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Oral history interview with Yvonne Jacquette, 1989 June 6-Dec. 13

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Yvonne Jacquette on June 6, June 7, October 24, October 26, October 31, and December 13, 1989. The interview took place in New York City, and was conducted by Barbara Shikler for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The original transcript was edited. In 2024 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

[00:00:05.28]

BARBARA SHIKLER: This is Barbara Shikler, June 6, 1989. I'm with Yvonne Jacquette, in her studio, at 28 West 38th Street, in New York City. This is side one of the first tape.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

Hello. I'm with Yvonne Jacquette. This is Barbara Shikler, side one, tape one of the first interview. Hi, Yvonne.

[00:00:37.71]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Hi, Barbara. Think this is legible?

[00:00:40.68]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I think so. Shall we listen to it?

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

Here we are. Let's start with your birth, which is, as they say, a good place to begin.

[00:00:52.02]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: December 15, 1934, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

[00:00:56.88]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Okay. Your parents—before we start with your parents, just tell me if you had brothers and sisters.

[00:01:04.65]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, there are three girls—four girls altogether, including me, and three brothers, and I'm number two.

[00:01:12.38]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh. How was that?

[00:01:14.58]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Good Catholic family. [They laugh.]

[00:01:16.59]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I didn't mean why, but that's also interesting.

[00:01:19.36]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: How was it?

[00:01:20.62]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. How did it—

[00:01:22.74]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It had a big role. It was chaotic, in some ways, and I sometimes wished it wasn't—there weren't so many kids. Some of it was very enjoyable. They were all very close, so there was a lot of babysitting for me to do when I was young. But the way that it became very important, I think, for my aerial work is that one—some of the time, I noticed that when I would get annoyed at the chaos and noise in the house, I had this little trick of imagining myself floating in the air above the house, looking down into the house, like a doll house, and seeing all the other brothers and sisters running around, doing their silly things. And because I was above it, I could laugh at it, and I got a little relief from the overload of excitement or pain or whatever. And later, I realized that it had a lot to do with imagining—having a double idea of space. Like walking around on the ground, thinking of walking forward, and then having this idea of imagining people in a lot of different situations from this other view.

[00:02:46.76]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's quite extraordinary.

[00:02:47.54]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: As a way to sort of understand it, get a little more space around it, I think. A little peace.

[00:02:53.21]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you begin to consciously do that, deliberately, evoke that kind of distance?

[00:03:03.38]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Not very often, but once I got to the aerial view, I recognized what that reminded me of. The other thing was that we lived on a very high hill, in—well first, we lived in Pittsburgh, but then we moved to Stamford, Connecticut, and we lived on a very high hill, in the middle of the hill. So there were a lot of views looking down, and our house was very narrow and high. And so I recall this feeling, these spatial levels. I could look up sometime, and I could look down other times. And I kept being aware of having these oblique points of view as a lot of fun, before I ever started drawing it.

[00:03:51.56]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How old were you when you moved to Stamford?

[00:03:53.84]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Seven.

[00:03:54.62]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Seven. I think it's really astonishing. It's so rare that I hear someone really relate experience of the early years to their development as an artist. And it's fascinating that you can, really can. It's a perfectly natural progression to today.

[00:04:16.01]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:04:17.00]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Fascinating. What kind of parents did you have, other than good Catholics? [Laughs.]

[00:04:23.42]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Very warm mother, quite nonverbal, but interested in art, to some extent, to the extent that maybe a suburban lady in 1945 would be. Not highly educated. And my father was mathematical and very interested in finances. He was an accountant and then a management consultant. So he had this very strict, often rigid idea about the proper thing to do, proper behavior. So it was difficult—

[00:05:04.41]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Socially correct, you mean—that sort of thing?

[00:05:06.39]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes. I think he had some social-climbing interests that he was disappointed about, because he didn't really go about it very carefully. So I got a lot of encouragement from my mother and a bit of opposition from my father.

[00:05:30.06]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Opposition or restriction?

[00:05:33.81]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Uh—he just couldn't understand why anybody would be interested in art or the kind of freedom that I was interested in. So there was restriction, definitely. But the balance of my mother I think helped things quite well.

[00:05:54.83]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What was her background?

[00:05:58.81]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Her parents had come from Germany, both at a very young age. I think they even married in the United States. And my mother's mother was a milliner, and my grandfather was a baker.

[00:06:18.19]

BARBARA SHIKLER: In the Pittsburgh area?

[00:06:20.39]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: In the Pittsburgh area. Right. And kind of docile and sweet people.

[00:06:27.19]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You knew them?

[00:06:28.57]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes. Yes. And my father's family was originally from Marseille, and came—actually, my grandfather came to work with DuPont, from Marseille, in the Philadelphia-Delaware area. And he came also from a very large family, seven children as well. And something happened to him that I never could understand. He didn't seem to be comfortable with the rest of the family. He didn't really like to see them very often. When we moved to Connecticut, we hardly ever saw that family. I know very little about them. And if you asked him about them, he said, "I can't remember." Yeah. I think he repressed his connections to his family.

[00:07:26.81]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Your father?

[00:07:27.47]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: My father.

[00:07:28.16]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Your father.

[00:07:28.82]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

[00:07:29.30]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Not your grandfather.

[00:07:30.41]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. So I don't know much about my grandfather.

[00:07:31.10]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So your father, in a sense, turned his back on his family.

[00:07:35.00]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It seems so. Enough so that it's so vague for me that I can't get much of a picture of the people.

[00:07:40.84]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What did you say your grandfather's work—his father's work was?

[00:07:43.91]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: He came to work with DuPont in gunpowder, and actually was killed in an explosion. So maybe there's something about that.

[00:07:59.18]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Fascinating. You said you left Stamford when you were seven.

[00:08:05.05]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, we left Pittsburgh when I was seven, to go to Stamford.

[00:08:07.76]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I mean Pittsburgh. Yeah. Was that a very big change for you?

[00:08:13.61]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think so. I think there was a lot more freedom to run around and to investigate things on my own in Stamford, because it was a suburban area, not very heavily

settled at that time. I remember lots of woods, and woods with vines and rambling streets, and there were still plenty of empty lots. And about three or four blocks, there was the Long Island Sound. It was on a little peninsula in Stamford, so I could go either direction to the Sound, which I loved. Beaches—comb the beaches, and I learned to swim. I was very excited about that. And I had a very lovely time, I think, as a child, being able to explore nature in this area, because it wasn't so set up.

[00:09:06.51]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How do you—if you had to examine that period, would you say that things changed as you passed a certain age? In other words, this sounds like the kind of idyllic thing, where you related to your immediate environment, your brothers and sisters, and the outdoors, which you loved. At what point did you become aware of the restriction that was being imposed upon you, or were you always sensible of your father's tightness there?

[00:09:40.96]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't think I was so aware of it until maybe eight, nine, or ten, or something.

[00:09:48.15]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Had you started to paint or draw or do something like that?

[00:09:51.52]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes. I did a lot of drawing as a kid. As a matter of fact, I thought everybody drew all the time, because my mother gave us lots of pencils and crayons and things, as we were all growing up. Now, I suspect it was just a good way to keep us quiet, keep us orderly, or some wish of hers to see what would happen, and all of the kids drew, that I remember. In fact, my older brother is an architect. So that went into his work, and the next brother was an engineer. And so that whole experience of drawing was just like a daily thing for all of us.

[00:10:34.51]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you each work as the moment hit, or did you decide to work in a group together and say, "let's do such and such?"

[00:10:44.02]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. I think it was more individual. We just—

[00:10:46.60]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Pulled away from one another that way.

[00:10:48.13]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: A little bit. I mean, always in some of the same rooms, because there weren't always that many rooms, but—

[00:10:56.41]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I wanted to ask you about—

[00:10:57.52]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It wasn't collaborative. There wasn't very much collaborative projects, I don't think, until we were much older, in terms of art.

[00:11:09.29]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I wanted to ask you what the other brothers and sisters ended up doing, all of them. But I was also interested in trying to understand how your mother who was—yes, she was a suburban lady, and you say she was interested in art. And yet at the same time,

you say that she wasn't well-educated, but had she educated herself? How does that sort of person become interested in art, and what sort of art? How did you know?

[00:11:38.18]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, my first feeling that she was interested in art is that she bought a Chinese vase, which I always loved, a small—actually, no, it was a figurine, and then another time, it was a vase. She seemed to like Chinese things very much, enough to buy a couple of them, and later have some Chinese prints or reproductions hanging. And she also was a terrific seamstress and made a lot of our clothes, and encouraged all the girls to learn to sew, and was very active in helping us pick out patterns and materials, and any of that kind of thing, which was definitely artistic.

[00:12:22.63]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Certainly.

[00:12:23.14]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: She did a lot of work on the house, from time to time, decorating and making things for the house. And she also tried to read a great deal. I think she started a few book clubs in the various places she she's lived. But with a rather conventional idea of literature, still, but much more reading and interested in various things than my father, outside of—my father's stuck to his field.

[00:12:58.58]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did he work for a large company?

[00:13:00.60]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. He started with—I wonder if it's still around—White Tower Hamburgers, way back in Pittsburgh, and I think he became part of the branch in Connecticut. So that's why we got to Connecticut. And then shortly after that, he joined an accounting firm in New York, which is actually one of the biggest accounting firms. It was called Ernst and Ernst then. Then, it was called Ernst and Whitney, and now I think it's even some other name. So for—I don't know—35 years or so, he commuted from Stamford into New York. So actually, he often wouldn't get home until 7:30 at night, and so forth.

[00:13:45.38]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you have a lot of friends in that area?

[00:13:47.99]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah.

[00:13:48.83]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's always amazing to me that you make friends with a family that's almost like a built-in camp.

[00:13:53.93]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, right. [Laughs.]

[00:13:55.49]

BARBARA SHIKLER: [Laughs.] I was an only child. I'm in awe of the family life of a large group of kids. What did you all do, and how did friends work into that?

[00:14:09.08]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I recall the main thing we did in the spring and summer was to go to this beach club nearby and swim, or just hang out at this club. It was a good place for my mother to take all of us to and then not have to worry that we were running off, because it was limits where it was. So I think a lot of the early friends were other children at that

club, but then neighborhood children started to come around, as we got older. And I started making friends with kids from school, who would come out in the same school bus as I would. And after a certain point, we'd start like roaming around this peninsula. One of the things we did was just either on bicycle or walking, just go around and look at things, or go around the beaches. I remember trying to make a raft on a beach.

[00:15:08.35]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. What fun.

[00:15:10.54]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The vines, the wonderful vines in the woods near us, making little houses in those vines and climbing the trees to get up to make little treehouses. A lot of fantasy, I think, was going on there with those kind of places. Because when I saw them later, when I went back to Stamford later and looked at the same spots where I'd had, it felt like, an incredibly rich little area, it was tiny, really. It's just that so much was going on, I think.

[00:15:42.36]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, and you were tinier, too, so your perspective—

[00:15:45.44]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Of course, right.

[00:15:45.94]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Let's pause here for a moment.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:15:50.53]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The other thing that—the other side of the year for us was when the snow came, because our hill was one of the steepest hills in this peninsula. It was the sled riding hill and the tobogganing hill.

[00:16:03.12]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Great.

[00:16:03.63]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And even for a while, before the neighbor put a fence between our land and theirs, there was people going down behind our house, and then people down the road in front of our house. So there was a big party outside, whenever it snowed, and we were right there.

[00:16:19.20]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, you must have felt—

[00:16:20.16]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So we had a great time.

[00:16:20.97]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —just as proud as punch that it was your hill, I should think.

[00:16:24.62]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

[00:16:25.11]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Maybe why the neighbors put up a fence too.

[00:16:27.36]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. They didn't want their roses messed up anymore. [Laughs.]

[00:16:31.00]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Yeah. Oh, what fun, how nice. It's like a storybook childhood. Are you still friendly with your brothers and sisters?

[00:16:39.12]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yes. Oh, sure.

[00:16:41.13]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What do—oh, yes, we said we'd ask—I said we'd ask what the rest of them do.

[00:16:46.30]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, let's see.

[00:16:47.15]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You feel like giving us a—

[00:16:48.51]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Sure, a little, fast—brother number one is an architect, who now is in London. I'm number two. Number three—brother number three, is a—works for Grumman Aircraft as an engineer. Sister, the number four, is a physical therapist in California. Sister number five—child number five, is a doctor, having been a nurse for quite a while and then going back to school and became a doctor. Number six is a—works for American Airlines, and I've gotten lots of free passes, recently.

[00:17:30.46]

BARBARA SHIKLER: [Laughs.] That's handy.

[00:17:31.42]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: He's supervisor of electronic maintenance, airplanes. And sister number—the last sister, the seventh child, started out studying literature and became a Ph.D. and taught for quite a few years in literature, and then decided, "This is too much. I'm going to go travel the world," and became a cultural attaché for the government and goes from country to country now. For the last ten years, she's been living—first it was Pakistan, then Algeria, then Mali in Africa, and now she lives in Zimbabwe.

[00:18:10.57]

BARBARA SHIKLER: My goodness.

[00:18:11.62]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So she's really the most exotic.

[00:18:13.57]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Indeed. Does she have family?

[00:18:16.06]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. She's single.

[00:18:17.83]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Do most of the rest?

[00:18:20.98]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: There are five who are married, and two who aren't.

[00:18:25.50]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Fascinating. Well, it always gives you access to another landscape.

[00:18:29.91]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. That's right.

[00:18:33.78]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How did it happen during your childhood that you began to recognize that you wanted to be a painter, or did you not recognize it until—

[00:18:46.45]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, I think I always did. I know I had a dream when I was 15 about my first one-man show. So at that time, I was definitely going to be a painter. Part of it had to do with—aside from the role looking played in my life, it gave me a little bit of separation from the others, because I continued to do a lot more drawing than most of them as I got older, and I liked having that private space. I liked going out and drawing from the landscape around my house to get away from the activities at home.

[00:19:31.90]

And at a certain point, I recognized that I was a bit of a loner, even though I came from this large family. Although I was still fairly social, I really liked getting off by myself and thinking my own thoughts and discovering things for myself. In a way, I think maybe that was the most crucial thing. Not really that I'd been drawing all my life, but just needing to have my own space there.

[00:19:59.69]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It went hand in hand with the painting.

[00:20:03.16]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:20:04.58]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It gave you a chance at the drawing, certainly.

[00:20:06.71]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:20:07.04]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you get to museums at all?

[00:20:10.86]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Not very much when I was young; not until I was in college and then really knew where to go. I did see art books in Connecticut, where I grew up.

[00:20:27.72]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Where did you see them?

[00:20:32.77]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think the school library maybe had a few. A friend's father worked for

Condé Nast Publications, and she gave me this copy of *Art Treasures of the Louvre*, which was really my important book.

[00:20:44.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Indeed.

[00:20:45.31]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So I started getting an eye, and also, my parents were very nice to give me private lessons. They thought I had some talent and that I should be encouraged. So first, I was going to lessons at a neighborhood woman's house, which was only good when I was really young. And then somehow, my mother met through maybe one of her women's clubs, a man who was giving lessons to various people quite a distance away.

But he actually would come and pick me up, and after a while—he was very enthusiastic about what I was doing, and he gave me very particular lessons in form and drawing, which he kept saying, "These are based on Italian masters. These are ideas about form from early Renaissance people." And he kept saying, "Now, your style I think is closest to Bellini," and I thought it was a lot of a con at that time, but there may have been something to it. There was a certain linear sensibility I had that seemed connected to Bellini, and later, I thought Mantegna might be another one. So once I went to art school, I started really looking carefully at those masters.

[00:22:04.85]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you continue to feel that responsive to them, or did you feel responsive to their work as you went on?

[00:22:12.70]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah, very incredibly. I really discovered that whole world out there.

[00:22:17.60]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Such a sophisticated introduction to art.

[00:22:21.53]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That was unusual. Yeah. The odd thing about this man, he actually had studied with—not Reginald Marsh, another '30s artist who did a lot of figure work, and later—you probably know who I'm mean—his later work had little crisscrosses on the form of figures. But before that, he was one of the leading—

[00:22:55.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, let's go through. Did he do etchings, when you speak of the crisscrosses?

[00:23:03.21]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:23:03.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Let's pause and talk for a moment.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:23:06.57]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I'm not sure now.

[00:23:07.41]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You just said that this man had studied with John Sloan or—

[00:23:11.37]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think so, yeah, or Fowler.

[00:23:12.51]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What was his name, this teacher of yours? Such an interesting—

[00:23:15.48]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, when I first met him, his name was Robert Roche, and then to give himself a little more prestige, he changed his name to Robert Roché, or else he put the accent back on. [Laughs.] And he was an odd person. He scared me, because he was so passionate about art. And it was very different than the suburban lifestyle I came from.

[00:23:35.73]

But after my studying with him a couple of years, he suggested to my parents that I become apprenticed to him, and that he would teach me everything he had to know. And instead of going to art school, going away to college and art school, I should just stay and work with him, and he'd teach me Old Master techniques and so forth. And I thought about it a little bit, because I thought he had been giving me some very valuable help.

[00:24:01.82]

But it didn't make any connection with what was happening in the contemporary art world. It seemed too traditional, especially—well, halfway because he didn't seem to ever connect with work like Mondrian or other artists that I was beginning to get curious about, although, not quite sure how I felt about them. But also, I felt it was too—a little claustrophobic to have an education just by this one person.

[00:24:34.82]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did he take you to a studio when he picked you up?

[00:24:37.25]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah..

[00:24:38.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And the studio was in the Stamford area?

[00:24:41.30]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Stamford area, right. I don't know what has ever happened to him. Never heard of him since I left Connecticut.

[00:24:47.60]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Was he an older man at the time? It's surprising that he hasn't reached out to say hello to you, because you've certainly been visible.

[00:24:55.38]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I know, right. He was not—he wasn't elderly when I knew him. I think he was actually probably in his late 30s when I was getting lessons. So he could easily still be alive.

[00:25:08.62]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Hmm. It'd interesting to see what he'd tell you about your work now. [They laugh.]

[00:25:11.94]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right. But it gave me a lot of confidence, what he did teach me about drawing, and I sort of discovered that I had quite a bit of patience to stay with

something quite a long time and develop it very carefully. I did these very—actually elaborate, by the time I got near the end of it—charcoal drawings, all in black and white. Realism to an extreme point, very much involved.

[00:25:51.33]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You have any of those works still, anywhere?

[00:25:55.92]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Probably there's one somewhere. [Laughs.]

[00:25:57.75]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Your mother doesn't have them up?

[00:25:59.40]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. No, not anymore.

[00:26:03.40]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It might be fun to look at them.

[00:26:04.98]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Well, my friend Red Grooms discovered one. When I was in high school, I was doing them. I was not only having high school art teaching, but also taking these private lessons. And there was a *National Scholastic* competition, so I entered a couple of those very, very realistic things, and won some prizes, and it was reproduced in a magazine. And since Red Grooms is about the same age as I, or maybe a year or younger, he saw them in the magazine. And he remembered them, because when we met later, he said, "You did those?"

[00:26:41.07]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, isn't that marvelous.

[00:26:42.52]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And then, of course, I said, "You did those?"

[00:26:45.06]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You mean his stuff was in there?

[00:26:46.73]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: His stuff was in there too, but his was so open and free and imaginative. And I thought mine was very tight, but it was skillful.

[00:26:54.10]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I think that's a lovely story. That's really very nice. How old were you when that took place?

[00:26:58.93]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I guess about 17 or so.

[00:27:00.91]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Great. What magazine was it? Do you remember?

[00:27:04.21]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It was the *National Scholastic* magazine. It's a high school art magazine that goes across the country, but actually, from that, I got a commission from

Seventeen magazine, which I don't know if that still exists. But that was kind of a teenage writing and art magazine, mostly teenage advertising, I guess.

[00:27:27.70]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Articles, too, as I recall.

[00:27:30.33]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Articles, yeah. So they asked me to do something for a story, and they sent me the story. And just at that point, I was entering Rhode Island School of Design. I remember taking the story with me to school, thinking I've got to do this as well as with my schoolwork. And the Rhode Island School of Design was opening my eyes so fast that my old style had fallen away. And here I was trying out something very open and loose for this story, and I'm not very good at it yet. [Laughs.]

[00:28:00.19]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did they accept it?

[00:28:00.91]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: They did accept it. They did print it, but I didn't like it, myself.

[00:28:04.33]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Transitional.

[00:28:05.14]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The transitional period. Yeah.

[00:28:07.36]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Goodness, you were thrust so quickly into—to an acknowledgment of yourself, as either a potential professional or a professional, to happen very quickly.

[00:28:19.51]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:28:20.09]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Then, school must have been pure heaven, I should think.

[00:28:24.19]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

[00:28:24.73]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How did you come to—obvious—but why did you choose RISD, rather than another place? And did you try for other places?

[00:28:37.16]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I did. I tried for four or five other leading schools. I loved Providence. When I went to visit the school, I loved these hills, these early American houses, the colors in the city, the old houses having these taupes, and violet-tinged grays and things. I just thought it was a magnificent environment. And at that time, that school was the first one to give a degree, and so that satisfied my parents. They thought I should really go to an accredited—or at least a school with a degree, and they didn't really have an idea about art school particularly.

[00:29:21.42]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, what year was that you went?

[00:29:23.96]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think I entered about '52, and so I stayed for three years. I actually didn't finish.

[00:29:31.00]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You didn't graduate?

[00:29:32.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I didn't graduate, no. I got too anxious to go to New York, to be an artist in New York [laughs], so I quit the last year.

[00:29:40.51]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you have any hopes for New York, anybody promised you a job or something like that?

[00:29:46.49]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. No. Although, I knew one other artist, another student artist who was going to New York, and we were friendly for the first couple of years. So I had a person to go with. I think that's what made me decide to go then too. It's scary to go—

[00:30:02.41]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I bet that caused somewhat of an explosion at home.

[00:30:04.81]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Well, at that point, my father said, "That school made you crazy." Because so many of my attitudes had changed. And so much questioning about the milieu out in Stamford, the suburban, corporate world.

[00:30:26.23]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Especially during the '50s.

[00:30:27.72]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right.

[00:30:28.35]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It was absolutely so entrenched.

[00:30:30.90]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right. And I was just turning my back on a lot of it, or saying, that's not for me. Also, when I went to school, I thought, well, maybe I'll become an illustrator. That was a respectable profession, and my father bought that story. I think I believed it myself, when I entered school. After two weeks in the school, I said, painting is for me, and this is really what I'm interested in. And so the whole thing that I switched into painting upset him. The whole idea that I was going to be an artist and probably not have much money and so forth threatened him. And it's so ironic, the way it turned out.

[00:31:19.32]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:31:20.07]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Because he said to me a few years ago, when I asked him a question about taxes or something, he said, "You mean you're asking me that question? That means you make over a certain amount of money." I said, "Yeah, I've had a lucky year." He said, "That means you're not a starving artist anymore!"

[00:31:36.45]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you see the humor in the question?

[00:31:38.16]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes. Yes.

[00:31:39.33]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I guess time has softened some of that.

[00:31:42.84]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But he was serious. He thought for all these years that I had been a starving artist. [Laughs.]

[00:31:45.81]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did he really? Did he not realize how successful you'd become?

[00:31:49.62]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: He didn't. How did—unless I showed him figures, how would he know?

[00:31:55.77]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Not by the furs and diamonds, certainly. Right?

[00:31:58.68]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's true. [Laughs.] I didn't ever look like I was wealthy.

[00:32:02.43]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How interesting. And did your mother ask you? No one ever questioned you, then?

[00:32:07.20]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. Well, I would send them reviews and things about shows, and tell them if I'd get a commission or something.

[00:32:13.53]

BARBARA SHIKLER: But just never sent the price list.

[00:32:15.36]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right. The proof wasn't there.

[00:32:19.48]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's right. How would he know? He probably assumed that artists get about $500 a painting.

[00:32:25.81]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Yeah.

[00:32:26.65]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Fascinating. Tell me about RISD itself. The environment must have been not as extreme a change as it would have been had you never been a painter until then, or never spent time in the studio.

[00:32:41.05]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

[00:32:41.29]

BARBARA SHIKLER: But nevertheless, it was intellectually a plunge into a river of change.

[00:32:48.25]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. That's true. And I was quite frightened by it, in a way. The first year I think I was just staggering around, saying, oh, all this stuff that I have to find out about, and interested in and—

[00:32:59.77]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That everybody else knows.

[00:33:01.18]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes. Right. That's true, overwhelmed by. And one thing that I took with me, in my teenage years, I became a champion swimmer, actually, working out of the YWCA in Stamford. Because my best friend actually was a national champion, and that's how I got into that. And we went to the meets together, and so forth. I wasn't that good, but I did win a few medals for the state of Connecticut. But I loved swimming, and I wanted to continue that physical activity.

And when I got to RISD, immediately, I went to the nearest swim club and said, "I want to get on a team." And it turned out that the son of my painting professor was the coach. So I thought, well, this is great. I have the painting professor for art, and the son for swimming. But at a certain point, there was a fight. There was a crisis about how I couldn't do both. I wouldn't have the time for both.

[00:34:05.48]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Who said that?

[00:34:06.80]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I felt it myself. I felt that I needed more time for the painting. Actually, there's a lot of classes you're taking, a lot of extra—not just painting. You're having English classes, and psychology, and all these electives. There were a lot of electives at RISD at that time. And I just felt I needed more time to be able to—I didn't like that daily thing of having to go to the pool, at that time. But the swimming had given me a lot of confidence, and a connection with the physical—the body and how to use the body, that now I think is extremely valuable. And now swimming is extremely important to me.

[00:34:50.62]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You still do it?

[00:34:51.62]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I do it more and more, because I've found it's the only thing that keeps my eyesight in good order. When I have to do a lot of close focus, for instance, when I'm working on a print on the plates, the registration is so crucial. My eyes can get in a lot of pain, and if I swim almost every day, it just keeps it at a level where—

[00:35:12.70]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Huh. I wonder—

[00:35:13.87]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Maybe it's the oxygen, the extra oxygen, the extra focus on something. How I see when I'm swimming, I know I'm looking through the water as I'm going.

[00:35:26.76]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So it's a exercise—

[00:35:28.39]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It relaxes—it's a kind of relaxation, keeps my eyes from tightening up, as well as—

[00:35:32.46]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What is the problem with your eyes? I've read that you had difficulty with them, but I don't know.

[00:35:38.19]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, a lot of muscle coordination problem, focusing problem, from near to far, and a cataract that's not really the problem now, but may get to be. I don't think so.

[00:35:51.78]

BARBARA SHIKLER: When did you first begin to develop these problems?

[00:35:55.11]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Quite young, actually. My parents gave me I exercise sessions with the eye doctor when I was six or seven, maybe even earlier. I think I might have been cross-eyed slightly, at the time. I was really having muscle problems then, and that exercising thing was very good. It must have helped a lot, because going through high school, I didn't remember having many problems.

[00:36:20.34]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you use those double glasses that you brought very close?

[00:36:24.18]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Oh, and little machines that made things go back and forth.

