommend to anyone to do it. I think it's—I think it's very important to have that broader-based education of book learning, as well as the technical skills. And ideas. The Academy students often are not very articulate. They're more—they can paint, but they can't talk much about it, and even sometimes, I think, think out the ideas themselves. And I think a place like Penn or any kind of university would help them in that area.

[00:26:34.15]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Can you remember any academic courses that you took at Penn that you particularly liked?

[00:26:41.20]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, I took a lot of art history, which we had to. It was required. Grant, Manson, and Smith. And I'm trying to remember. Robb. There were a lot of wonderful professors out there, which I enjoyed. I enjoyed the psychology. I took a number of literature courses. Truthfully, I didn't love writing papers a whole lot. It just wasn't my—I just didn't like it. I liked—and I remember we had to take a science, and I wasn't very good at math or any

scientific kind of things. I think I took geology or something, which actually, I enjoyed. And it was a good experience for me.

[00:27:40.34]

My brother was three years older than I, and he was in the law school while I was in the undergraduate school at Penn, and so I would go visit him. He lived in the dorms out there, and I met a lot of—just coincidentally—of his lawyer—he was on the *Law Review* friends. In fact, I met my second husband at that time. He was head of the *Law Review*. That was just a—I guess my social life, what I had at that time. Some of it revolved around those meetings out at Penn.

[00:28:26.82]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So you had a broader based group of friends than just artists?

[00:28:30.06]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Oh yeah, very much so. Although I must say, I was so busy between the Academy and the academics that I didn't have a heavy social life. I didn't go out a whole lot. [Laughs.] I just didn't have time. I worked a lot. And I guess I was a little slow on the other. But by the end of those four years, I did. I took an extra year to finish up at the university because I just didn't want to overload myself while I was at the Academy.

[00:29:15.53]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Do you remember having any adversarial artist relationships at the Academy where you literally argued about art or about a certain way of life?

[00:29:29.15]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I just remember—I suppose I would characterize myself there as being very much of a loner and not much of a group, party—I just didn't participate in any of those things at all. I saw Ray and I saw a little bit of Lou, and I—that was it. I really—maybe partly it was shyness and partly I just was never that way. I never—I always kind of went my own way.

Ray and I used to talk a lot. He could talk you to death. He loves to—very articulate and very bright, and so we had a lot of good discussions, I would say, more than anyone. And we were—he was very close to Ted Siegl, who was working at that time at the Academy in restoration, and we would often go up, and he had a little place up on the second floor in the back. And we had a wonderful time. We would go up and talk there a lot with him. He was very supportive and wonderful man.

And I also—you asked about faculty. Of the younger faculty at the Academy when I was a student, Jimmy Lueders and Ben Kamihira were both just beginning. They were teaching a Friday evening croquis class, and I liked to draw a lot and I would go to that class, and became friends with both of them outside of class. And then I was friends with—for a while afterwards. He did my portrait and—but Ben being Ben, he was always chasing women down and I found that hard to deal with. But Jimmy and I remained friends, and still are very close friends. And it began in my student days.

[00:31:45.22]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So you actually took a class of Jimmy Lueders?

[00:31:48.05]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I took his—yes I did. I took his croquis class. I mean, those classes basically you just draw and the teacher is there. And I think especially if you draw well, they often just leave you alone, which was fine with me. But that's how I got to know Jim, and we've been very good, close friends for many years.

[00:32:12.88]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did the Academy faculty take the students to New York ever to see the current gallery shows?

[00:32:21.16]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Not that I remember. Not at all. Of course, that was in the '50s, and I don't think there was anywhere near the scene in New York at all where there is now. Obviously, there wasn't. There were much fewer galleries in New York. I remember Stuempfig taking us to Henry McIlhenny's house in Philadelphia, which was a big event because I'd never been in a house like that.

[00:32:49.64]

And I remember he took a few of his students because he was friendly with McIlhenny, and I remember standing in the library and I reached up to look at a book and some maid rushed over and said, "Oh, don't touch that." I was so humiliated that I had done this. But that was my only field trip somehow that I can recall. I think they do a lot more of that now than they did when I was a student. They have bus trips now.

[00:33:26.06]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did you take sculpture at the Academy?

[00:33:31.16]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, I mentioned it. They had it in the first year. But I can't remember doing much of it. I remember in my first year that because of my courses at Penn, I had to miss a printmaking class, Morris Blackburn's. And he was a very sensitive instructor in that he took it very personally if you didn't go to his class. Some instructors are that way. They were very—a little paranoid, I guess.

[00:34:04.15]

It wasn't that I didn't like him. It was just I couldn't schedule it any differently. So I did miss his class. At the end of the year, there was a—they gave an award to—it was only a one-time traveling grant by the Catherwood Foundation to Europe. It's a fellowship to go for the summer and they gave it to me that year, but Blackburn, I think, was the only one opposed. He just couldn't get over the fact that I never took his class, and held it against me. It's a shame.

[00:34:42.40]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So therefore, then, you did not take any printmaking at the Academy or just not his class?

[00:34:47.51]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Very little. It was a rather weak department, actually, to tell you the truth. It's changed a great deal over the years. Now they have a lot better facilities than they did when I—I did do some on my own. I did some lithographs. I have some of them still, and it interested me, but I did most of it on my own.

[00:35:08.17]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: But did you use the Academy facilities?

[00:35:11.86]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes. It was pretty—they had this crummy little room up on the second floor. It was very quaint.

[00:35:19.20]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did you learn to grind your own pigments?

[00:35:23.36]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: No.

[00:35:24.61]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: That was not taught at the time?

[00:35:26.28]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Grinding your own pigments? No.

[00:35:27.81]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Right.

[00:35:28.35]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, Ted Siegl had a course in materials and techniques, and I must say—and that's another course I regret—I didn't go as often as I should because I was out at Penn after four o'clock. And now I encourage all of my students to take that course and really try to learn it, because I made mistakes because of that, that I might not have if I'd studied that course a little bit more. Ted, I guess, taught that, I just didn't take it. I didn't learn it as well as I could.

[00:36:13.49]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did you take color theory?

[00:36:15.89]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I don't think they taught it them. In fact, I know they didn't. That's a more recent thing.

[00:36:21.63]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Also, design. Any design courses?

[00:36:23.83]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: No. They didn't have that. The Academy was really, at that time, drawing, painting, and they did have cast drawing, which I enjoyed in my first year. Drawing and painting. And printmaking was a minor. They had sculpture, and they had—I think there were some mural classes, and they had McCoy. A man named John McCoy was teaching some watercolor, which I never took because he was in kind of the [Andrew] Wyeth tradition. That's it. It was very broad based.

[00:37:11.01]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Now at that time, had acrylics yet been invented in tube? Or did you study them at the Academy at all?

[00:37:23.24]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I don't—I don't know. I think they probably were just starting, but I was not using acrylics. I was using oil.

[00:37:33.56]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Strictly oil then. Is there anything else that you remember about the Pennsylvania Academy in the 1950s that you might want to share?

[00:37:47.74]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, the Academy—

[00:37:48.65]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Some sort of summing up.

[00:37:50.56]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah. The thing they did, and they still are—it's a very powerful kind of, what's the word—motivator there, is their there traveling fellowships, the Cressons and

the Scheidts, where you work and do a body of work. And at the end of your third and fourth year, you hang a wall of your paintings. And if you win the fellowship, you go to Europe for the summer, and everyone gets very revved up about that. And naturally, they want to go have a summer in Europe, and I was no exception.

I competed for both the Scheidt and the Cresson. And I would say, you know, that's a very kind of compelling, overriding theme that's sort of in the background there. You're very much aware of this competition all the time toward the end of your school years. And I won both of those, the Cresson and the Scheidt. I went to Europe, and that was nice.

[00:39:06.00]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Were you—I know that you won many prizes at the Academy.

[00:39:10.68]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah.

[00:39:11.19]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Were you surprised at the number that you won, or did you feel fairly confident at that time?

[00:39:22.85]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I was pretty confident about my drawing, especially. I thought I was very skilled. It just came rather quickly, and fairly easily to me. Painting was much more of a struggle. I had a lot harder time learning to handle paint. I wasn't experienced. I'd never done any oil painting, and it came more slowly.

[00:39:52.81]

You know, it was nice. I did get the Scheidt. Although being on the other end of it and judging now for many years, I see some marvelous students that don't get awards and I see some students that I don't think are so great get them. There's so much compromise when you get 20 faculty together judging. So it was a very great boost to get those grants, and it was a wonderful experience to go to Europe. It was a nice way to start off your career. But of course, when you're out of there, you're at the bottom of the heap again and you have to kind of climb up the ladder again.

[00:40:39.92]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Well, this leads me into my next obvious question. What did you do in Europe when you were on your traveling fellowships?

[00:40:48.18]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: What did I do?

[00:40:49.27]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: What did you do?

[00:40:50.81]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, the Catherwood, which was really given to me without my competing for it, I went over when I was—I think I was. 18 or 19. I just had finished my first year. And I remember I wanted to go to Paris. I had always wanted to go to Paris. I went by myself. I always traveled alone because I just liked doing that.

[00:41:21.07]

And I went to Paris, and I met, I remember, a French sculptor who took a great interest in me at the Beaux-Arts. I don't know how I met this man, but then I left Paris, and I went—took a train ride to Madrid overnight. I didn't have a lot of money. You had to be careful, so I traveled modestly. It was that night that my sister, twin sister died, I remember. I didn't know it at the time, but my brother was sent over by friends to tell me shortly afterwards, in

July of that summer. So I didn't stay the whole summer. I came home. And I would say the next year was difficult for me, just trying to cope with that and with my grandmother dying and a lot of—all this family trauma.

[00:42:27.44]

But I kept painting. They were very somber, kind of gloomy paintings, trying to get through this tough time, and moving out of my house. I took a little room on Race Street. Just a kind of—I think it was $20 a month. It was a real fleabag. [Laughs.] I wanted to get within the city and live by myself, which I did. Then I competed for the other two fellowships and went to Europe two more times. And—

[00:43:14.71]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Well did you actually do drawing, painting, or pastel while you were in Europe, or did you just travel?

[00:43:20.06]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Oh, sure. No, no. I did a lot of drawing and small watercolors. And in fact, after one of those trips, I had my first exhibition of those works at a place called the Art Alliance in the Everyman's Gallery, which is a place to get started. And that was really my first show.

[00:43:43.48]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Well, Everyman's Gallery was in the Art Alliance?

[00:43:46.27]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah, it was on the third floor. [They laugh.] It was called—it was kind of quaint. I mean, that's what it was called. I guess you submitted work to a jury, and if they accepted it, you could have a show, and that was my first show. I always remember that. I think Emlen Etting was on the jury at the time. I always—that's how I got my start. Everyman's Gallery.

[00:44:10.16]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Was that in about 1960?

[00:44:14.98]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I don't even think I've listed that in my resume. I mean, it was—but I remember the work was from Europe that I showed. It must have been about that time. Yeah, '60 or '61. It had to be, because I was—that's the years I was going over to Europe. I went to Europe quite a bit that time.

[00:44:39.89]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Do you remember if your work sold from that show?

[00:44:42.76]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah. It did very well. It was small works, and it was nice. It was a good—

[00:44:48.32]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: That must have been very exciting for you.

[00:44:50.48]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah. [Laughs.] Get my taste of commercial success. Yeah, it was nice. It was helpful. I needed the money to live on, and I had just finished school, and I had to start to face the reality of how to paint and support myself. And so, do you want me to get onto that?

[END OF TRACK AAA_osborn91_5954_m]

[00:00:04.16]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Interview with Liz Osborne, side two of the tape. Okay, so you had just had your first commercial and perhaps spiritual success [laughs] as an artist at the Art Alliance. And when you left the Academy, other than this show at the end of your travels, what did you attempt to do?

[00:00:34.57]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, I took actually an extra year to finish a few courses up at Penn, so I could get the BFA, which I did. And I took a job. I was offered a teaching job at Friends Central School, where I had studied as a kid, and taught three days a week there to support myself. And then it gave me enough time to paint.

[00:01:04.20]

And I really hated it. I was teaching seventh and eighth grade. I was an assistant art teacher, really. And I just didn't—I wasn't very good at disciplining these young kids. A lot of them weren't that interested in painting. A few were. I met a few that later in life I became in touch with. One was is now editor of *Arts* magazine. He was one of my seventh-grade students. But I would say basically that teaching was a terrible strain for me. I did not enjoy it at all. And luckily, the Academy asked me to start teaching not long afterwards. I was maybe in my early—maybe 23 or 24 when I started there.

[00:02:01.95]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: It was in 1961 when you joined the Academy faculty.

[00:02:05.78]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah.

[00:02:08.49]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: I'm very curious to know—[cross talk]. Pardon?

[00:02:11.97]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Then I was able to stop teaching at Friends Central School.

[00:02:15.05]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Right. Tell me about the circumstances of joining the Academy faculty. Who asked you, for example? And was it a hard decision for you to make, or not?

[00:02:26.37]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, I'm just trying to remember. Joe Frazier was the director at the time. He had been there for many years. I don't really know what faculty recommended me. That's often the way you got in because someone would know you. I would assume it was Ros Weidner had a lot to do with it. And I had done well as a student. And they asked me to start in the evening school, which is the way they usually started their faculty. You would teach a few years there. And I guess if you did well enough, they'd move you into the day school.

[00:03:04.44]

And I think Lou Sloan, and Dan Miller, and a whole bunch of us started at the same time, and we're all still there. It just seemed that at that time, there was a big turnover on the faculty. I think it was because people like Watkins, and Stuempfig and Blackburn were all getting pretty old—and Pittman. And they started in this bunch of newer, younger people who are now still there.

[00:03:39.57]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Were you the only woman on the faculty at that time?

[00:03:43.59]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: At that time, yeah.

[00:03:44.46]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Someone told me that they thought you were the only woman who had been hired for the faculty since the early 20th century. Do you know if that's true?

[00:03:56.78]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, I never—you know, it's funny. I never thought about it a whole lot. I think Cecilia Beaux had been there at some time.

[00:04:08.46]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Yeah, fifty years before. [Laughs.]

[00:04:10.43]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah, it had been a long time since they'd had a woman, which is just amazing when you think about it.

[00:04:16.91]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Well, did you did you realize the implication at that time?

[00:04:20.61]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: No, I really didn't. I had no—I just didn't even think about it. I had not encountered any prejudice as a woman, being a painter. I did a little later on when I was trying to get a New York gallery. But I really hadn't had any problems with it, so I didn't even think much about it.

[00:04:46.39]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: It didn't even occur to you.

[00:04:47.51]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: No.

[00:04:49.21]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: But now, again, looking back, I mean, it is quite remarkable that of all the talented students that passed through that place that, number one, you being a woman, it's remarkable, in a way, that they did ask you, there having had been such an absence of women on the faculty.

[00:05:12.09]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah. Well, it is, when I look back on it, although I was totally unaware of it at the time. And I will give them credit that as part of the faculty, I never felt any prejudice or problems dealing with other faculty at that time. There was a good rapport among the faculty. It's not quite as comfortable now as it was at that time, but—

[00:05:45.62]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Do you remember who some of the other newer teachers were?

[00:05:49.25]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, yes. As I mentioned, Lou Sloan started when I did, and Dan Miller, who both have been very active in the years since then. I think Homer Johnson might have started then. And I'm probably forgetting some. I think that was pretty much the newer faculty at that time. And they're still there. I feel sorry for people today trying to get in because all these people have been there forever.

[00:06:20.38]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Well, you have been there thirty years now.

[00:06:22.93]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah. It's tough for the generations since us because the Academy tends to keep people. Unless they do some really stupid thing, they stay on for a long time. Even though we're not tenured, it's a kind of unwritten thing.

[00:06:44.58]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Does it ever hit you that you've been there thirty years?

[00:06:48.73]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes.

[00:06:49.62]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: And how does that feel?

[00:06:50.74]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, there are times when I feel I should not be there any longer, that I should leave. And I love it, but there have been periods when I wished I could take off for couple of years and just get away. We have only in recent—I'd say—well, in the last 15 years, maybe, they've got sabbaticals going. But it took them a while to get that. In fact, I was instrumental in getting them to look into that.

[00:07:26.95]

I think painters need to get away from that, and you know, travel, and just see different places. It's tough being in the same place that long, even though it's an ideal place to teach, because the students are very focused. And there's a lot of real talent that comes through there. And you don't have to do a lot of preparation of notes and meetings, and stuff. It's a wonderful place to teach. But I guess, financially, if I could have afforded to take off more, I would have. But it just didn't work out that way. At some point, I might just leave [laughs], just get out.

[00:08:18.96]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: What do you like best about teaching at the Pennsylvania Academy?

[00:08:24.22]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I love the students—I mean, not all of them. But there are always some—I'd say, every year, there are a bunch of very talented students that go through there that are fascinating to work with, and stimulating to work with. It works both ways. I learn sometimes from them as much as maybe they learn from me. The students are terrific. And there's some very interesting faculty that I like—a few, especially.

[00:08:57.07]

Sidney Goodman is one I've enjoyed over the years, and Jimmy [Lueders] is another. Roswell Weidner is still there. He's a wonderful person. And we've had some interesting directors there. Tom Armstrong was a colorful character. He was there. I've seen a lot of people come and go. Tom was a lot of fun. And I like Frank Goodyear very much. Frank has just been a very good friend, and I think has done a good job through a lot of difficult times there. So it's a good—it's a great place to teach.

[00:09:47.72]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So you still feel comfortable there.

[00:09:50.11]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: If I have to teach, I like teaching there. But it's just that I feel

sometimes I just would just as soon not have to go into a school every week. I'd like to be off traveling somewhere or just in the studio. And it's more of that than anything about the Academy. It's an ideal place to teach.

[00:10:10.57]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: When you started teaching there, you said it was part-time, in the evenings, I believe.

[00:10:16.54]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I taught in the evening school.

[00:10:17.72]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Yes. So you had plenty of time to work on your own things.

[00:10:21.17]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah.

[00:10:21.74]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Now, what about in later years? Did the time you had to yourself diminish as you started teaching more and more?

[00:10:28.60]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, when you go into the day school, most of the faculty—the Academy is set up so that you really teach either one day. Some people teach two days if you want. It's not set up like a college where you have to teach a three-day schedule. So many of the faculty are forced to teach in more than one school to support themselves if they can't sell their work.

[00:10:55.20]

In other words, they will teach in a little art center here, the Academy, or some college part-time to make a living. I was fortunate in that I early on started exhibiting and having shows. And I was able to manage with exhibitions and my teaching one day to support myself, which I did since I was 21 years old. I married when I was 27. But even then—and I married an architect. And God knows they don't do that well. And we managed better together than separately. But still, I had to earn my own way, which I did. I have always done that. I've managed to keep that balance pretty much the way I like it. When I divorced ten years ago, I was forced to really teach a little more. I took on almost another day, which was more than I really wanted to do.

[00:12:21.97]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: How many days presently do you work at the Academy?

[00:12:25.30]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, now I'm cutting back again. I was up to almost two days. It was a day and a half in the day school and one evening. So it added up to two days of teaching of my time, which was more than I liked to do. But I just—having a child in a house and studio and all the things, I just needed—it was a little too much. So now, fortunately, I'm able to cut back on the teaching a little more, which is good.

[00:13:07.66]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Do you have—I'm jumping to the present, but do you have a routine or a method of working day to day that you stick to?

[00:13:21.16]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, yes. I come into the studio every day. In different periods of my life, that's varied somewhat. I mean, there was a period, I suppose, before I was married

when I painted a night at lot more than I did after I was married. And then when I had a child, I would even—you know, I'd be home for dinner more because I wanted to see my child. And I would try to stay home part of the weekend, at least Sundays. So those things affected my working schedule.

[00:14:04.80]

But I pretty much would discipline myself to come in. Whether I felt like it or not, I'd come into the studio every day. And there's always something you can do. Even if you're not inspired to paint, there's plenty of other things to do in the studio. And I did that. I've always, most of the time, worked separate from where I live. Although, at some point now, my next move, I think I'll move my studio back to where I live. That will be my next move, which I imagine will be in the next few years.

[00:14:59.26]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Getting back to the first one-woman show you had at the Art Alliance at the Everyman's Gallery, would you say, at that point, you were extremely motivated to continue being an artist?

[00:15:16.06]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Oh, yeah.

[00:15:16.33]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Or did you ever have doubts? Or did you have some doubts when you graduated from the Academy?

[00:15:22.24]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, I think the first couple of years out of school are tough, because you're in this cocoon of artists. And everybody's all excited and get all this attention from teachers, and praise. And all of a sudden, you're out there in the big, wide world, and nobody could care less about you. And you kind of have to start over from the bottom of the ladder, as I said. And you have to deal with your personal life. I was dating people and having relationships. And some were working, and some weren't. And you're trying to figure that out. And I would say, the first couple of years out of school were tough.

[00:16:13.14]

And I wasn't as prolific. I was trying to figure out how to live and paint, and have some kind of a social life, and get the right balance between the three. And I remember, I always knew I would keep painting, but there were periods when I wasn't as prolific. And those first couple of years I can remember being a little tougher. My brother and I sold our house in Lansdowne because my aunt and uncle, when I was 18 or 19—about 19, they decided we could live on our own. And we did. I had to get used to doing everything pretty much on my own. And I did.

[00:17:16.83]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: What were exhibiting opportunities like in Philadelphia in the early '60s?

[00:17:23.97]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, I'm trying to remember. After the Art Alliance, I joined a gallery called Perakis, which—he had been a student at the Academy and opened up this gallery on Locust Street and a frame shop combined. And Soc just had a wonderful eye and a wonderful warmth and feeling for artists and had some very nice, very interesting exhibitions. And I had a couple of shows with him.

[00:18:05.83]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: I'm sorry. What was his first name?

[00:18:07.46]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Socrates Perakis.

[00:18:09.98]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Oh, okay.

[00:18:10.24]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: He is now—since that time, he really got into framing more full-time, and became a marvelous framer. And in recent years, though, he himself is moving into painting again. And he's a very talented painter. But he's also a very successful businessman. He's done very well. Did a lot of my framing over the years. But I showed with Soc a few times—and a lot of drawings and some paintings. And then I left him. I don't remember why. I guess I felt it was time to move on. And I went to Makler Gallery. She was a more—she'd been around longer, and she was showing a combination of New York and Philadelphia artists. So I thought it was a good idea to try that. And I had several shows with her.

[00:19:19.85]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Now, I think that was not until the '70s.

[00:19:24.29]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I guess so, yeah.

[00:19:26.33]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Getting back to the '60s for a moment, I know there were not very many galleries in Philadelphia, but the few that did exist, were they showing contemporary Philadelphians' work? Or were they mainly showing more older, established artists who perhaps already had a national or international reputation?

[00:19:47.04]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, Socrates was showing younger artists. Makler was into more established artists. There were very few. I didn't mention that I had close friends that I knew from my Friends Central days named the Carlens—Bob Carlen. I used to stay overnight at their house a lot when I was going to art school. And he had had a gallery for many years, and he was more into Hicks and Pippin and Demuth. I mean, he showed some contemporary people in Philadelphia, but not as many. I never showed there, although I saw a lot of wonderful things in that house over the years. I learned a lot from them and Bob.

[00:20:34.56]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: How did you meet them—the Carlens?

[00:20:36.58]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: His daughters both went to Friends Central. They were a year or two behind me. But somehow, we became friends. And it stuck. I just stayed friends with them over the years. I still am friends with them. And they opened up their house to me, and I stayed overnight there a lot because that was when I was living outside of the city. And they would let me stay—they had a big house, which they still have on 16th Street. And Bob had this gallery. But as I say, he was really into more big-time artists. And he would occasionally buy things of mine. He was very supportive.

[00:21:28.58]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So you could say he was an early patron?

[00:21:30.99]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah, uh-huh [affirmative]. He was. And the Academy is having a [Horace] Pippin show, I think they're planning now. Bob had a lot of Pippins. He encouraged him a great deal, supported him and owned a lot of his work.

[00:21:56.07]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay, so then through the '60s, you showed at Perakis; you showed at the Art Alliance, and you showed at the Pennsylvania Academy Peale House Galleries.

[00:22:05.02]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Oh, did I?

[00:22:06.09]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Yes. [Laughs.]

[00:22:06.35]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I'd forgotten.

[00:22:08.10]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Yes.

[00:22:09.15]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I did. I forgot that show. That was a good show. I showed—you're right. Marge Rubin was running those. She was in charge of that operation, the Peale House Galleries. And I had a studio there. The Academy was wonderful in giving faculty working spaces. That was a real bonus that a lot of faculty took advantage of. I was one of them, and used—I had a wonderful studio in that building for many years. I remember twisting Marge's arm to get a show. You had to go out there and say, "I want to have a show," and just keep after it 'til you got it. And I did have one. And I don't know the date. Was it '67 or '69?

[00:23:03.15]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: '67.

[00:23:03.64]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: And I showed oils. Some of them—I did pretty well in that show. I remember selling fairly well, although I have a few still from that period, which I'm very glad I still own.

[00:23:22.25]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: How were the exhibitions split up in those days between the Academy itself and the Peale House? Or was it one and the same?

[00:23:33.74]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: The Peale House was trying to show, I think, more contemporary artists, both a percentage, a smattering of their own faculty, plus other artists. They had a show of Diebenkorn drawings. I always remember that show because I loved the drawings, and I wanted to buy one in the worst way. It was $500, and I couldn't afford it. And I sure wish I had done it. I'll never forget it.

[00:24:04.52]

So they had some very—Marge put together some very interesting exhibitions of contemporary artists. And now I think the Morris Gallery is filling that same role. I don't know. It's a little different. They have a little different focus, but it is mainly contemporary artists. And it was a nice—they were nice spaces. The location was great, because it was on Chestnut Street. A lot of people could wander in and see the show. It was just a nice way to get more exposure. And I did do that. I forgotten about that.

[00:24:51.17]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Yes. You showed there a few times, I think. I see here on your resume that you had a show in 1969 at the American Consulate in Sao Paulo, Brazil. How was that arranged?

[00:25:05.80]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Oh. [Laughs.] Okay. That, I must confess, came about through Peter Solmssen. Peter, I mentioned to you off the tape, was a friend and a former beau who was in the law school with my brother at Penn. And then we both married other people. And Peter was in the foreign service for a while and went to Brazil. And he was very anxious for me to come down there and have an exhibition. And he arranged it. And I did it. I wasn't allowed to sell the work, but they paid all the expenses. And it was really just an opportunity to sort of travel and see a faraway place. And it was a lot of work, rolling up the canvases and re-stretching them and then un-stretching them. But it was really interesting, and I was glad I did it. And that's how it came about.

[00:26:06.13]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Do you remember what the reaction of the consulate was to your work and/or whoever else saw the pictures?

[00:26:15.52]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I have some photographs of Governor Shafer. For some reason, he was down there at the opening. He was the Governor of Pennsylvania at the time. I guess they seemed to like the work. I don't remember any reviews or—if there were, I just don't remember them. I had a positive feeling about it, so I guess it was an interesting experience.

[00:26:51.74]

Brazil was funny— a big built-up city. And it was so unlike Europe. I'd never seen any place but Europe. And then on the way home, I remember we stopped by—we got off the plane in Peru, which was wonderful to see Machu Picchu. And I'd been very interested in the textiles and weavings of Peru. That was a nice bonus that we were able to do, coming back. Other than that, I wouldn't say it was a major experience. It just was a nice way to travel—to have a show and travel.

[00:27:47.48]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Not bad for a young woman artisan in her twenties at the time.

[00:27:52.92]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah, it was a good thing. And I'm glad I did it. It was very good.

[00:27:59.36]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Now, a little bit earlier than that, you received the Fulbright. Now, tell me about that.

[00:28:07.56]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Gosh, I'm forgetting. I'm glad you're reminding me. I competed for the Fulbright—I'd been out of school a few years, and I decided, for a number of reasons, that I wanted to study in France for a while.

[00:28:30.02]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Can you elucidate those reasons?

[00:28:33.21]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: [Laughs.] Well, they're somewhat personal. I don't know. It has to do with family background. And I don't know that I really want to go into it at this point.

[00:28:45.19]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay.

[00:28:45.81]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: But it does have to do with my family and French connections. And I decided I wanted to spend some time in France, so I did. I competed for this Fulbright. And I went over there for a year. It affected me in a lot of ways. The Fulbright was 1963 and 1964, I think, wasn't it?

[00:29:20.37]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:29:23.18]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: It was ironic at the time that when I was over there, American painting was full of Rauschenberg and Johns, and it was a very exciting time in this country. And so I found myself in Paris really looking back at American art magazines and being really more excited by what was happening here than over there.

[00:29:53.06]

I was living in Paris, and I even was sort of hanging out with Americans more than French. I met a critic named Max Koslov, who was—we were friendly. And he's kept on being a critic for a number of years. Another artist, a sculptor named Michael Todd, who—we used to go to flea markets. He did a lot of found sculpture, and he was quite fascinating guy. And I met a woman named Katherine Lee, whom I liked very much. She was also—these were all other Fulbrights. And she became my maid of honor. I married that year in France.