[00:36:28.41]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. And the pencil tool, that things joined—

[00:36:30.42]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah, all kinds of things, things that probably came from Dr. Bates, originally, ideas. And actually, what I use now, I go to an eye doctor who does exercise routines with me. I've been doing it for years, and I seem to have to continue to do it.

[00:36:47.75]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Must be rather frightening.

[00:36:49.25]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It is. It has been. When the first cataract was found, when I was about 26, that was very upsetting. But that one hasn't changed much. The other one that's been growing has been very gradual, and so far, there's no real problem.

[00:37:07.64]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And of course, it's too soon to operate on.

[00:37:09.98]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right.

[00:37:10.88]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So you've never gone through any operations.

[00:37:13.16]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. No.

[00:37:15.17]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Goodness, of all ironies, it seems the most ridiculous thing for you to have gotten, and no reason for it given.

[00:37:25.76]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think it's emotional. I think there was a lot of discomfort at home. Maybe the fear that my father tried to instill in me. He was heavy-handed, to say the least, and threatening, if he didn't like the way things were going. And I think I may have developed certain habits of reacting to that that went into my eyes. Maybe I had a weakness in the eyes to start, because my mother had weak eyes, too. But the fact that I needed my eyes so much, and used them a lot, maybe I also—I think I developed habits of tightening, as I was looking and working, that I'm trying to break, still.

[00:38:13.88]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Certainly, nothing related to glaucoma there.

[00:38:17.90]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. No.

[00:38:20.42]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And no—well, I shouldn't push this any further, I suppose, but it's—

[00:38:25.31]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Things seem to be in order. I have had some bad periods with it, and then with working with the eye doctor, I usually find the way out of it or switch the kind of work I do for a while. But I'm farsighted, and that tends to push me in the direction of the aerial view. Because when I was doing some of the still-life work, I was having a lot of pain looking closely at things and then also looking closely for the painting, the drawing.

[00:38:56.54]

BARBARA SHIKLER: The eyes actually hurt, or did you have headaches?

[00:39:00.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, both. I mean, the headache experienced through the eyeballs.

[00:39:08.32]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Grisly.

[00:39:09.58]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Now, I found that, if I'm working—looking out at a far distance and then putting the mark on close up, that's actually a good combination for me.

[00:39:22.36]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. It's like an exercise of changing your focus.

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right. There may have been a tendency that I found that was comfortable, so I'll continue to do that. I didn't relate it to the eyes when it was happening, but I think it was part of it.

[00:39:35.47]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Well, did you have any of this at RISD? Was that something you had to deal with?

[00:39:42.43]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't think there was much of a problem there.

[00:39:45.13]

BARBARA SHIKLER: There has always been a fascination for me in the associated life, the shared life, between the poets and the musicians and the artists. Musicians less than I would expect always, but certainly poets and artists. At RISD, were you aware of the other arts? Were you encouraged in the other arts? Did you respond?

[00:40:11.74]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, I was very involved trying to learn about all the other arts as much as possible, film particularly. I helped start a film society, so we could get foreign films or avant-garde films.

[00:40:26.14]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It was a good period for that.

[00:40:27.58]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right. Beginning of a lot of activity, too. And I tried to read a lot —some poetry, a lot of literature.

[00:40:40.27]

BARBARA SHIKLER: All of which was a new experience.

[00:40:42.22]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Pretty much, yeah. I think so.

[00:40:45.60]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Who are some of the artists of any kind, and movies and that sort of thing that you liked, during that period? You remember?

[00:40:56.74]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: There's a film by Jean Vigo, a French film called *L'Atalante.* I just was bowled over by that film.

[00:41:03.74]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. It's a classic.

[00:41:04.57]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, a lot of those, and Chaplin and Buster Keaton, a lot of those kinds of films.

[00:41:11.88]

BARBARA SHIKLER: The stuff coming out of Italy was—

[00:41:15.05]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Just beginning. Yeah, right.

[00:41:15.71]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —just beginning, right in that period.

[00:41:17.61]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: *Naked City* and those things were out about that time. [Cross talk.]

[00:41:22.71]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Maya Deren came to visit us at RISD, stayed in our apartment, my roommate and I. We had a wild time with her.

[00:41:27.87]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Really? How did that happen?

[00:41:29.28]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Because we invited her to come, we being the film society.

[00:41:32.40]

BARBARA SHIKLER: [Laughs.] That's great.

[00:41:32.79]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right? And she came, and even sent us a cat later. [Laughs.]

[00:41:37.42]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, my. That's wonderful.

[00:41:39.70]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: She had so many cats, she could give away one. So she mailed us one.

[00:41:43.50]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You're kidding.

[00:41:44.66]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, it's true.

[00:41:45.48]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Imagine. Did you have any idea? Did you hear it mewing as the box arrived?

[00:41:50.04]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. No. It was a total surprise. I had to give it away to somebody, because I was leaving for the summer soon. But it was an interesting period.

[00:41:57.81]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, I should think that must have been quite extraordinary having her there.

[00:42:02.19]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah.

[00:42:03.57]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Was her behavior what you expected?

[00:42:06.63]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, she was a little frightening. [Laughs.]

[00:42:08.64]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What'd she do?

[00:42:10.63]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: She took off her—well, we got her to the school to show her film, and as soon as the film was over, we said, "Well, we're having a reception for everybody." And she said, "Oh, I brought some records." So that's fine. So she brought some Haitian records, and took off her shoes and started doing these Haitian dances by herself, and we were very surprised. [They laugh.]

[00:42:30.92]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I just saw a film on her, very recently, and her dancing was part of that—to that music.

[00:42:39.09]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. But I was shocked.

[00:42:39.99]

BARBARA SHIKLER: She was still a youngster.

[00:42:42.68]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, those dance films, of course. I just saw a dance film on television on Sunday that was very much coming from her work.

[00:42:53.85]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Right. You knew of her importance even then. So it's interesting—those students who study film are exposed to all kinds of different peripheral artists than those who don't. It's a whole—

[00:43:09.21]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's a much more encompassing, I think, art. You have to know about a lot of other things.

[00:43:16.33]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I assume that your interest is still powerful.

[00:43:19.60]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, more so.

[00:43:20.35]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:43:20.56]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: My husband's a filmmaker. [Laughs.]

[00:43:21.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. I know. Yeah. Had a fascinating period. So you left to come to New York. Oh, before we leave that, do you remember any teachers there that—or peers?

[00:43:36.38]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I had one teacher I was quite struck by, John Frazier.

[00:43:40.56]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Let me write some of these names.

[00:43:45.07]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: F-R-A-Z-I-E-R, who was part of, I think, a Provincetown school painting. And the thing that struck me about what he said, and what his own work was I think a sensibility was fairly close to someone like Vuillard, Bonnard as well. But in drawing, he showed me that you could make little notations, the small spots or dots, or just short lines, or a whole variety of marks to describe something that, put together, would add up to a form. But that you didn't have to draw with an enclosing line. You could open up the drawing process to a lot of different kinds of markings.

[00:44:37.13]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, was his focus—this kind of lesson drawn from his experience of the post-Impressionist—

[00:44:44.99]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes, I think so.

[00:44:45.14]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —or was it a contemporary '50s development, or both?

[00:44:50.51]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it came from the post-Impressionist, but he was a contemporary artist who had some reputation in Providence and around Cape Cod, and even had a few shows in New York, actually posthumously.

[00:45:06.20]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Modernist?

[00:45:07.73]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I would say he was a Modernist. He was a reticent temperament, but he was a Modernist in his viewpoint. It didn't really look like French Impressionism, although I think there are a number of American Impressionists that he knew about—Chase, and so forth, people who worked around Providence, that he, I'm sure, had seen. And so I think there was a line through that, and someone named Hawthorne.

[00:45:33.59]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I was just going to ask you about him, Charles Hawthorne.

[00:45:36.59]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. He was—

[00:45:37.40]

BARBARA SHIKLER: He was a Provincetown artist.

[00:45:38.72]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. I think he was—one of his leading assistants in the school.

[00:45:45.73]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. I remember that there was always a Hawthorne show up there, in Provincetown.

[00:45:53.92]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And I also liked the moral capacity of this man. I just felt he had a very balanced life, a very perceptive way of seeing people or relating to people. And being an artist in that combination struck me. I just admired him, more so than some of the more adventurous, more modernist painters at the school. The balance of his life interested me a lot.

[00:46:31.33]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What was his life like?

[00:46:34.27]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Probably just very work-a-day.

[00:46:37.57]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Family, you said.

[00:46:38.56]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Family, yeah, family. He seemed to respect his wife a great deal. I think she was a professional in some field. He went to Provincetown for the summers and worked very hard in the summers, taught in the winters. But was always available to students, really had a very—not a big-hearted attitude, but just a very straightforward. And a sense of integrity about him to students that I found really useful, really helpful for me.

[00:47:12.69]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It sounds as though he respected his students, too.

[00:47:15.30]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:47:15.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And that seems like a primary—

[00:47:17.79]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:47:18.51]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —a primary thing. Did he respond well to your work?

[END OF TRACK AAA_ jacque89_4610_m]

[00:00:06.54]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Here we are on side two of the first interview. It's still June 6, 1989. And we finished up the other side talking about John Frazer—Frazier.

[00:00:18.66]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Frazier.

[00:00:19.38]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Frazier. Is there anyone else that was in influence there that through whose friendship or tutelage you changed your way of seeing things, or working?

[00:00:36.19]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: One instructor, named Robert Hamilton, who had been a pilot in the Second World War, was doing abstract aerial views. I mean, you had to be told that they came from flying experiences because they were very abstract. But I was pretty struck by those at one time, but never thought that it would fall into—feed into my work later.

[00:01:04.75]

But the thing that did connect with him was that he encouraged me to go drawing on bridges. And when I was starting to find—trying to find a place to do landscape from, he made some suggestions about particular bridges, which there are many in Providence. And I

spent a lot of time on bridges [laughs] during those years, doing studies. So I think that—

[00:01:32.30]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you work straight outdoors?

[00:01:35.30]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:01:36.80]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Set up an easel and—

[00:01:37.79]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:01:39.32]

BARBARA SHIKLER: With all the folks poking over your shoulder?

[00:01:41.96]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Well, the bridges weren't so bad. Most people drove over them.

[00:01:45.83]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. So those images were, very early on, part of your visual experience, certainly.

[00:01:52.28]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah. And studying the light in Providence. I mean, as I said, I was struck by the way colors looked. Especially in gray light, this kind of day, their color seemed to bloom. Very soft and delicate colors seemed to stand out more than when it was sunny. But I really spent a lot of time trying to learn to paint, being out there, trying to get the light accurately, or at least the suggestion of the light, and finding it hard. It wasn't something you can do right away.

[00:02:28.25]

BARBARA SHIKLER: The light on the Cape is always a low, raking light because of the position of the clouds, it seems to me.

[00:02:35.99]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:02:36.14]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And they hit objects in such a way that it always seemed to enhance light and shadow more than usual. Was that typical of Providence, too?

[00:02:46.07]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, I felt there was some kind of diffused light there often, something about—

[00:02:52.91]

BARBARA SHIKLER: A sea mist of some sort?

[00:02:54.41]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: A sea mist, yeah. Yeah.

[00:02:56.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So that the sharp glare of the sun, when that was gone, everything was almost trued.

[00:03:03.02]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, right. That's what it felt, like the essence of the object was shown through this wonderful grayed-out color, but it still had a lot of strength to it. It wasn't contrasty.

[00:03:20.39]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you keep any of the work you did then?

[00:03:31.20]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: [Pause.] I'm not sure. Maybe a few things. It might be a couple of things here and there. Probably I gave them to my brothers when they were looking for things to hang up in their apartments later or something.

[00:03:41.59]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Waiting room art.

[00:03:42.53]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, yeah.

[00:03:44.78]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It doesn't sound like there was much drawing from the figure or painting from the figure.

[00:03:48.47]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, no, there was quite a bit. It didn't seem crucial. Well—

[00:03:57.73]

BARBARA SHIKLER: To them or to you?

[00:03:58.78]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: To me. I didn't feel like this is what I really want to be doing, although when I first started, I got very excited about drawing the figure, and even felt very interested in drawing portraiture and working with people in the work. And then at some point, it just drained out, as if either something happened to me that led me away from it psychologically—maybe I wanted more distance. I'm not sure. Or I couldn't figure out how to make good art out of it. So I left it. Although I still draw from the figure from time to time now. And I'm trying to get figures back into my work now. So I wish I had kept it going more. It'd be easier.

[00:04:47.63]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Never too late.

[00:04:47.94]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, of course. Yeah, right.

[00:04:49.91]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Do you have models come?

[00:04:52.13]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, when I work in a group, we have models, right? And sometimes I'll go drawing off—well, hanging out the window and draw here. Or—

[00:05:02.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: [Laughs.] You make it sound very perilous as though you want to—

[00:05:06.32]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, I have to be a little careful. I know. Or sometimes I'll draw off—there's a bridge on 23rd—between 23rd and 24th Street, between two buildings, that I've drawn from sometimes, some of the night views I have figures in.

[00:05:23.12]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's west? In the west—

[00:05:25.04]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right off Fifth Avenue, actually. Opposite Madison Square Park, there's the Toy Center building.

[00:05:32.99]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, I know what you're saying. And you still do that?

[00:05:38.10]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: A little bit, here and there. When I'm needing figures in my pictures, I'll just start, wherever I can easily get a good view, the right height maybe. I try to draw from it.

[00:05:48.99]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's true. You'd have to really find a place to work if you were going to work in a studio in which you could get to that height that you need.

[00:05:57.24]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, sometimes—

[00:05:58.11]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's very hard.

[00:05:58.95]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: In the summer, actually, sometimes I have my husband stand downstairs. I'm on the second floor, and he's standing outside. And I'm drawing him in the right position.

[00:06:06.97]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's lovely.

[00:06:08.04]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And a few times—well, my son was doing a lot of skateboarding about ten years ago. I would do a lot of drawings from him from our fifth-story window on 29th Street, and put them in the paintings at different heights.

[00:06:24.67]

BARBARA SHIKLER: [Laughs.] That's funny. So you left at some point. Tell me again when you left. You left RISD in '55?

[00:06:35.63]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: About '55, I think, yeah.

[00:06:37.81]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And came into New York, which was a massive contrast during that period. It seems to me there were two very strong and mutually exclusive currents. Certainly, in the art world, there were. And politically, there were, and in every single way that you could imagine. Even in films.

[00:06:58.57]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:06:59.41]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You have the Goldwyn Girls on one side.

[00:07:02.55]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. The first artist I met was Ernie Briggs.

[00:07:06.37]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you really? Isn't that funny?

[00:07:07.93]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: In a display company, my first job to make a living. And he taught me a lot. I mean, we had wonderful conversations at lunch hour.

[00:07:18.94]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How did you get that first job? And then—

[00:07:21.11]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, I don't know. It was the beginning level art job, so anybody could have gotten it, I think. He was doing spray painting for display. They used to do a lot of window decorations in those days. And so he had a job spraying white before they got painted.

[00:07:38.45]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Ah, yes. Department store windows and that sort of thing? There were hundreds of them.

[00:07:41.98]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, objects, things that were put in there. I don't think that job was so healthy, either, because he had to wear a mask. And I'm sure it wasn't enough protection.

[00:07:49.63]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Wow.

[00:07:50.41]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: When you think about what happened.

[00:07:52.15]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Clearly, clearly. So you just came, though you had no apartment. You had no job.

[00:07:59.35]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, right. I got a loft right off.

[00:08:02.65]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Right off.

[00:08:03.58]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Ernie Briggs told me how to get a loft. And you could get them—

[00:08:06.38]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You really have to describe that the step off the train. And didn't you look around and say, what on Earth?

[00:08:13.42]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, actually, because my parents lived in Stamford, I went back to Stamford for the summer and started—I got a job from there, that display job. And then after talking to Ernie for a couple of weeks, I said, well, all I have to do is find this loft. And so I went out looking. And by September, I had found this cheap loft. I mean, it wasn't hard to find in those days.

[00:08:37.15]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Where was it?

[00:08:37.90]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: 25th Street, right off Sixth Avenue. And I had DC current. [They laugh.] Probably was about $40 a month. Didn't have much heat. The worst part about it was that the ground floor, right at the door, a doctor—a workman's compensation doctor had offices. There was a lot of sewing machine activity in that neighborhood. And if anybody got hurt, they would take them to that doctor. Well, what I found out, unfortunately, after a while, was that he also would supply drug addicts. So people would sometimes come to get in at odd hours, like when I would come home at night, after hours, I mean, after dark, and want to get—have my key and want to go in, and there'd be some guy hanging out there, wanting to get in, and would want to try to force his way in.

[00:09:37.74]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Terrifying.

[00:09:38.49]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So that was very frightening. And I certainly couldn't tell my father about that. [Laughs.]

[00:09:43.74]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I guess there was a hue and cry when you said you were going to get the loft anyway.

[00:09:48.51]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, there was a horrible scene. Finally, when they finally came to see it—I said I was getting it. And I had to paid the rent, and I was staying there. And actually, my father—I said, "I'm not leaving." I'm going to stay here and not telling them—I don't think I knew, at that point, about this doctor and the drugs. I never had any real problems. But knowing later what could happen, it was really horrible.

[00:10:14.58]

But my father—you said, did I ever save anything from RISD? I did at first have whole trunks full of drawings, the figure drawings. And one day my father evidently opened them and started to go through them, all these nudes. I don't know whether the nudes upset him. Probably they could have. But the worst thing was that he found in the very bottom of the trunk some love letters from the boyfriend I had when I was at RISD, who I was no longer seeing. But they were very explicit sexual letters. [Laughs.]

[00:10:48.44]

And my father got so flipped out by that he called me up and said, "Your mother is ill. You

have to come home right away." And I said, "Oh, well, all right. I guess I'll get the train." He said, "We're going to come and get you. And I said, you're, "'we're'—what do you mean?" He said he's going to bring my mother with him in the car. And I couldn't figure it out. I knew there was something wrong, and it was some kind of a trap. But—

[00:11:19.43]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you go?

[00:11:20.21]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So when he arrived, he took a look around and he said, "This is horrible." And then he said, "You have to come back home. We have something to discuss." So I got into the car, not knowing what it was really about. And he wouldn't even say anything on the way home. My mother sat in the car and wouldn't say a word. She wasn't sick, obviously, but she was certainly disturbed. And I got home.

The next morning they told me about finding these letters. And the main thing they said was, "Well, obviously, you're not a Catholic anymore if you could have had sexual relations with this man." And I said, "Well, that's true." And they said, "Well, that's impossible. You have to correct this. And we're taking you to see the monsignor right now." So I had to go talk to the monsignor. [Laughs.]

[00:12:04.83]

BARBARA SHIKLER: My God. Well, you're laughing now. But I bet you didn't then.

[00:12:07.02]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, it was horrible. Horrible.

[00:12:09.51]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Were you forced to go through confession, or just chat, or talk or listen?

[00:12:18.66]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: A couple of very heavy question periods with the monsignor about giving up Catholicism, and in which I was trying to find—state my position, and not being too clear about it verbally, but feeling that—I felt it. So I didn't think that I was going to change. But my father had said, "Unless there's something satisfactory, you have to stay at home now." And I didn't really know what to do about that. So finally, I made a compromise with the priest, which was I would go to church in New York. I would continue to go to Catholic church and investigate it again for myself. And so he told my father that I intended to do that. And I did that for a little while, and thought about it, and soon enough came out with the same answer, that it wasn't for me.

[00:13:17.02]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Had you rejected it sincerely for yourself?

[00:13:24.43]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think so.

[00:13:25.42]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It wasn't a defiance, in other words?

[00:13:27.44]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't think so.

[00:13:27.64]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It was a decision.

[00:13:28.87]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, it was a decision that came out of the kinds of experiences that I was having at school by myself. I mean, the feelings that I was finding and that it didn't jibe at all with that. And I couldn't figure out how to make it jibe.

[00:13:44.18]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How did the conflict express itself for you between being a Catholic and being the person you saw that you were becoming?

[00:13:53.87]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think that I'm a kind of person who has to feel there's a sense of freedom to be able to go in any direction. And I felt the Catholic thing was so authoritarian it didn't allow for my exploration. I didn't know how to get to it. I'm sure it's possible. But I didn't know how to get to it at that time. It didn't make any sense in my relations with people. And then eventually, that got into the situation with sexual exploration, which I felt very—it was a very important stage for me.

[00:14:38.33]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You understood that? I mean, you were straight with yourself about that?

[00:14:42.59]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't know how clear I was at that time. It's so much hindsight. It wasn't just about the sexual thing. But there was some role that it played eventually, because the other part was happening first. And then eventually, I felt I couldn't find a way to continue for myself and do the explorations that I felt were necessary. And the kind of relationships I was developing were going in that direction. And it seemed important.

[00:15:18.12]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So rarely does one find two things that I can—that someone of that age would be so thoughtful and recognize that this was a point at which you were making choices. Most kids—21, I guess, you were—

[00:15:38.21]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:15:38.69]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —just sort of float with a current, and only later perceive that they were at a choice-making place in their lives. You seem to have done that. And you also appeared to have very little guilt, which so many lapsed Catholics do.

[00:15:58.73]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, not now. But I think I did then. I think it was a struggle for years, actually, about that, because at times, I reinvestigated again and say, "Maybe I just didn't understand enough intellectually, and I should go back to this," because it had been somewhat important when I was a child. I mean, it was also the kind of thing where everybody in the family was doing it. And everybody—so much—you're brought into that. You don't know how to question that, because you don't know if it's the essence for you. But now it seems that was the right choice.

[00:16:40.65]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Let's pause.

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[00:00:09.94]

BARBARA SHIKLER: This is Barbara Shikler. It's June 7, 1989. The second interview with Yvonne Jacquette, side one. Hi, Yvonne.

[00:00:19.75]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Hi, Barbara.

[00:00:20.83]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Let's continue, or sort of backtrack a little bit to that first year that you were living in New York in your loft. And if you'd give us the address for future scholars.

[00:00:35.95]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think the address is 103 West 25th Street, right off Sixth Avenue. And the building doesn't exist anymore. It's a parking lot.

[00:00:45.20]

BARBARA SHIKLER: New York. What was your rent? Speaking of rents as we have been a few minutes ago.

[00:00:53.47]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Something like $39 or $40 a month.

[00:00:55.93]

BARBARA SHIKLER: My God. What were you making then in your window display job?

[00:01:00.73]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Probably $50 or $60.

[00:01:05.32]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, you weren't a big eater, that's for sure. [They laugh.]

[00:01:07.57]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No.

[00:01:09.58]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And you said that Ernie Briggs was a neighbor of yours and—or he was a friend.

[00:01:14.44]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, he worked in in the same display company. That's how I met him. Actually, he lived about five blocks away from there.

[00:01:21.49]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Was he at that time—now, we're speaking of '56, '55, did you say?

[00:01:26.98]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I'd say '56.

[00:01:29.54]

BARBARA SHIKLER: '56?

[00:01:29.87]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think so.

[00:01:30.64]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What sort of work was he doing, and did that have any effect on you? Did you see—

[00:01:35.02]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, I thought it was very exciting painting. In fact, he had just previous to my meeting him been discovered by Dorothy Miller, and had a big show at the Modern Museum just about the time I knew him. Big abstract work, which was put on with trowels, big heavy knives, and planes of, sort of slabs of color. But to make up an image that superficially at first looked like a slice of marble, but with stronger color than most marble. But he tended to prefer white, sort of a dull red, a black, a gray, sometimes some ochre. And very dynamic big thrusts in this work.

[00:02:29.13]

I don't know how it relates to my work. I don't think there's too much of a direct connection, because I drew from nature a great deal. And he really was working out of his head. In fact, when he drew, he drew with razor blades, pushing ink around across the page with the edge of a razor blade to make kind of slashes of ink. And that way of doing something didn't connect with me. I just liked it so much.

[00:03:05.80]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. It must have been, in a sense, just another part of what you were seeking, was in a sense, permission to be what you wanted to be.

[00:03:15.04]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:03:15.40]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And he was certainly being something other than what he had been told to be, I suspect.

[00:03:20.71]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah.

[00:03:21.76]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Well, that's I suppose that's what I mean when I ask how it related to what you were doing. Did that inform your work at all in that respect, the attitude?

[00:03:39.82]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The way that it might have a bit was that I was thinking about New York as a very exciting environment. And if I couldn't at first draw it so that it had any feel for the way it seemed to me, I think it kept me open to keep considering it, how to do it. Where it might have started to channel was that I started to go to Maine for a summer—well, I'd get a two-week vacation at these various little jobs I had.

I would usually go to Maine by myself to paint and just find rooming houses or little inns or something to stay at. And I was trying to get a kind of mythic quality into the landscape with —I think I was using—maybe I even did a little pastel at that time. I'm not sure. But probably watercolor and maybe some ink, colored inks. But the Abstract Expressionist impulse was in there. And I guess the painter who seemed the most connected to that work in Maine was Joan Mitchell. I thought her big gestures interesting. And I was trying to find my way to do something like that.

[00:05:16.88]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You were going to galleries in the city?

[00:05:19.95]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah. Oh, sure. Going to look at a lot of things.

[00:05:22.73]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It was an active scene in those days—

[00:05:24.32]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah.

[00:05:24.65]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —uptown and downtown.

[00:05:25.79]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. De Kooning really interested me, like so many other young artists who were very inspired by him. And I also, around the early years—the very first year, I met painters around Nell Blaine, friends of Nell Blaine. In fact, I got into a poker game with Nell Blaine and Robert De Niro and Al Kresch and a number of friends of hers, mostly older than I. And so that was quite interesting. Not that we talked about painting that much but—

[00:06:03.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Plays poker today with Leatrice Rose. Was she one of that crowd?

[00:06:07.10]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't remember meeting her there. Although, I know Rudy knew her. Because that's how I met Rudy, through Nell Blaine.

[00:06:17.97]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Let's not forget to talk about that. So then, that was an early set of friends that you found in New York. How did you find them?

[00:06:32.19]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: In a bar. I met somebody else in a bar who knew Nell, I think. I went to bars a lot then. I can't believe it now. [Laughs.]

[00:06:42.57]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, it was a common place, wasn't it, for art students?

[00:06:45.21]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. To go and drink beer and meet different people and listen to jukeboxes.

[00:06:53.16]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Seemed rather innocent, didn't it?

[00:06:57.24]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:06:57.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It seems to me, in retrospect.

[00:06:59.67]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Although I think I went through a lot of anxiety in those years that was specific to being a young person with what I felt had no identity. I mean, these older artists, a few had started to show. And certainly, Ernie Briggs was showing. And here I was just a beginner and really didn't know what my style was going to develop into. And I think there's a feeling of being inferior in a sense when you don't know where you're going to go.

[00:07:32.12]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Sure. Well, I think that it was also inevitable that—well, the experience of Janet Fish, as I recall her telling me, of being naturally drawn to figurative stuff at a time when that was considered not only dumb and retrograde but "oh, yes, here comes a nice lady. Why don't you go and paint some flowers someplace and put on an apron and cook."