[00:30:42.75]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Tell me about—

[00:30:43.30]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Her father was Sherman Lee. He was a very distinguished American —

[00:30:48.00]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Curator.

[00:30:48.75]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: —museum director, Cleveland Museum. And she has now become a museum director, I understand. And I forget—some museum. I just learned that.

[00:31:03.21]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: You were about to tell me about your first husband.

[00:31:07.89]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes. When I was competing for the Fulbright that year, I was dating a young architect who came to Philadelphia from Pittsburgh. He was from Pittsburgh, and he was here working with Lou Kahn. He came to work for Lou. He had gone to Yale and knew a bunch of—I think Lou was teaching at Yale. Anyway, we met, and we fell in love. And I was 27. And then the Fulbright came through, and I left. I said, well, I'm going to go anyway. [Laughs.]

[00:31:55.52]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: You had not yet been married?

[00:31:57.03]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: No. We were in this great, exciting relationship. But I decided to take it and go. And so then I did go, and we carried it on by mail, letter. And it got more and more accelerated. And we decided to get married, basically, which was very romantic. And he did all of the—there was lots of paperwork you have to do, you have to get.

[00:32:30.21]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: You got married in Paris?

[00:32:31.72]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah, he came over, and we married in Paris. And Katherine Lee was my maid of honor. We just had four people in our wedding. And he had a critic for *The Tribune*, Paul Schwartz, who was writing art criticism at the time. And we had a very simple, little civil ceremony. We didn't have a church wedding. I had a godmother here who wanted me to have a church wedding, but I didn't want it.

[00:33:04.15]

And my brother was married here a week before. He had a real traditional wedding. Unfortunately, we didn't go to each other's weddings, which was a little sad. But I did marry in January of that year. And my new husband came over and lived with me in Paris for a few months, which was very nice.

[00:33:33.78]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Yes. Sounds very romantic.

[00:33:36.49]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: It was. It was great. And I worked fairly well over there. I did a lot more abstract work over there than I did. I just had a real rebellious feeling about the Academy and wanting to pull it away from me. And I just did. I didn't do anything at all similar to what I'd been doing before. I was much more experimental.

[00:34:17.99]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: What of the untold numbers of Parisian—well, masterpieces found in Parisian museums impressed you at that time? Can you remember?

[00:34:30.38]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Wow. You know, I have to say that I was fascinated by American art at that time. And I was much more interested in what was going on here, although I loved Paris. I was living there. And it was nice to have the distance away from the United States and really trying to get some perspective on my life. It was really a good year for me to get away. In fact, I remember my husband took a painting of mine that I had finished just before I left, and put it in the Academy Annual. And they bought it. It's in their collection now.

[00:35:18.47]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: What's the name of that piece?

[00:35:20.62]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I think it's *Woman With Red*. It was a figurative painting, very much influenced by the California painters.

[00:35:29.30]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: *Woman with—*

[00:35:30.01]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: *With Red*.

[00:35:31.10]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Red.

[00:35:36.43]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, in Paris, you asked what paintings? I guess I went to the Louver, and I remember all the Jeu De Paume, and the Rodin Museum, and all those places I looked at over and over, but more from an art history point of view.

[00:35:56.86]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Rather than any of them directly affecting your work?

[00:35:59.70]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah.

[00:36:01.03]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did you look at the work—

[00:36:02.08]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I got fat over there, eating cheese and pasta, I mean, all that great patisserie. Oh, God. I'll never forget that.

[00:36:10.72]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: And butter.

[00:36:11.72]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I had to lose weight when I got home. [Laughs.]

[00:36:18.27]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did you look at the work of Matisse when you were over there?

[00:36:22.50]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Not really. I have since grown to just love Matisse and admire Matisse a great deal. But at that time, I don't remember being terribly focused on his work.

[00:36:38.55]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: How about Gauguin or Cézanne?

[00:36:42.83]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Gauguin, I loved. And even when I was a student at the Academy, I was interested in Gauguin because I guess the figurative and his interest in color. And I related a little more to that. Matisse was probably a little more ahead of me in a way. I wasn't quite caught up to him. But I certainly admire him a great deal now. But Paris—I was ready to come home after a year and get back to my life and work here, which I did, and continued showing in Philadelphia for a while.

[00:37:36.32]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: What did your work look like in the '60s?

[00:37:39.47]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I was doing figurative painting primarily, some still life, very loose oils. I have one here in the studio. I was looking at some of the California artists a little bit. They were doing some figurative work as well—Diebenkorn, and Park, and Bischoff. I love their work. And I had considered going out there to study with Diebenkorn, I think, just before I got the Fulbright.

And so I went to Europe instead. So I never did make it. I wish I—that's one regret I do have, that I never did get out there to study with him. That would have been a fascinating experience for me. But I did look at their work a lot, and it came through in my—I think it affected what I did. I was doing nudes and very sketchy large figures, and trying to be very gestural with the paint.

[00:39:00.89]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: What about your palette?

[00:39:02.60]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, it was somewhat muted, I would say, looking at it now compared to what I'm doing at present. I would say it was a little—I certainly was using color. It wasn't Academy brown soup painting, but it was, I'd say, a low-key palette—a lot of purples and blues. Yeah, it was—I did, for instance, like to use a lot of washes combined with —and even leaving bare canvas, which, when I was at the Academy, was considered a no-no. You never were supposed to leave bare canvas. But I did that.

[00:39:54.67]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did the Paris experience free you up to do that?

[00:39:59.03]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I think so. It did. It just gave me a perspective on the Academy—that there was a much bigger world out there and a lot of different ways to paint that were not so traditional. The Academy was fairly traditional. And I learned to start going up to New York and looking at exhibitions, and seeing—much to see what was going on beyond Philadelphia, which was time for me to do that.

[00:40:41.06]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: And when you went up to New York, what do you remember about those days?

[00:40:46.14]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, I remember—in fact, I was quoted in some interview saying I would go to thirty galleries in a day. And I did go up there, and I would just wear myself—run myself ragged, going to as many galleries as I could, just to see what was going on. And I did. Of course, I remember Diebenkorn. Even before that, there was a little gallery called Gallery St. Etienne that showed some of the Austrian artists. That was a beautiful little gallery. And I remember Ray Saunders. We would look at that gallery. [Egon] Schiele was there, and [Julius] Bisser, and some beautiful European artists.

[00:41:38.61]

But then there were some of the American artists coming up that were exciting. And for me, it was important to—I made a point of getting up there as much as I could. I was still feeling not quite ready to attempt showing there. Although I started—I don't remember when I started looking for a gallery up there. I just don't remember the exact dates, except that I had some collectors who had work of mine that must have been in the late '60s or early '70s when I became aware that it was time to try to show up in New York. And I did start to look. And I can—want me to tell it the next tape?

[00:42:39.92]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: All right. So we'll pick up when you first started for looking—

[00:42:44.82]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: My New York gallery.

[00:42:45.68]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: —at New York galleries.

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[00:00:04.13]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: This is Cynthia Veloric, interviewing Elizabeth Osborne for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art on May 31, 1991 at the artist's home.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

You were describing before a painting on the wall of your studio that was from the 1960s. Do you recall the title of that painting?

[00:00:26.92]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes, that was *Standing Nude*. It's a portrait of one of my students in my studio and about 50-by-60-inches, the painting is.

[00:00:41.25]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: We want to pick up with your investigation of New York galleries in the 1960s. Why don't we continue in that realm?

[00:00:52.32]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I started—I'm not sure. I have to get back in the time here. Just about the time I did finish that series of paintings, one of my collectors suggested I go to New York and talk to a dealer that she had bought from named [Antoinette] Kraushaar.

[00:01:16.89]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: K-R-A-U-S-H-A-A-R?

[00:01:20.97]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Kraushaar. And I thought, well, I've got to start somewhere. So I did do that. I went up, made an appointment, and I went to see this little gray-haired woman there who I guess had run that gallery for many years. And I was all full of hope, partly because I had this introduction. And I liked the work I was doing.

[00:01:45.71]

And she did look at the slides, and we talked. And at some point in the conversation, she basically said that she really couldn't take me on. And wasn't it difficult being a woman artist? And I was so startled by that. I don't know. It was my first time I had ever encountered that, especially from a woman art dealer who was—at any rate, that was the end of that meeting. And I must say, I never set foot back in the gallery again. I was so put off by it. But I didn't give up.

[00:02:30.22]

And I did a few years later—actually, it wasn't until the early '70s—I did connect with a gallery in New York called Gimpel & Weitzenhoffer, which was at 79th and Madison. They came to me. They had seen my work at Marian Locks' gallery in a show and chose me and another artist, James Havard, to be in a group show. And that's how I began my connection with them.

[00:03:06.03]

And I had, I think, two or three exhibitions with Gimpel. I don't have it in front of me, but I showed with them in the '70s a few times—more landscape than figurative work at that time. And in fact, I was working in acrylics, doing these large landscapes that were inspired from travels in New Mexico and also in Massachusetts. And it was an interesting experience for me. They did well, although I guess one always wants the moon. And I gradually started to feel that I wasn't completely comfortable in that gallery. Do you want me to continue with the gallery talk?

[00:04:11.73]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Yes, but I do want to ask you the name of the collector who told you to go up to New York, if you can recall?

[00:04:19.67]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Oh, boy. I can't. It could have been Mrs. Isard, Lenny Isard. It could have been.

[00:04:29.91]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: I-S-A-R-D?

[00:04:31.20]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah. But I'm not a hundred percent sure of that. That goes way back. This collector obviously had bought from that gallery.

[00:04:44.58]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: I want to keep the discussion a little bit longer in the '60s.

[00:04:48.98]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah, I was starting to jump ahead.

[00:04:53.34]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: That's quite okay. I want to talk about—we may have covered it a little bit before, but just in a little bit more depth, your interest in the California Bay Area painters and how you learned about, them and how it influenced your own work.

[00:05:17.17]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Okay. I really learned about them partly through magazines, I mean, all the art publications coming out every month. I was aware of Diebenkorn, especially. And he was showing very regularly in New York at a place called Poindexter Gallery at that time, and showing these very loose figurative paintings, which just fascinated me. And I followed his work very closely at that time. Every time he had a show, I'd go see it. And I think Oliveira even—Oliveira even was showing in New York somewhat at that time—not quite as frequently as Diebenkorn.

[00:06:12.42]

But the Modern had a beautiful Oliveira of a walking figure. They still have it—sort of a figure in the middle of a canvas. And I don't know. It just caught my—it struck something in me, because I liked the painterly quality. The Academy tradition was a little more restrained somehow to me and more conservative.

[00:06:46.81]

This had more energy, and it kind of tied into the Abstract Expressionists much more closely. I mean, these painters, some of them were abstract painters before they did the figures. And I just enjoyed that kind of energy and excitement that I didn't feel in the Philadelphia approach to figurative work. And it just fired me up. And I looked at it a lot and it, and I think it did influence me, and kind of reinforced me.

And I considered going out to California to study with Diebenkorn. I was out of school a few years. I think I was in my middle twenties at that time, maybe late twenties. But I had applied for a Fulbright, and it just happened that the Fulbright came through. And so I went over to Europe instead, and I never got to California. But I certainly could see their work, and knew what was happening.

[00:07:59.63]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So how did looking at their work cause you to change your own work?

[00:08:07.28]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I don't know that it changed it. I suppose that it just reinforced something that I already was starting to do myself. And that was being looser, and more painterly, and broader areas of big brushstrokes, and kind of flat areas against the very brushy, painterly areas. And I think it was more that they were doing what I was interested in myself. And it just was a reinforcing it more than changing it, particularly.

[00:08:59.70]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Also, in the '60s, were you looking at any of the color-field painters or the hard-edge painters, like Ellsworth Kelly or Gene Davis?

[00:09:10.59]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: A little later, I became more aware of them. In fact, that's a good question. I did start to look at Frankenthaler a lot. I, in fact, had a student at the Academy that was doing some staining canvases. She was pouring acrylic on unprimed canvas, and as was Frankenthaler, and [Kenneth] Noland, and Morris Louis. And for some reason, it fascinated me because it was these veils of thin color, which relate to—and I always liked that wash transparency. I later did it in watercolor quite a lot. But this is moving into the '70s period.

[00:10:11.08]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Seventies, yes. I read that she introduced you to that in 1970.

[00:10:15.26]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah, yeah. And this student—literally, she just was playing around with it. And I thought I'd give it a try myself and see what I could do with that. And I did start to work in depth that way for, I would say—I don't know how many years. At least, six years, seven years.

[00:10:45.22]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay, before we get into your staining technique, I just want to go back to an annual exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy in 1963, where you won a prize for a painting called *Sleeping Girl*. Do you remember that painting? Or can you describe that painting to me now? Can you tell me anything about it?

[00:11:08.67]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I have a picture of it in my studio. It was an oil painting of a friend of mine named Margie Gibbon. I remember she was—she's still around, actually. And she would sit for me. I always had trouble. I liked to work from the model for its—periodically, I just liked to have the actual model in the studio. And she was around, and she would sit for—she was a beautiful girl. And she was willing to sit. And she posed for quite a few paintings, actually.

[00:11:46.25]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: And her name was Margie—

[00:11:47.82]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Margie Gibbon. And her father—

[00:11:50.19]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Could you spell that?

[00:11:51.30]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: G-I-B-B-O-N. Her father invented the heart-lung machine. I knew her from Friends Central School, where I went to school. She was a student there. She was younger than I, but I was friends with her family. And Margie set for me a number of times. That particular painting, I'm trying to think what I can tell you about it. It was preceded—What was the date? '63?

[00:12:27.47]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Yes.

[00:12:27.76]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: It preceded my little bit bolder, more California-inspired work. This

was more—I liked that period of my work. I remember that I was starting to get a better grasp of color and combining the color into the drawing. I think I had a problem at the Academy for a while when I got out of school, sort of working with stronger color. And really, the Academy always had this reputation for brown soup, sort of muddy paintings. And it certainly was true for certain artists there. And it took me a while to get my sense of color, really, out and sort of under control. But those paintings were starting to show that.

[00:13:34.54]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So over the course of the '60s, your style went from—help me out here. [Laughs.]

[00:13:44.73]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Oh. Went from—in the '60s, in the it went—well, I was working a lot with the figure. It went from a more restrained, more carefully drawn figure to a more abstract, looser approach, which I would say is the California School. And I pretty much stopped that at the end of the '60s, when I decided to just change direction altogether and try to explore color and larger-scale works and even more abstract kind of interpretations of subject matter. And that's when I went to the landscapes and the acrylic paintings and left that period altogether.