[00:08:03.46]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:08:04.51]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you get some of that, too? Where you were—was it either groupie or conform?

[00:08:12.28]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think I was trying a lot of different things in those early years, trying to get some angle into something that I could keep feeding. And a lot of the work I did just went nowhere. I did a lot of abstract work those years. And I was trying to learn from the abstract work I was seeing in New York. It was just incredibly peculiar, the shapes I was coming up with and imagery. It seemed as if I were looking for some kind of fantasy images of figures that were very distorted into maybe mythic kind of characters, but mostly looked kind of crazy or goofy. I mean, right now it might be interesting, but then it just for me—it never looked like anything.

It looked—I remember showing a few to Ernie Briggs, and I don't think he knew what to say about them. I didn't know what to say about them. And finally, I decided I don't think I really know how to work abstractly where I'm really feeding off my real life. I'm just floundering incredibly and looking for accidents all the time. And it wasn't that I was looking for technical breakthroughs or anything. I was really trying to find where the image located in relation to me. And I couldn't quite find it.

[00:09:40.26]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What the writers call, I suppose, finding your own voice.

[00:09:43.98]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

[00:09:45.00]

BARBARA SHIKLER: "Where are you?"

[00:09:46.14]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah. I mean the thing about trying to find something mythic, something grander and more transcendent than your daily life, I think was the thing that kept me from finding something that I could really connect with. And maybe later I might have come to that through what I ended up really doing when I finally really just started to work kind of directly from images that I found in the city. It was more modest work in a sense, but in a way, it just seemed a little truer.

[00:10:21.63]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Keeping the figure more or less—

[00:10:24.75]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Actually, I think the figures kind of fell away. I think it was really more a landscape.

[00:10:28.92]

BARBARA SHIKLER: A landscape. But you did keep it figurative, I meant.

[00:10:33.51]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It was figurative. That's right. Yeah.

[00:10:35.07]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. It's a silly word when you're not dealing with figures, isn't it?

[00:10:38.43]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. That's true.

[00:10:40.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, that's, I think, quite courageous. The figure hadn't really—the figurative hadn't really gained any kind of respectable attention yet?

[00:10:51.07]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. And I didn't know anybody—nice rain out there.

[00:10:56.47]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:10:56.89]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, Nell Blaine had switched from being an abstract painter of actually quite a bit of reputation to starting to work from direct representation. And I think also feeling that she was getting less respect for it, but I saw it as something honest. And I think maybe that was a help. It wasn't very dramatic in any way. It was kind of more related to French painting than her early French maybe Impressionist paintings than her abstract painting was, which was related to Hélion.

[00:11:48.06]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But she was an influence in a sense?

[00:11:51.18]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think so. Yeah. And a strong personality who also had a lot of energy and commitment to work, which helped me see what a woman artist could do. How do you go about it. I think she still had jobs doing graphic design when I first met her. And of course, she hated those, and was always trying to get time, more time to paint. So there was the example, well, you've got to get a job that pays your bills, and you try to get one that maybe allows you a little time to break into it, maybe not a regular nine to five job.

[00:12:32.50]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, you certainly had a nine to five job, didn't you?

[00:12:36.22]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I started off with a display, and then I went to do drafting for helicopters on government catalogs, actually, was what they were for.

[00:12:48.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did they find you, or you find them?

[00:12:51.27]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, I faked that I knew how to do drafting because I'd had a course in art school about it. And I just sort of bluffed my way in and said, I know all about this. And then when they discovered I really didn't know more than the very basic thing, they didn't mind. They sort of trained me the rest of the way.

[00:13:06.84]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Where were you working? What's the name of the place? Do you

remember?

[00:13:11.13]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, I used to call it Roy Rogers, but it was Royer and Rogers. And later, it occurred to me that all this work that I was doing was contributing to the Vietnam War, because there were all these different—

[00:13:25.56]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, helicopter.

[00:13:25.98]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —kinds of helicopter design. And they were just coming out with one new kind after another. And having to have them—these catalogs made to show how the parts were assembled. I did exploded drawings, usually from some engineer's drawings or from even sometimes blueprints. But I didn't really have to know very much about what I was drawing. I just had to try to do the drafting carefully, and then often ink it very carefully with different widths of pen lines so that in the catalog the heavy lines would read as the lines that showed forms that were in front of other forms, let's say. It was sort of clarifying a simple drafting line drawing into something that had a little more readability on the page when it got reduced.

[00:14:20.56]

But that was interesting in that you had to make the spatial concept of these objects very clear. And you had to understand them that much. And it's sort of something that I think I still use in that even when drawing something way up from the airplane, and it's kind of unsure how high or low, or what's in front or what's in back, I keep struggling to find that and make that clear.

[00:14:50.05]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's interesting that something which you did at that time in order to have the viewer's eye remind the rest of the body what it knew about that space, in other words, is something so many critics, when discussing your work, say that you—well, they think you try not to do, in effect, to detach from the remembered experience of dimension, dimensionality.

[00:15:23.97]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, uh-huh [affirmative]. I don't believe I've read that one. That's interesting. [They laugh.]

[00:15:28.06]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, at least by the time we finished deciphering. Yeah. But in a sense, do you find that when you say you remember that, do you use that experience in the same way today as a definition and a distinction in your work?

[00:15:45.83]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, sometimes I now deliberately decide to unearth that, I mean, upend that idea. I often start with the idea that I want to make the space clear, as clear as I can make it, and I can understand it three dimensionally. But I don't want the color to be—to read with an expectation—a predetermined expectation. So I find sometimes when I work with color, I'll use the color to shift your normal reading of that, make something come forward that if you made it in a line drawing wouldn't come forward, or just try to continually play back and forth with something that's not the way a mechanical drawing or an illustration would do. But—

[00:16:46.46]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Reverse the expected—

[00:16:47.87]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:16:48.74]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —things such as warm colors coming forward and cool colors going back, you mean.

[00:16:52.79]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But I remember one time Fairfield Porter looked at some prints that I had just started, where I hadn't really developed it too clearly, what I was going to do with them. But the drawing at least was very clear. And he was sort of saying, "I don't find that so great. Why don't you play more with how you can change that? It's too clear." And when I looked at his work, I understood what he meant.

But when I was doing the painting, these odd peculiar paintings I described when I first came to New York, and then looking at de Kooning, I remember that the space in de Kooning, which interested me tremendously, was probably one of the reasons I was trying to do that kind of work, the space of forms that are maybe negative spaces, shapes that were adjacent to some so-called positive form, how he would twist your expectation about what's coming forward, what's going back. And he could make both the negative and the positive be equally important. And I could never do in that way. He could do it even in a linear sense, but I couldn't do it that way. And I think that was the frustration. But I found later that I—from studying French painters, like Bonnard, Vuillard, I had more of a sense of how to do it with color.

[00:18:26.61]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Were you at all interested in studying with Hofmann?

[00:18:29.70]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, I think the era of Hofmann as the great teacher had just passed. Or maybe it was like five years before I got to New York. I don't—

[00:18:40.55]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, the late '40s, early '50s.

[00:18:42.71]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, I don't think he was still having a school. I'm not sure, but—

[00:18:47.83]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I'm not sure either, whether it didn't continue. But now, let's then let's clarify which period we're sort of wandering all over the decade of the '50s.

[00:18:56.69]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Yeah. Yeah, late '50s is when I really hit New York and started to work. I'd say '56 is the beginning.

[00:19:03.77]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Okay. And then the drafting—

[00:19:06.15]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

[00:19:07.00]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —the helicopter drafting extended into the '60s, did it?

[00:19:10.78]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I'd say that was '58, '59. Then maybe about end of '59 or so, maybe a

little before, I got very bored with the drafting and the nine to five aspect of it, and the pay, and decided I might be interested in doing textile design, because you could work with color. So I started—I found a woman who was a stylist in fabric, woven fabric design. And she kind of gave me quite a few hints, and a little bit of training in a sense just by talking to me about how to prepare a freelance portfolio. And I thought maybe if I can make some designs on my own time, and then she or someone she knew was willing to be an agent to try to sell them in the field. And so I tried to do that for a while.

[00:20:21.03]

And actually, it was a good thing—a good learning experience. I didn't sell much, but I did start to really know how to prepare things for commercial use, and what things couldn't be sold. And I also, at the same time, tried a little bit of print design and found that even more had more rules about things that you couldn't use, which now I'm sure don't exist. For instance, I remember doing some designs with birds, kind of abstracted birds. And I thought it was my best design, and it was very interesting. The people who might have been interested in buying all said, "Oh, no, birds are bad luck. We can't sell birds." So it was discouraging to find something that you'd find these mysterious things you couldn't do after you've done them. And you're wasting your time as far as trying to sell them, so—

[00:21:20.98]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You mean birds in fabric design? Oh, gosh.

[00:21:25.36]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: In fabric design to wear for clothing. She said sometimes you'll find them in home furnishings, like for sofas or something,

[00:21:33.13]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:21:34.30]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But don't show one bird in—and it seemed to be some kind of—some people had almost subliminal fear of birds, or something. That's what they were kind of saying to me. Or any kind of strange animal. So I mean, like pigs or something, that would be sort of obvious. But I just bought a pair of socks the other day and had these pigs on it. They're very cute. [They laugh.]

[00:21:58.40]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, I bet they are. But nothing was really cute except bows and ribbons, and that sort of thing, and buttons and bows, as the song went.

[00:22:07.27]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:22:07.55]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So you were still in the midst of that era, as you said, of rules and regulations about so many things.

[00:22:13.80]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right.

[00:22:14.24]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Gosh. It really points it up, doesn't it?

[00:22:16.04]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes.

[00:22:16.55]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Compare the pigs on your socks. [They laugh.] That's funny. Yeah.

[00:22:23.48]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So then I continued—I finally got a full-time job, which I felt was necessary, in woven fabrics, for Burlington Fabrics at a company called Galey & Lord, which designed good quality plaids and woven stripes and what they called dobbies, which are little, intricate weaving patterns, a way to make a fabric have texture by just what the weave does, raising—

[00:22:56.51]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How do you spell that?

[00:22:57.86]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think it's D-O-B-B-I-E, is what—

[00:22:59.60]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Huh.

[00:23:00.38]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: You have to know a bit about weaving to do that. And I took some courses with some—a woman named Riva Blumenthal, who had classes in hand weaving. And I enjoyed that a lot.

[00:23:13.97]

BARBARA SHIKLER: During that period?

[00:23:14.84]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes, learning to use the color in the weave. And then the job, the regular job I had was mostly designing on paper patterns, like stripes or plaids, by using gouache and ruling pens, and just ruling out sections of color. And then taking metal plates and positioning them opposite, in the other direction—perpendicular to the painted lines—and then spraying with either an airbrush—that's what we usually used—airbrush a certain amount of color over the painted area, which gave it an illusion of a weave. If you had the right proportion of the cross area of paint, you could facsimile what it would be if it were woven in plain weave.

[00:24:15.87]

And so the real point was to find colors that did interesting things with each other. And I found that a terrific education in any way toward painting. Just to be playing with color in a way that—the rules were, it had to be rectilinear, pretty much. But once you got past that, proportions were open. And kinds of color was a bit restricted when I did anything for men's wear, but for women's or children's wear, you could have a pretty open idea of palette. Just sometimes there was a restriction on how many colors you could use.

[00:24:58.74]

But I enjoyed learning how to make things work for the commercial world, that something I could make could be produced, and that people would want to see more. And although you could, I guess, develop a real style, I never really recognized what particularly my style was as far as designing went because I had to do so many different kinds of things.

[00:25:25.27]

But the other part of the job that was extremely useful was that you had to match paint to yarn so that when you painted these facsimiles of weaving, the paint had to really give the same color as the yarn at the mill. So a certain red would have to have—if it had a cast in the actual little thread—cotton threads it was usually—you had to get those overtones when you mixed big batches of paint in a big mixing bowl with designer's gouache. And the thing of getting that color really right with the overtone—sometimes it'd take half a day to get it.

And then you'd put it in a big jar, and then they would have it for a year while they used it.

[00:26:08.10]

But to get it right was really interesting because some days, even the reflected light coming in off the street from the sun hitting another building would make you think, "I've got it right." And then another day, you'd say, "It doesn't have quite enough pink in it or something." And you'd have to extract what was missing.

[00:26:29.14]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you work with electric light, or did that absolutely kill it?

[00:26:33.91]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, sometimes there was electric—sometimes they used fluorescent lights, which I think are horrible. And so actually you'd have to walk around the room. Go near the window. Go away from the window. Go out into the hall where there was different kind of lighting, to just try to get a picture of what the composite was.

[00:26:51.88]

BARBARA SHIKLER: When you speak of overtones—is that what you called it, the overtones?

[00:26:57.46]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Color overtones.

[00:26:58.13]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Color overtones. Could you be more specific? If you were to take a red as an example, do you mean something like a red that has a good deal of orange in it?

[00:27:13.66]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes.

[00:27:14.29]

BARBARA SHIKLER: As opposed to a red that has blue in it?

[00:27:16.15]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. Yeah.

[00:27:18.65]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Okay.

[00:27:19.48]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But being very precise about what kind of orange in it. Is it a yellow-brown orange or a pinky orange?

[00:27:28.65]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Right.

[00:27:28.86]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So breaking it down to more detailed observations.

[00:27:32.81]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That sounds challenging. How long were you there?

[00:27:35.79]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I think I did that about four years. And about halfway through that job, my boss got pregnant and wanted to take off for nine months or six months or something. And so I became the head person in that studio. There was about eight people. And so I had to be the organizer, as well as design and plan the work and hire people, and so forth. That was really challenging, interesting.

[00:28:06.87]

BARBARA SHIKLER: The administrative side of it?

[00:28:08.37]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah. And then at the point when she came back and said—seeing that I'd done a good job, I said, here's my chance. "I want to work part-time now. I don't want to work every day. I'd like to work from nine 'til one." And because they'd gotten to rely on me to some extent, they said okay. So I had really set up something perfect for myself. I had enough money to live on because my salary had gone way up. And I had a chance to go home and paint.

[00:28:41.89]

BARBARA SHIKLER: They didn't drop the salary?

[00:28:43.63]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, yes, I only made half of what I had been making, but it was enough to live on. I was willing to give up a big salary to do the work—

BARBARA SHIKLER: Great.

[00:28:52.45]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —just to get more time for painting.

[00:28:54.01]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's smart. Your father's daughter. [They laugh.]

[00:28:58.93]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it was lucky. I think it's very hard to do those things these days to say, "No, I just want to work that kind of hours."

[00:29:05.05]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It seems to me that that's a very personal kind of—and involves a personal relationship, and that seems to be harder and harder to find in work today.

[00:29:14.38]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:29:14.59]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How old were you then when all this was taking place? It sounds so—

[00:29:18.52]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well—

[00:29:19.18]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —terribly adult.

[00:29:23.25]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —I guess around up until I was about 30, so maybe from 25 or 26 'til 30 was that job.

[00:29:34.59]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So here you were, working half day. Were you still involved with some administrative stuff or were you—

[00:29:40.64]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. No, I had just design work to do besides, so that was even better.

[00:29:44.30]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Even better. And then you would go home? Were you pretty good about getting to work?

[00:29:48.08]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:29:48.74]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Disciplined?

[00:29:49.49]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah. I think that job had given me a sense of discipline, because I had to do the organizing for others. I certainly wasn't when I first came to New York, so I learned it gradually.

[00:30:04.88]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And your own work, was it changing in relation to the work you were doing?

[00:30:10.22]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes. Probably with quite a bit of a time drag. From the actual jobs that I had, I started taking what I could use so that at a certain point, say when I was about 28 and was still doing the—I was doing the textile design, I was using the drafting job, drafting techniques to make my art. So I was interested in the beginning of minimal observation.

[00:30:47.64]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, yes.

[00:30:48.12]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I was sort of slightly, slowly trying to develop a minimal realism. And I started off by making drawings with drafting techniques of interiors without any ambience, without any atmosphere, without any sense of hard or soft, just these thin lines describing things like radiators, window frames, tin ceilings. We had a tin ceiling in my loft, and the pattern on it was kind of geometric. So I could describe that with straight lines and drawing pencils, drafting pencils.

[00:31:33.72]

And I was also trying to find a way to use reproductive methods to make that do something else. So I started taking these drawings that were done in mostly pencil to photostat places, and having them blown up very large to get the line exaggerated into what then became slightly fuzzy, because from a tiny drawing up to maybe 60 inches high, that line started to get a little irregular, so it didn't look tight anymore. So I started getting a little bit—it seemed like a new kind of art to me. I didn't quite know anybody else doing that. And I didn't know if it had a lot of range. That was kind of a question. It seemed kind of very particular.

[00:32:22.96]

But for about two or three years, I was able to work through things that way until I started to try to paint it in color. And then I had trouble, because it didn't lend itself to planar paint, planes or variations in planes. I mean, the drawing style kind of was under-structure, but it

fell away as being something that I could really feel it expanded enough. And also, I wanted to get more situations where I could use more full color. This was kind of color coding, since the early minimalists were being interested in it.

And at that time too, I'd met Sylvia Mangold and Robert Mangold and lots of discussions with them about minimalism. And it sort of became my second education, because through them and through other people who went to Yale all about the same year within maybe two classes, I got to know about 20 or 30 artists, a lot of whom were thinking about these things and using them to some extent. And instead of my having gone to graduate school, I felt like by talking to these people I got my—

[00:33:52.49]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You got the best of—

[00:33:53.51]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —surreptitious graduate school.

[00:33:55.43]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You did, indeed. There's a nice article about you and Sylvia Mangold and two other women. I'll take it out, and why don't we stop for a moment and talk about it.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:34:09.88]

[In progress]—and where it left out. Yeah, there's certainly there's subjects—doors, windows, ceilings, rugs, jars, bottles count for something. But for what?

[00:34:17.32]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, you see this word here where it's cut off the edge of the article?

[00:34:20.83]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah, I think they're subjects being doors, windows, ceilings.

[00:34:26.20]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh. Oh, okay. Uh-huh [affirmative]. Yeah.

[00:34:26.50]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I think that's—the four women that we're talking about are Sylvia Mangold, Yvonne Jacquette, Susan Crile, Janet Fish. [Reading:] "As pictorial phenomenologists, they tend to affirm the artwork something a literal fact, which may have its referent in the visual world, achieves its true effectiveness in direct visual experience, not evocation." What on earth does that mean to you? I'm not sure what it means to me, but—

[00:34:59.65]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:35:01.12]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's your work after all.

[00:35:02.56]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah. I don't know—I'm wondering whether—you see, this, for example, this painting comes from that drafting experience, although it's taken a little further. I did a drawing of this structure, this street structure, and this the upright, this building in drafting.

[00:35:26.96]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What's the title of this, just so that the—

[00:35:30.33]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, this one? Oh, yeah, "Twelfth at Second Avenue" is the title of that painting.

[00:35:34.69]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Okay.

[00:35:35.53]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I did the drawing first in this very crisp drafting style. And there's no—absolutely no atmosphere in it. It just looks like pipes, you know, and edges of buildings. I didn't have the sky. Then I went back, and an experience had happened a little later than I had done the first drawing, which was going to Maine. We bought our house in Maine, and I started working outside and getting much more involved in those aspects of nature which are very changeable and very unsolid evocative forms, I mean, in the sense that you can't see things in positive and negative.

Well, that's not quite—you can't keep things within that limited style of representation that the drafting included. And the whole thing broke down for me about what I wanted to include. But this question about not evocation, I think the earlier work was trying to make something kind of solid through a form of description that tended to be about solid objects normally, like pipes or helicopter forms.

[00:37:12.06]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:37:15.03]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And maybe that work, especially the earlier ones, the doors and the tin ceilings, were more like trying to put the work right there on the picture plane. Only talking about what you could talk about that you could describe; being very objective, making objects be right there, not hinting at something that you couldn't put on the paper, like painting clouds, which is already a difference of seeing things from a big distance.

[00:37:56.53]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:38:00.81]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And Sylvia, who kept everything within her interior within a measurable space and even was using rulers to mark off how far it is from here to there, was doing that in her way. And we were—the two of us were the most communicative to each other about what we were doing than all of the others. Although Susan Crile later became—what she was doing later became very important to me. And Janet Fish, also, a little later. But yeah, there's a terrific cross-flow among that time.

[00:38:38.92]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:38:40.03]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think the women's situation was beginning to open up amazingly. And there was a tremendous—women being compassionate toward each other for how you find out things and how you explore things, and giving each other a great deal of time and energy, and talking, and very generous qualities came out.

[00:39:05.99]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Were encouraged?

[00:39:06.70]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Encouraged, yeah.

[00:39:07.88]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's interesting how fashions in political thinking create avenues for personal expression that were unpredictable.

[00:39:17.69]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, yeah.

[00:39:18.99]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That always amazed me. I knew another group of women who were painters who were a little older. Mimi [Miriam –Ed.] Schapiro was part of a group, who it always seemed to me, took from the women's movement—the power aspect that was held by men, and took that over. And it was as though you had a choice—one from column "A," and one from column "B."

[00:39:41.18]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:39:41.30]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You could either go for male power, or you could go for women's attributes, which were kindness and sharing and generosity, ostensibly, ideally.

[00:39:52.16]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:39:53.54]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So how involved were you in the ideas of feminism? Was that something that was discussed, or was this just an overflow?

[00:40:01.95]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, I never joined a consciousness-raising group, but I was reading a lot of material about it, talking with other women. And at one time, I remember I wanted to explore things that interested me particularly. And one was in relation to art, how do we learn about our spatial orientations? Or how do we—what kind of spaces interest women or interest little girls and little boys?

[00:40:34.83]

And at that time, because I had a child about maybe three or four, I was interested in exploring with other women who had children what this artwork was like, kids who drew. So I remember calling a meeting in my loft and told as many women as I knew who had children, or had access to children's drawings, to come, and let's just see what it looked like. And we put them all over the floor and looked at this and tried to discover things about what—was there anything that was continuous or showing up as a pattern? We found out there weren't too many patterns. There was less than we'd hoped as far as trying to make some kind of—

[00:41:19.96]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Interesting. You mean as far as the male/female child?

[00:41:21.94]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah, there were some wonderfully different female children who were doing things that the boys, a lot of boys did. And then there were boys who do the things that supposedly girls usually did. So it broke down our little rules there, or our expectations. But there were some things where maybe there were more girls who were doing certain kinds of drawings and spatially putting things together in a certain way,

depending on ages. So it was a lot of fun to try to find out about that.

[00:41:52.70]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Surely. Did the whole business of the women's discoveries of their own best qualities affect your choice of subject matter at all or your perception of your own space as a woman, the space you were given, the space you had had, what you needed or wanted, et cetera? I mean, was that something that you can—here, the painting—this is, again, Linda Nochlin. [Reading:] "The painting was part of a series concerning space between objects." They're talking about your James Bond car painting that you had done in '67.

[00:42:40.13]

And she says that, [reading:] "According to the artist, this issue of space is between things has continued to inspire and an art of greater range but less intensity than that of Mangold." And then she speaks of your space, your ups and downs, your clouds, your light fixtures, et cetera, et cetera. And here, wait a minute. Hold on. She's speaking—I should have prepared this, but the transcriber will just have to go through the pauses.

[00:43:10.88]

[Reading:] "Women may be stuck with glimpses for their visual nourishment. Yet, the pictorial tensions generated by interplay between space and the things that interrupt its freedom are after all what makes art interesting, et cetera, et cetera, whether it's children's toys or Sistine ceiling interruption the hand of God."

[00:43:30.47]

So she's, in a sense, saying that women's vision was, at least at this time, still restricted to some extent. When you all put your children's work together, you didn't find what you expected, but did you think of yourself in that way as having had restricted vision? And it's interesting that we're using this phrase.

[00:44:00.15]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [Pause.] I don't recall ever experiencing being restricted as a child in what I could choose to draw, but I'm certain that I didn't draw a lot of the things that my brothers drew—about what kind of spaces were in my work compared to theirs.

[00:44:34.38]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Or in your world.

[00:44:35.82]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Or in my world. I think I tended to do close-up objects and observations of people. The childhood work that I have still shows that, and also some play with fantasy about imagining things that you couldn't really see. [Pause.]

[00:45:26.55]

I think when I first came to New York, I could not imagine that I could do a kind of painting that Ernie Briggs was painting at that time, a big—a very wide-scaled imagination of something kind of heroic. I mean, I have my vague attempts at something like that, and they were really quite ludicrous. So I think there's an example of where probably there's just so many little hints in the environment from other people about being able to do that, or sort of suggesting that not that's not really your meat or something, that you would tend to stay away from something like that.

[00:46:19.98]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I hear you saying that the subtle implicit message was that men could handle big space and big heroic gestures, but certainly not women. So that—

[00:46:30.33]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think that may have been underlying there.

[00:46:32.82]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Because in fact, you were simply just not an adult painter yet, rather than—

[00:46:38.97]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, right.

[00:46:40.35]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —out of your area.

[00:46:42.06]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:46:43.11]

BARBARA SHIKLER: In terms of aspiration. Fascinating.

[00:46:48.51]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I'm wondering how that plays into the present. I mean, I have go home and think about this very intensely, but—

[00:46:57.05]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Or whether it does—

[00:46:58.07]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:46:58.49]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —in fact. It's sort of difficult and very dangerous, I suppose, to make theories adapt to history.

[00:47:08.24]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:47:09.32]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's hard enough to make history adapt to theories.

[00:47:11.78]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Yeah.

[END OF TRACK AAA_ jacque89_4612_m]

[00:00:09.42]

BARBARA SHIKLER: This is side two of the second interview with Yvonne Jacquette on June 7, 1989. As interviews like this tend to be scattershot sometimes, we got into the area of painting, which is really the meat of any discussion like this. But I'm tempted to pull you away from it very briefly just to keep connected to the sequence of things and how you got from there to here, so to speak. So if we could just pop back for a second, unless you wanted to talk about that Linda Nochlin thing. I saw you reading the article, but after—do so, please, and afterwards then let's try and catch you back to that period in New York and what happened next and et cetera, et cetera.

[00:01:03.22]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I was thinking about that when I was looking at the article, in the

sense that I think my work has come a lot from a trail that's prodded by my life, and things that work for a while in art suddenly don't ring true anymore, because something has happened in my life, or it's not—I can't use it as enough of a metaphor. So one of the crucial things between the point of the drafting technique, making a kind of minimalist drawing style and the stage where clouds are coming in, came from two main facts, one—or three actually. First, I met Rudy. We got married, and Thomas was born—my son—in 1964.

[00:02:04.23]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What year? You met Rudy when?

[00:02:05.67]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, about three years, three and a half before that. And we lived together—

[00:02:10.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You're talking about Rudy Burckhardt.

[00:02:10.68]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Rudy Burckhardt, right. And we decided to get a summer house in Maine, mostly because Jacob, Rudy's older son, was coming to spend the summers with Rudy from Rome. And it didn't seem such a great idea to be cooped up in a little loft.

[00:02:34.59]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So how old was Jacob at this time?

[00:02:39.01]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, 13, 14. So we found a cheap house in Maine with a wonderful little pond, and we bought it with a poet named Edwin Denby, a really remarkable person. So there were five different generations living together.