[00:14:44.24]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay. So then in 1970, as you were just discussing, you were introduced to this staining technique of staining acrylic into unprimed canvas.

[00:14:56.54]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah.

[00:14:57.38]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Which we know Frankenthaler was doing that, and Morris Louis was doing that, and others. Did you ever get to meet any of them? Or did you go to any of their shows in about 1970?

[00:15:11.71]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I certainly saw Frankenthaler shows and Morris Louis. I met Frankenthaler only once, and she came to Philadelphia—to Penn, as a critic, to their graduate school. And I went out because I knew she was going to be there. And I introduced myself and asked her if she'd come and look at my work at my studio. I guess I was very bold to do that. And I remember, she was very gracious considering it was a hectic day.

[00:15:43.01]

And she said, "Oh, sure, I'll bring my lunch to your studio, or a hard-boiled egg," or something like that. I remember her saying that. And then she got tied up, and she never was able to get away and leave the University and come in town to my studio. But later on, I wrote her a note about something. And I think I sent her slides, and because I was admiring her work so much.

[00:16:14.12]

And she made some recommendations for galleries for me to go look at and said to use her name, which I thought was really very gracious of her, considering she really didn't know me at all [laughs] and was probably very busy in her own right. That was a very nice of her, I always thought. I can't remember the names of the galleries now.

[00:16:38.25]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did you pursue them?

[00:16:40.33]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I might have. I must have, because it was something that was on my

mind, and I was anxious to resolve that to get a New York gallery situation. But obviously, whatever they were, it didn't work out, or I would have joined them. She was with Emmerich, I think. She'd been there a long time.

[00:17:09.80]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So tell me, then, about—

[00:17:16.24]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: The landscape period?

[00:17:16.88]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: —the landscapes. Yes, in the early '70s.

[00:17:19.67]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Okay. So I started working then. I literally put the oil paints away. I got the unprimed canvas work fairly large for me. I mean, most of them were at least five, six, seven feet, which was about as big as I ever went. It wasn't enormous compared to Frankenthaler, but it was big enough for me.

[00:17:47.44]

And what I did was work from small studies. I would go out on location to New Mexico or to Manchester, Massachusetts. Those are two places that I happened to like and was familiar with the certain areas there. And I would do these little watercolor studies—not very literal, but more of the shapes and the kind of broad areas of color. And I sort of heightened the color. It was somewhat exaggerated.

[00:18:27.92]

And then I would take them back to the studio and choose whatever ones I wanted to use for larger works. And I didn't necessarily do them exactly the same as the study, but it was a departure for the painting. And that's pretty much how I worked for—and those are the works I showed at Gimpel and—well, for several shows, I did that.

[00:18:56.62]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Some of those landscapes are actually titled *Manchester, Massachusetts*. Isn't that right?

[00:19:02.36]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah, I have a lot of them.

[00:19:03.94]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Right. And the ones of New Mexico are titled—any particular spot in New Mexico?

[00:19:10.37]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, the place—I went out there—really, I just asked a friend because I'd never been there. And I knew some people that went there, and they said, well, go to Abiquiu and around Santa Fe. And I flew out there. My daughter was just a baby, I think. I left her here with my husband, and I went out for the first time by myself and just drove around and painted for, I think, two or three weeks. It was really just a working trip and exploring. It was very fascinating to do it.

[00:19:52.28]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did you meet up with Georgia O'Keeffe by any chance? [Laughs.]

[00:19:56.39]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I did later on. What happened—I loved New Mexico after that first

trip. And then my husband came out. That started a series of visits there with him or on vacations, and with our daughter. Over a period of years, we went out there.

[00:20:20.36]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Was the first year you went out there 1973? Or was it earlier than that?

[00:20:26.15]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: It was earlier. It must have been around '71 or '72. I'd say '72, because Audrey was born in '71. And I think she was just a little baby when I went out there first. And we found this place called the Ghost Ranch, which was in Abiquiu, which is O'Keeffe land. And it was this enormous piece of property that was tied into the Presbyterian church. Evidently, it was a given as a gift to the church.

[00:21:08.46]

And they had a series of summer educational programs. But they also have a few wonderful little Adobe houses on this huge ranch, where you could pay to stay. And then you ate in this communal dining room. It was a nice—and they had a pool, and they had horses. And it just was a very real kind of place. It wasn't a phony kind of artificial environment. And it was very beautiful because it was thousands of acres.

[00:21:49.91]

And one time when we were there—of course, the first thing I said was, "Where does O'Keeffe live?" Because everybody, of course, knew her and knew she lived at Abiquiu. And they were very protective of her and said, "Oh, I'm sorry. We just can't tell you that. We won't tell you that." So I gave up, finally. And one day, we were on a ride. They had these college kids that were guides. This cute, little 18-year-old girl was taking us on a—a group of five or six of us on a ride, the horses were following her along.

[00:22:32.95]

And we went pretty far. And at some point, we were in this gulch or gully. She got off. She got a little bit lost, I think. And all of a sudden, there we were in front of O'Keeffe's house. And O'Keeffe came out the door—I remember she had on a black dress—waving her arms, "Saying, you're on private property! Get off of my land," or something like that. And, "Go away!"

[00:23:03.44]

And I was just fascinated. I just stared at her, and I looked at her house, and her truck, and everything, and I looked at her views. And it was the closest I got to her out there. But her own house, which was part of that huge ranch, was pretty far from the main part where we were staying. I mean, you had to ride for ten or fifteen minutes to get to where she was. You wouldn't not find it unless you just fell into it like we did.

[00:23:35.37]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: But it's almost as if you were fated to see her. I mean—

[00:23:40.47]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: [They laugh.] It was interesting. I was amused. And then I did meet her in New York at—I was given an award at the—I guess it's called the National Institute of Arts and Letters, or whatever it is—National Academy of Arts and Letters. And I don't remember the year, but it was called the Hinda Rosen—something Hinda Rosenthal award for sort of a younger emerging artist. They still have that every year. And the year I got that award—you hung a group of paintings. And that year, I know Joyce Carol Oates got it in writing. And they gave it to some interesting people. I forget how much money it was.

[00:24:36.64]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Was it the Rosenthal Foundation Award at the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters?

[00:24:41.83]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes.

[00:24:42.16]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay, then that was 1976.

[00:24:44.63]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Okay. Well, that year, when I went up to receive it, we were seated on a stage. It's up around 155th Street or somewhere way uptown. And I remember seeing O'Keeffe sitting there on the stage. And at intermission, or some break in the ceremony, people got up. And she just stayed in her seat on the stage. And I was seated a couple rows and back. So I got up and went down, sat down next to her and just chatted with her. And she was quite friendly and very—I don't remember. We were talking about her teaching in Texas, and she was very pleasant. I guess if it wasn't on her own ranch, then she didn't mind talking then. And but that's about all. That's about as far as I've gotten with George O'Keeffe. [They laugh.]

[00:25:48.66]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Certainly better than nothing. Wow.

[00:25:53.30]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Actually, truthfully, I wasn't that aware of her work until—or even that interested in it until a number of years later. And then I started to really look at it more closely and admired it. But it took me a while.

[00:26:09.59]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Well, as you were both working in New Mexico—you and Georgia O'Keeffe—could you say that you have any affinity with her work?

[00:26:25.95]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, very little. I think I—I mean, perhaps some maybe in the landscape. But no, I would not say—I wasn't thinking about her or that aware of her. She had a very unique vision of New Mexico, and probably more intense in a way than mine, because she was there all the time. And she picked up all these bones and things around her that I did not have. I was really focused mainly on the landscape.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:27:14.52]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay, now, can you describe for me the large acrylic landscapes then that were done out of these small watercolor studies in Manchester and in New Mexico?

[00:27:25.95]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes. They were painted in a combination of very thin, stained washes, layering colors. First, I would make a drawing from the little sketch I would do. And then I would, in some areas, build up the paint. I never got really heavy brush strokes. And I did most of them with sponges, and pouring, and some brushes.

[00:28:03.35]

But there isn't much of a—unlike the oil paintings that preceded them, you don't see much brush mark on them. They tended to flatten out. And I would say, to get texture, I relied more on combining two or three colors together that would intermix and give a different kind of feeling of on the surface. Or I would throw solver. And I don't think I did it on those paintings, but you could throw sand or some different things to get some kind of breakup of the texture.

[00:29:00.00]

I guess in the end of that series, the one thing that I did miss was getting—and I didn't use much—was just the loaded brush where you get a feeling of the pull of the brushwork on the painting. You didn't see that in these at all. They relied much more on the intensity of the color, and the broad areas of—they were not really realist paintings at all. They were really somewhat abstract paintings that were based on the landscape.

[00:29:44.00]

Some, I thought were—I liked a lot more than others, as in all of my work. And I think the ones that I began to depart more and more from the original study and just let the painting take its course were much more successful than when I tried to follow the study very closely. Those became much tighter and less exciting to me. I finally learned that in the end.

[00:30:21.98]

But those paintings did lead me into watercolor in an odd way, because I was interested in these veils, layers of transparent color—which, of course, watercolor was a wonderful medium as well to get that effect. And there was a natural transition from the paintings to focusing on watercolor, which I did after those paintings. That was my next period of work, basically.

[00:31:03.55]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So it was sort of circular. You start out with a small watercolor studies, which led to the large acrylics, which led you back to large-scale watercolors.

[00:31:11.76]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes, mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:31:14.12]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay. Somewhere in there also in about the mid '70s, you began printmaking with silkscreen and lithography. Can you discuss that?

[00:31:26.61]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes. Okay. I did. The printmaking began with a woman that was teaching at the Academy with me named Marty Zelt, who was—still is, I think, a very talented printmaker. She did a lot of silkscreens herself and became quite—I have some, but not right here—upstairs. At any rate, Marty kept saying, "Liz, why don't you try to do a print? It's time you thought about trying some prints." So she recommended one of her students to try just to lead me through a silkscreen. And we did one or two together—small, little ones, just so I could understand the technique of it.

[00:32:19.97]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: What subject were you doing?

[00:32:21.67]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: It was from a landscape. I had a couple sketches of landscapes. And we did two prints, which I never even showed. I just did them to learn it. Then my gallery decided to commission a series of a couple of prints, editions.

[00:32:46.61]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Which gallery was that?

[00:32:47.97]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Marian Locks Gallery in Philadelphia. And so my first silkscreen was called Passage. Sometimes I'd take these names from maps or from—they didn't necessarily apply to any real place. It was like I read once Motherwell would just open a page in the book and point to a word, and then he'd choose that as a title or something. I thought—I mean, that's almost as arbitrary.

[00:33:21.00]

I did one or two prints with a printmaker named John Bowles. He was an artist, and he also printed for other artists. And we did the silkscreens together. He was in Philadelphia, and he was very careful and a good—I liked working with him. *Passage*, actually, the first one, I think, was one of the most successful. I must have done at least five or six of those silkscreens. I did small editions of maybe 50 to 75. And in fact, the *Passage*, I remember, got a prize from Metropolitan curator once—some award, which I thought was very nice. But I never—

[00:34:22.43]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Had you submitted it to a show or something?

[00:34:24.12]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I think it was in a show at the Print Club, and he was on the jury. So I did those. And then, I'm trying to remember how the first—

[Telephone rings.] Excuse me. [Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:34:41.14]

The first lithograph I did was for the Friends of the Philadelphia Museum, and they asked me to do a print for one of their benefits. They would commission a different artist every year. And I agreed to do it and went out and did that at Landfall Press out in Chicago. And actually, lithography was an even more interesting medium than silkscreen because it has, I thought, more range for me, where you could get more textures and more subtleties rather than the sort of flatness of the silk screen.

[00:35:27.96]

Anyway, I did go out and did—I struggled and struggled doing that print, because I was really learning the medium as well as doing the print, although I was working with professional, wonderful printers out there. And I managed to do something I think was a decent print. It was a still life. It was from actually one of the watercolors.

[00:35:57.45]

By that time, I was starting to do the larger watercolors, and I was focusing on still life. And this particular lithograph was of a still life with a shell, I think it was. And I did a number of lithographs after that. I did one or two in New York with another artist up there named Paul Markovitz that were commissioned by Marian Locks Gallery editions. And I did one of Nava, the model I used. That was in New Mexico at Landfall Press—I mean, the Tamarind Institute, not Landfall.

[00:36:51.56]

And so I guess, yes, I have done prints, not a great many. I did do some that I have mixed feelings about, larger editions of prints that were silkscreens from watercolors that were not, I don't feel, as—technically, they were well-done, but the editions were much larger. This was a group that was done in New York for Chalk & Vermilion. And I suppose of all the prints I did, those were the ones that were probably—had less of my own hand in them. And for that reason, I didn't feel as close—excited about them personally.

[00:37:42.59]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: They were done for—what was that?

[00:37:45.86]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: A publisher in New York called Chalk & Vermilion.

[00:37:48.28]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Chalk? Could you spell that?

[00:37:50.48]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: C-H-A-L-K.

[00:37:52.42]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: And Vermilion.

[00:37:53.75]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah.

[00:37:54.19]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:37:55.12]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: So I did a series—Fischbach Gallery, whom I was showing with in New York. And I had had a number of shows there of watercolors primarily. I somehow arranged this deal with this publisher to do a series of silkscreen prints from certain watercolors that they liked that I had done. And I agreed. They had claimed they had done some with Nell Blaine and some of their other artists that were very successful and they liked.

[00:38:42.40]

And I agreed to do it, although—and one or two other artists in the gallery did it with me—Nancy Hagin and I forget the other—Pat Gordon. But it turned out that they were very large editions of like 300-and-some prints each, which is big. And most of the work was done by the printer in New York. I didn't do much of anything except work with the color.

[00:39:14.54]

And I just felt it was—even though they did an excellent job, that it wasn't as personal or as much of my input as I would have—that I preferred to do with the print normally, so that I don't quite have the same feeling about those prints as I do as some of the lithographs or even the earlier silkscreens that I was more involved with. So I guess for the record, I have to say that. One doesn't always know what you're getting into. And I realize now what I did.

[00:39:57.48]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Was that the last time that you did a series of prints?

[00:40:01.09]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:40:01.56]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So I believe that was around 1980?

[00:40:04.21]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah. And it really actually sort of—I just wanted to put it out of my mind for a while. I decided to wait. I mean, I have thought about doing a pochoir with a printer in New York, which I probably will do next, which I like very much, and a smaller edition. And but I haven't done that yet. But that's on my mind.

[00:40:35.51]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So let's go back to the beginning of the series of the subject of Nava, which began in approximately 1974. Please, since you've done so many works concerning Nava, why don't you tell me how you began the series? What interested you about her and how that all came about?

[00:41:05.63]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Okay. Nava was a student at the Academy when—as I've been teaching there for many years. And periodically, I would use students for models that I either were friends with, or that I just thought were interesting to work from. And if they wanted to earn some money and had the time, they would pose. And Nava just was both a friend and a student.

[00:41:33.60]

And she was a little older than some of these students. She must have been in her late twenties or early thirties. And she was a particularly striking young woman, and had a great sense of how to move. I mean, she sat in the studio. No matter how she sat or moved, it was often very—it was very interesting. Some models just don't have that sense of how to move and be interesting to look at. And she really had a natural grace and a great sense of style.

[00:42:16.88]

And so she came a number of times and sat in the studio. And in some cases, I took photographs to keep a record, which I still have. And in other cases, I worked from her directly. And I started to do a series of watercolors from her. She was, I guess, a little fashion-oriented. She always had these great fabrics, and old hand-me-down clothes, and interesting things. There was one old beat-up dress that she would bring in that I did a lot. It had these flowers on it, and you could see it in a lot of the watercolors. Just an old rag that I still have, actually.

[00:43:10.20]

Anyway, it was the first time, really, that I had focused on one person for a number of works. Usually, I would change from one model to the next painting to another, often because they're so difficult to get. They're just unreliable people. But she was pretty constant. And I was able to do quite a few works that I felt were very successful, and I enjoyed doing them. I was also doing still life at the same time, but I did work a lot with her. I used a few other models, too. But more, I focused a lot on Nava.

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[00:00:04.69]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Side two, interview with Liz Osborne. Okay, please continue with the—

[00:00:09.89]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Nava series.

[00:00:11.17]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Yes.

[00:00:14.03]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: The series—actually, visually was a combination—they were all clothed figures. I remember she had this blue sort of silk—it looked like a kimono jacket, and I did a number of her with that. And they were all painted in my studio at 18th and Chestnut at that time, which was in the old Belgravia Hotel, which had beautiful light. It had sunlight and north light—east and north exposure.

[00:00:57.00]

And at the time I painted her, I also had sitting around the studio some of the big, acrylic landscapes that I had painted previously to the watercolors. And so you can see in some of the watercolors those fragments of those paintings in the background. They sort of look very abstract, and it was just an interesting combination. And that series was, I guess, commercially, or however else you want to look at it, as far as the gallery world, was very—people just wanted to own those, and it was very successful. But I didn't want to keep doing them forever. I just, at some point decided I'd done enough, and I didn't do any more.

[00:01:49.65]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: What were some of the titles of those series?

[00:01:53.34]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, *Nava*. I think one was *Woman Seated with Green Cup*. I know that was one that was reproduced a lot. One was a *Nava Standing*. Gosh, if I could remember all the titles.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

Nava in Studio was a watercolor, and *Nava with the Green Cup*, which she seated holding a green cup. And then the lithograph was Nava with what? Do you have that?

[00:02:32.22]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: *Nava Seated*.

[00:02:33.53]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: *Nava Seated* again. I used her name in most of the titles.

[00:02:39.33]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Are all the ones with the title Nava really Nava?

[00:02:42.42]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah. They are.

[00:02:49.26]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay. Now, in those Nava series, there seems to be a concern with light and pattern in many of them, sort of patterns independently floating across the surface of the canvas or the paper. How did you get into that design element? I don't know if that's the appropriate term, but that's a new interest, apparently.

[00:03:23.37]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes, it was. I think it had to do with, actually, the situation of her in this particular studio, where the sunlight kind of—it came in the morning, and it was very dramatic the way it hit the figure or whatever objects were there. And also, the colorful kind of whatever she wore, it just was a very—it captured my visual imagination. I just was excited about that and tried to get that in the work. And basically, I suppose that's how—I'm looking for pictures of them here, but I don't have it in front of me.

[00:04:22.29]

But those works were very strong works. They were not that large. They were 22 by 30 inches, most of them, and some 30 by 40 on these heavy Arche watercolor paper, 300-pound paper. And mainly, I would draw it in first with pencil and then just use straight watercolor. I didn't use any other media, no ink or gouache. Since then, I've combined other things with the watercolor.

[00:05:09.32]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did you do any oils or acrylics of Nava, or was it all watercolor and print?

[00:05:13.84]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: A did a few acrylics of her. A couple, yes, but not very many. Mainly we worked with watercolor.

[00:05:22.84]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay. Would you say that series lasted about a decade or so? Because I see one dated 1974 and another one dated 1983.

[00:05:35.11]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes. Off and on. I didn't always—sometimes I would do a lot of still life during that same period. I was focused a great deal on the still life as well. And so I did both.

[00:05:55.59]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So Nava ended approximately in 1983, or did you—

[00:05:59.61]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah. I think that's about all I did.

[00:06:02.29]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did she disappear, or did you—

[00:06:04.40]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, she did, actually. She moved to Amherst, Massachusetts. She married and moved away from the city.

[00:06:14.13]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay. There was one picture called *Reclining Figure* from 1976, which was a nude scene from behind on a quilted bed, with a view beyond. Was that Nava also?

[00:06:26.55]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: No, that was another model named Kathy. Some of them, I honestly, were not personal friends, so I don't remember. But I know that I did a few of Kathy. She was just a—being and teaching at the Academy, I had access to tons of models, because a lot of their curriculum used the model. And that was kind of nice. I could always find people to work from. I'd hate them, but yeah.

[00:06:56.78]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did you ever do Nava in the nude?

[00:07:00.09]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: No, I never did.

[00:07:00.39]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So all the nudes were other models?

[00:07:02.02]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah.

[00:07:08.94]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: I'd like then to talk about the still lifes that you were doing simultaneously with the Nava series. One of the first still lifes that you did, a large watercolor, was in 1975, and it was called Still Life with Sun. It's in the collection, just to refresh your memory, of the Rishels [Joseph Rishel, Curator, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Anne d'Harnoncourt, Director –Ed.].

[00:07:33.64]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Oh, yes.

[00:07:35.30]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: There were a number of vases and shells arranged on a white table, with the sun light entering at the right. Tell me about the new interest and arrangement of the objects on a table.

[00:07:52.08]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Okay. That series began in that same studio on 18th and Chestnut.

[00:08:00.88]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: But this was not the Peale House Studio?

[00:08:03.48]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: It was. It was the old Belgravia Hotel.

[00:08:07.95]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Supplied by the Peale House, though.

[00:08:10.12]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah, they called it the Peale House. And when the Academy bought that building—and I don't remember what the date was—they offered studios in the building to faculty. Not too many faculty took them in the beginning, maybe half a dozen. And I was one. And I had this—it was a pretty good-sized studio. I'd say it was 20 by 30. No. Yeah, 20 by 30 feet. And the beauty of that building—it was run down. It was an old hotel. It was a pretty rundown building, but it had beautiful light. On all sides, it was a free-standing building in the middle of the city.

[00:08:57.13]

But I was on the eighth floor in the corner, and I had all northern windows on one side, and on the other side was east. And in the morning, I had that sunlight come in. And still life always interested me. Even when I was doing oils, I liked the still life. The museum owns one. The Philadelphia Museum owns an early still life, an oil that I happen to like a lot.

[00:09:26.24]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Do you remember the name of that one?

[00:09:29.00]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: No, I don't. But it's probably *Studio Still Life,* or something. I was never great at giving titles. I think Diebenkorn had the answer when he did his Ocean Park series and just numbered them. But I did always enjoy still life as a kind of balance to the figurative and landscape work. And I became interested in setting up objects in this studio in the sunlight, and getting a lot of drama with shadow.

[00:10:15.11]

And also, at this time, I would take objects and paint the same object many times in different arrangements, which I had never done before, as, say, Morandi would take an object and you'd see it over and over again. And I had never thought of things in sort of a sequence, particularly. But this time, in the watercolors. I did do that. I did, for instance—I had an old, blue medicine bottle that a student had given me, and I had some shells, and I had some old Israeli glass bottles that were copies of ancient forms that were quite beautiful.

[00:11:04.06]

And I would just rearrange these things, and do them in different kind of combinations, and I did a lot of them. I guess I did a lot. I did them for at least six, seven, or eight years. And the watercolor, I had never taken it quite that seriously. I had only used it before as a means to another end, in other words, as a sketch for a painting. But this time, I was thinking of the watercolor as a more finished thing itself. And as a painting, it's a more finished painting. And I felt I really achieved quite a lot of control over the medium. I really got to understand it and enjoy it a great deal.

[00:12:17.03]

After a while, I felt—after doing it for whatever, seven or eight or nine years, I decided I needed to change the scale of my work and go to larger work and just leave it alone for a while. And I did. I have. But at some point, I'm sure I'll go back, and I am using it a little bit now in a different way, maybe a little bit freer way—combining it with gouache and colored pencil, and trying to be explored in a different way. But I, at that, time did it quite in a very, I would say, disciplined, and a very controlled approach to it.

[00:13:08.19]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did you always start with pencil sketches?

[00:13:10.30]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah.

[00:13:11.28]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: How long would you work on a sketch, for example?

[00:13:14.41]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, the sketch would take a day or two, maybe to do. And then the watercolor itself could take me—sometimes I would do maybe two at a time. When I would get tired of working on one, I'd go to another. But I could take two weeks to do one. It was slow work for me. Very slow work. And the paper was a heavy enough paper so I could make changes and build—you know, take out things with the sponges, and then go back and work into it.

[00:13:58.34]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So these were very carefully planned.

[00:14:00.76]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes, they were. Very. Very. It happened at the time I was doing these watercolors that a lot of other artists, it seemed were taking an interest in large-scale watercolors as well. Like [Philip] Pearlstein was doing these big nudes, and Carolyn Brady was doing large still lifes in Baltimore. Well, there were a lot.

[00:14:36.66]

I mean, it just seemed—this was in the late '70s—it was tied in somewhat to the realist movement in painting that these other artists were doing large-scale watercolors as a sort of end in themselves. So I would say we got, as a group, a fair amount of publicity. There just seemed to be a lot of articles.

[00:15:08.05]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Tying you all together. Even though you weren't necessarily—

[00:15:11.11]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah, even though we were not together, not particularly. No one was really going into each other's studios and talking about it. I wasn't anyway. I was just doing it myself. But then you would get these articles, and you'd look at the other person's work, and then you became aware, like Sondra Freckelton in New York was doing a lot with it.

[00:15:33.40]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Janet Fish.

[00:15:34.32]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Janet. Well, she came in at the end in watercolor. She didn't start doing it until a little later. She was pretty much into pastels at that time, more than watercolor. But she certainly, in her imagery, was related to it in these very lush still lives. I

liked her work, actually.

[00:15:58.24]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So it was about that point that you started being called a realist?

[00:16:03.65]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I guess so, yeah.

[00:16:05.80]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So that was in the late '70s?

[00:16:07.42]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes. And I was a realist. [Laughs.] I've always, I think, been inspired by what I see, and interpret it fairly much in a recognizable way. I mean, even in my most abstract periods of landscapes, you could read it as a landscape, but I don't think I ever got into—I was never interested in photorealism, or being—as Carolyn Brady got really extremely literal. Some of the watercolors approached that in some of the vases.

[00:17:02.34]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: But that was not your goal.

[00:17:03.98]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: No, it wasn't. And it isn't really—I guess it isn't a natural thing for me to want to go that far with it. I don't—it just doesn't—I'm not comfortable with it. It bores me after a while, so I got away from it. I sort of backed off when I was getting too—

[00:17:34.74]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Too close to it.

[00:17:36.54]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: —close to that. I decided I'd better get away from it.

[00:17:40.53]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: At that time, were you aware of the work of Richard Estes and Robert Cottingham?

[00:17:48.35]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Oh, sure. I couldn't help—I mean, anybody that picked up any art publication or went to New York at all, you couldn't help. I mean, the PR of the galleries and the magazines was so—they picked up on all of this so—and it was the booming art market as well. So the combination, you just couldn't avoid seeing this, even if you wanted to.

[00:18:16.33]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did you ever meet any of the other realists?

[00:18:19.63]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Oh, I've met Pearlstein a number of times, and Jack Beale and Sondra Freckelton and Sidney Goodman here, of course, teaches with me at the Academy, and we're friends. And I've met all the Fischbach artists like—well, Nancy Hagen was into that a lot, and I met Janet Fish a couple of times. But working in Philadelphia, I guess I would see more people I was teaching with—Jimmy Lueders or Sidney. We were friends, and I didn't see these people in New York on a regular basis.

[00:19:14.60]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So there was no—

[00:19:16.09]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Susan Shatter was also in Fischbach Gallery, and Jane Freilicher. I knew all of them. But I wouldn't say I was really close to them, particularly.

[00:19:31.14]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So there was not a concentrated effort on your part to become part of any group, let's say. And you did not partake in any serious discussion about the realist movement, per se, or anything like that?

[00:19:53.91]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Oh, not really. No.

[00:19:54.28]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: You were working pretty much independently?

[00:19:56.03]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes, very much so. Very much so.

[00:20:01.19]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay. So how do you feel about being included in catalogs such as—well, let me rephrase that. It's always an honor to be included in any catalog. But how do you feel about the label, "contemporary American realist?"

[00:20:23.61]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, I think it fit a certain period of my work. And a lot of people, there was a kind of a period, as I say, when that was flourishing. It all came together. But the whole art world, you know, it's fashion. It's so much hype, and kind of whatever the magazines and the galleries are hustling that year. And it just happened at that time that realism was getting all this attention. And there were some good people doing it, and some of them will last, and others will probably not.

[00:21:13.07]

But then I don't know what followed that. It was the Neo-Expressionists, and the David Salle and all that, the [Francesco] Clementes, and then all of these kind of super-focused realism was like, forget it. Who are those people? It's kind of—one thinks at the time it's never going to end, and you're going to just be on magazine covers forever, but that isn't the case at all. And I always quote to my—occasionally to a student, I think it's the Andy Warhol, "everybody has their fifteen minutes of fame." That sort of comes back to you, how that can—there's a lot of truth in that, in the art world.

[00:22:05.25]

But you do what you—at least I've been fortunate in being able to do what I felt was important to me, and was moving me forward in my work and trying to grow and develop and explore. I could have—the gallery would have loved to have me, I guess, keep doing those very realistic still lifes, partly because they were very popular in terms of commercial success. But I just didn't want to—I felt I would just stop growing, I would, if I had done that, and I couldn't do that. I just couldn't do it. So I didn't.