[00:03:02.42]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Was that with Red Grooms too?

[00:03:05.18]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The year after—

[00:03:06.32]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Talk about that a little bit.

[00:03:07.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Okay. Well, the first way we got to Maine was to go to spend it with Red Grooms and Mimi Gross the year that Thomas was born, '64. And we wanted to be nearby Alex Katz, because the year before we had spent two weeks staying down the road from Alex Katz. So Rudy and Red went to Maine to look for a summer place, and then it turned—they didn't find one, but actually Alex knew a real estate man who found something for us. So we just packed up the car and went. And that was an incredibly delightful, interesting summer.

[00:03:46.90]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Where were you then?

[00:03:47.95]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: In Lincolnville, Maine. And so we were watching Alex, who was going through a terrific breakthrough, interesting breakthrough into his big scale right then, his painting. And Rudy and Red made a film called *Lurk* based on Frankenstein's story, because when he went to look for the house, he was in the movies with Red one night, and he

happened to look over at Red with that movie light coming. And he said, "Hey, that looks like Frankenstein."

[00:04:19.84]

So there was all these things going on together in the house with Red and Mimi. Edwin Denby was staying right down the road. So he would come over for dinner. And so Jacob and Thomas, the two kids, and then Red and Mimi, both painting like wild, making the film. I was busy, of course with Thomas, as well as doing some painting, but painting started to change a lot because of the exuberance from Red and Mimi. That stiff drafting style just didn't seem to have any life anymore for me, although it had been breaking up a little before that.

[00:05:00.35]

But painting outside and dealing with effects of nature, which got to be very moving—I think that summer was incredibly foggy summer. And so my whole idea about space being able to be depicted up to a certain plane fell away, because here are all these aerial effects of things as you got away—a distance away, started fogging away and fading and making wonderful kinds of grays.

[00:05:36.22]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And this was—say again when you think this was around.

[00:05:40.75]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That was actually '64, was the year Tom was born, and that's the summer we spent with Red and Mimi.

[00:05:48.13]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's funny how the area of Maine was such a light bulb turned on for so many people, for Lois Dodd, too, and Alex Katz was, also. It seems to have been so instrumental in so many people's growth or opportunities or insights, or in many ways, he's just a continuing catalyst. Did you find him—

[00:06:13.42]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, absolutely. Oh, wonderful. Very generous with discussions, talking about materials and concepts and explorations, what you could paint, what you couldn't paint. Very practically it was great to watch him in the studio over the years because I saw how thoughtful his methods were for what he was learning to do for himself. He changed over the period of time, but he was quite systematic at setting up to do—to be able to do large paintings. He had the preliminary processes very carefully analyzed, how they would play into the larger thing and how you arranged your time so that you could make it possible to do something like paint a giant painting in three or four days to make it wet on wet.

[00:07:12.07]

And although I didn't need all that information right at the beginning, it gradually all became very important. But particularly, the idea that you didn't take a bohemian approach toward this if you're going to be really serious. You had to really build the painting by layers and by thinking about what's important for this stage, how you can do something as a study and very loosely to start to get your idea. But then at a certain point to make it strong, you had to deal with making the drawing very concise, and how the color was going to play into that.

Because Thomas was just born, I had changed my material to acrylic, because I didn't want to use oil painting around—and turpentine around a baby. And I had to develop very practical methods of getting mixtures of paint ready so that when I had time to paint, like, an hour nap for Thomas—if I had the paint mixed previous day and put it in a jar, a baby food jar, I might be able to really quickly get to the painting. As soon as I was really ready, I could just go ahead. And with acrylic, if I stopped on that color, then I could go on the next day without worrying about drying problems.

[00:08:42.96]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So that a certain efficiency of thinking, which played right into your

nature, I think.

[00:08:49.31]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It seems so. Yeah.

[00:08:50.25]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. It was, in a sense, the legacy of Katz.

[00:08:57.30]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:08:57.60]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Although I suspect you would have found a system by which you could work best.

[00:09:03.96]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I imagine, right. But it might have been taken a different trail. It might have been looser and more random for a longer period than it was because I met Katz.

[00:09:15.15]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So it's that direct a feed-in to your work—his influence there.

[00:09:26.25]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes, I mean, I was talking about all these other things with other people, Sylvia Mangold as well, and Janet Fish to some extent. But being able to observe him in the studio continually, and questioning every detail of how he did things focused it more, I think.

[00:09:49.87]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You felt free to ask?

[00:09:51.34]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, and he was great, really.

[00:09:55.36]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Had you known him before Rudy?

[00:09:57.39]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No.

[00:09:58.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You met him through Rudy and the Maine gang.

[00:10:03.19]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, right.

[00:10:04.75]

BARBARA SHIKLER: There were a lot of other people in your immediate community then. Do you want to talk about who you spent some time with other than these few you've mentioned?

[00:10:13.12]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, Ann Arnold and Ernie Briggs, Rackstraw Downes. Neil Welliver, who had taught at Yale, and I think brought quite a few people. A lot of those people had

come through Yale. Joe Fiore, Lois Dodd, those are the people we saw frequently. In New York, when we saw Alex, there was often—there might be some of the same people, but often very different painters from very different sides of the painting world—abstract painters, or Al Held, for example, Ronald Bladen. Alex was in touch with a very wide range of people, not just painters. Poets.

[00:11:24.47]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Who did you say?

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

Okay, it's going now. Let me just stop you.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:11:46.16]

Let's agree to talk about Maine, still, because it's very fertile, but it seems to me that your life in New York was also progressing, snowballing in many ways. Were you still inclined to be alone much of the time? Were you with people? What kind of life were you leading at around this time, just 'til the point you met Rudy, let's say, and if it underwent change there for you in any way that you wanted to talk about.

[00:12:21.74]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I think it went through a big change at the point that I met Rudy, because Rudy had an enormous circle of friends and acquaintances, who also were—most of them knew Edwin Denby. And it would be unusual to go to a performance of say music or a poetry reading and not meet somebody that knew either one of them, and get to talk to them. So I met poets like Frank O'Hara through Edwin Denby: Kenneth Koch, John Ashbery, and then a whole group of younger poets who read at Saint Mark's Church—Saint Mark's in the Bowery—Anne Waldman, Lewis Warsh—

[00:13:33.35]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Lewis?

[00:13:34.10]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Lewis Warsh, Michael Brownstein. Well, I can name you a hundred people.

[00:13:41.27]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Such a big change for you, no?

[00:13:46.16]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes. Yes. I felt also quite overwhelmed a lot of the times. I felt like I didn't have enough background to know how to take it in. I still feel that way. [Laughs.] And because my eye troubles were always there, to some extent, I found it hard to spend a lot of time reading, which just really would cause eye pain. And I found that if I could get a connection to the world through oral things—going to poetry readings, talking to people, having conversations with people, having them to dinner, and just talking to them, find out what their life was like, that filled in for that gap. That's still very important for me. And Rudy being such an open and generous person was very interested in all that, having people to dinner frequently.

[00:14:49.26]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Had you done that at all before?

[00:14:51.09]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Very little. I didn't really know people did that. My parents didn't do it, so—and also the experience of living with Edwin. So we spent every summer with him, and

saw him a great deal on the winter. And his sensitivity to people and his involvement in their work, the kind of time and thought he gave to, well, dancers, first of all, since he was a dance critic as well as a poet. It's just remarkable the kind of time he took to see painters' work.

[00:15:44.25]

The way that he would spend talking to them—I mean, it was very, very involving kinds of conversations, fascinating, not pretentious, just very open and going in all directions, and full of humor, but with great imagination. So I was very thrilled to know Edwin as well as Rudy because in a way they were similar. Edwin was more verbal, so his ideas were clearer as far as speaking about it, but then at the same time Rudy was making films, all kinds of films.

[00:16:34.57]

At first—when I first met him, I guess, it was about '61, he was making a film called *Millions and Business as Usual*. And it had three sections. It had landscape with Haydn music; landscape in the sense of quiet, cinematic landscape—the camera going across buildings, and then a busy city people scape full of people—even speeded up a bit; in the city in two sections; and then a third section which composited these two. They were kind of interacting.

[00:17:26.36]

And I was just so moved by the poetry in it—the quiet sections having such a gentle, quiet tone, and then the busy things being so full of liveliness. And here was somebody who was working with New York in a way that I was hoping to get to in my early years in New York, but it had a form for it. And although it was cinematic, and I couldn't use the same forms, it was inspiring enough to make me feel like I have to pay more attention. I have to find my way to do this. And also—

[00:18:08.84]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So even before you became really friendly, the effect of his work on your work was—

[00:18:14.86]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, the way I met him, first I saw a photograph of his. Then I saw a painting of his about two weeks later, and then I met him in an art drawing class—a drawing-from-the-model class. And I saw him a little bit there, but then mostly met him at a party at Nell Blaine's. That's where I really had a chance to spend time talking to him. And then I saw his films once I got to know him better.

[00:18:47.85]

But before I ever met him, I was drawn to his art, and it wasn't sophisticated art in the sense—well, the photograph, I think, is, but the painting—he has a, kind of, primitive art, painting style, but it has this weight and this delicate—no, what's the word? It's unpretentious and very absorbing. You're drawn to it because you don't have any barriers in some way. I was really touched by his painting.

[00:19:25.94]

BARBARA SHIKLER: No barriers to the—

[00:19:27.89]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: To the experience that he's talking about. I mean, there was a painting of Maine, and the descriptions of things were a bit primitive, let's say. The space was a bit primitive, but the conviction of the joy of what he was painting was there. Also, a sort of sadness in it, too, a delicate sadness which has been in a lot of his work. I was drawn to that.

[00:20:03.73]

And then when I met him and I saw his paintings—he was painting in New York on the streets, and then I saw this whole range of photographs, often from rooftops of New York, and having this incredible sense of the life of New York, and still dealing with these very real forms, like water towers and the roofs. He got an evocative thing into something very, very physical.

[00:20:34.78]

So in a way, he was doing something that I had wanted to do with my painting but hadn't gotten to do it yet. And he made New York his subject. And so I think the photographs gave me the idea of, well, why not just start painting images of New York—maybe just start with small glimpses, like, just a bit of something you can see out a window instead of trying to do a big spread. And that was very exciting. So I think it was really a great deal due to his work that I kind of turned back to that direction.

[00:21:16.07]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Everything you've ever done in your life is very interconnected and very affected and abides by—well, it's an interaction. Each is affected by the other, your art and your life.

[00:21:31.97]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, I'm sure.

[00:21:34.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, so here we are then at the point where, well, you've met Rudy, and you met him at a party. And it was sometime around '61.

[00:21:45.65]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: '61, I think.

[00:21:46.97]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And you married when?

[00:21:49.73]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: We married in '64.

[00:21:51.47]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And Thomas was born—

[00:21:53.09]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: In '64.

[00:21:53.96]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —in '64. And where did you live in the city?

[00:21:55.25]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: We lived on 29th Street, 44 West 29th Street, as opposed to 50 West 29th Street, where I live right now, and then Searsmont, Maine in the summers.

[00:22:13.96]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, that—you spent one summer living with Grooms and one summer with Denby?

[00:22:22.75]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, no. The summer we spent with Grooms, Denby was right down the road, but spent the evenings with us. And then the next summer Denby bought the

house with Rudy—our house, our present house. They split.

[00:22:43.16]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I see. Okay. Now, I have a little list of some dates. And I see that in 1962 you had a show at Kornblee. Was that your first show?

[00:22:59.57]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That was in a group show. That was the first time I showed anything. I'm sure I got into it because Rudy was in it, and Mrs. Kornblee looked at my work because of Rudy, and I remember the painting I was doing in '62 were of the plants in the flower market where we lived. We lived right around the corner from the wholesale flower market. So I was painting the windows that you would pass by, which would have a plethora of plants, and sometimes—

[00:23:41.29]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I love when they're all out on the street.

[00:23:43.30]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, now they are. Then, they didn't do that. But I know; it's great now.

[00:23:49.24]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I have a couple of things here. The next thing was your Ithaca College show. Well, let me ask you—that Kornblee experience, being in a group show. What was the theme of that show?

[00:24:03.82]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It might have been a landscape theme, or it might have just been an open show, an open group show with a lot of people. I mean, I only had one work, and that's what everybody else had.

[00:24:16.00]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It sounds as though it was—everything was happening, too, at such a speed at this point.

[00:24:21.94]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It didn't seem that way then, I mean.

[00:24:23.83]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It does now, doesn't it?

[00:24:24.79]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It does. Yes. Yes.

[00:24:31.99]

BARBARA SHIKLER: This one, it's funny. I have two lists of your shows, your group exhibition, and one thing has you starting in '65 at Swarthmore.

[00:24:46.73]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That was the first one person show.

[00:24:48.26]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, that's the one person. Yes, let's see. How did that come about?

[00:24:54.18]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, again, another artist who had gone to Yale, in that same class was Janet Fish. Harriet Shorr taught at Swarthmore. I think she had studied there previously, and she got a job in the art department, and started inviting friends to come and show at Swarthmore. So I showed paintings that I did the summer that I lived with Red and Mimi, maybe half a year beyond that.

[00:25:34.21]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Within a few years—well, within five years, you'd had two shows. And then the very next year, you had a show at Vassar in '68, a group show, rather.

[00:25:46.60]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. That was a group show of new realists.

[00:25:51.67]

BARBARA SHIKLER: "Realism Now?"

[00:25:52.60]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: "Realism Now." Yeah. I mean, I think, realists who were doing unconventional things up to that point. That was very exciting to be in that show, I mean, to be in a museum show, which collected what never to me seemed to be a movement. I mean, we never thought of ourselves, any of us, as being in a little group, because I just thought I related to Sylvia and maybe one or two other people in it. But in fact, there were a lot of other people working with—Lowell Nesbitt, as someone I met at that time, too, who was doing interesting bicycle paintings. Most people using objects that weren't normally painted, or setting them up in a way that avoided very atmospheric effects or romantic overtones.

[00:26:59.17]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Who else was in that show?

[00:27:00.43]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I'm trying to remember. John Button was in the show. He's an artist who interested me a lot, especially once I started trying to use New York as a subject again, because there he was doing what I ended up doing. I mean, I discovered it for myself, and then he was really doing it the same time.

[00:27:24.71]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Was Janet Fish in that show?

[00:27:26.82]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I'm not positive. Very likely, but I'm not sure.

[00:27:31.59]

BARBARA SHIKLER: When you look back on that period and realize who you were grouped with, you were grouped on a number of occasions with people that just said you didn't realize constituted a school. Do you see it now? Is there a connection that you can—

[00:27:49.44]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It was very short lived, really, I think, in the sense that it was a little new breakthrough into realism, because I think most of the people went on to do things with—if they were realists—went on to do things that expanded the scope of their thing. And then it couldn't have been contained anymore by any one little thing. I think the fact that at that Vassar show, there were people who were using non—making a reference to the object in a way that strengthened the object and the space around the object in a way that hadn't quite been seen before. And for some reason, it's not something maybe a lot of people continue to do without just keeping within a very narrow frame.

[00:28:47.95]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But where are the extensions that you can identify from that for you? How did it seep out into other areas?

[00:29:00.91]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, in my case, my work started to seep into other things because of what was happening in my life, and the experiences, the work situations, like going to Maine and working outside. Further on, it was being involved with Rudy's films, how a cinematic thought process could be involved and brought into painting, at least to a small extent. But gradually, I would find new things all along that would come out of my, kind of, narrow little life there but—

[00:29:45.04]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Which wasn't so narrow.

[00:29:47.52]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, well, daily it sort of seems that way. I don't know.

[00:29:52.93]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I heard the descriptions of how Lois Dodd, on her own, with herself in charge of her infant, found a studio and painted each day, took him back and forth. And I thought to myself, what a tremendous drive and courage.

[00:30:10.21]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

[00:30:10.69]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How extraordinary and how enterprising, too, that you would to mix up a batch of colors so you could quickly run and paint. And with all of that, it seems to have been a period during which you made a very definite step. It was a watershed period. And you didn't feel the presence of a child in your life to be a hindrance?

[00:30:40.27]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Occasionally, sure. Time-wise, yeah. There's frustrations about having a painting starting to cook in your head, and dying to get the chance to get the paint down, and knowing it might take five times longer for you to do it than the guy down the street who could paint full time or so; sure. But I found that the experience of having a child so rewarding in so many other ways, and actually even useful in terms of art in some ways, that it balanced out—maybe I feel it's like it was more positive than not having one, by far, just in terms of the art—not to speak to this person.

[00:31:26.14]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How so? That's so interesting to hear that.

[00:31:31.06]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, the number one thing I noticed was that having to sit for many hours nursing a baby made me start to plan my work in advance. Instead of just getting there and start fooling around, I would pre-imagine what I wanted to paint. I would sit there. Sometimes I could even set myself in a chair and have a view that I might think I might want to work from. And while I was rocking and nursing, "Hmm, I could make that gray, and I could make that pink." And think about, imagine what might be like, and try to imagine it in the simplest possible form so that when I went to do it, it wasn't so complicated that I could get lost.

[00:32:23.89]

Then another way I noticed was that the year that I—the works that I did when Red and Mimi

shared the house with us and, of course, that was the first year I was nursing a lot—the hours and hours—I reduced my work to very small format. And because I'd been looking at these little children's books of Beatrix Potter somebody gave us, I started trying to make work that made me feel like Beatrix Potter. [Laughs.]

[00:32:55.06]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, gosh.

[00:32:55.93]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Little window pictures, I mean, not deliberately narrative in any way—no little rabbits—but the kind of simple—I didn't have an outline, but I did have a kind of simplified form that I felt came from looking at Beatrix Potter. And then using my window, there was a lot of yellow windows in this house. So I often used the yellow window, and then I even used the red screen door and things like that as part of the image.

[00:33:24.36]

So I started getting a little more sense of play into the work, I mean, compared to those drafting things. And the main thing I think is that because a child is changing so continually as they're growing, you just keep trying to keep abreast of that. And the idea of change isn't so frightening anymore. [Laughs.]

[00:33:50.93]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah, also sounds as though humor came galloping in at a sudden fast clip.

[00:33:58.55]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Oh, absolutely. Well, Red Grooms—main influence there. And actually in '61 we started to make a film with Red Grooms—we met Red right after I met Rudy—called *Shoot the Moon*, in which I was the costume maker. We thought we were just going to make this movie for a weekend, but it turned out to take a year. So the first—getting this the spirit of Red was to, "Oh, don't spend a lot of time thinking about it; just go ahead and do it, and you'll see what'll happen."

[00:34:34.68]

So I just started making these costumes out of paper and painting them. It was black and white, so we didn't have to worry about color. So I just started painting these black and white wild costumes, and making them stick out to be very fat. And he really encouraged my very buried sense of humor about people as ludicrous, or full of fun.

[00:35:01.58]

BARBARA SHIKLER: The zany and the unexpected.

[00:35:05.36]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:35:05.63]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's a funny, kind of isometric exercise for you, the two sides that were now in play is the—in time, very soon you began to plan and create a structure for yourself from which you could develop and hang the painting on, so to speak. And on the other hand, you have him saying, "Just let go, just splash out."

[00:35:30.23]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, right, exactly. It was sometimes confusing because I didn't know which side to give precedence to.

[00:35:36.53]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's almost as though you were drawing from both sides of the brain, as it were.

[00:35:41.93]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Well, and to make the movie—I mean the whole process of filmmaking is so fun in the way that Rudy and Red were doing it, anyway. There was so many things to help with: make sets, just watch the filming, have ideas about the cutting, quick question the story and so forth. I mean, Red's method at that time and probably still is very encompassing—anybody who's working on it has chance to say whatever they want—

[00:36:14.60]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's great.

[00:36:15.49]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And he'll listen, and likes the collaborative process so much. I mean, I'd never really been involved in collaborative things. So suddenly here is this chance to do things with other people and give up the idea of the ego of your own style. I mean since you really work in Red's style, which is quite open-ended, you could do things that would just about fit as long as they weren't too tight. So that was very important to me because it gave me a chance to let go of a lot of things, and made the whole relationship with Rudy terrific.

[00:36:57.10]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Sounds like a wonderful time, wonderful time. You were so lucky to have that exposure.

[00:37:05.00]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:37:05.18]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I guess it's intriguing to imagine what your life might have been like had you gone to live in a different city.

[00:37:11.84]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Oh, yeah. Sure. I could have married my boyfriend from art school and gone to live in Woodstock, which is where he lived. And God, it would have been dismal, I think. I think so.

[00:37:26.89]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You might not have stuck it out.

[00:37:28.51]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I might not have—I could see very easily that I could have given up art as too frustrating or too difficult, with a difficult life.

[00:37:40.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Although it's a specious experiment here even in speculation, because you weren't the sort of person to do something like that. You didn't do it. [They laugh.] Thank heavens that you didn't.

[00:37:59.84]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:37:59.96]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You want to take a pause?

[00:38:00.92]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Okay.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:38:04.20]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You were talking about how much fun it was to be with Mimi and Red. Like a big family.

[00:38:08.49]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, was like—it was like being in a big family but only the positive aspects of being with a big family [laughs], a few, sometimes—

[00:38:16.86]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You didn't have to rise above and look down.

[00:38:19.53]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. That's right. You could be right wallowing in it and enjoy it. You didn't—you might have a few minor problems once in a while about getting enough food together for everybody if they all happen to be at your house, and you sort of, scramble to throw something together, but you could do it with all kinds of lenient attitudes. You didn't have to be fussy about it, whereas my own family—we had some good times, but it rarely seemed to get to that level of enjoyment.

[00:38:51.54]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You think of Red Grooms, the very two words of his name make you think of some kind of rollicking, something in motion all the time, and merriment beyond glee.

[00:39:03.43]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah.

[00:39:04.41]

ARBARA SHIKLER: Summer camp at its best. The trick, I suppose, in that sort of thing is extending the spirit of that into your winter life because that's a summer spirit that he's got, isn't it?

[00:39:16.23]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. Yeah.

[00:39:18.21]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, you seem to have done.

[00:39:21.00]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I hope I have. I've tried.

[00:39:24.99]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What you've described as your work doesn't even begin to touch upon what we know of as the main body of your work. I guess—well, I'm not I'm not going to tell you when it was, but you tell me at what point you began to exploit all of those potential directions within yourself, and the work began to look as it did—does.

[00:40:04.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Hmm.

[00:40:05.44]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You turned a corner, certainly. That summer was a big corner, all those summers between Grooms and Katz. And then suddenly the work was not "caught moment." It became "caught motion," as we said. I don't know if we said it on tape, but how did it happen?

[00:40:31.31]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think the experience of having a child who is changing continually and has very definite needs that you have to be accommodating to, understanding about, makes you realize how wide a nature you need, and that you don't close down to just a couple of attitudes. It's not good for the child or for yourself, especially for yourself.

[00:41:14.44]

I don't know if there are certain works that seem to show all the different things coming together at once, maybe the one—the "Second Avenue and 12th Street" suggests a lot of them because there is such a distinction between the motion of the cloud and the upright forms of the streetlight, but there are a lot of works before and slightly after I think that where I was beginning to be pleased with the poetry of the work, and pleased that it connected to my life so much, that this seemed to be really metaphors for my life. And the change of space between me and the object kept extending.

[00:42:16.16]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What do you mean? What do you mean change of space between you and the object?

[00:42:20.42]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, in '64 or '65—I think, '65, I did some paintings of my son's high-chair against the gray floor. And the subject of the painting is really the shadow of the chair, part of the chair. You can't even see all the chair in the painting, but you can see a shape of the chair under the chair. It's called "Under Space." And how close you are to the chair in the floor is pertinent because you're probably just two feet away. And that space seemed to me about the space that normally I was with the child, taking care of a baby a year or two old. You're, kind of, always within arm's reach, or you're thinking about being within arm's reach.

[00:43:17.53]

And then as he started to get older, like, once he started to walk, that started to extend a few feet more, and then I started painting paintings like the "James Bond Car" painting. Although that—yes, it's a little later. It's a few feet further away, and there are more things in it that are relating back to each other rather than you to the few simple objects. It's diagonals going back and forth across the painting, the spaces between things and how things look on this floor, which is an aerial view.

[00:43:59.49]

Then when we moved to Maine, and after Tom was old enough to be outside a lot, or I was able to be outside not watching him all the time—like, he might be playing in a sandbox or something and I could not necessarily paint, but I could be looking at things, I started to feel that this space was getting to be 10 or 12 feet away, or 20 feet away. And one year, I remember starting to paint telephone poles and clouds or trees next to them.

[00:44:37.35]

I just happened to pick this subject as an odd object that had its upright stability like that, other kinds of pipes and things, and yet all these random things connected into it. The next year, I believe, it became just the clouds. I was looking at corners of buildings, but then the clouds quite far beyond the space just kept getting extended. And then at one point, there were no buildings. There were just the clouds. And then a few years later I was in an airplane, and I started painting the clouds from the airplane because it was a very convenient place to paint from. It was a good little studio. You had a little shelf. And if I had watercolors with me, I could just start work.

[00:45:31.79]

Then one day the clouds weren't there. And so the space between me and the clouds extended way, way out, until there was this very distant landscape really far away. And it wasn't frightening anymore. It would have been frightening to paint it a few years before that, but I felt ready for that kind of space. It was a very encompassing space in which I was in, but the scale of things being so tiny, yet making up—being little particles in a vast enclosure, seem very exciting. And it all seems related to my life.

[00:46:29.58]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's fascinating the way it is. It's also fascinating the way—in a sense, you were cushioned from the shock of space by the clouds and your experience with the clouds, I mean, literally. And also you were very contained in your space. And also, it was your understanding that made the distance vast, but what you saw was that pattern, which didn't matter how far away it was. It was what you chose to see.

[00:46:56.96]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah

[00:46:58.53]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Let's stop side two.

[END OF TRACK AAA_ jacque89_4613_m]

[00:00:05.73]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Tuesday, October 24, 1989. I'm with Yvonne Jacquette at her studio at 28 West 38th Street in New York City. Hi.

[00:00:17.31]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Hi.

[00:00:18.18]

BARBARA SHIKLER: We are standing in the midst of the studio, surrounded by the work, terrific work. Two paintings begun this summer—begun actually before this summer, but worked on this summer. Would you like to describe them? They're—whatever you want to describe about them. And if you leave anything out, I'll—

[00:00:39.28]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: You can add the rest.

[00:00:40.11]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —holler, right.

[00:00:42.42]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, they're—these two are both taking the theme of the airplane wing as you're sitting aside it in a jet plane. So it's got a—probably a 727-type wing. And both of these so far are the right wing. In fact, the first one is titled "The Right Wing," partly because a lot of the land below is conservative country of San Diego, and with lots of tract houses, adobe-colored tract houses seen from above, spreading out in big patterns. And this also has a bit of an industrial section south of San Francisco, which was part of the same flight that I saw the image of—where I was flying to San Diego.

So that random section in the foreground of South San Francisco is—has a little bit of wilder nature of kind of swampy sections and some little—extra little ponds. There's a river that curls through around some of the tract houses. But there's some factories. And I think it's a shopping mall, because there's two buildings that look like two pianos facing each other, and right next to that, two gas tanks in the parking lot. And there's an edge of the coast, a bit of waves at the shoreline.