[00:23:01.31]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: During this period of these still lifes, still life watercolors, you were part of the Marian Locks Gallery. Let's go back a minute, and tell me how you got involved with Marian Locks. That was in—apparently, 1972 was the first year that you showed with her.

[00:23:24.41]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: '72. Let's see, I guess I had been showing with Makler Gallery in Philadelphia. First Perakis, then Makler, and then Marian opened up a little gallery on

Chestnut Street in back of a gift shop. Really, the most modest beginning. And then she moved to a very nice space on Walnut Street, which was much bigger and was really a nice gallery space. It was the Old Yale Club, I think, in Philadelphia. And I think about that time, I decided to join her gallery. I knew a number of her artists, and I liked her very much.

[00:24:13.49]

And she did a lot for Philadelphia, the art world, the younger artists in Philadelphia. Makler was more focused, really, on New York artists, although she had a token group of Philadelphia people, and she was a first-class dealer. But Marian was a little more interested in taking on unknown people and mothering them, and showing them, and really helping them along. She did it more on a local level. I mean, she really focused on Philadelphia. And she was one of the hardest working people I've ever known. She never stopped.

[00:25:03.97]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Who approached who?

[00:25:06.07]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I guess Marian must have approached me, because I don't even remember. I'm sure she did. And I had a few shows with Marian. I don't know how many I had. I'm not what I consider a very—I'm fairly slow working, I guess. I just can't crank out a show every year. Usually it was every other year.

[00:25:38.06]

But I showed with her a few times, and then started to make this New York connection. And so then it became a little more difficult, complicated, in that I couldn't show every year. I would show once with Marian, and then I'd show in New York. Gradually I began to start showing more in New York and less here, is what really happened, because I felt I had to focus there to reach a broader audience, and I wanted to do that. So I did. And it was hard. It was like leaving home, because it was so comfortable here. And I enjoyed Marian so much, but I just didn't show there as frequently after I joined the New York gallery.

[00:26:32.48]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So simultaneously, you were showing at Marian Locks and Gimpel & Weitzenhoffer throughout the '70s.

[00:26:38.61]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes.

[00:26:39.29]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Now in the '70s, when you said you had a great commercial success in New York with your watercolor still lifes, can you tell me approximately what those paintings were selling for at that time?

[00:26:52.83]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah. The watercolors were, I guess, mainly selling between $4,000 and $7,000—the 22 by 30 watercolors, which was fine for me. I felt comfortable with that. It was easier to sell them in New York for that than here.

[00:27:21.08]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: I was going to ask you, was the Philadelphia price any different than the New York price?

[00:27:25.77]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, that became a problem, and it always is, because I really think in New York, it's easier to sell at a higher price than it is here. I mean, not that there aren't people here that don't spend that kind of money. There are, and there's some wonderful collectors here. But I think there's more in New York. That's all. You're reaching a much

broader audience. When I would have a show in New York at Fischbach, paintings would go to Texas, or to California, or to you name it, all over the country. Here, it would mainly stay here in Philadelphia.

[00:28:11.04]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Can you remember the names of any of your patrons during the '70s in Philadelphia?

[00:28:17.13]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: In Philadelphia. Oh, gosh.

[00:28:18.80]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Let's say patrons who collected several of your works.

[00:28:27.19]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: In the '70s? Well, it's funny. There was a collector in Pittsburgh, actually, who was related to my husband, named Jim Cooper, who owned a lot of my work. And unfortunately, he died recently of cancer. And his wife still has a number of works. But they collected in depth, a lot of interesting range of my work, I thought. And in Philadelphia, I'm thinking. I'm blanking out. There's so many people that own my work in Philadelphia.

[00:29:16.66]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Just any name that you can recall?

[00:29:19.20]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, Rolfe Wike was one of the early collectors, and he still has some interesting works. Marian even bought works of mine. She's always been great about buying her artists. Anne d'Harnoncourt and Joe Rishel, they bought one of the early watercolors when I was first doing those. I can get the list. There's a long list of collectors, but I just can't remember them right now.

[00:30:08.69]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: All right. Now, from 1976 to 1978, you did not do any landscape, apparently. Why was that? Well, I mean, was there a particular reason?

[00:30:26.04]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: That's interesting. 1976. I guess I was just focused on the still life for a while, and I was fascinated by that, and just didn't do it. I didn't really—I wasn't conscious of that.

[00:30:49.27]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay. Now, you're still lives were both in watercolor and in acrylic. The acrylics look very different from the watercolors. They're brighter. The colors are just more vivid. There's a different focus on the subject matter. Can you describe the acrylics from that period, from about 1976 to '78? Such as *Still Life with Iris*?

[00:31:25.73]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, they were larger than the watercolors, I guess, so that the color probably is more saturated when I'm trying to work at a larger scale and get more impact. And the acrylic, you can actually get much more density, because it's a little more weight to the paint itself, and build up layers of it. I don't know how many I did do an acrylic. I remember a show at Marian's I did of the still life with acrylics. I used a lot of floral motifs in some of them, actually, and combined with very flat areas of color, some of them sort of Oriental almost in feeling.

[00:32:35.29]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: How did you choose the flowers? Were there flowers that you grew, or did you go out and buy them?

[00:32:41.93]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Both. I have a little garden down by the river, a community garden where I can grow things. And friends would give me flowers sometimes, and I would just get excited and paint those. Or sometimes I'd buy them. A combination of all three.

[00:33:01.27]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: And in these acrylics, did you use sketches first?

[00:33:05.15]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah. Just very rough sketches. I didn't do very finished drawings for them, because they would change as I progressed. The paint would sort of—I would make changes as I went along.

[00:33:23.97]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay. Around this time, there starts to be an ambiguity in the views. And by that I mean you can't always tell if you're looking at an interior or an exterior, whether it's a flat space or a deep space. And you've got contrasts of opaque colors and transparent objects. So there's more guesswork involved on the part of the viewer. Tell me what led you to do that.

[00:33:59.72]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Are you talking about the acrylic paintings now?

[00:34:02.40]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Yes.

[00:34:05.43]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I'm trying to just recall some of these particular ones. Some of them, I guess, were made-up things. I wasn't necessarily even looking at what I was doing. Or I would combine different aspects of one place. I remember in a watercolor, particularly, where I would take one view from the building and from a different place and just put it in a different location. I would kind of invent my own landscape. I wasn't always being literal about it. So I guess it's interesting that you say that you can't see the spaces as well in them. They were much less literal, though, those paintings. They were becoming much flatter, and more moving into a little more of an abstract direction.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:35:16.25]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So at about this time, in the mid to late '70s, it seems you moved from a very tight, controlled, ordered sort of painting, that is, with your still lives, into larger acrylic work, which was, perhaps, not so ordered. Or you were freer to change in mid-method, and mid-working on it. And also, whereas the watercolors are easy to read—you know exactly what you're looking at—there is this new element of ambiguity in the acrylics.

[00:35:57.44]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, it's true. I think the watercolor, the medium itself—for me, at any rate, dictated—at least my feeling about it was I didn't make as many changes. You couldn't take out and put in and cover over as easily as you can with acrylic because it's such a direct sort of pure medium that it doesn't allow that much flexibility, whereas the acrylics, I could make more changes, and I think it showed in the works. Anyway, I did explore that for a few years—the larger paintings, and then I went back to oil again. But I guess I'm skipping ahead a little bit on that.

[00:36:54.05]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Right. In about 1978, you started doing flower paintings, where you mixed up the blossoms with abstract bands of color, and you started placing borders around the still life subject, a painting such as *Tulip with Red*, for example.

[00:37:25.95]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I did do that for—In fact, I did a few combining—well, I did some watercolors where I combined acrylic with the watercolor. I would do, first, the watercolor and then acrylic—the sort of heavier paint around it with acrylic. And later, I did that with gouache to get a combination of the opaque against the transparency. I wanted a little more weight than I was getting. And the border idea always interested me. I had never explored it—it just fascinated me. In fact, in recent years I've admired Howard Hodgkin a lot, who does a lot of that kind of use of the border around his imagery, but more abstractly.

[00:38:26.60]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: The border, in a way, also extends into a new architectural element which appeared in landscapes in the late 1970s. For example, in *Manchester Porch*, you used posts and railings of the porch as a sort of border element.

[00:38:48.88]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah. I was trying to, I think, just get some kind of hard edge against to play off all of this very kind of delicate veils of thin washes. And I wanted something a little kind of weightier to kind of bounce off your eye against these more subtle paintings. And so that series, I began to do a few paintings that were inspired by this particular place in Manchester, Massachusetts. And there was really a porch with a table, where you could sit and look out over the ocean. And so you would actually see these wonderful columns, or the shape of a table against all this sort of blurry landscape. And I used that in those paintings. I did little studies, and then I did larger paintings.

[00:40:04.99]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Tell me now about the paintings such as *Manchester Islands*, where you get into this nearly abstract element.

[00:40:22.51]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: That was, again, all the Manchester title works really were conceived originally from studies from this particular place where we went in the summer only, really—not all summer, but part of the summer. And it belonged to this family of the Gibbons. Margie Gibbon, the girl that I had mentioned earlier, part of her family was from that area, in New England and Boston.

[00:41:02.49]

And they had this beautiful, unspoiled property of four or five houses on the sea coast, and they still have it. They've managed to keep the developers out of it. And they would rent it out to friends of the family, and we did that for many years. It's a wonderful place. And I did a lot—I'd just do tons of small works up there—paintings, and then come back and use them in the studio as inspiration for larger works.

[00:41:37.31]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So you did small watercolors?

[00:41:40.28]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: And drawings. And mainly, drawings and watercolors when I was there.

[00:41:44.03]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: On the site.

[00:41:44.61]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes.

[00:41:45.44]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: And then transfer them back into your

[00:41:47.57]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah.

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[00:00:03.33]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: This is Cynthia Veloric interviewing Elizabeth Osborne for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art on May 31, 1991, at the artist's home. This is tape three, side one.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:00:22.72]

During those—the late '70s when you were working in Manchester, you did a work called *Blue Water*, and the elements of the landscape, I believe they're islands, appear to be floating in an abstract space. Can you comment on that work?

[00:00:44.20]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes. That was—it was from—actually from tiny studies that were watercolor studies. And I would really—I guess I was mostly interested in the forms, the kind of—the outline of the island. It was closer to what I was looking at than the color, which I changed considerably.

[00:01:18.89]

And then I did these on a much larger scale. This painting is 82 by 106. And I did them in acrylic. It's a 1974 painting. That was a painting I showed in my first show with Gimpel & Weitzenhoffer. I remember because it's in a New York collection. And I did a series where the—I would—it became almost kind of a floating thing of these things. It could have been clouds or islands or anything against this dark sort of blue sea.

[00:02:05.25]

And it's a landscape, but it's also kind of a—it's not at all what I would call a literal landscape, by any means. And none of these acrylic landscapes were. I really didn't want them to be that. I wanted them to of have kind of their own life and their own place, and not particularly be a—you know, Winslow Homer. Not that I don't admire Homer, but I wasn't interested in getting all the literal details of the rocks and the waves and the ocean and whatever. That just wasn't what was interesting to me at all.

[00:03:00.72]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Were there, in fact, islands out there, from what you see?

[00:03:03.99]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah. Believe it or not, in Manchester, there were some. Not many, but I would just invent. You know, I would take liberties, a great deal, with color and with however many islands I wanted to put in the painting, I did. It was really just a kind of idea that I elaborated on in a lot of—in many ways.

[00:03:33.50]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So in these, you did not use the photographs in any way?

[00:03:38.49]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: No.

[00:03:39.11]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay. Now in contrast to the still lifes and landscapes that you were doing throughout most of the '70s, you did a couple of figure paintings in the very late '70s. One is of your daughter Audrey, done in Abiquiu, New Mexico, and the other was a portrait of Tony Greenwood.

[00:04:00.00]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah.

[00:04:00.80]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Could you comment on these two figure paintings?

[00:04:04.49]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Okay. The Audrey one was painted in this—actually, it was painted from little studies in this house that we stayed in Abiquiu on the Ghost Ranch, and she was only, I guess—well in '70—What was the date, '76? Whatever. She was six or—five or six years old. And the thing that interested me was mainly this small kind of figure in this wonderful Adobe house with all the subtle gradations of—the architecture of the building was so beautiful. And the light as well. And I had never really tried anything like that, but I enjoyed that. And—

[00:05:03.93]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Is that the actual work hanging above your fireplace?

[00:05:08.16]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah. [Laughs.] We're looking at it. It's right there. I managed to keep a few of my own things. Not too many, but that's one I did keep. She liked that, and we just kept it. But that's the only one, actually. I had one over there.

[00:05:26.56]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay. What about the portrait of Tony?

[00:05:28.53]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Tony was a fellow faculty at the Academy, where I had been teaching for a long time. He was a sculptor, and we had adjoining studios on the eighth floor of this building in the old Peale House building. And when I'd get restless, I go in and talk to him, or vice versa. And he was a marvelous, colorful character.

[00:05:59.60]

He was a great big, heavy man, and loved to eat and he loved beautiful women, and he loved to do sculptures of these very sexy kind of models. He just was obsessed with it. His work itself was quite—was a lot like Duane Hanson, but he sort of preceded Duane Hanson. Unfortunately, Tony never got the recognition. It was very sad that Hansen did, because he was really quite a talented man.

[00:06:39.13]

I say "was" because he wound up shooting himself, killing himself. But he—anyway, we were friends, and he—I decided to try a portrait of Tony, and I did do this large painting. He sort of—he just demanded a scale, when you looked at him. And the painting is of Tony standing. Really, I moved some of the pieces that he had done into my studio.

[00:07:10.22]

They were actual—what they were was body casts. At that time, [George] Segal was doing that, and Hansen. They would just put do a plaster cast of a model, and right on top of the model. So Tony had a group of these in his studio and I took them, and they just were so striking. I put them up on the wall and he stood in front of it, and I did part of it from a

photograph and part of it from him. I couldn't—he wouldn't stand for a long time. And I had a very dramatic light, so it was a—I liked the painting. It was a combination of acrylic and oil. Part of the figure is in oil. I worked a long time on it. And—

[00:08:03.64]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did you show the work anywhere?

[00:08:04.81]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: The work was shown at Marian Locks, and it is in the collection with James Cooper in Pittsburgh. And I didn't do too many of that series. It was kind of an odd, one-shot thing that just fascinated me. I kind of wish I had pursued more figures at that time, but that was—That was the only one.

[00:08:29.56]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Was that the only male you ever painted?