[00:02:12.21]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What's the size of the painting?

[00:02:14.82]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I believe it's about 96 by 80 inches high. It's a horizontal.

[00:02:24.06]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Do you have a name in mind so that in the future—

[00:02:27.39]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, this one is the—

[00:02:27.96]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —if we want to refer to it. Oh, it is "The Right Wing."

[00:02:29.73]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: "The Right Wing."

[00:02:30.03]

BARBARA SHIKLER: For heaven's sakes, you just told me that.

[00:02:31.98]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I'm planning some "Left Wings" this year. [They laugh.]

[00:02:33.72]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I'd be interested in seeing, what will they be, destroyed nuclear installations? [They laugh.] What did you have in mind for it when you began? If you could describe what appears to me to be just a perfect illustration of space being upended, as we spoke before, my comment was that the idea of painting from a plane seems to almost provide that perfect effect, that—of upending space that you're reaching for. So talk about that a little bit, how it first hit you, what you're planning for it, and why, et cetera, et cetera.

[00:03:15.35]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I think the way I got to do this was the paintings I did about three years ago of Times Square had big signs at one side of each image. And there was a discrepancy in the size of the small objects on the street and then these big signs, big neon signs. And someone came along and said, "Oh, those big signs are vectors into the space." So that sort of stuck in my mind.

[00:03:44.75]

And when I got on a plane and got put in the seat, not by choice, but because I was flying standby and this was the only seat available, it suddenly struck me that, okay, the wing is the vector into the space. And something that—ever since I've been flying for these 20 years or so, I've been trying to get a way to give you more of the experience of the plane itself. And so for a long time, I was doing—putting in a section of the window, the curved window. But it doesn't really work when you've got an enormous painting. You have this enormous window. So I only was stuck with a certain size that I could use that idea.

[00:04:26.89]

So now I feel relieved that I've got some way to have this kind of mediator between me sitting there and then the wing, which establishes where I'm sitting, and then the space below. And the part that's really fascinating in seeing is how something below, how something in the landscape below makes a dialogue with the wing, something more particular than something looking kind of random. When I feel there's some kind of special correspondence or special opposition, or something, then I get excited about it. And then I have to try to draw both the light in the wing and the landscape really quickly.

[00:05:12.51]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So you have to try and capture that moment—

[00:05:16.20]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right when I feel it, yes.

[00:05:17.36]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —which lasts—well, literally lasts for seconds.

[00:05:20.33]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And it lasts even less than it actually lasts, because the wing is in the way—

[00:05:24.52]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, of course.

[00:05:26.38]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —of the land—of seeing the part of the landscape that I might want to have, say, to the left of the wing, is getting covered. As I discover what's going to look good on the right of the wing, I can't even see what's on the left of the wing anymore. That makes a little bit of a complication.

[00:05:40.13]

BARBARA SHIKLER: True. How then do you solve that? Do you go back again? It costs a heck of a lot if you keep buying tickets.

[00:05:48.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. I didn't in this circumstance. But I had taken a lot of photographs, which gave me some clues of what I could invent to look right there. I mean, there's a lot of invention in this painting. There's probably no real place that really looks like this, especially since the foreground is San Francisco. And the main thrust up behind is really the feeling of San Diego.

[00:06:12.84]

But now, I've been going back and forth in jets along the eastern seaboard, in the shuttle jets. And I'm beginning to repeat some of the same routes. And so sometimes I might see something on the next trip that I—or I might have seen something on this past trip that I look for on the next trip. I'm not quite sure whether the routes are exactly over the same thing. But I'm counting that they might be close enough, especially when we get near the landing sites.

[00:06:45.33]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You spoke a little earlier off tape about your plans for the top of the painting, where it's darker, and where the settlements, the houses are fewer in number. Do you—you spoke about having to make a decision about whether and how to darken—how to give it greater weight. Would you talk about that, and why?

[00:07:08.33]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think because it's the first one I had the light on the wing and the light on the land or the colors in the land too close. And they seem to be jammed together still, even though the overlap of the wing obviously gives you one clue that you're covering—you're on top of something. But slowly, I've been adding more value, a deeper value in the foliage, the trees and the kind of woods areas in between the housing tracts.

[00:07:41.96]

I've gone—I've done this three or four times. I've made them slightly darker, and think I'm

finished. And then three weeks later, I look at it again and say, no, it could go even darker. And what I do then is to put some charcoal over the areas that are—that I think I want to see darker. And that gives me an idea of the value, even though not the color. So right now, you're seeing some blackened-out sections that—

[00:08:07.44]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh. That's interesting.

[00:08:08.46]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —the color might become a little bit close to in some places. I don't even mind what the black does. But it won't be the same color all over. I mean, I can't just put black paint over there like I did black charcoal, because charcoal is very transparent. It really kind of—

[00:08:23.55]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And you can wipe it away if you're painting this dry.

[00:08:25.91]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I can wipe it right off. Yeah, see, whatever I have there will come off before I paint it. But it's just a fast way to—

[00:08:31.50]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So let's walk little closer, if we can, just for a moment and take a peek. So what I'm looking here is an overlay of—oh, I see. It is charcoal. [Laughs.]

[00:08:41.76]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: There is charcoal.

[00:08:42.72]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah, some of it is—oh, yes, I see what you've done. Isn't that interesting. And what's under it, of course, is oil on canvas.

[00:08:51.00]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, and that's quite dry now. So—

[00:08:52.71]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What do you use as a medium?

[00:08:54.51]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: In this one, I didn't use anything but the paint and a little turpentine because I was so uncertain about everything. I thought it was easier to work into a painting that didn't have any varnish or glazing quality yet to know what I want. But, well, I'll plan to varnish it with a spray gun after it's done so that it'll have a slight gloss in the end.

[00:09:24.63]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I see. You wouldn't do it in between? No, you don't want that.

[00:09:29.46]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, I want to—

[00:09:30.06]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It would spoil the absorbency, I suppose.

[00:09:31.56]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, right. Yeah, I want to wait 'til everything is finished. And then we'll have a very even coat that you won't even really be aware of.

[00:09:36.90]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you stretch this canvas?

[00:09:38.34]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:09:39.02]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yourself?

[00:09:40.08]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, I had an assistant.

[00:09:41.52]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, I meant you didn't—

[00:09:42.95]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. I did, but I painted—

[00:09:44.13]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Tell me the process, how—

[00:09:45.12]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I painted it on the wall in Maine, and then rolled it up and brought it back and stretched it here.

[00:09:50.70]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You hadn't—well, are you saying that when it was on the wall it hadn't been stretched?

[00:09:55.98]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. It just was tacked on, like the one on the other wall here. You see, there's—

[00:10:00.12]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I see.

[00:10:00.49]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: There's thumbtacks on the wall like a wall board.

[00:10:04.41]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Let's talk about the kind of canvas, then, just for a moment and what you do to prepare your canvas and—so that—what the processes are, let's say, from the naked canvas. What do you use?

[00:10:17.73]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I'm using a pre-primed linen canvas, pre-primed just because it saves me time. But then I single prime. So what I do right after that is add another layer of a light value color that corresponds to the study that I'm going to paint from so that the color of the paper that I used, which was a kind of a slightly grayish off-white gray—

[00:10:49.62]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You mean for the pastel studies. You're now talking about that paper.

[00:10:52.77]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: For the pastel study. Yeah. I intended to have this color on this canvas. And I mixed the color and tried it out on a piece of paper, and yellow oil made the paper seem like I had the right color. And later, when I actually—here's a little swatch. And I thought—this is what I thought I'd mixed. But actually, what I had was this. When it got on the canvas, it only tinted the canvas a slight amount, not enough to give me really what I wanted. And I didn't actually discover it until I was ready to start to paint. I kept thinking, "Why doesn't it look like something has happened?" So I ended up painting that color—well, making a darker version of that and putting it in on some places before painting the next color.

[00:11:42.94]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, the darker version that you just pointed to on that little swatch of canvas you've got, which looks really sort of like an umbered glaze in there, what in fact is it?

[00:11:54.07]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's white paint with some tints in it. It's probably a little yellow, a little tiny bit of red, and a little tiny bit of blue.

[00:12:00.49]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Okay. And what we're looking at then is another painting which hasn't yet been stretched and isn't as complete as the one that we've been talking about called" The Right Wing." This one is 79 and a half by 66.

[00:12:15.78]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right.

[00:12:16.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And it's another reactionary wing, is it?

[00:12:20.77]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I don't know. I'll probably call it "The Right Wing." This one's actually going down to Washington, D.C, so I'm not quite sure if I want to get into that kind of political statement. [They laugh.]

[00:12:31.00]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You'd have to have two wings, actually if it's the American landscape, I think.

[00:12:35.71]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. This one was—

[00:12:37.27]

BARBARA SHIKLER: This is far less complete.

[00:12:38.86]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah. Yeah, this is just started, actually. This is only about a week and a half into the painting. And it's got a lot of wet-in-wet painting. So I'm actually using a medium right from the beginning now because I know that I want a lot of blending this time. This time, I'm trying a medium called Liquin. It's an alkyd medium, which you dissolve with turps. And it's got a little stand oil in it. I mean, what it's made of is really just stand oil and dissolved in turps.

[00:13:14.54]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I see.

[00:13:15.41]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And I think it gives me the possibility of working on it for a while before it gets too shiny. I can probably go two or three coats before the—any kind of shininess—

[00:13:26.03]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What are the proportions you use?

[00:13:27.98]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: One third of the medium to two-thirds of the turpentine.

[00:13:31.10]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Of the turp, so it stays pretty dry.

[00:13:33.61]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's still kind of thinned out.

[00:13:36.92]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What is the rule? I never remember which way it goes, fat over lean or lean over fat, you may or may not?

[00:13:43.19]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, it's fat over lean.

[00:13:46.25]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Is what you may do? In other words, you start—

[00:13:48.41]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, in other words, I'm starting lean. This one is so lean I haven't got any fat in it yet. [Laughs.]

[00:13:52.10]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You mean the first "Right Wing?"

[00:13:54.02]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The first one, right.

[00:13:54.65]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:13:55.58]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And that's why it looks so matte. This one is slightly less matte when you look at it from the side.

[00:14:01.98]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. It has a gloss, a sort of a semi-gloss, if you will.

[00:14:06.51]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. But this one, I may not build up as many layers, because I'm getting some of the stuff that I want right away in the—like in this water here. It's done with

rags and fan-shaped brushes. And it's not the kind of thing you can just keep painting over and over. You're going to lose the variety of color going in there.

[00:14:27.03]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What's interesting here is that the texture of your water is—well, if you have to describe it without the visual aid of somebody being able to look at it, you would say it's more drawn from a kind of a Pollock technique of dealing with the water. But on "The Right Wing" that you have behind us, the water is done in a far more Impressionist way.

[00:14:50.46]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Sort of patches, almost.

[00:14:52.02]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, in patches. Did—

[00:14:54.18]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That was accidental. I originally had planned to have it much more flat and smooth. And—but I didn't feel I had the right color when I started to do that. So I actually took some acetate and put it down over the water area and just put some patches of color to try to get an idea of which—what value I wanted. And the patchiness showed up there. So then I transferred it onto the canvas. I had no idea that it would work.

[00:15:25.34]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It works very well, actually.

[00:15:26.84]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But it seems to, because the little tract houses are, in a way, like little patches, too. The scale of the patches in the water are similar to the houses.

[00:15:35.50]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Also, there's a—there is that—it evokes that extraordinary thing that happens when you look at water that's been lit, and dapples.

[00:15:46.43]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Right.

[00:15:47.42]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And it has a lot of that excitement of the light coming and playing from under it.

[00:15:53.48]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Well, see the ground color—this one has a yellowy-green ground color. And you can see quite a bit of it. On the far right of the water, the paint is getting thinner there and less patchy. And it's allowing more of the ground color to come through, which gives you that feeling of the light—light hitting water.

[00:16:10.83]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Absolutely. Also, because of what you've got, because of the vector wing and because of the roads winding up to that top, you've got—and the curve of the houses, there's a sense that you're being pulled. You're being pulled and turned at the same time. It's actually almost a physical feeling that I'm getting when I look at it, which is very exciting. Also, that—what you've done with the wing, there's a very careful drawing. For some reason, it's just put me in mind of your story of having worked on the—

[00:16:53.21]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Architectural drafting, right, or the—

[00:16:55.05]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, and the helicopter drawings.

[00:16:57.00]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And the helicopter wing things, right.

[00:16:57.96]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Exactly. And the accuracy, or the feeling of accuracy that's transmitted, and the feeling of the plane, it's very satisfying. It's as though you've provided the—a contrast that is almost touchable, spatially. Let me pause for a moment, if I may. And—

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:17:23.55]

Talk to me about what you were just going to say about this painting. I asked you if you'd lost a great deal of weight, which you—

[00:17:29.10]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, I think I've lost about ten or twelve pounds, which on me shows up a lot. But this painting, this first one of this sort, I felt it was a very exciting idea. I mean, just when I got the drawing out, it just—the wing against the landscape, it looked so exciting. But all the way through, I kept thinking, I'm not meeting the challenge of this terrific idea. And I'd worry, I'd worry, I'd worry. I'd wake up in the morning too early and say, "How am I going to get it today?"

[00:17:56.70]

And I'd go in there, and I'd work in the studio. And I'd be so anxious. So for the—for about a month, I really lost my appetite. And I kept trying to eat. Now, I have a terrific appetite. I'm not worried about that painting anymore. But I lost this weight, and I can't seem to get it turned around so that I'm going to put on weight. Of course, I do a lot of exercise to be able to keep working.

[00:18:18.50]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Actually, it's—

[00:18:19.56]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So maybe I work it off too fast.

[00:18:20.75]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —that's terrific. There's nothing objectionable that I can see about it.

[00:18:23.95]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, no, except that I get nervous that I should have a certain weight to keep from getting sick or something. But I have a lot of energy, so—

[00:18:30.85]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, I think that it's—what's really very interesting here is the way you were dissatisfied and that you're not now. What changed it for you?

[00:18:41.92]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I think I'm much closer to what I wanted now. I mean, this has many little layers and layers and adjustments, and thinking a lot about, what is this experience about? And part of it was trying to make the wing more precise in the drawing—it was a little bit wobbly for a while—and more silvery, more different than the landscape, without making it all the same, like a light silvery color. I've got all these different slight patches of pale-ish, pinkish white and light blue and brown, a tan color, because that's all

about catching the light in that wing. And it's really much more color than you really might see looking at the wing. But I want this flash of—effect of multicolored light.

[00:19:35.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Almost as though—it seems to me that by going further than the truth, you find the truth—

[00:19:41.50]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's—yeah.

[00:19:42.31]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —about the thing.

[00:19:42.93]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, that's what I'm trying to do. On the second wing, I've simplified it a little bit. And it's not finished yet. But I don't think I'll have so many different colors. It'll be mostly this kind of pale blue. And now I have these sections to paint that will need some—a slight volume. There's a slight curve in some of these. They're like pontoons that come down. And in both of these, the position of the wing is when you're coming close to landing so that the brakes, in a sense, are down. They're trying to stop the air. And I found when I saw that in the plane, that's really where I got excited because the first time I drew a wing, actually it was a couple of years ago, I just got that drawing back after being away for a long time, and I was amazed. It looks like a boomerang. See the one up there on the right?

[00:20:39.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, quite so. Yes, it does.

[00:20:39.95]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And I don't think I'd even noticed the flaps going up and down at that point. I was so unused to drawing it.

[00:20:46.37]

BARBARA SHIKLER: When was that? Now, that's a pastel. That's one of the pastel studies.

[00:20:50.48]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Now, that's one—that was done about I guess at least two years ago, again, when I got on a plane and couldn't get the seat I wanted away from the wing. And I sort of did this drawing and kept thinking, well, this doesn't really work. But I'll keep it around. Maybe I'll get ideas from it eventually. And sometimes, that—

[00:21:10.46]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's true.

[00:21:11.70]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —you just stick with it. You don't get it right away. It's okay.

[00:21:15.18]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What you've done, it seems to me, looking at the two on the right, the top one and the bottom one, the top wing being a darker gray, the bottom one being lighter, but both of those, in some funny way, even though they're dominant, they occupy if not negative space, then almost the same kind of—well, especially the bottom one. The bottom one is almost on a par with what's behind it and around it. The top one almost—that wing almost goes back, and everything else comes forward, whereas here, you have—you've really used the wing differently. In a sense, that's a spatial thing that tells you something different about what your focus was.

[00:22:00.81]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:22:01.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You may have had in mind the same idea of making use of the wing. But here, what you've done is create a different set of relationships, I think, very different, maybe because it's so big. Do you find that that—when you work large—

[00:22:20.58]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah. [Inaudible.]

[00:22:22.06]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You feel that surprises take place?

[00:22:23.77]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah, really. A lot of things that work fine in a little pastel, just indications of things, you've got to be much more clear-headed about what—how those things relate to other things as well as, say, the wing idea, too. And I mean, I started off with this landscape. Although I made a drawing from another drawing that was done on a plane, I didn't ask myself to be too precise about all those buildings in the landscape, but gradually, I found myself becoming so. I kind of kept them as loose as I could, because I thought the looseness would increase the feeling of that being another plane. It was a little bit maybe even feeling out of focus. And I also wanted to get a sense of the speed, of the motion of the wing passing by. So a certain area, I've deliberately made these buildings with slashes of color on them to give you a feeling of more motion.

[00:23:28.16]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. The right middle ground there.

[00:23:31.85]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, and I've tipped the Earth unconsciously. I didn't really intend it. I mean, I didn't think I was intending it when I even did the first drawing. It just sort of happened. It's not in my original drawing very much. There was a little bit of a tilt on the landscape, but t not this big slight curve.

[00:23:52.02]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And then do you say that this was the result of the demands of the size?

[00:23:58.77]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, I think so.

[00:24:01.35]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So it wasn't so much the attention to the realism of each of the houses. It was that in order to get the effect you wanted, you had to do more, as it were.

[00:24:14.92]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:24:15.84]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Is that right?

[00:24:16.57]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I had to think about things in a—from a more relativistic viewpoint. I think I had to keep thinking, how does this affect that over there? This—if I put this patch of houses here, how is that going to affect the space of way up there?

[00:24:34.99]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:24:36.79]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I just felt like I had to continually think about all of it, not in individual sections.

[00:24:45.54]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, but as a large thing. It seems to me extremely successful. There's so much attention paid by the critics to the large work you did for the building in Bangor. Forgot the name.

[00:25:00.97]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's called "Autumn Expansion."

[00:25:02.76]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Thank you. "Autumn Expansion," which I gather your husband did a documentary watching you do.

[00:25:08.95]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:25:10.81]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What was the size of that? Just—let's talk a little bit about size because you are increasingly ambitious, I think, as I look, except that that took place when in when, '81?

[00:25:24.69]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, yeah, that's '81. And that was a response to a particular room. It was a room probably about 50 feet long. And I had a wall of about 30, 31 feet. And I didn't think painting a small painting would work. [Laughs.]

[00:25:41.46]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Not quite.

[00:25:42.15]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It was also a very dark room, which I didn't even learn—I accepted the commission before I actually looked at the site. And I was shocked that it was a dark room. And it was a shock only because at that point I had just started doing night paintings. And I was very excited about doing night paintings. And I knew a night painting was the worst idea for that room. So I did an autumn—a spread of autumn foliage in Maine close to our house. So I could use a lot of golds and yellows and oranges. And—

[00:26:13.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Was that the largest thing you had worked on at that time? I don't—

[00:26:16.93]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, it's still the largest thing I've done.

[00:26:18.28]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It is?

[00:26:19.09]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, actually, no, I've done a triptych. I haven't put together the

inches for all three of the new triptych, but I think that one was bigger. I think so, because that was a triptych as well.

[00:26:30.52]

BARBARA SHIKLER: The "Autumn Landscape."

[00:26:31.54]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: "Autumn Landscape," yeah. That was—yeah, it adds up to about 27 feet with all three panels.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:26:40.36]

Well, I wanted to remind Barbara of a body of work that I felt very strongly about. It's really a period of about ten or twelve years. And I call it all "The Night Paintings." There's a few dusk paintings thrown in there. But it started off with a view of the East River, a painting called "East River at Night," that was like all—usually, my new changes have to do with some kind of accident, life accident. In that case, it was a friend, Edwin Denby, who was very ill and was in University Hospital, which is on the East River. And I was very involved in his illness and spending a lot of time in the hospital with him. And I really didn't think he would survive that illness.

[00:27:34.81]

And he kept saying when I'd go in to see him, "I wish you'd stay home and work." And I'd say, "I'd really rather be here." And so I thought I would make him feel better by bringing a drawing pad. And we could sit and talk, and I could draw. And at first, I was just very aimless about it. And in fact, I started off seeing him in the daytime a lot. And then I started going in the evening, so I could work in the day. And I started drawing in the evening, the same view I'd started during the day. And I just did it as that thing to be there.

But later, I started looking at it. After he survived that illness and was out of the hospital, I started working on the drawing. And it just totally drew me into it, and I couldn't stop working on it. And it almost seemed to have some kind of magical power of, if I work on this and this drawing really develops, maybe this will help him get better. I mean, I know it's silly. But [laughs] artists do things like that sometimes.

[00:28:38.69]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, surely. It's that magical—that belief in one's own magic, perhaps. Now, that was a view of the highway and the river?

[00:28:46.88]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes, it had the East River Drive. And it had a Pepsi-Cola sign. And it had a Con Edison plant and a lot of smoke, a lot of steam, I guess, from Con Edison. And so I just put the drawing aside and went on with my usual daytime paintings and didn't really know what to do with it, but just sort of liked it. And what catalyzed me into painting it was that a curator from the Metropolitan Museum came and wanted the drawing. I was showing him all my daytime work. And he kept saying, "Well, I like that one over there." And I said, "Oh, no, I can't sell that. I mean, that's just something personal, you know?" And he said, "Well, you could borrow it back if you'd like to do a painting from it." So I sort of—[laughs].

[00:29:31.98]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How things happen—fascinating.

[00:29:33.72]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So it sort of made me do it. And the first night painting, it was kind of frightening to do it because I had no way of knowing how to translate all this color into oil paint that would still stay rich and beautiful as it looks when it's wet when it dries. Oil—dark colors really flatten out very much.

[00:29:54.00]

And so I had to invent a new way of painting, which is to put medium in some of the strokes, a lot of medium, with a lot of varnish and stand oil and very little turpentine. And then other strokes were painted with the thin—a thin layer of the varnish, so that those strokes would dry rather matte. And I got this kind of alternating stroke technique, which in that painting worked wonderfully because it was—most of the painting was the river. And it was very dark. And there was a small barge with only two little lights on it, which you almost couldn't see. But because just by changing the stroke and the shine in the stroke, you could pick it out enough that you could almost sense it, rather than see it.

[00:30:40.86]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How interesting. And it relates so much to some of the—what you learned in textile design, doesn't it, in a way?

[00:30:47.86]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I guess you'd say so, because the warp and the woof always look different, the way the light hits—

[00:30:54.21]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And when you learn to make the design within—the drawing within the fabric, et cetera.

[00:30:58.77]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Yeah, that's true. And it gave me a chance to play with all different kinds of paint strokes. I had to be more emphatic than I had been painting before about each individual stroke. But by this point, I was using pastel a great deal. And my pastel strokes, I found, had to be very emphatic in airplanes. I mean, I didn't have time to fuss and smoosh them together or get a nice, smooth texture. So it suited the way I was making my studies. And then I just adapted it for various kinds of night paintings. City paintings that didn't have water, I still would use this to some extent, maybe modifying it a bit.

[00:31:43.39]

So for about ten years, I was very happy painting because I found that the night color was much more exciting in my work than my daytime paintings had been. It gave me a chance to get into bright reds and bright blues and yellows, not in big areas but small enough areas so that they would really glow against the surrounding darkness. And then it gave me a chance to explore the kind of reflected lights that come up from the bottom of the street. When you're looking from way above, looking down into a street, you see that the sides of the buildings surrounding the street gradually change color. They're never the same color at the top and the bottom, especially when there's neon at the bottom and—

[00:32:28.50]

BARBARA SHIKLER: True. Actually, the Ashcan fellows did that, to some extent, in their own —

[00:32:32.23]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. Right, there's some John Sloan paintings that—

[00:32:35.04]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, I was just going to—

[00:32:36.36]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, and of course, here I had this slight connection with John Sloan from a teacher I had at—in high school. I think we—did I tell you about that?

[00:32:42.45]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Roché? Was—

[00:32:43.23]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Roché, right, yeah, although—

[00:32:45.29]

BARBARA SHIKLER: But you didn't mention his connection with Sloan. But—

[00:32:48.65]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: He had studied with Sloan.

[00:32:50.37]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Had he?

[00:32:51.00]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, although I had just completely forgotten about him for years. And later, I thought, oh, yeah, there's this connection. So then I went to other cities quite a bit. I got commissions to go to Washington, D.C., to San Francisco, and to Minneapolis to do night paintings. And that was so much fun.

[00:33:13.64]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I bet it was. What years are we talking about in that story? You did mention it, but let's anchor it.

[00:33:18.16]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, well, let's say from '70—wait a minute.

[00:33:23.92]

BARBARA SHIKLER: '76?

[00:33:25.23]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, I'd say starting around '80—1980, till about '86 or '87 that go in and out of this period. I also was—had gotten very interested in doing nuclear plants, because of one in Maine that I had been on a committee to help get stopped. And I started flying over that one. And then I went to Three Mile Island and flew over that famous one.

[00:33:53.34]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I hate to interrupt your flow of memory. But when you say you flew over it, you flew over—did you hire a plane in order to fly?

[00:34:01.11]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. I flew to Harrisburg.

[00:34:02.07]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Was that Phillips? What was his name, your pilot? I've forgotten.

[00:34:05.85]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, the one I have in Maine is—oh, my memory's going. I just saw him recently.

[00:34:15.80]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, it's written. It's written somewhere, and it'll pop through. Anyway, go back to what you were—

[00:34:21.74]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So I would—I could go to another city and hire a pilot there. I'd go to a flying school and ask for the pilot who teaches, because I figured that they were the better pilots. If they were good enough to teach, they had to be ready to save the plane from the student who didn't know what they were doing. And they could—

[00:34:36.79]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's wonderful.

[00:34:37.16]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: They could circle around with me. And—

[00:34:40.04]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Were they always willing? I bet they were.

[00:34:42.35]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Pretty much. Sometimes I would feel they were getting bored before I was finished. And that was my own paranoia because they just have to sit there and circle and circle and circle. And sometimes they'd have to radio in. Every time they came around one turn, they'd have to radio in to the tower because if they were anywhere near an airport, which is like when you fly around Manhattan, you're near any of the big airports. And you can only go in certain areas. You can't go higher than a certain amount, and you can't go over things. So they're always—they're looking continually for any stray helicopters or other planes that haven't been reporting in. And they're reporting in. So—

[00:35:22.98]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Nerve-wracking, I guess, yeah.

[00:35:24.30]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —it's very tense for me, actually. It's not something I enjoy.

[00:35:27.57]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:35:28.68]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Although I'm excited about what kind of painting I can get out of it.

[00:35:32.28]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How do you work that—well, let's say you—to go back for a moment, you said you were commissioned to do some night things in other states.

[00:35:40.79]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:35:41.91]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Do you—what's the procedure? How do you deal with the whole sequence of the process? In fact, let's say you're called to Minneapolis, and you've never been there before.

[00:35:53.07]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Okay, what—I usually try to find one person who might be able to help me get some sites to work from. If I don't think I'm going to use an airplane—which it turned out in quite a few of them, an airplane would have been too difficult to do this in because there were a lot of city buildings in these paintings. So a high-rise window at night is what I need then. And so I try to find some person that will promise to give me a little hand in getting permissions, or take me to the likely sites.

[00:36:26.21]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You do that with the people who commissioned you, I would assume.

[00:36:29.15]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, or if I can say to them, "Who do you know that might be able to help me find some things before I'll accept this? Do you have some liaisons?" Because otherwise, it's really hard to go cold.

[00:36:42.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Right.

[00:36:42.80]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And that's worked in these cases, that I've found people before I went who would say, yes, I'll—and often, I found something really quickly, within one or two nights out looking. And it was a lot of fun to go with them. And they'd show me, and they'd give me a little history of what we were looking at.

[00:36:58.76]

And a couple of cases, like going to San Francisco, I found five or six images out of the same building. And the woman who took me, I mean, she kept saying, "Oh, you want this one? You want that one, too? You'll have to—we'll get permission in this office, too." And she got a little nervous that I was going to really take over. And in fact, one office was the president of Bank of America. [Laughs.]

[00:37:23.43]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, my.

[00:37:23.94]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That was a little far-fetched to get permission. And she said, "He really would like you to use the office below. Would you think it would—the height would make that much difference?" So—

[00:37:32.88]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's funny.

[00:37:33.72]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It was perfectly fine.

[00:37:35.03]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Hang on for a sec.

[Recorder stops; restarts.] [Pause.]

[00:38:21.28]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Okay.

[00:38:23.00]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So after doing the city—quite a few of those city paintings, I had an opportunity to visit Japan with my daughter-in-law, who's Japanese, and my—actually, my stepson. She's my stepdaughter-in-law, Yoshiko Chuma. And my husband and son, we all went, too, for three weeks to Japan. And she was incredible at giving us a tour of things she thought would interest us, each one of us. Like in the same day, we'd go to five different types of places because each one of us had some special interest.

And one of the things she did for me was to take me up to—I think it was the National Press Club in Tokyo, where I could look down and see a tremendous spread of neon light in one of

the sections. It probably was Ginza. And it put a bug in my head. And I thought, I'm going to come back here and draw, if not from this building, there's really a lot of wonderful color here. So I was trying to figure out how I'm going to get to Japan when I was invited. I mean, it was just miraculous. I was invited by Seibu, the department store—where there a lot of galleries in these department stores—to have a show. So I asked them if they would help me get a few sites to work from if I came for the show. And they said, "Oh, of course." So I studied Japanese for six months or so—

[00:39:45.81]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Terrific.

[00:39:46.55]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —learning to—the questions about how to get the view I wanted, and how to say, "A little higher up or a little lower, a little—"

[00:39:55.02]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:39:56.15]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —which floor, and so forth. And so I set out and spent five weeks in Tokyo, going from hotel to hotel, a high-rise hotel to high-rise hotel, which are all the most expensive, of course, because they're the new ones. So really, I was living it up. And I was working every night, drawing—practically every night, drawing three or four hours a night and then sleeping in the morning and walking around in the afternoon, trying to get more of a feeling or looking for new sites.

And one hotel had such great views. It had angles out so that you could look in four different directions and get a totally different kind of view. So I actually stayed in that hotel for four of the drawings. And I just kept asking them if I could change my room. And they must have thought I was really nuts. By the time I got to it, they didn't know why I was there anymore. I got a different person.

[00:40:59.35]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You didn't—oh, I see, and nobody passed on the information that there's a painter here.

[00:41:03.20]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That she's drawing, right.

[00:41:04.51]

BARBARA SHIKLER: This is—does it relate to this one?

[00:41:09.31]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: This is the show that I had. And here's a painting of San Francisco on the cover, of Chinatown. You see, I was getting ready.

[00:41:16.43]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. Orienting yourself, as it were.

[00:41:20.32]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. But none of the paintings I showed in Japan were done in Japan. However, I noticed the painting I did just before I left looked so Japanese to me, it's—I don't know if it's reproduced in here. It's a painting of a barge on the Mississippi.

[00:41:34.91]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Here, I'll give it to you.

[00:41:36.13]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: If I can find it.

[00:41:37.67]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And then here, of course, is the show for Bowdoin.

[00:41:42.36]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, that's after I went to Japan.

[00:41:45.37]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. And these are—

[00:41:47.85]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: They came out of being there and doing the drawings, yeah.

[00:41:50.13]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Of that trip, that very trip. Now, the show at Bowdoin was in April and May of 1986.

[00:41:55.14]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. And this one was—

[00:41:57.48]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And this show you had in Japan was in '83? What does it say there?

[00:42:03.12]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, the painting says '83. I think it was '85.

[00:42:08.37]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Uh-huh [affirmative].

[00:42:08.88]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: '85, yeah. And this painting is of a barge. I mean, I kept thinking about Japanese isometric perspective on this bridge here. And this—the whole image of a boat on a river, it just seemed incredibly drawn from Japanese prints, to me.

[00:42:24.99]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And this is "Mississippi Barge at Dusk," which you did in 1985.

[00:42:29.24]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: '85, right.

[00:42:32.20]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Now, did you vary your opaque and glazed technique in this?

[00:42:39.70]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, this was happening with these, too.

[00:42:41.73]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What happens in—remember, we tickled the subject of lean and fat. What happens when you have an unconstant technique like that, to its survival potential? I mean, what happens?

[00:42:58.19]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I don't put a lean stroke back over the fat unless I sand what's underneath—

[00:43:04.23]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I see.

[00:43:04.98]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —to break up the oil. What I try to do is to start off with a dark ground that's very lean, then start building up the strokes that are shiny. And if I decide that they're too fat, let's say, I'll take it right off with a Q-tip. I'll take a—narrow it down to the width I want. If I want to make it—

[00:43:27.75]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You're using the word "fat" to describe the width of the mark.

[00:43:31.77]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. But also—

[00:43:33.47]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Rather than the—

[00:43:34.35]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —than the oiliness of the—

[00:43:36.27]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Okay, yeah.

[00:43:37.26]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. But I'm pretty careful not to put any matte stroke over the oily stroke until I've done some sanding. So I'm always out there with a little piece of sandpaper to cut into the stroke that's oily.

[00:43:55.36]

BARBARA SHIKLER: As we look at the one on the cover, it almost spells itself out. Those—are these all more oily than those that are next to it?

[00:44:04.66]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, that's right.

[00:44:05.83]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, those that seem to have a richer, darker effect, even in reproduction, do the job. So they—would they be the same color, the matte and the shiny, in fact, with more oil?

[00:44:17.35]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Sometimes—yeah, I'd use the same color. But the mixture with the shininess will look darker.

[00:44:23.02]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:44:23.49]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It almost gives you a double set of colors because you've got the same

color much more translucent, but also deeper value. It's like wetting it.

[00:44:35.86]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Surely, and it would happen in those all-black paintings so often in the—or one-tone paintings that just had different surfaces, let's say, in the '50s and '60s so many artists did. I think of it now in large, geometric areas or fields of color and that sort of thing. So you've adapted quite intelligently something that had been done very, very large, let's say, in the color field things and et cetera.

[00:45:08.35]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:45:08.95]

BARBARA SHIKLER: To a traditional—to a somewhat traditional technique.

[00:45:12.16]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:45:12.58]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's interesting. But what a burden to have to keep track of each of the strokes.

[00:45:18.88]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, you can see it. You can just work—I mean, it makes you work a bit methodically. You have to kind of be careful and only go so far with—before you have to sand or—but—

[00:45:32.32]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It obviates an accident, doesn't it? I mean, you just can't afford an accident there.

[00:45:38.14]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, you can sand back. I would repaint things sometimes, a whole area. I'd just sand the whole thing out and put a flat ground over and start in again.

[00:45:46.51]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Ah, I see.

[00:45:47.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: You can do that. And that's safe, technically speaking.

[00:45:51.13]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I think we're coming so close to the end of this tape. Maybe I'll just stop it and turn it over now before you get going.

[00:45:56.41]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Sure.

[END OF TRACK AAA_ jacque89_4614_m]

[00:00:06.37]

BARBARA SHIKLER: This is side two of interview number three with Yvonne Jacquette on October 24, 1989, and where we're getting to this—the Times Square painting.

[00:00:18.25]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So after coming back from Tokyo, the Marriott Marquis Hotel had been built. I was waiting for somebody to build a good view of Times Square, and that happened while I was in Japan. So I came back very excited, ready to start, and rented a room for a week, and just started in on the 15th floor.

[00:00:41.53]

What, sort of, had been happening in the course of all these nights city paintings is that the first couple of ones started at the World Trade Center. (Aside from the hospital painting.) That's 107 stories. Gradually I'm getting closer and closer, and I'm getting more interested to see figures and very particular weights of cars and trucks and so forth. And I mean, you can see more color that way. And I felt one big problem of aerial thing is to get too distanced and too far away from some experience that you have your own relation to. And I kept wanting to be closer and closer.

[00:01:27.98]

So, 15th floor over Times Square gave me a chance to work with two spaces. The big neon sign, I could still look directly out and see, or look a bit down on. And then past that I could work with the street, with taxis, and police cars, and ambulances, and buses, and people on the street, groups of figures on the street and the light under movie marquees, which I like—the sort of glow of it, and then the kind of luminosity on the lettered signs.

[00:02:07.45]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. And of course, the headlight streaks ahead, which is interesting. It's very exciting.

[00:02:15.83]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. I mean, luckily, I was facing the direction where I'm looking at it rather than—

[00:02:19.51]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Was it raining?

[00:02:21.13]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Often it was.

[00:02:22.00]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I always think of a wet street when I look at it.

[00:02:23.89]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. I like to use the effect of it being rainy if it isn't, because I like—I mean, I noticed that happening in Japan, which where it is often damp anyway. And I wanted to work with words, but not too completely. I mean if I'm interested in poetry, I like the idea of having glimpses of the words or the signs, the movie marquee signs, and use them enough to give you a little flavor of the city thing of always having signs to read, but not emphasize it so that it was offensive that you have to read before you do anything else. That meant cropping the signs. And in some cases, I wish I could have cropped them more, but I would have lost the format.

[00:03:16.62]

So I intended these three as a triptych to at least give a sense of one side of Times Square, and to have a sense of continuity between one to the next, partly from the format of the big sign onto the street. And other views I would have liked to have done, but they didn't work with that kind of slice of street to sign.

[00:03:48.35]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What's fun, of course, that you get just enough of the fun of seeing a bit of a sign, so you have a taste of it and just slightly ahead. And of course, people like to think

that they can read in, that we're all so smart.

[00:04:05.09]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah.

[00:04:05.24]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That we know really what you're trying to say about American society [they laugh] whether or not you're saying a thing about it.

[00:04:11.51]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. [Laughs.]

[00:04:12.23]

BARBARA SHIKLER: But I guess you can't help but say something about it by just being in it then.

[00:04:17.93]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Someone just asked me recently, "Are your paintings political, when you go up in an airplane or you look down from a hotel?" And I said, "Actually, there's no way they can't help being."

[00:04:27.26]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Exactly.

[00:04:27.32]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I mean, you just can't avoid it, without making them propaganda.

[00:04:32.15]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Exactly. But the question might have been, "Do you intend your paintings to show your political responses to some extent?" You needn't have labeled that "Right Wing." [They laugh.] It always seems to me that if we can't help but reflect the society that we're in, we don't necessarily always have to put a handle on it, or label. Certainly, history will take care of reading it.

[00:05:03.35]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

[00:05:03.50]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How do you feel about that? People are forever attributing to you one interpretation or another. You're either being called "mystical," or "the first figurative," or "the last figurative," or "Hudson River," or—I almost asked you about Monet's "Water Lilies." And I mean, it just seems as though you lend yourself in some way to everyone's fantasy of something.

[00:05:28.49]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's great. [Laughs.] Maybe it's because there's—I'm not tying it all up too tightly in any one direction, which probably a lot of people will think of as a fault. But for me, I just feel like I need kind of a slow take on things. I need to do things with a hint of things, so the hints can go in a lot of directions. I don't want to spell anything out too obviously. Like, the first nuclear plant I did, I made the reactor look like a skull. And then I took it away from that. I inched it away from that reading, although there's just a hint of it left, because that just seemed too bold. But I like it when you can come off with some angle on it and some point-of-view that's probably half-conscious if not totally conscious.

[00:06:28.62]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I always wonder that the artist can get away with something like that. I

read something—I don't remember why or where or what it was, but about Goya painting the General with a uniform that's totally bedecked with medals but it's several sizes too big for him. And I wonder that the General let him. [Laughs.] What was the General thinking of that he let himself be made into a political statement, in fact? It's always amazing to me that King Carlos sat there with that family and said, "Do it."

[00:07:03.68]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. That's true. I guess we're all vain. And so any of us would allow ourselves to be made use of if a great painter like Goya or Velazquez took it on. [Laughs.]

[00:07:14.48]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Exactly. Well, you get—do you get a lot of government commissions, for instance, for government buildings?

[00:07:21.53]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, the one I did was that "Autumn Expansion," and there were no restrictions put on it, only safety restrictions. I mean, they didn't say—I could have done anything I wanted, I think, but I did have to show them a study before I started the big work. And it was obviously not any kind of—it's only, kind of, a local political statement in the sense that if you know anything about the management of woods, you know a lot of things that I'm saying there. Well, there's different kinds of tree growth and different kinds of harvesting of that tree growth. One whole section of the painting has slash cutting, which is really the worst thing you should do to take care of a woods.

[00:08:05.43]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Slash-and-burn sort of thing that—

[00:08:07.65]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it's just they make a mess of the woods when they cut it. They could leave certain trees to go, but they just take it all out and then just leave it and don't even plant new stuff for a while. So that the land is just sort of useless at that point. And so I was making a statement about that in a way, but you'd have to know enough about it to see it.

[00:08:30.70]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I think to myself as you say that, about the Hudson River School to which you've been compared, also some of those interior landscapes by Asher B. Durand that really focused on the life of the forest and almost made it a mystical experience to be an American in an American landscape, which was part of the reason that they were so picked up. And in a sense, you have that sense of relation to your environment, which continues to be strong. You seem to be extending it from country to city, responsibility to your environment, which you pull into your painting. So of course, I mean, whatever "political" means, it is political. It's certainly impassioned.

[00:09:17.29]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:09:18.25]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You were talking about this triptych, this Times Square thing. And I suppose it lends itself—well, you had a purpose in talking about it. You were going to relate it to size. We started out by talking about how you got to painting large, and then you spoke about the distance from it. Now did that permit you greater size? Is that what you're saying, in a sense—that as you got further away, you could deal with a larger environment?

[00:09:52.94]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: As it got higher from the land either in a plane or high rise, I could deal with certain aspects of the landscape that had to do with that particular height. And in some cases, it seemed necessary to work very big. One obvious thought about the New York

landscape from the air at night is this idea of a big spread of orange highways leading left and right, just going out for miles. Well, I really couldn't make that painting literally. It would be very hard for me to get the material to do that painting, but I did try for it by having a triptych as a painting. I did had it in my last show. That title would be something like "Triboro Triptych at Night," or no, I have the Triboro Bridge in one of the paintings, so—

[00:10:56.93]

BARBARA SHIKLER: We may have it here, but—

[00:10:58.40]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: There should be a list up somewhere. We can go back. But by having three paintings, I could get close to the idea of that space and have a section of each part of New York that I felt could contribute to that and still sort of get a feeling of big spread, and even have some clouds obscuring some of the view, so playing with the thing of another kind of vector, too. It just seems certain ideas that I get to seem right for big scale paintings, and others just look like they should forever stay in a little pastel. They probably don't have enough development and detail to become a big painting that is really going to be convincing, and that's sort of what I tested it against.

[00:11:49.91]

If it's a small pastel that's just a little vague, although it might be very lovely, and I don't think I'm going to be able to get away to develop it more strongly, or the point-of-view doesn't seem that it's supposed to be, then it's only going to stay a small pastel. And I do about three times, four times the amount of drawings, of paintings, or maybe even more than that—ten times the amount of drawings, than I paint. And I expect that to happen, because the thing of going in an airplane is to ask for something totally unexpected. I don't really know what's going to happen most of the time, even though I set myself to look for certain—now I'm looking for wing situations. So I might be able to get some wings for a while.

[00:12:36.82]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:12:37.51]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But a lot of what I draw is just accepting what's going to come, and not knowing in advance what it's going to be. And then maybe it'll be a stimulus for a series of paintings when I get enough material.

[00:12:51.28]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It shows a nice kind of trust, as it were, in what will happen.

[00:12:58.42]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Nature will be out there somehow.

[00:13:00.37]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. Somehow you'll find something to do. You don't need to tuck it all into place ahead of time. You spoke about that a little bit when you said that you were painting different ranges of space as your child got older and began to move about.

[00:13:19.15]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Right.

[00:13:20.59]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Okay. I read something very nice, very descriptive of the process of your making, I guess, lithos, lithograph. And I then read something about your monotypes, and I thought it might be interesting to have you talk a little bit about processes with any of those, and how you came to them, because I don't recall you saying that you were involved in

these things at RISD but, perhaps, you were.

[00:13:46.54]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I did a very little bit of printmaking at RISD, and it didn't really take. I didn't have a vision then that it connected to. But a monotype was a great help to me when I first went up in airplanes, because the first images I did up in a little plane looked so solid. The landscape looked as if I were painting it as if it were a still life. I had—it wasn't that I didn't have any texture. It's just that I made the color so strong and dense as they looked to me from the main view of ponds and foliage—there was a lot of dense, rich color there—but it had no atmosphere. And I was very disappointed in them. I didn't know what was wrong.

[00:14:32.87]

So I sort of stuck some of these pastel—first pastel studies in a portfolio in some newsprint, and put them away. And one time later, I got them out and I noticed that some of the pastel had printed off on the newsprint and there was this hint of the image, but there was a lot of space. So then I started taking my pastels and rubbing the back of them onto a piece of paper and hinting at that space and then I started taking the pastel, putting it under a plate of glass, painting the image not so differently than the way I had drawn it, and then taking a piece of paper, and printed it. And I used oil paint just on the paper.

[00:15:15.41]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, you mean you use the glass as you would have tracing paper, in a sense.

[00:15:18.79]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. I just would have the drawing all set. So I could just paint it real quickly, without even having to make a new drawing. And when I printed it, I would only get about half of what I painted, because I was printing it by hand with a rubber—

[00:15:32.95]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Roller?

[00:15:34.00]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: A wooden spoon, just a spoon, like, a Japanese rice spoon, actually. So there I got the space. So I had these little flecks and spots of color with a lot of paper coming through, and there it was the way I kind of wanted it, or I could work on it a little more, and added more paint if I needed to. And I got excited by that direction.

[00:15:57.73]

And my dealer, who was very, very supportive and interested, gave me some books on monotype, which I'd hardly really heard of then—the Degas book and a Gauguin book. And so I just got very excited about trying all kinds of monotype, watercolor monotype, gouache monotype, pastel monotype. I mean, I started rubbing my pastels off again more carefully this time, and oil on paper. And that's really developed my "strokiness" in the pastel to work in the plane. I went back into the plane with more strokiness, more deliberate marks, more inventive color to couple colors next to each other that weren't really local color, but an idea of a light.

[00:16:46.97]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So they helped you to abstract your technique and your idea, in fact.

[00:16:50.96]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right, right. And they gave me a feeling of aerial space that I was interested in that seemed right for that feeling of being up there.

[00:16:58.91]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Fascinating. That's very serendipitous how it fed into this and back

again, how the two mediums really shake hands in mid-air.

[00:17:08.90]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, right.

[00:17:10.79]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's exciting. How much time do you do you spend on that just for the pleasure of it?

[00:17:14.51]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I haven't done that many monotypes recently. I sort of come in and out of it occasionally. It was such a learning thing at that time that I did a great deal for about a year and a half. I did maybe 30 or so monotypes. I worked on them a long time, too.

[00:17:28.10]

BARBARA SHIKLER: When did you start monotype?

[00:17:31.22]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, that was about '72 or '73, maybe. And then I could get a monotype that I could work on for two weeks. Nobody else could do that. [They laugh.]

[00:17:42.47]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Wow. Indeed.

[00:17:42.62]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I just kept it taped down on one side, and keep it in register. And then I just keep adding paint on the glass and then printing it, and adding it slowly and slowly and slowly until I finally built up what I wanted.

[00:17:54.23]

BARBARA SHIKLER: The tape being in order to secure it.

[00:17:56.30]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: To keep it from shifting, from registration. And then after that I started —when I started doing regular printmaking—the lithography or etching, I started making monoprints with presses, I mean, because you're using a press and regular things. You can get a lot more off the plate than with my little hand rubbing method. And so I could do a monoprint in one afternoon, and control it more from what I'd learned, and it didn't have to take so long. [Laughs.]

[00:18:34.43]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, interesting. How did the how did the lithography come into being? Had you—or any kind of printmaking other than the monotypes? Did you—

[00:18:42.92]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's wonderful that Brooke Alexander is a print publisher as well. And he had a project before I had done any printmaking, except in school, called Hand-Colored Prints, where I did a drawing just in one color, printed it in one color and then hand-colored with many different kinds of materials. Like, I could do all kinds of pastel, markings, some watercolor ones, some combinations of gouache and pastel or colored pencil. I just took the same drawing and tried to find as many possible ways of approaching it with a new color light so I could do night images, and daytime images, and dawn images, and things that change just because of the medium.

[00:19:36.13]

And the first time I think I did about 27 of that drawing, and that was really went fast. And

then the next one I did was about 45 or so. And so that was just such a feeling of learning something so quickly, without having to redraw it every time. And so after that—And then I'd had this beginning experience in lithography to make just the one color. So after that, I started doing—He would publish things with color. I think actually I did some big black lithographs on vellum, because I'd been doing a lot of drawings on vellum with black charcoal. So that kind of played into that medium.

[00:20:26.78]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Where did you work on those things? Were you working in your own studio?

[00:20:31.06]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, those were all collaborative things. Once I really started to do the regular printmaking, I'd work at a printer's shop. And I would learn a lot from the printers about printing. I'd had very little knowledge. I had very little knowledge about papers and colors of printing inks. And Brooke was very nice. He'd come sometimes while we were proofing and throw out ideas of papers. And so it was just very wonderful to have that interest, and have to learn all these new things.

[00:21:05.06]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, yes. You were lucky in your dealer.

[00:21:06.83]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah, and still am. I mean, because he's still publishing my prints.

[00:21:11.18]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. And Rudy is with him, is he not?

[00:21:13.22]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: He's shown photographs with him, but he's not a regular in a regular gallery stable since he's not painting. It's getting late.

[00:21:23.73]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You tell me.

[00:21:24.40]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, we'll go five more minutes, and I should go home.

[00:21:27.24]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Okay. So that's very exciting, and it must be extremely rewarding to have a dealer who participates so eagerly so that you find yourself really growing through him.

[00:21:39.96]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, I mean, sort of, unusual, I think.

[00:21:44.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What was your experience before him? I don't remember without consulting a chart.

[00:21:49.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I had shown for a couple of years at Fischbach Gallery, and it was fine because there was interest in new realism at the time. So there was a lot of interest in the shows, and there were some group shows and one person shows. A strange thing was, I felt the gallery was much too big for my work. I felt so exhausted getting a whole show together. They had a very big gallery at that time; not so much—

[00:22:15.85]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Are you speaking about 57th?

[00:22:17.60]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The first gallery on 57th before they cut it down.

[00:22:21.98]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Uh-huh [affirmative]. Yes.

[00:22:22.28]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I just felt I couldn't deal with that space. And when I started showing with Brooke and his very small print gallery for our prints, I found incredible relief. And I found I was doing much more work. So when Brooke opened his painting gallery on 57th and he thought I might be interested, I said, "This gallery is the right scale for me. It will give me a chance to really have time to play with the work and do a lot without having to show every last thing I make."

[00:22:55.17]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, of course.

[00:22:56.70]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Now Brooke's got this giant gallery. [They laugh.]

[00:22:59.22]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. That's true. It is vast. It is vast, but you no longer are the same person you were.

[00:23:05.67]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, I can handle these big shows.

[00:23:07.86]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I mean, they're on. Well, let's stop this tape right now, I think.

[END OF TRACK AAA_ jacque89_4615_m]

[00:00:08.58]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Thursday, October 26, Barbara Shikler with Yvonne Jacquette in her studio at 28 West 38th Street.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

You were speaking a moment ago about your frescoes. So why don't we do that?

[00:00:29.11]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, last summer my husband Rudy taught at Skowhegan School, and so I stayed with him for a month at that time. And they do have a program of teaching fresco. And I had one time even been a judge on a fresco competition there. So I've been sort of interested in what it was all about and decided to try to do one.

[00:00:54.43]

And I did one, and immediately fell in love with the process of painting into this wet cement, wet plaster, really, over cement. And I liked way it dried even better, because the light was coming out of the surface. It seemed as if it was saturated. The ground color was coming through the colors, the white ground, and giving it a luminescence that I just hadn't been working with for a long time, maybe since watercolors years and years ago.

[00:01:28.46]

So I just thought I was just doing one little side thing, as usual. But then when I came back to New York in the fall, I got very sick for a while. And I had no energy to get myself out into airplanes to draw and to start some big paintings. But I did have two paintings from the summer that had lots of detail in it, a painting of a lumber yard and a painting of the town of Skowhegan. And it seemed to me that if I could take sections of that painting and paint them small, and I thought that maybe I would see what would happen with the light in the fresco compared to the light in the oil, that would just be very interesting.

And another friend, George Schneeman here in New York, had been doing frescoes. And I'd been following his work. And so he agreed to coach me a bit more than what I had learned at Skowhegan. And so I started doing small frescoes. Maybe the biggest one now is 18 by 26, I think. And so I learned the whole process from doing the backings, to the front layer, plastering the intonaco.

[00:02:47.70]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Start from scratch here for the tape. Really just—

[00:02:52.23]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, the way that the process is now working for me—I won't talk about all the mistakes I made and things I learned about. But the way it goes now is I have a wooden frame made for me by my framer with a piece of plywood in the back. And then I coat the inside of that frame with three coats of polyurethane. Then I add lath. Then I add three coats of concrete mixed with sand. And then after that, I add one thin layer of intonaco—lime and sand mixed. And then I paint into that. And the day I plaster it, I have to paint it. I have one day to do it—or maybe six hours.