[00:08:32.68]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: [Laughs.] That's a good question. I have done a few. Not many, but a few in the '60s. I have one in my house of a couple—of a male and a female together. I have several, actually, of this particular couple—a student and her boyfriend that would pose for me. And before that, I had done a few males. But I would say I've done many fewer males than females. You're right.

[00:09:04.46]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: I mean, any particular reason?

[00:09:09.37]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I guess I just enjoyed the female form more. It just inspired me more, although I'm thinking of doing some more males actually now. I have some friends that I want to work from.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:09:29.04]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: In 1980, you had your first one-woman exhibition at Fischbach Gallery. Could you tell me how you made your connection with that gallery, in New York?

[00:09:42.96]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I think it came out of a conversation with a friend in New York, another—a print dealer who was handling my prints named Orion Editions. And one of the guys that owned their operations said, "You know, your work is changing a great deal. You might consider showing at Fischbach because they show—they have a lot of artists that would relate to what you're doing, and I think you would do well with them."

[00:10:19.63]

So I thought, well, I'll check into Fischbach, and I did call them. And the fellow that ran the gallery at the time was named Aladar Marberger, and he was actually from Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, and knew Philadelphia. And he knew me as well—not personally. I mean, he knew my work. And so I went up and saw Aladar, and just we—I liked him and I liked the gallery. He had Jane Freilicher, and he had Neil Welliver at the time, and he had John Moore. He had a number of artists that I thought were strong. They were realists. And I did think my work would, at the time, fit in well with that particular gallery, so I joined the gallery.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:11:21.84]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did you approach Fischbach yourself, and was there any reaction on

their part about you being a woman?

[00:11:32.70]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: [Laughs.] Well, the first question, yes. I did approach them myself. I called them and made an appointment to see Aladar. The second, no. There was none at all because by that time, or at least in their experience, it's funny that they had more women artists than men. When I left that gallery, I would say, well, they just had a very high percentage of women artists in the gallery, and good ones.

[00:12:07.38]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Who were some of the other ones?

[00:12:08.53]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Nell Blaine was one of their sort of their stronghold artists. I mean, she showed every year, and she sold out everything she did, and she was—and she is still an interesting artist. Jane Freilicher was there for—and still is—for many years, and was a very strong painter, very good painter. Jane Wilson was a good painter, still shows there. Susan Shatter, who's not in the same league, but still shows there. Nancy Hagin. They had tons of women, for some reason.

Of course, now women—I mean, they're all over the place in New York galleries. So, no. I never encountered that in any other of my professional life, at least overtly. They didn't say it to my face. They might have thought it. But no, I never did. But I did approach Fischbach and did join them, and showed. My first show with them was mainly—it must have been all watercolors, because I was really doing—focused on the watercolors at that time, and I did show the 22 by 30 and 30 by 40 size watercolors mainly. I never showed the little studies much. And—

[00:13:50.45]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: And did you have a commercial success right away at Fischbach?

[00:13:53.51]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Very. Yeah. They were very—they did very well. Yes. I did sell almost everything, practically.

[00:14:02.25]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: And do you remember, in the early—very early '80s—what your paintings were going for in New York?

[00:14:09.02]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Oh, gosh. What did they sell for in the beginning? I would say they must have been around $3,000 or something, maybe.

[00:14:24.90]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So your watercolors earlier were selling for more than your paintings later on? Because you said your watercolors in the '70s were going for $4,000 to $7,000.

[00:14:35.77]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah.

[00:14:36.21]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So Fischbach in 1980, you were maintaining about the same prices, or were they going up continuously?

[00:14:49.18]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: The watercolors went up continuously. I mean, every year. Every show, they'd raise the prices. They always felt that that's just the way they—if they could sell

them for a little more the next year, they would, and they did.

[00:15:05.64]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Was there a big difference in price between your watercolors and your acrylics?

[00:15:11.63]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah, I think they started things—they jumped up the prices a little from Philadelphia. Or even from Gimpel, they raised the prices. And partly it was that they were able to sell them, and partly it was that time in the '70s and '80s when there were—there was a tremendous boom in the art market. People were buying a lot. It was a good time for—to show.

[00:15:49.24]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: In 1985, you did a large still life called *Still Life with Amish Quilt*, and it was an oil.

[00:15:56.08]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah.

[00:15:56.86]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: And I see that as something of a turning point in your style. There was more of a formal geometric quality to the design and to the arrangement of objects, and the objects themselves.

[00:16:16.89]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: That's right.

[00:16:17.63]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Can you comment on that?

[00:16:19.53]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes. I guess I had been—as we've just been discussing, I had been doing these watercolors and for at least seven or eight years, I don't know. A long time, it seemed. I just decided finally I had to go to a larger scale, and I wanted to change—get out of the—off paper and onto canvas, and use oil paint again, which is something I had done in the '60s, late '60s, and enjoyed.

[00:16:57.31]

And I thought it was time to look at it again in a different way. And I did somewhat, because I had—this Amish still life was kind of inspired by a quilt—a beautiful Amish quilt that an artist friend named Warren Rohrer had a collection of these quilts. And he sold it to a man I was dating at the time. [Laughs.]And this man, Ted Newboldt, lent it to me to paint, which was a—it was a beautiful quilt. And the iris were just flowers that I had grown, and I had a roof deck outside my studio and I grew these iris. And so I did this large painting and it took me a long time. It was kind of a slow painting, but it was—it got me interested in going back to oils, which I have done since then. I've stayed with them.

[00:18:13.34]

Periodically I'll do watercolors, but I've mainly focused on oil. And the Amish still life was kind of one of the more striking ones of that period. I did another one called Spring, I think—*Spring Still Life*. It was a black painting. I'm trying to find the thing. But I did pursue that subject in oil, the still life, which related to the watercolors and subject more than anything else. But they were not as transparent. I painted rather opaquely with the oils.

[00:19:02.31]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Were you interested at that time in folk art?

[00:19:08.97]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, I've always been interested in pottery and vases, that sort of thing. You know, not—I don't have a great collection, but I have a few Rookwood pieces and that sort of thing, and just things I've seen around and been able to get hold of.

[00:19:29.88]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: In the painting, *Early Spring*, from around the same time, I noticed a sort of cut-out quality to the objects in the still life. Any particular thing that drew you to that quality?

[00:19:53.13]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: No. There was a fabric that I had, an odd fabric, that had those kind of odd sort of half-moon shapes that I had—which almost looked like they were collaged on. And the rest of the painting was really just inspired by early spring, by these magnolia and forsythia which I found. I'd just go pick them in backyards or along the river, wherever I could get my hands on it. And the little bird's nest, I think someone gave to me. And that was shown in Fischbach at another show.

[00:20:39.20]

No, I guess I gradually moved into oils. I continued the watercolors, but I started to move into the oils more and more. And as you can—you'll see in some of these slides. I did focus a great deal on flowers for some reason. They just inspired me and fascinated me, and a lot of these oils of the late '80s are combinations of flowers and various old pieces of pottery, and occasionally a book or a postcard or something that was in the studio that I happened to like, and used in the painting.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:21:38.63]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: In the late 1980s, you started suspending your still lifes in front of other landscape or waterscape. Can you comment on that?

[00:21:49.13]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah, a little bit. There's a painting—a slide I have here of a bowl of blossoms, actually. They're early spring blossoms, and then there's a little postcard, I think, of a [Nicolas] de Staël. It's on a table, and in the background is a kind of a body of water with two hills on either side, sort of leading you out the painting.

[00:22:23.29]

That actually was a combination of a—I had friends that have a house in Maine on a place called Somes Sound, and the view from their guest room window is this looking down Somes Sound and you see these two beautiful kind of low, mountainous hills. And then your eye just goes right through, beyond to infinity. And I really just—it was such a beautiful kind of calm landscape.

[00:22:58.49]

I did a lot of watercolors of that in Maine, and then in the studio I just combined this still life that I set up in the studio with the landscape. So it was really a kind of a hybrid. I guess I mixed the two because I thought they were both very beautiful, and that's how they came together. I really didn't see them together. They kind of were invented.

[00:23:31.60]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: And then you continued in that same vein with a series that you did at Belmont Plateau in Philadelphia—

[00:23:37.75]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah, I did.

[00:23:38.23]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: —in about 1988, where you made some interesting spatial or planar transitions from one object to another.

[00:23:52.87]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I did that. The Belmont series—I did first, a series of small oil landscapes. It's a hillside near—in Fairmount Park in Philadelphia. And I would go out there mainly in the fall when it was quite beautiful, and sort of—it's not the safest area to paint, but I managed somehow to work there and look unnoticeable.

[00:24:24.80]

And it just has this wonderful kind of rolling hillside, and then the city is way off in the distance. Some of the landscapes I did were just pure landscapes with trees and hills and whatever, a lot of autumn color. Then I—occasionally I'd bring out a few still life objects and I did some watercolors, kind of just to see what it was like to combine the still life with the landscape just sitting out there. And I did that a little. And then I worked in the studio with more of those. That's how I did that series. I did a few of those with the leaves and the still life combined against the landscape.

[00:25:20.03]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: In 1987, you did a large oil called *The Studio*, where Elizabeth Osborne is in—reflected in a mirror in the middle of sort of a large still-life painting. Was that your first self-portrait?

[00:25:42.56]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Oh, no. I over the years have done a number of—I'd say a fair number. I didn't do very many in watercolor, but I did in oil. Starting when I was a student, I did a number of self-portraits. Then when I got out of school, I did—they're all in various collections of different people that—one in particular belongs to this Mrs. Isard, Lenny Isard, which is one of my favorite ones.

[00:26:17.79]

It's a dark figure with the—it's not a very literal self-portrait—with an orange background. And there was an earlier one I did of me seated nude to the waist with sort of some drapery, and I remember showing it—Makler showed it in her window and one of my sort of Main Line school friends was so horrified that I let her show this painting in the window. I don't even know where that painting is. I might still have that.

[00:26:57.95]

But over the years, I've painted myself. In fact, I have one in the studio now, a large one. This one we're talking about is a very complex painting. For me, it was. It just was one of those paintings, I thought I would never get through it. It just went on and on. I couldn't finish it. It was a very demanding painting. I had a hard time with—it was just getting it all kind of resolved. I think I did in the end, but it was a battle. I thought it was going to be the last painting I ever did. It was not an easy painting for me.

[00:27:47.65]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: How long did it actually take?

[00:27:49.03]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: It was at least more than a year I worked on it. Well over a year, off and on. I just—it just never ended.

[00:27:57.56]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did you work on other paintings simultaneously?

[00:27:59.60]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah, I worked on others, but this was my main focus. And I just kind of fought, struggled. And I'm glad I hung in there with it, but it was not always fun. It was an ambitious painting for me. It was large, and it was full of a lot of detail. And it actually combines a lot of elements of many of my—of the still life, and the flowers, and the Amish quilt, and myself. It's interesting in that it sort of encompasses a lot of these things in this one canvas, And it was—it belongs to a couple that actually does have a number of my works named Lenny Silk. Lenny and Barbara Silk, who have an interesting collection of paintings.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:29:11.04]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: You started doing pastel still lifes in the late '80s. Tell me about that.

[00:29:19.83]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Pastels were just a medium that over the years, I have used more as kind of a drawing tool than as a finished work in itself. But in the late '80s, having been working with watercolor and this kind of—to me, a situation where you couldn't make very many corrections. That what you see was what you got, and either you got it or you discarded it. The pastel, you could layer and change and manipulate.

And so as a relief more from the watercolors, I would periodically do pastels just to work in a whole different approach, which was layering opaque colors. For me, anyway. And working with a more—in a more linear way. And I loved the medium. And I still, you know, tend to sort of focus on it for a while and then leave it, but I did do it. And at Fischbach, I showed them in combination with the watercolors. And I still have some in New York now. It's a medium that I just use periodically, and then leave, and then come back to.

[00:30:52.18]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Would you say they share some of the same qualities with the watercolors?

[00:30:57.43]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Mainly in the subject matter, in that most of them are still lifes. A few landscapes. Not very many figures. I guess that's about all. No, I wouldn't say they're terribly similar to the watercolors. I don't think. Maybe some of the colors. I mean, often I use the same objects so—There's one over there.

[00:31:26.72]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Yes. Do the name of that one?

[00:31:31.09]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Probably *Still Life with Rookwood Pottery*.

[00:31:39.12]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay.

[00:31:39.84]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: It's actually one of the nicer ones, I think.

[00:31:49.76]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: In 1988, you did a few watercolors of female nudes in ambiguous, flat, colored spaces. This was a new style for you, a new period, and I see you've been working in that mode now for a few years.

[00:32:11.72]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah.

[00:32:12.41]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: What started to interest you in that type of work?

[00:32:15.44]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, I felt the last watercolor work I had done was so controlled and rather somewhat literal in the drawing from the figure or the object, and I wanted to loosen up, basically, and try to get a little more movement and freedom and more—I guess a little more energy and excitement. So what I did was a lot of quick studies.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:32:56.82]

I did really very rapid croquis, watercolor wash, combination drawing and pencil, from the model. And then certain ones I would rework later without the model, adding whatever—color around it, or just playing around with it. And that's how a lot of those came about. And it just—I found it more exciting and more—I enjoyed doing it more. That's all. And so I stayed with that for a while.

[00:33:42.06]

And then in recent years, I have become aware of an artist named Howard Hodgkin whom I happened to admire a great deal. He is a British artist who shows with Knoedler, and he has a wonderful sense of not only color but getting a very exciting brush stroke and kind of a great intensity in his work. That really fascinated me. I just kept looking at his work, and there's so many good catalogs. And he had shows every other year in New York, or every three years, so I could see the work. That had some effect on these, too.

[00:34:36.37]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: What I find fascinating about them is that the contour line is there, but it's extremely soft, and that must be very difficult to do in watercolor.

[00:34:50.29]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes. It's a—well, I guess having focused on that medium for ten years, I really felt quite—very much in command of the medium, very comfortable. Probably more so than with oil, I feel. Still, there's a lot I'm trying to learn about oil. It comes a little harder for me. But watercolors—at the moment, I haven't been doing very many of them, but I periodically I go—I return to them and focus on them. And so I can try to sort of—I find if I change mediums, working in one medium, when I go back to another one, it often helps it. I just see it in a new way, and it gives it a new strength, and that's good.

[00:35:58.99]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Speaking of renewal, I wonder how you continue to renew and refresh your subject matter, which remains traditional.

[00:36:10.34]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah. Well, it's funny. I have a daughter and she has said to me occasionally, "Why haven't you ever done an abstract painting?" Or, you know, she was amazed. And I guess I think to myself, why haven't I ever done a completely abstract? I've sort of flirted around the edges of it, but never really sat down and done a completely non-objective painting.

[00:36:41.90]

And who knows, I still might. It's just for some reason, I'm always so excited by what I see, and I tend to take it more literal than—I mean, Hodgkin is excited by what he sees, too, but he interprets it very abstractly. I just haven't gotten to that point yet, but I'm not so sure that I won't at some time do that. I just don't know. I really can't quite predict that. I certainly admire a number of abstract painters, like Diebenkorn and Hodgkin particularly, I

like very much.

[00:37:31.59]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Is it difficult to remain something of a representational painter when so many forces around you are pulling you toward abstraction?

[00:37:46.10]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes. Well, no, it's not—I guess I've learned over the years—I guess for me, I just have to trust what excites me and what is meaningful to me. And if I, you know, just pick up whatever trend is in this year or the next year or the following year, it would be absurd. You know, it would be just jumping on one bandwagon after following the magazine covers.

[00:38:21.76]

And I—so I really keep trying to find what really is meaningful to me and what really is where I feel my own strength is, and just stay with it. And sometimes, it's not in fashion and it's not selling well or it's not what the magazines are all writing about. And you just kind of have to get through those. You know, you can be very much in focus and then very much out of focus. All artists are. I think they don't—everyone that's been in it for a while knows that.

[00:39:19.32]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Your most recent work is both still life—it continues to be still life, landscape, and the figure.

[00:39:30.06]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:39:30.51]

CYNTHIA VELORIC In what directions are you moving right now, stylistically?

[00:39:34.62]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I'm moving—I'm working on a larger scale. Actually, I had some paintings in my studio from the late '60s that I just, for some reason, were never sold. They were in a show at Makler Gallery. And they're paintings that over the years, when a collector or somebody was in the studio, occasionally I'd pull out one or two and they'd look at them and say, gee, they're wonderful paintings. And I'd look at them myself and think, they really are. They're very strong works.

[00:40:16.79]

So finally, I pulled a few out and just left them up and looked at them for a while, and I think they triggered off a little bit some of the newer work in that they were figurative paintings, and they were kind of very loose, brushy, kind of painterly paintings. And the newer work relates to that somewhat in that I—again, I'm using the figure, but I'm this time trying to get more—work very directly, and not rework the painting a great deal and sort of kill it. I'm just trying to get a much more immediate—I think about it a lot before I actually do what I'm doing. And I'm interested, in these works, in getting—the color is much more heightened, and more, I guess, stronger color than I've used in a long time.

[00:41:43.13]

And I'm interested in getting a very exciting sort of range of paint, and using thin and heavy areas, and getting a certain psychological impact with the figure itself. Kind of a haunting figure, something that people really will think of—remember and think about. That's what I'm doing. And I actually figurative work, I don't know whether it's in or out, or what it is. At this point, I'm just doing it because I want to do it.

[00:42:24.37]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Also, you've done some very large-scale acrylic landscapes in the last

year.

[00:42:30.13]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes. That's true.

[00:42:30.67]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Such as *Castellane* and *Passage Mandelieu*?

[00:42:35.59]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes. Those paintings actually preceded these figures. They were kind of a brief—well for six months really, I was in France as artist-in-residence, and in southern France for six weeks, about. I don't know, maybe it's been a year now. And I did a lot of studies in watercolor and pencil, and these paintings were from that series of works.

[00:43:10.49]

And I thought I could, you know, just do them in acrylic, because it was sort of related to the watercolor in this sort of thin, washy kind of work. But after a while, I decided it was—I couldn't take it far enough. I just couldn't get enough range with it, so I decided to leave it. And I went back to oil. And I haven't—I finished the ones I did, but I haven't done it anymore.

[00:43:48.42]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So now you're exclusively working in oils at the moment? In 1991.

[00:43:54.93]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes. '91, I'm doing oils.

[00:43:56.67]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Okay.

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[00:00:04.25]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Interview with Elizabeth Osborne on May 31, 1991. This is tape three, side two. Well, now that we're up to 1991, and we know where you are stylistically in your work, I would just like you to comment upon your 30 years—a summation of your 30 years of teaching at the Pennsylvania Academy if you could do that.

[00:00:34.40]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: All right, I'll try. I've taught a number of different subjects there. From the a beginning, teaching cast drawing, when I first started. And then teaching life painting, and then being a critic, and teaching works on paper. Of the subjects that I've taught at the Academy, the one I've enjoyed the most, really, has been being a critic, which means that you go around to the private studios of the third and fourth year students, and you really just look at works, either in progress or finished, and talk about it with the student, as opposed to being in the studio looking at a life model and saying, "do this or do that, or don't, or why are you doing this?"

[00:01:33.09]

I find that being a critic, to me, is the most interesting. And as I say, I was a critic for many years. And then recently, they decided to rotate the sort of core critics that they had—I was one of them—so that other faculty could have that opportunity. So that meant for two or three years, I wasn't able to do it. And I missed doing that. But hopefully, that will end soon, and I'll be back doing it.

[00:02:06.72]

In the overview of teaching, it's been a very positive experience, certainly an ideal place to

teach, in terms of being an artist, in that you go in and you look at work of a lot of serious young people, and then you leave. You don't have to do any preparation, a whole lot of preparation, or papers, or anything like that. And you teach either one or two days, so you have a lot of time to do your own work, which I liked. There have been years where I wished I could just get away from the Academy for a couple of years. I have not been able to do that. We have sabbaticals, but they're only for one semester. And I've only had—well, I've had two in all that time.

[00:03:03.37]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Speaking of sabbaticals, you mentioned something earlier in the interview about you being instrumental in obtaining sabbaticals for teachers. Tell me about that.

[00:03:12.34]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yeah. I was—I guess it must have been in the '70s or late '70s. Twice I was what they call Faculty Representative to the Board, which means they elect—the faculty, each year, elects one person to sit in on the board meetings. And I was very—I don't know what the word is—took it very seriously, and very involved, and very active. And I, at that time, proposed that they both should have a pension plan and sabbaticals.

[00:03:50.29]

And of course, they were aware of these things. I think they just hadn't really put it together for probably a lot of reasons. But I did take the initiative to have lots of meetings with board members and with faculty and really push them to do it. And they have done it since then. And we were a little late getting sabbaticals started, but we do have them now. And we have a pension plan, which was late starting.

[00:04:24.42]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Do you remember what year that was?

[00:04:27.73]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I'm trying to remember. I'd say it was probably '79 or '80, pretty late. I guess the downside of teaching at the Academy would be maybe that it is so traditional. I mean, there is a range—the students, you get quite a range of work. But the program itself is based on figurative work and rather traditional work, as opposed to, say, a school in California or something, where they don't even think about that sort of thing. You can't help but have some of that seep into you when you're around it a lot and see it.

[00:05:19.58]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So you do think you're a product of the Academy?

[00:05:22.11]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I'm sure it's had its effect. I just can't—you just can't be around that all the time without not having it sort of get into your consciousness, somehow.

[00:05:34.17]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So would you say that you're part of the Philadelphia Realist tradition?

[00:05:38.96]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I guess, somewhat, yes. I would have to say I am, because I'm—I lived and worked here all my life, and taught here all my life, and have looked at other Philadelphia Realists from Eakins on. And certainly, there's some marvelous ones. But it's certainly not like being in the Abstract Expressionist movement in New York. It is definitely a Philadelphia thing.

[00:06:16.18]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Over these years of teaching at the Academy,

have you supplemented your lectures with textbook instruction?

[00:06:26.68]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: The only time that I've done that was recent years when I was asked to do this class of Works on Paper, which was mainly watercolor. And it just was coincidental that Charles Le Clair, who used to be at Tyler, did a book called *The Art of Watercolor*. And he did—it's a wonderful book that he did, where he researched and interviewed many artists, contemporary artists. And it's just got a lot of good information.

[00:07:02.09]

And I did use that in my classes as part of some reading for the students. And it was just a wonderful kind of adjunct to our projects that they could refer to this book. And a lot of the students have used it. But other than that, we don't, at the Academy—or at least I haven't—and I don't think a lot of the faculty actually give lectures as much as critiques of the student work. I mean, we give slide lectures of our own work, or sometimes other artists. I give a lecture on American watercolor painting. But that's about all we do.

[00:07:59.43]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Do you do field trips with the students?

[00:08:02.34]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Some, yes.

[00:08:03.88]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Where do you take them?

[00:08:05.85]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Well, the last trip I took, it was not—it wasn't a watercolor—well, I did two this year. One was really not very far. I took my Works on Paper class to the Archives at the Academy. We went down and looked through the vaults, and we looked through how they store all the works. And we saw some of the—of course, works—the watercolors, and the [Charles] Demuths and the—

[00:08:36.12]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Marins.

[00:08:36.39]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: —[Winslow] Homers and the [John] Marins. And then Robin—I can't remember her last name—a nice girl. She talked how they maintain the collection. And it was very instructive for the students. The other trip really was for a painting class. And I took them through Old City, which has become a very lively gallery area. And it's where my studio is. And we went through quite a few of the galleries there, including Marian Locks', and then to my studio. So that was really—they were both local field trips. The Academy does have bus trips to New York and Washington. Usually, they let the students kind of go their own way. Occasionally, there's a special show that they'll go to.

[00:09:29.14]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: So the field trips have improved from the days when you were a student?

[00:09:32.98]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: [Laughs.] Yes.

[00:09:34.30]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: The students are now more exposed to—

[00:09:35.94]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Oh, yes.

[00:09:36.83]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: —other currents in the art world.

[00:09:38.57]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: No question. They really are. It shows in their work, too. Every year you see how the—what they're seeing in New York affects a number of them.

[00:09:51.79]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Do you generally let the student tend to go their own way?

[00:09:56.74]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I try to encourage them, yes, to move, I mean, in a direction that I feel is natural for them rather than, say, make everyone do a certain kind of thing. I know Penn always was known for Welliver teaching all little Welliver artists, imposing a sort of style. But I'm not knocking him. I think he's a wonderful teacher. He was, and an interesting person. But I—no, I would say I try not to do that. I don't want to see a lot of little Osborne watercolors all over. [Laughs.] I just would rather see people find their own way.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:10:51.05]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Since the early '70s, you've been included in a number of group shows that have used the word "woman" or "women's" in the title. Now, how do you feel about your work being shown as "women's work" as opposed to another title for a group show?

[00:11:14.84]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I don't really feel one way or another about it. I mean, in fact, I wasn't even aware of that. It's interesting you point it out. Well, I don't think of myself as being different from a male artist, at all, really. We both are—except that maybe I—certain things might excite me more than a male artist. I mean, maybe. I don't know.

[00:11:48.87]

I don't think of it. I don't go into the studio and think—I'm not really a feminist, only in that I feel strongly that I should be able to show where I want to show and that I should be able to paint and teach and do what any male artist would do, and have the same opportunities. But I don't feel like a Judy Chicago or—where I have to paint female imagery, particularly, to make my point.

[00:12:30.36]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: There are no issues, in other words, that you feel compelled to explore in your work, no women's issues?

[00:12:36.76]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Not really. And I don't say that's good or bad or whatever. People that do do it, I'm not against it, particularly. Sometimes I think they might be capitalizing on just getting publicity for that reason, which doesn't—I don't get very—I'm not very interested in. No. You made the point, though, that a lot of these are women's shows. And that's interesting. I'll have to read that more carefully.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:13:16.35]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: On a different note, I know that you have a family life. And I would just like you to tell me, briefly, who comprises your family at the moment?

[00:13:26.07]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: All right. My family, at the moment, at present, is a daughter, who is just about to turn twenty and is in college, Audrey. And I've remarried this spring, Ronald Wertheim, a judge in Washington. I was married, before, to an architect, who lives in New York, Robert Cooper, who's Audrey's father. And that's my family, with my cat. And my husband lives in Washington. And I live here. And we see each other on weekends. And it's a busy life. [Laughs.] It's very busy. I work. I teach two days or a day and a half and paint the rest of the time, except when my husband comes out.

[00:14:27.38]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: What is your full legal name?

[00:14:30.68]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Sarah Elizabeth Carroll Osborne, and Sarah is for a godmother. Elizabeth is Elizabeth. Carroll was a family name. It's two R's and two L's. And I just decided that it was too many names. And when I was in my early 20s, I just dropped the Sarah and the Elizabeth—I mean Sarah and the Carroll and kept Elizabeth.

[00:15:03.92]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Did you always go by the name Elizabeth Osborne, even through the two marriages?

[00:15:09.58]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: Yes, I did.

[00:15:12.38]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Wasn't that unusual back in the '60s to do that?

[00:15:16.34]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I guess so. Well, really, when I started painting was in my early 20s. And I didn't marry 'til I was 27. I had already been exhibiting and showing work for five or six years, maybe, and using that name. And so it just seemed natural to continue that. And my husband had no objection, so I just kept my name. And I felt that it was no big thing for me. It got a little complicated when my daughter was in school because you had—but I think people today are so used to it—women with their maiden names. My daughter has my—she has both our names, Audrey Osborne-Cooper.

[00:16:12.44]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Will you continue to maintain gallery affiliations in both New York and Philadelphia?

[00:16:20.30]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I'd like to. I find, you know, Philadelphia is like a home base to me. And I certainly know and have a large following here. It's a little hard in that I'm not as prolific and wish I could show more frequently, in other words, show one year here and the next year in New York. But because having galleries in both cities means sometimes it's a show, here every three or four years, as opposed to every other year, just because I have to keep showing in New York. But I keep trying to keep them both going. Sometimes it works better than others.

[00:17:13.60]

CYNTHIA VELORIC: Where do you see yourself heading in the future?

[00:17:19.64]

ELIZABETH OSBORNE: I see myself painting until I can—I'm just a little old lady, and painting and painting. I enjoy it more and more. Although I've had periods that have been slower, and sometimes I'm not sure about the direction I want to go. It just happens I feel I'm in a period, now where I feel very sure of my direction, and very happy about it. But that's

not always the case.

[00:17:53.81]

I can't imagine not painting. Just to me, I just couldn't live without it. I couldn't. It's my whole raison d'etre, as they say. It just is the way I'm happiest. I suppose I get the most satisfaction from it. That's all. I suppose that's what you try to do in life, what really gets the most out of you and what you look back on and feel really good about.

[00:18:29.88]

I mean, it's fun to buy beautiful things and have a nice house. And I do all those things, and garden. But none of them have that real sense of sort of inner strength. And a sense of leaving something behind is important to me. I think it's because in my life I've seen so many people come and go, and just evaporate, somehow. To me, it's important that I have something to leave behind that's meaningful, and that says something about me and how I felt about the world.

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]