[00:03:37.51]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It has to dry at the same pace, is that it, with the plaster? In other words, when they dry together—

[00:03:44.50]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: All the other stages are already done and dry before I get to the final layer of putting the plaster on, except that I wet those previous coats of concrete again. And then when I put the plaster, the intonaco plaster, over the wet concrete, the wetness in the concrete will maintain wetness continually on the plaster. It will hold that painting time as long as six or eight hours. So that if I have a tracing all ready and I have an idea of what I'm going to work from, all I have to do is just mix the colors as I'm working. And I found it's very much like watercolor in that I do a lot of underpainting, a lot of opposite colors even under a color to modulate the color and keep the thing very open and broad until maybe the last hour. And then I kind hone in on details.

[00:04:50.78]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Is it pressure?

[00:04:52.46]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Pressure?

[00:04:52.85]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It feels as though there's a kind of time pressure.

[00:04:54.74]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, there's a time pressure. Oh, yeah. I mean, I don't even feel comfortable answering the phone. I don't feel like I can take more than ten minutes to eat my lunch. So I just have to just—because everything that you're painting probably has got three or four layers of color under it, building it up. You have to start off really thinly and then you slowly build up to the final layer. I don't think it really works very well to just go in strong with the density you want right away.

[00:05:25.41]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What would happen? Would it lose its translucency? Would the light somehow be blocked out of it if you did that?

[00:05:32.07]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I'm not sure that the colors might not—well, I saw that some of the things that I did in the first one I did, which I don't like so well anymore—the color sits up on top of the surface like poster paint sitting on top of a piece of cardboard, or something. It's right in front of the surface. The paint doesn't feel like it's coming through the surface. It's not saturated into it.

[00:05:57.06]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:05:57.36]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And in that way it doesn't have that translucent quality that helps give it more of a glow.

[00:06:05.28]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And that's the reason to work into the wet surface, I assume, so yeah. So that it is absorbed.

[00:06:11.34]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right. Also, that there's this wonderful texture that the fresco surface itself has. It's sort of slightly grainy because I'm using sand, and a kind of modulation from it being plastered, and just the way that plaster has a nice slight shift in the way it absorbs color things. Even if they're put on, you assume, in a flat manner, they probably dry—soak in in different weights. And there's that kind of modulating quality that I like.

[00:06:46.74]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. The unpredictable.

[00:06:49.36]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. And there's always the unpredictable part. I mean, I'm not quite sure that it's the perfect medium for me. But right now, it's one way to get down to a small scale again and still be painting, not making studies, not making drawings, which I'd missed. Because for years I was just doing big paintings. And deal with a lot of detail, but not have to make a big fresco. I'm not really interested in doing a big wall work at this point. I just want to make small paintings that have a kind of object quality to them when they're done, that have a nice density, that's sort of an equivalent for an oil painting that has a density of—like my shiny and matte strokes. There's just some way that it's doing the opposite thing, but it feels an equivalent.

[00:07:43.35]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. And it has literally a weight to it as well.

[00:07:47.53]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It certainly has—yeah.

[00:07:48.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So you get—

[00:07:49.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Any bigger it would be too weighty.

[00:07:51.06]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Exactly.

[00:07:51.66]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Because they probably weigh about 30 pounds, these small ones.

[00:07:54.30]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Wow.

[00:07:54.90]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: At least. And once they get the frame on them—I mean, then they go to a framer and get an extra wood outside edge so that they don't get too battered around if they got moved.

[00:08:04.14]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. But you don't work here then? You work—

[00:08:07.74]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. I do.

[00:08:08.53]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, you will?

[00:08:09.13]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. I'm going to work here tomorrow. I'm all set to work on—what I have right now is a tracing made from a painting I did this summer. And it's got pinpricks in it at the lines that I'm very sure about and the more important areas. And what I'll do is I'll put this tracing over the wet plaster after I get it plastered in, take a little ball of—I'll take some cheesecloth and stick some powdered pigment in it, maybe yellow ochre, a light color, and rub it through all the pinholes. So on the wet plaster, which is light gray when it's wet, there'll be this little network of pinprick lines. And you can see I did it on top of foam core. But you can see this has many drawings underneath it.

[00:09:07.69]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Sure.

[00:09:08.77]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, right here, there's a section that came from the stairway. You can see that'll show me just where that is. And once I get a few things located, then I'll start laying in washes of light colors that maybe will be just the ground, the sensation of the ground. And then slowly I'll build up three or four more layers of color.

[00:09:29.63]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Making reference at all time to your painting—

[00:09:32.33]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, somewhat.

[00:09:32.75]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I would assume.

[00:09:33.38]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. But I feel free to change some things. And certainly the color will be quite different, because, for example, the blue in my oil painting, I probably can't really get that color. The blues are very strange in the powdered pigments. Ultramarine and Prussian blue don't exist. Cobalt blue is about the deepest blue you can get. So I have to mix

a lot of brown with the blue to get it to do something to be other than a bright cobalt blue.

[00:10:03.74]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. It cools it, I would assume, to some extent.

[00:10:05.93]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah.

[00:10:08.87]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And what happens to the surface as you work? Actually, it's very much like the old cartoon in fresco, isn't it?

[00:10:15.95]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. That's exactly what this is. It's a cartoon.

[00:10:19.64]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:10:19.88]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I understood that for a big wall painting probably they would put this cartoon on the concrete layer, or the layer—whatever is underneath the final plaster- and do it in a quite strong color. And then when they put the plaster over it, they could see through where the outline was. But it wouldn't really mix with it. This way I might have a little mixture of color. But it probably won't matter.

[00:10:45.59]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Does that affect what you lay on to it? For instance, those—how well—I don't quite know how to ask. If the powder goes through the holes and settles into the holes on the plaster itself, how much of an image do they present to you? And does any of it remain? Is it a problem to get rid of?

[00:11:08.22]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Sometimes I feel the holes are a little bit of a problem. And I tried sometimes instead of using pinpricks, but just taking a sharp stylus and kind of incising some lines. But that is then impermanent in the plaster. That will stay.

[00:11:24.60]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:11:25.05]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And I found that a little more of a barrier against making slight change. If I want to make something fatter, I feel I'm sort of stuck a bit with that.

[00:11:35.16]

BARBARA SHIKLER: In time, will it build up to cover the holes? Not that it matters very much.

[00:11:40.26]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. The paint will probably—most cases it won't show much anymore until you got really right up on top of it. And if it shows, you'll sort of see them consistently at the edges of things. And maybe it'll just become a part of the style.

[00:11:55.75]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, here's a photograph.

[00:11:56.71]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And there's a photograph.

[00:11:57.61]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Of "The Right Wing." No, not "The Right Wing." What is it you showed me?

[00:12:01.74]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, this is the image that I used—

[00:12:03.73]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Purifying, almost.

[00:12:05.02]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. That's got some of that material in it.

[00:12:09.32]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, it's a little purification thing.

[00:12:10.87]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right.

[00:12:11.11]

BARBARA SHIKLER: For some reason, I thought it was at the top of "The Right Wing." It isn't. Correction, please.

[00:12:16.00]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The water treatment center.

[00:12:17.05]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. Yes.

[00:12:18.49]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So I just keep looking at this again. Because if I want to make some changes different than the painting, I might get some ideas.

[00:12:26.24]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I see. So then just for the clarification on the tape, this is a photograph that's tacked up onto the board above where the cartoon is at this point showing the water purification system and the painting that is titled—

[00:12:43.60]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: "Madison Paper Company."

[00:12:45.16]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Thank you. Okay. Good. How fascinating. Have we left out anything of that process, just so that we can get it all down?

[00:12:57.27]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, the colors are powdered pigments. And they get ground in water previously to doing this painting. And then I store them in little jars and just take them out a little bit at a time. You don't need much pigment. But then you can mix lime with the pigments, which is also in the surface. And that can alter the colors as well. And then I found even if I do something a little bit too emphatically, too darkly, after the whole thing is dry, I

can take a little bit of lime and maybe lighten the color a little bit. With some colors, it almost acts like a bleach. I mean, it just—because it's white and it has a catalytic agent on the either dry pigment, or wet mixture dry pigment, or on the final fresco. I can use it as a slight bit of a correction thing. I mean, I can't change the drawing, but I can lighten the color a tiny bit.

[00:14:00.16]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What happens if you want to, if you really have a major dissatisfaction with a part of the thing? Is there—

[00:14:06.91]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: You could scrape it out.

[00:14:07.18]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —any way you can rewet it?

[00:14:08.95]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, once it's dry, forget it. You probably shouldn't touch it. Although you could put a little tiny bit of egg white with some pigment if you want to make something slightly darker. You could kind of touch it up. I think that's called the secco method or something, dry method.

[00:14:30.97]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:14:34.54]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But if you're in the middle of the painting and it's still wet and you don't like what you've done, you could just take a knife and take the whole plaster off of that section and then put in a new little batch of plaster and start in again.

[00:14:48.42]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Could you ever cover over the whole thing with—I suppose you could.

[00:14:53.25]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I guess you could.

[00:14:53.52]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You make a new surface.

[00:14:54.51]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: You could make a new surface, I think. I don't think it'll come through. I haven't tried that yet. [Laughs.]

[00:15:00.09]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I hope you don't have to. [Laughs.]

[00:15:01.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I hope I don't have to, too. [Laughs.]

[00:15:02.58]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Let's pause this. Funny.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:15:06.21]

I thought it might be good to talk a little about your printmaking processes. And I think processes all along, while they're deceptively about craft, are also an indication of choices and attitudes and never to me extraneous. I hope you feel the same way. How did you come to it? It wasn't only through Brooke Alexander that you came to the business of printmaking, was it?

[00:15:36.21]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, that was the first input. And I continued to work—

[00:15:44.70]

BARBARA SHIKLER: When was that, Yvonne? I'm sorry to interrupt you when you—

[00:15:47.37]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I would say 19—maybe it was about 1975 that I started the hand-colored prints. And I think maybe the first lithograph I did, aside from the hand-colored ones, was about four or five years later. And so maybe every year or every other year since then I've been doing at least one print, sometimes two or three at the same go-around. So it's been—started with lithography, then I went to color etching and black and white etching together, then went to woodcut, and back to etching with using some lithographic methods in etching. Now I'm going back to etching after having just done another big color lithograph. So I sort of alternate between lithography and etching. And there's been this little foray into woodcut, which was just for two prints, three prints maybe.

[00:17:16.65]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you enjoy that immediacy of that?

[00:17:23.10]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I felt a little disconnected from the woodcut process because the shop I work did most of the cutting.

[00:17:30.81]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh. That's a [inaudible].

[00:17:32.55]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Although probably I couldn't have done the cutting as well. I did work on one of them. I did do some of the actual Dremel work and cutting work. And I found my hand wasn't as strong to get—I really just didn't have the skill to do a whole lot of it. I could have wrecked the print easily if I'd done more. On other hand, the color overlay process and the woodcut was very much like painting, although the inks seemed more opaque than a lot of the—and would build up very fast than with it etching and lithography.

[00:18:11.20]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How was that applied?

[00:18:17.20]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The ink is rolled on, and then the press is an automatic press—I mean a press with pressure, because a lot of woodcut is done with hand rubbing—hand pressure.

[00:18:31.24]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:18:32.11]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I did one big one, too. But it was evidently just within the size of the press, so that could be done by a machine. But the thing I noticed was that the paper makes an enormous difference with woodcut as with any of the other methods. That the same thing printed on Japanese rice paper can look delicate and wonderfully soft and strong in woodcut,

but printed on a straight piece of white solid paper can look tough and crass. And so you really have to try out proofing with colors of paper and different kinds of paper. Sometimes a toned paper, a grayish paper will look much better than a white paper depending on what kind of energy you want.

[00:19:23.98]

BARBARA SHIKLER: The process of printmaking has become a kind of a community effort. You're never really alone too much.

[00:19:31.33]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. I like that.

[00:19:32.54]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Do you like that?

[00:19:33.28]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I like, yeah, the collaboration with the printer. And the kind of long—it takes a while usually, and the kind of long ongoing thing. And there's always this conversation going between you. And it's wonderful when the printer has an idea about what you're doing that you hadn't thought of, and throws that out. And then you take it and try to work with it. And you probably have misunderstood it, but you come up with something else. [Laughs.]

[00:19:57.79]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:19:58.33]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And then you feel like if you had done this by yourself, you never would have come there, gotten to that point. I also have been doing monoprints all along. Some of them still with myself with a rub, a bamboo paddle. But sometimes I'll get the use of a press. And I actually went out to Colorado recently to work with a printer just to do monoprints. And he had a wonderful way of suggesting an extra tone, an extra sort of film of light color on the plate other than that had much to do with the image, which all the colors sat into once it was all printed. And it gave it a really much richer quality. And it took away from over crisp edges and other things that I had accepted as okay in monotype. And once I saw what this did, I thought, "Oh, I never can like that again."

[00:20:57.00]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:20:59.10]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And printers are always trying to devise new methods to try something out. And they're just as excited about something.

[00:21:08.91]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's a great form of tinkering, isn't it?

[00:21:10.71]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, the only thing is you have to watch that you don't go off on a foray just because it's a new technical thing that nobody's done this before.

[00:21:20.23]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:21:20.50]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: At that point, I draw the line and say, if it doesn't seem really suitable

to my work, then I'll back off that. I just feel like it has to really work with what I'm doing.

[00:21:31.12]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:21:31.92]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And it usually does then lead me to something in painting. It's usually some insight that comes out of each print that goes back into the paint process.

[00:21:42.21]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's a kind of an interaction, which is—isn't that the word, synergistic?

[00:21:46.41]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:21:46.74]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That one—it just simply feeds the other and goes back again and informs all of it. How about the lithography? There's been so much written about the procedures, technical procedures of what you do, the blue, and the red, and all of the stages of the drawing itself. Would you want to talk about that one more time? It's in all those interviews, and you indicated that your techniques have changed over the years. So if you want to spend a little time talking about that.

[00:22:20.86]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, the first color lithograph I did I felt was a disaster because I used a red plate, a yellow plate, and a blue plate. And I tried to do everything on just those three plates. Maybe I had a black one too. I'm not sure. Anyway, I was trying to mix everything. And of course, I had to guess about how much to have on each side. And I really didn't feel I could draw with that understanding well enough.

[00:22:53.73]

So the next print color lithograph I did I took it more from the way I would approach a painting, which is I mix the main colors very precisely out of the ink that I could. So maybe I wanted a gray-brown and I wanted an orange-green. And maybe I wanted a violet kind of red. I would mix those very precise colors. So they would change when they printed on top of each other. And that would come out with something that wasn't expected. But to have to start off with mixed colors instead of trying to get to a mixed color gave the thing much more weight, much more solidity to the image. And it was much closer to where I was coming from with the image. The only thing it meant was that I'd have a lot more plates, because then there would be plates where I just needed a little bit of a color, even though you can sometimes squeeze a couple of colors onto one plate if things are separated enough.

[00:24:02.77]

To get the whole thing built up of mixed colors and the complications of the amount of detail I often get just meant that I would probably take 12, or 13, or 14 plates to get the whole image. So it meant a long working process. I had to do a lot of drawing to then have the whole thing build up. And sometimes I'd add plates even after I thought I had them all finished. After we'd proof, I'd say, "No, I need some more density."

[00:24:32.32]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So final decisions on this sort of thing, even feeling your way, was—you were more or less on your own?

[00:24:39.85]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, there were suggestions made. But no, I think in a way you're on your own until you get something that starts to click. And then you sort of work from that.

But the beginning is really the hardest to know where to start when you haven't had the experience, unless there's something so obviously connected to your work that you could see how to translate it quickly. That didn't happen for me.

[00:25:05.76]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Start simply here with step one. What would you do? And why would you come to a litho, let's say, rather than something else? And then what would you do to establish it? All your steps, if you have that patience.

[00:25:21.37]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Uh-huh [affirmative]. Well, I think the reason I've been using litho is that the hand touch with crayon—actually most of what I do in a litho is crayon work, rather than painting with tusche, because I like that connection with the plate. I like the modulation I can get and the marking process. I can make deliberate marks as if I were making pastel, with crayons. And now they make these fat crayons, and all kinds of shapes of crayons. So you have a lot of choice in softness, greasy ones, and very hard ones, and so forth.

[00:26:00.35]

So I would start with a line drawing of the whole image. And that would probably get photographed onto a plate, as many plates that were necessary, with a blue line. So I could see it, but it wouldn't be too emphatic. The plates are gray. And then I would just start drawing with crayon. And at a certain point when I wanted maybe more density, I might add some tusche work. Or if I wanted something that looked very brushy, like dry brush or something, then I would work with tusche.

[00:26:31.71]

And I would just have to keep track of what was supposed to be what. Of course it's backwards. I found after I started one big lithograph, I had to make a color study because I hadn't really figured out really carefully where the colors should go. I had a rough idea from a painting, but it wasn't—I changed the drawing quite a bit. And I had to redo a study to know how much of red would go over blue or whatever. Even that knowing these colors are going to be mixed, you know that the overprinting is going to change.

[00:27:10.92]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:27:11.26]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So I would often draw all the plates, 12 or 13 plates. And then the printer would come and take them away, and etch them, get them prepared for proofing, and then would start in proofing the light colors first, the yellows and anything that's in the light value range, and then start adding things on top of that. And I would go and look then to see how that was coming, that the registration was fine and all that. And then after we got to about halfway, we would start making different layers. What went on top of something on one proof might be the opposite on another proof. So I might put the yellow over the red in one proof, and then the other one—the red over the yellow, or vice versa, or whatever.

[00:28:07.26]

When I have a night print with 13 colors, that can get very complicated and very interesting, because you might get something that's really wonderful putting the yellow over the dark gray. And three quarters of the image works terrifically, except one part of the drawing looks terrible like that. So what are you going to do? Start in and draw another plate where the yellow doesn't go over the gray. You have to choose then what you're going to give up. That's complicated.

[00:28:35.37]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. I should think so. You mean the surprise of how things relate to one another suddenly. Something must get lost.

[00:28:43.12]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right. Things just shift around in space because you're fooling around with valued things. But that's what's fascinating.

[00:28:49.87]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:28:50.41]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: You get something that you didn't intend, but it's much better than what you intended.

[00:28:54.60]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Indeed.

[00:28:55.30]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Then you have to make the rest of it work.

[00:28:57.88]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. [Laughs.]

[00:28:58.84]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So that's what it's about. It takes a lot of proofing, a lot of color proofing. And sometimes you don't really have to be there. The printer can try out a lot of things, and then you look at them and decide what you're going to go from next. With color etching, actually the process is quite similar where—but I've done it with fewer plates, maybe five or six plates is the most. Well, no, I've gotten one that was up to about ten plates. All right.

[00:29:31.14]

But with one project, I found we got the original idea completely finished. There were about six plates then. Everything doing what it was supposed to do according to my original idea, but very rich. It looked very thick ink, like, almost like pastel. And then the printer said, "Well, why don't we try some monotypes from this? Using the plates, but just change the colors, and change the order, and maybe drop off a plate here or there."

[00:30:07.62]

BARBARA SHIKLER: For a fast idea of how it would look?

[00:30:10.14]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: For a fast—yeah, this was just afterwards as a kind of an extra fun. Play with color and actually you might get a couple of extra monoprints.

[00:30:19.33]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Free print. Extra.

[00:30:21.04]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right.

[00:30:21.94]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:30:24.37]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And it got so interesting because then I understood how much offsetting works. That means that when you print—you ink the plate up, you print it off, and say 50 percent of the ink comes off onto the print. But there's still a little bit left on the plate. So you've got this thin film of ink there. Supposing you put that onto another print and add

another thin film of something from another plate, what's that going to do? Well, you get a whole different quality.

And then you can start playing with a thick ink on top of that and leaving the other two being thin ink. Or you might start putting that thin ink on top of a color you've already printed. Say you put a thin yellow over a heavy dark gray, well there's another thing happening. And the only thing is you have to remember how much ink you've left on that thin plate, you know.

[00:31:25.20]

And if you don't write it all down, which we didn't do because we were just fooling around, you know—this is also a very experienced printer, you know. But just that we didn't expect to want to make more than a couple of extra prints. And we were just trying out a lot of things, and throwing this on that, and not even being methodical about it, just saying, "Oh, here, I've got some orange on a plate. Where's an empty—which one we haven't put plate on three. Okay, well, ram it on that one."

[00:31:51.63]

And suddenly we had like ten extra prints, all that looked very interesting. And what they did is it looked like I was thinking about every type of light, daylight there could be. I could I was thinking of dawn. I was thinking of midday. I was thinking of late afternoon. I was thinking of dusk. I was thinking of night. It just put—the shift of colors, and the weights, and so forth. Here we got this series that was really very interesting. And even some dropping off.

[00:32:21.40]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Fascinating. And no idea how you'd got there. Is that what you're about to say?

[00:32:24.16]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, that's what I'm saying. Then actually the publisher came over and said—Brooke Alexander said, "Let's see the monoprints as well as the regular one." And he said, "Oh, these are wonderful. I think we should edition these, too. Let's do ten of each of these." So then the printer and I had to try to reconstruct how we did it. And we went nuts. I mean it took a long time to figure it out. We would try out trial things just to say, "No, is this how we did this?"

[00:32:53.71]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did you manage to get it?

[00:32:54.82]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: We finally got something pretty close to what we had tried. And a few cases we just could not figure it out. It might have been that plate had been printed three times on other prints, and finally there was just a little haze of something on it, and that was what gave us that color.

[00:33:08.17]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Sure.

[00:33:09.07]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But that was really fascinating to see what you could do.

[00:33:11.74]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And a lot of fun, I should think.

[00:33:12.91]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

[00:33:14.56]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. The element of accident—Hello.

[00:33:17.47]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: This is Rudy.

[00:33:18.13]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oops.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:33:20.71]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I went flying yesterday. I went to—because the weather was perfect. And actually, I needed a sunny day without clouds. So it was one I could count on. I just went to LaGuardia and got on the Trump Shuttle going to Boston, repeating a flight I had taken about three weeks ago, hoping to see some of the same places, but it turned out one of them I did, and one of them I didn't. So evidently the routes can shift a little bit.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:33:53.91]

Well, I'm working on this wing idea. And so I wanted to keep drawing more wings, and seeing how the light could shift on the wing, and then trying to find some new landscapes that would work with the wing, and also to look at a couple of drawings that I had done in this previous flight to see if I could improve them, see what the color looked like. And since the autumn foliage has developed quite a bit since three weeks ago, I got a lot of ideas about one image—how they could go much redder, a beautiful red brown tone that's come in from trees getting—a lot of the green trees turning red now.

[00:34:31.95]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So you're doing a whole—you're going to extend your interest in the wing paintings to the Northeast rather than only focus on those on the West Coast.

[00:34:43.80]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah. I think I'm just going to keep going on the East Coast as much as I can because that's the easiest flying I can do right now with the wing. I mean, just now I might go to Washington next time because that's another route. I might see some different things.

[00:35:02.31]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Do you keep careful track of each one and mark it so that—

[00:35:06.30]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I'm starting to mark my photographs, number them as from start to finish so that I have an idea of in the course of the trip what was in the beginning. So if I want to go back and look at something close on takeoff, I'll have an idea that it's a number three or something like that. Just to get an idea.

[00:35:25.53]

BARBARA SHIKLER: When you do something like that, you take photographs or let's say you do a fast little painting if you have your tiny little gem watercolor thing, or pastels, or something like that.

[00:35:37.59]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Pastels. Yeah. I use pastel.

[00:35:37.86]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Mostly pastel. What determines for you at that moment the kind of

attention you want to pay? What kind of medium you're thinking of using? Why would you reach for a, let's say a lithograph or an etching? Why would you say, "this will be a painting?" Or do you say any of those things?

[00:35:59.71]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah. Well, I don't say it until I finish the work and decide what it looks like.

[00:36:05.53]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You mean finish the flight?

[00:36:07.18]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. I always use pastels in the plane.

[00:36:10.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I see.

[00:36:11.05]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Because it's a portable medium. And I can—there are lots of choices of colors. And I can mix on top of colors. And I can start it, and not have to finish it, and then go on with it. But only in one case recently where I set out and said I'm going to do a drawing that will be a study for a print. I tried that because I wanted to limit the colors. So I took like six colors and did everything with that. And now I'm not making a print out of it. I'm making a painting out of it. But it's sort of useful now to know that I only have to mix five colors or six colors for this painting. Of course, maybe I'll add later.

[00:36:53.17]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's what you're saying now. I was just going to say.

[00:36:55.27]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I know, I know. That's right.

[00:36:56.25]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. So that the impulse is almost like the mountain climber; because it's there. You want to do focus on this wing thing from all angles. Do you have any feelings about where you—do you have anything in reserve in your mind that you'd like to play with after this, or a direction you'd like to go?

[00:37:22.13]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I think I'm—

[00:37:23.02]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Are you still happy with this kind of—

[00:37:25.18]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I feel like I'm at the beginning of it. I mean, I've done quite a lot of drawings now. But I'm only on my second painting. And the first one really is still taking some time.

[00:37:36.85]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, I don't mean just the wings. I mean, the distance, and the height, and the perspective.

[00:37:42.42]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The aerial. Uh-huh [affirmative].

[00:37:43.96]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Is there something lying sort of at the side of your mind or in the back of your mind about a next kind of thing that you'd like to do?

[00:37:53.59]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. I feel lucky I got this idea. [Laughs.] I sort of get desperate sometimes thinking do I want to continue aerial perspective, with all the possibilities of course, or is there's something I'm giving up because I'm sticking to that? And I walk around and look at things continually, saying, "What would happen if I stopped doing the aerials and did that?" Portraits, or figures on the street, or even the landscape from the street, and so forth. And I like to look at all those things. And sometimes I can see a painting, but it doesn't really look that special to me. I think, well, I see how somebody else has done it. I don't see that I can add a great deal to it.

[00:38:40.55]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. It doesn't translate to Jacquette.

[00:38:42.68]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. I've been drawing in a life class just to sharpen my drawing skills and to work with the figure. And they're not very particular drawings. I mean, they're okay.

[00:38:57.44]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How do you feel when you're doing them? Is it challenging or amusing?

[00:39:01.46]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah. It's hard.

[00:39:03.38]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:39:04.45]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's very hard. It's like you feel like you set a trap for yourself. And here you're trying to jump outside it, and you can't, in a way. You can't make something that's really amazing unless you go back to your trap.

[00:39:19.37]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's interesting that you say that. So you feel in a sense locked.

[00:39:24.74]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. The only things that I—but I keep finding new possibilities within it. So then I unlock the door for a while. I unlock the feeling of being locked. Like the wing somehow has set me off. And I keep looking at the whole thing, aerial landscape, from a different perspective now. And I don't feel like I've—I think there's a lot of possibilities there for me. And there's a lot of reasons why I've arrived at it right now, let's say.

[00:39:51.44]

But as long as I can look at those other things, I don't have to draw them. I don't have to paint them, you know. But there may come some time when I just don't feel I can go up in that plane. Like last year when I got sick, I didn't really feel ready to do it because it's so demanding. And then luckily I had these paintings that were providing me with subject matter, to work off those. And the memory of the experience in the plane was still there.

[00:40:21.70]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How do you respond to the difference between being in a plane sent to your order, so to speak, like your own taxi, and being in a commercial flight? Are there

differences that take place? And are you ever frightened? Does the physical thing scare you at all?

[00:40:40.81]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Not much anymore, unless I get a pilot I feel doesn't know what he's doing. I did have one like that not too long ago. I'll never go up with him again.

[00:40:51.05]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I bet. What did he do?

[00:40:52.67]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's just the way he was flying. He just seemed kind of erratic. I mean, from my many years of flying now I can kind of know the signs that make the pilot feel in very good control. And I just felt that he was doing a few things that were a little questionable. And he was very bad at putting me in the window, looking through the window over the wing or under the wing—actually, it was under the wing in that case—so I could see my view. He kept blocking my view with the wing of this little Cessna. And at that time, I didn't want any wing in it. [Laughs.] I just couldn't see. And I'd have to ask him to go around again and dip the wing up and so forth. Whereas, my other pilots that I've worked with a long time seem to know how to do that.

[00:41:43.58]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's funny. You know, I was thinking as you're saying all this that most people kind of dread having to take a flight anywhere. Say I've got something to do in Boston; It's such a pain in the neck getting to and from the airport, et cetera, et cetera. You must be remarkably patient with that whole process of traffic and getting to and from. What do you do?

[00:42:08.87]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I'm not too patient. It's annoying. It's gotten so difficult because I started it 15 to 20 years ago—actual flying. And I know the differences now between how hard it is just in time to get there, and to get on your flight, and get where you want to sit or all that. Just because it's so crowded—

[00:42:34.01]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:42:34.31]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And one thing that is actually an advantage for me now, if it's supposed to take off at say one o'clock, and you're sitting in the plane and everybody's ready to go, and the plane taxis out to the field, but then it can't take off for another three quarters of an hour because there's doesn't get a chance to take off—

[00:42:55.62]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:42:56.12]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it used to be very annoying because it would prolong my anxiety about what am I going to draw. But right now, because I'm drawing the wing, it gives me a chance to set the wing up, get the light on the wing a certain angle. Of course, it may not be the angle I want once I'm up in the air. But then I might be able to erase it, or I might be able to remember if it changed in a way that I want, or start a new drawing immediately, or something. But it does allow me to—

[00:43:24.36]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You get a little free time.

[00:43:25.49]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I get a little extra time to work that way. But then of course they're trying so hard to get to the destination much faster. [Laughs.] And we're going over the landscape so fast that I can barely see it.

[00:43:38.96]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:43:39.56]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That part is not so great. I think they fly a little slower when they don't have to make up time.

[00:43:44.90]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, I see what you're saying.

[00:43:46.22]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: On the shuttle.

[00:43:46.76]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:43:47.06]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Because they have to try to be there in an hour or so.

[00:43:49.55]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And do you come right back?

[00:43:50.78]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I do. I have been. Yeah.

[00:43:52.58]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And how do you get to and from the airport? Do you take a car or get a cab?

[00:43:56.81]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. Just a bus. Actually, yesterday there was some problem with the tunnel, and I couldn't get back, and I had someone waiting for me here. And I was sitting on the airport bus coming back in and knowing somebody was waiting for me here and hoping they would stay. And no, they didn't. They left, because it took me too long to get back.

[00:44:17.63]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It changes the whole immediacy of artists, to material, to canvas, to his work, her work.

[00:44:26.00]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah.

[00:44:26.24]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's really kind of fascinating that you have voluntarily allowed something that kind of stretches tolerance and patience to intrude. [Laughs.] It's funny, isn't it?

[00:44:37.19]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah.

[00:44:37.82]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's such a peculiar thing how things have developed with you and have been like those Japanese things you drop in paper that suddenly open and expand unexpectedly.

[00:44:50.57]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. That's what's happened with each of your stages. I think we made reference to that. It's an interesting thing.

[00:44:56.92]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Things change that way. Yeah.

[00:44:58.45]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Let me stop here for a little bit.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:45:00.83]

I'm sitting next to something. And I just asked Yvonne to tell me what I'm sitting next to. If you want to describe it, it might be interesting now. Why is it—

[00:45:11.71]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's a tray that has wooden sides. I actually taped the sides right now with gaffer's tape. But there is lath and then three layers of white concrete mixed with sand. And after I do each layer, I comb it with alternating strokes, so it has a lot of tooth. So the next layer that goes on top will have a lot of grab.

[00:45:42.19]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Okay. And so how many layers are we looking at? How much more—

[00:45:45.64]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's three layers already. And tomorrow I'm going to add the final coat, which is one layer of fresco plaster, lime and sand.

[00:45:56.05]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. You never really rise above the framework of the thing, do you?

[00:46:00.91]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I did in some of them when I actually used Styrofoam behind, which turns out not to be a good material to use.

[00:46:09.43]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Does it crumble?

[00:46:11.11]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. It's too impermanent. But I couldn't really plan this out so I could gauge exactly where I would come out. I didn't know how thick I was going to plaster each time. This is the first one I've done with three coats.

[00:46:27.67]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I see.

[00:46:28.06]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So it'll probably be just about level with the—or maybe a little bit higher. Because I'm only supposed to use about an eighth of an inch more for the final coat. So it'll be kind of level with this frame. And then there'll be another piece of wood outside it to come up over it, giving it protection.

[00:46:51.46]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Have you ever been commissioned to do something like this, frescoes?

[00:46:57.00]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-mm [negative].

[00:46:57.17]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You do get some commissions.

[00:46:59.09]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I was getting commissions to do night paintings in different cities—Minneapolis and in Washington D.C. In San Francisco, I got a suggestion by my dealer—

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[00:00:06.56]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Side two of the fourth interview with Yvonne Jacquette on the 26th of October 1989. You were speaking about the commission in San Francisco.

[00:00:17.36]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It was actually a little short of doing a commission. It was a suggestion from a dealer that it might be interesting to do San Francisco images. And since he offered to get me help in finding sites to work from, that seemed like a very good opportunity.

[00:00:37.43]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Do you get other commissions other than the—

[00:00:40.43]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I actually—after that, I stopped taking them because I was interested in coming back to New York—well, I went to Japan to do what I wanted to do. And then I came back, and I wanted to work with New York. And I wanted the choice of choosing my site, so I didn't accept any commissions then. I might after this. But just at that point, it seemed like I needed the freedom to go on myself.

[00:01:13.47]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Okay.

[00:01:15.35]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But I've been lucky. So far, the commissions I have done I felt were terrific sites offered. Either they gave me an idea, or there was something that they wanted, and I was able to use it. So I never could have done some of those images without having the help that they gave me.

[00:01:34.49]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. I read somewhere recently about the processes involved in doing that, the autumn landscape and the flights. That sounded like a very fascinating and long process before you just sat down to work. We talked a little bit about it. And we talked a little bit about your attitudes about the—was it slash or burn? I forgot which—

[00:02:04.67]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Slash.

[00:02:05.16]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Slash.

[00:02:05.65]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Cutting. Cutting, slash—

[00:02:07.62]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, slash-and-burn is also a technique that keeps intruding into my memory here. But we never really did talk about the whole process of doing that, and the flying that was involved, and if you think that it's of interest to us.

[00:02:23.70]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it's sort of parallel with a lot of the other paintings except that it took much longer. And it had some surprises in that I accepted the commission and was all set to start doing something, when I then went to see the site and realized that what I had planned to do was—in fact, I had even done some flying. The thing I wanted to do was to do a painting of Bangor, since Bangor was the seat of where the painting would be hung. And I went up with a pilot, and we circled around. And we found it was terribly frightening because it was right next to the airport, this international airport. So we had to watch for planes coming in while we were circling. And it drove both of us crazy.

[00:03:13.49]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I should think so.

[00:03:14.39]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And luckily then, I found out that actually that was a very bad idea to have this night painting there anyway. So then I started—

[00:03:22.28]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Because of the darkness, you did mention that.

[00:03:24.35]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, yeah. So then I got the idea that the autumn foliage would be a way to brighten up that room. And it was lucky that it was—we came to the agreement about doing it in September. And in October, I knew that the foliage would be coming in. So I just stayed in Maine that fall instead of coming back to New York and waited and watched for the foliage.

[00:03:53.86]

And every day, we'd would go out and look or drive around and say, "Well, anything coming?" And it'd be one tree here and one tree over there. I'd say, "Not yet." And I'd call up the pilot and say, "Have you been seeing much?" And he'd say, "No, it's pretty slow this year," but you know. So finally, I thought I saw enough to go up. And we went up, and it didn't look very good. So I waited longer, went up again. And then by that point, it really was a huge change.

[00:04:29.29]

And I had decided I was going to go fly over a mountain not too far away. And on the way over, we flew over where I live. And there was more foliage there than when we got to the mountains. So I said, "Let's go back." So I didn't consciously pick this spot right near where I live, but it was—I came back to it. And then the whole thing of—I understood once I'd picked it that there was this whole story that could be told of this, because it was owned by a lumber mill, that there was a whole relation to the tree growing process in Maine, which is the big industry, that I could play with.

[00:05:14.14]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah, yeah.

[00:05:15.34]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And then I could just walk down the road and look at it beside when I was down off the plane.

[00:05:20.29]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Funny coincidence. It's like the bluebird of happiness. As I've said before, this is also scattershot, that there are things that one jumps around with. As you speak, I remember something else I wanted to ask you. So I'm just going to buzz around. I found a note here. I wanted to ask you about pounce-wheel tracery. What is pounce-wheel tracery? Which you don't do, apparently, as—

[00:05:54.14]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No.

[00:05:54.74]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —Neil Welliver does.

[00:05:56.48]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. I tried it out as a way to get the little holes in the tracing for the fresco, but I found that it made a mechanical look for those little holes.

[00:06:07.86]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So regular, you mean?

[00:06:08.90]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Too regular.

[00:06:09.53]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And a pounce wheel?

[00:06:10.68]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's just a little round wheel.

[00:06:13.10]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Like in dressmaking?

[00:06:14.69]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It was sprockets—yeah, same thing.

[00:06:15.56]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, okay.

[00:06:15.98]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:06:16.52]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Pattern-making, you use that.

[00:06:17.47]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Pattern-making, right, right.

[00:06:19.19]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Okay.

[00:06:21.65]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But it hasn't worked for me.

[00:06:24.17]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, it feeds right into a quote which I took out of something you'd said. You said to someone at some point, "I always think of my work as a little primitive, not technically refined and unbelievable." You were relating this to Rudy's work. You said, "His is primitive in that way too, not smooth and slick in any way." So of course, any kind of a mechanical thing that gave an absolutely perfectly, regularly controlled design would be—do you think of your work still as primitive? I mean, do you still have that feeling about yourself that way?

[00:07:03.56]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It looks clunky to me. I think an awful lot of painters I know paint much better as far as the craft part. But it really is all about how much vigor is in the painting and how much—what kinds of meanings you're getting in there and how suggestive the painting is. So I'm not knocking myself out to elaborate into more refined things that don't seem to belong to the kind of meanings I'm suggesting. I just try to keep the technical level equal with the kind of strengths I'm trying to develop as a painter. And I could imagine it getting rougher if I felt that I wanted it to be more abstract or more simpler in some way. That would be all right if it were a little rougher, technically, let's say.

[00:08:03.14]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Would that keep it vigorous?

[00:08:04.97]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, that would be—

[00:08:05.65]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Clearly.

[00:08:05.81]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. If I felt I was getting the vigor in the design or in the intention, then yeah, that'd be fine.

[00:08:13.34]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Are you ever in the midst of work and suddenly feel that you've gone dead, or that the picture itself has lost that?

[00:08:22.01]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I feel that. I feel that sometimes. But I'm not always right about it. I just might be tired.

[00:08:28.43]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. What do you do? What happens?

[00:08:32.85]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I often put the painting upside down and try to work on it only from the abstract qualities and see if maybe I've just—it's settled into something too safe because I'm thinking too much of the objects or how they relate to each other according to nature, and that I could change the weight somewhere, and then that would set it off again. That's one way. Sometimes, I've noticed when I photograph something and then I look at it, I can see what's wrong with it. I can sometimes do that with a mirror. But like I'm translating it—

[00:09:15.81]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Backwards.

[00:09:16.35]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, or black and white. Sometimes, it'll show me something. But the hard part is to sometimes not feel like it's going dead just because you've been working on it for a long time. After about a month and it doesn't feel like it's really coming around, you start to get worried that you're doing something to prevent it from coming around.

[00:09:43.53]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:09:43.96]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: You're fussing with it, or you're thinking about things in too little—piddly kind of thought processes and not toward some big feeling.

[00:09:53.94]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Does it help—do you often work on—I see several things, of course, on the same theme, and I realize that you have things going. But do you work on a group of them ever simultaneously? Does that help to keep something alive?

[00:10:09.39]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I haven't done that very often. I usually try to finish something before I get too far into the next one, but then sometimes I think I've finished a painting, and then later I say, no, it's not finished. So then it'll turn out I'll have a couple things there.

[00:10:24.63]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I guess there's always a choice as to whether you'll go back to that painting if you've discovered something, let's say, along the way or whether you'll start in on a whole 'nother range of paintings on that same idea.

[00:10:37.63]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, that is the question often, whether you should—you're learning something, really. I find showing my work to people, to friends and to my husband and to my son, who's a terrific critic, great help just in finding out what seems to be working, what pleases people, what displeases them, confusion they seem to express if they can't figure out what's really going on. And then sometimes—

[Horn sounds.]

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:11:15.42]

I taught for, I guess, about ten years, a lot of it in Philadelphia, but some at Parsons here in New York. And it was good for a while. I started to feel burnt out on it near the end.

[00:11:30.00]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You mean after the ten years?

[00:11:31.50]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, yeah. So now what I do is to go to—if I'm asked to do a lecture, slide lecture, and often they're outside of New York so that I get a chance to go out on an airplane to them. And keeping the slide lecture fresh is enough of a challenge now.

[00:11:52.65]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's a chore, too, isn't it?

[00:11:54.06]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Somewhat. Sometimes, I feel I learn a little bit doing it from a new viewpoint. I think the last one I did, I did prints on one slide projector and paintings on the other side, and I tried to show how they interchange. And it was demanding on the audience because there was a lot of slides and a lot of talk. But it was good for me to learn that.

[00:12:16.85]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah, I should think so. It'd be good for us to hear it. I wouldn't want to put you through it, but—[They laugh.]

[00:12:21.94]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Takes forever.

[00:12:22.75]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:12:23.07]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Takes so long.

[00:12:23.80]

BARBARA SHIKLER: But there's so much area of interaction in your life of—let's respond just to that. Look, you have your printmaking, and you have your painting, and then you have your presence in Rudy's life and his presence in yours, and your relationship with poets. You're in and out of mediums galore. Are you sensible of that while—

[00:12:49.75]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I feel like I have a very rich life. And sometimes, it's just too rich. I can't get enough focused, although I try to stay in the studio a lot. But there's a lot going on in our family because Rudy's son's wife—Yoshiko Chuma— is a choreographer. She's continually working, and is interested in criticism about her work from us and the family. In fact, I collaborated with her on a stage set. That was a very exciting thing.

[00:13:20.65]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, that is exciting.

[00:13:22.42]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: A piece called "The Big Picture," which three women collaborated, basically—myself, Yoshiko, and Nona Hendryx, who's a rock star. And it was presented at DTW about two or three years ago. I did these sets that could be put on what you think of as garment center racks, but of varying sizes, and then they could be folded up and stored away. So this show could travel. It went to Spoleto Festival; it went to Atlanta; it went to Philadelphia. I think there's one other place. And I felt very gratified by the response to my work.

[00:14:10.50]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What was it? What was, in fact, what you put on to those racks?

[00:14:16.19]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I took Times Square imagery. I start—well, actually, I started—

[00:14:21.03]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Do you work on paper or fabric?

[00:14:22.43]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, I worked on scrim. I put black, very fat line drawings painted on

scrim with oil paint that you could see through. And there were eight or nine, I believe. So when they were all lined up in a row, with or without dancers in between them, you could see from—the distant one was a very far away space. In fact, it was an image of the Earth, the one hemisphere of the Earth, the curve of the Earth. And that was with white line on black scrim. And all the others were black line on white scrim, and you could look through. And as you got closer to the audience, the space got closer and closer up. So sort of that midway, we got to Times Square, the overview of Times Square, which is actually the same image as this print. I took the print from one of the images from the stage set, except I made the color afterwards.

[00:15:21.96]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What do you call this one?

[00:15:23.61]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: "Times Square Overview," in woodcut. And then the closest-up view as you got to details in Times Square, it got down to the street level and then under a movie marquee, which also said "The Big Picture" on it. And then the very front one was a close-up of a woman's face with sunglasses. And it actually looked like it could have been either Nona or Yoshiko. There was just some way that the face simplified could have easily been either one of them, or myself, maybe, if I had sunglasses. And these scrims could revolve and interchange with each other. And dancers could work in and out of them. And the light could change enormously, which did in New York, anyway. And also at the side of the stage was a standing airplane wing, a cutout of an airplane wing painted with black—black with white outline. So actually, there's my airplane wing coming in. I recognized that I had used it in one way, but it actually was—

[00:16:37.81]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, that's fascinating.

[00:16:40.81]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Here's from the model—a little cutout of the wing.

[00:16:43.87]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, I see. I see. Describe what you're showing me.

[00:16:46.59]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's a view of the wing looking from the same angle if you're sitting on a plane and looking out. And it sort of zooms away in space, and it shows the flaps relatively just in a schematic line drawing.

[00:17:04.05]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What you're showing me is about four and a half, five inches high?

[00:17:07.77]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:17:08.30]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And it's black poster paint, is it?

[00:17:10.62]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative], yeah.

[00:17:11.64]

BARBARA SHIKLER: With white.

[00:17:12.36]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: With white lines in between.

[00:17:14.01]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And it's cut out to echo the shape of the wing.

[00:17:17.70]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right. And it was standing, actually, in the wing. It became the point where the dancers came in in this stage set.

[00:17:24.69]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's very exciting.

[00:17:25.87]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So here we are.

[00:17:26.99]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's very exciting.

[00:17:28.01]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Another connection.

[00:17:28.89]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. And that was before you started working—

[00:17:32.16]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: With the drawings of the wing.

[00:17:33.45]

BARBARA SHIKLER: With the drawings of the wing.

[00:17:34.47]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: At this time, when I did this, I never thought the wing was going to be part of my aerial imagery. I just thought the wing is what you avoid when you get on the plane. [Laughs.]

[00:17:42.31]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Fascinating. Again, serendipitous. And how exciting to be involved with another medium. Do you do any dancing yourself? Were you tempted?

[00:17:52.69]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's a secret fantasy.

[00:17:53.87]

BARBARA SHIKLER: A-ha.

[00:17:54.73]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I wish I could have been a dancer in a way. I'm really involved with physical things.

[00:17:59.35]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:18:00.43]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I swim a lot, and I do yoga all the time to keep in shape to paint.

[00:18:05.68]

BARBARA SHIKLER: By yourself or with a group?

[00:18:07.42]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: With a group, and by myself too. So I have a lot of—I have tremendous sympathy for dancers and for that process of choreography and so forth, and go to see a lot of it. And when Edwin Denby, who was our close friend, was alive, who was a dance critic—

[00:18:29.95]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:18:31.21]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —I went with him a great deal of the time to see things, especially ballet.

[00:18:36.25]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That must be such a major loss in your life.

[00:18:38.27]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, it's true, absolutely.

[00:18:41.05]

BARBARA SHIKLER: If you would like to tell us who you like as a dancer, and then I'll get to who you like as painters, I really would like—

[00:18:50.58]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: As a dancer? Oh.

[00:18:50.76]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. What kind of dancing do you like?

[00:18:53.46]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I relate most to postmodern things that are happening now. The Douglas Dunn Company interests me a lot, their wit and their variety of approaches, and the way they use music, which is usually not directly choreographed to music. It's kind of parallel, coming like the way Merce Cunningham would use music.

[00:19:21.48]

Well, I like Merce Cunningham a lot. I used to follow Paul Taylor very carefully. I feel not so—always so interested in the choreographic style now, but I like what he's done with sets and costumes and stage positioning. Alex Katz has done some of that work that I like. I used to go to the New York City Ballet a great deal. I haven't very much since Edwin Denby died, because it reminds me so much of him.

[00:19:53.89]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:19:56.21]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: New York City mostly, New York City ballet.

[00:20:02.09]

BARBARA SHIKLER: All the cultures cross in your life. How does it—how do you ease in and

out, move in and out of Rudy's medium?

[00:20:15.14]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, film is his main medium now, although he's painting and doing photography too. I assist him occasionally on films. Sometimes, I'm the second camera person. If he's acting in it or something, or he needs another camera, I'll film a bit. And I always look. Whenever he's showing rushes, I look and have suggestions and reactions. And I just feel so interested in what he's doing. And I feel jealous that he can put an enormous amount of things into one movie, whereas I feel my subject excludes a lot of things. I'd love to be able to figure out how to do that, but I haven't yet. So I watch his films.

[00:21:03.22]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Does it tempt you to think about moviemaking?

[00:21:06.61]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, actually, about a week ago I said to Rudy, "Why don't we collaborate on a film about night, night imagery in New York—night imagery, let's say." And he seemed to like the idea, but we haven't really planned how to do this. There's so much time we need.

[00:21:23.78]

BARBARA SHIKLER: In one of the interviews—maybe it was the Pettit interview—he spoke about early on liking to get high up and photograph what was down below.

[00:21:35.05]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah. Right.

[00:21:35.35]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And I was thinking what a funny kind of a crossover that is. And it happened before you.

[00:21:41.27]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's true. Absolutely.

[00:21:41.70]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Before you happened. Isn't it funny? Well, that—you know.

[00:21:45.99]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. I mean, he's always giving me advice of how to get to a spot that I think—I say, "Gee, I'd like to work from that building looking down at that over there." And he says, "Well, the way I used to do it, you just go up to the top floor, and you try to find a way to the roof. Of course, now they lock them a lot. But you might—if you're lucky and it's a nice day, you might get up there and just hope they don't lock you in."

[00:22:07.75]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Or out.

[00:22:08.45]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Or out.

[00:22:10.72]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:22:11.29]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But it's true that I definitely notice those high-rise images that he did. I

mean, his whole feeling about New York, I felt like I got permission to go ahead and work with New York. I had the idea when I first came, but I hadn't figured out how to do it. And somehow it seemed practical looking at his work. I could get an idea, well, you just start here.

[00:22:33.65]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So there was an influence, then?

[00:22:36.19]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, absolutely.

[00:22:37.10]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, I see.

[00:22:37.51]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah, yeah. Here and there.

[00:22:39.20]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Very direct, you're saying.

[00:22:40.64]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, quite direct. Yeah. When I went up in airplanes, it seemed like I was veering away. And actually, see, I didn't go up in the high-rise buildings until after I'd gone up in airplanes. So it wasn't "one, two, three." It was like being interested in—to paint New York because of seeing his photographs, but not painting it the way he had photographed it for a long time until after I'd been doing all this work in airplanes. And it turned out that, well, actually, if I could get in high rises, that was in very similar processes as he went through.

[00:23:17.56]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You spoke about that a little bit on the last tape, how you got to the 15th floor, et cetera. Well, that's so fascinating that—so I should think that even while it's frustrating that you can't get to it all, there's a feed-in. There's a strong feed-in. We spoke a little bit just off tape last time about what has been described as parallel poetry, which is criticism of art by poets who use it as a point of departure. And I wondered whether that in your life has also fed into your feeling about your own work and feeling about poetry, and if you are tempted to draw from them or write any poetry yourself.

[00:24:12.26]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: My few attempts were so miserable that I said, "I don't have to do that." I like to read poetry from time to time. I feel like I'm reading a little bit here and there a lot, but I often don't sit down with a whole volume of anybody's poetry and go through it. Rudy often reads me things. He's very interested in and maybe influenced by John Ashbery. And so he'll read things to me. And often one thing we do when we drive to Maine is that we read to each other as the other one is driving. And we often read poetry then.

[00:24:51.68]

BARBARA SHIKLER: An enviable thing. Neither of you, number one, gets carsick.

[00:24:56.75]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, right.

[00:24:57.14]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Number two, how nice to have someone read poetry to you. I think poetry is most exciting when it's lively, aloud.

[00:25:05.81]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, yeah. Well, I go to a lot of readings, partly because it's easier for me to get to the poetry since I have reading problems with my eyesight.

[00:25:15.32]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:25:16.82]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: This is a way for me to get it without eyestrain. There are certain poets that I know that I follow all their work just because you do that.

[00:25:27.99]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Who are they?

[00:25:29.61]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Bill Berkson, Anne Waldman, John Godfrey. Well, I'll pretty much read everything of John Ashbery. Maureen Owen. Well, those are the main ones.

[00:25:56.37]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Okay.

[00:25:56.79]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I go to the St. Mark's Poetry Project a lot. So the poets have come in and out of there. I mean, also there's John Ashbery and Jimmy Schuyler, I'll always go to hear. And I read Frank O'Hara, and so forth, from that group of poets.

[00:26:19.78]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So you keep a cross-current of other painters who are so connected with these poets as well, other women like Jane Freilicher who was very much involved with them. And there's a nice feed-in between art that came out of that period and the poets. It's a very healthy kind of relationship, isn't it?

[00:26:45.75]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Hmm-mm [affirmative]. Wonderful, wonderful.

[00:26:48.13]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What I'm holding in my hand here is this marvelous catalog from a traveling show called "Making Their Mark—Women Artists Move Into the Mainstream," which you have a couple of paintings in, I see. It looks like a really glorious show. Did you want to talk about what you've shown in it? And then I'd love it if you would talk a little bit about these women who fill the pages here and fill the walls, I would assume. Who do you particularly respond to of the women who are painting today?

[00:27:28.69]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Elizabeth Murray is a real favorite. In this particular show, there's a glorious Jennifer Bartlett—not the one that's on the cover, but another one that's in there. I'm not sure it's reproduced because I don't remember seeing it. Katherine Porter is a painter I follow very closely. In fact, we're good friends. She lives in Maine. Her record's very strong.

[00:27:57.50]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:27:59.72]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Sylvia Mangold has been a close friend and a traveling companion in the sense that we came on the scene about the same age and developed in a similar way. Both have artist husbands. Both had children at the same time. In fact, we got together

because of getting the children together. And that set off a long association and a kind of a cross-stimulation.

[00:28:34.74]

Those are the painters I think that mean the most to me in this group. But I felt the show as a whole, not only did it have maybe some of the strongest work by individual artists that are in this show, the best work I've ever seen, although I hadn't often seen it at the time it was made, because maybe it was shown out of town or something. But the overwhelming number of artists, it seemed very strong.

[00:29:05.22]

Then there was this third feeling, which had to do with the energy and the excitement of the late '70s and early '80s when women were—you had the feeling that the best shows in New York were all by women, and that there were incredibly original things coming out of women working in new mediums. Joyce Kozloff was doing all this public sculpture—public tile painting, I guess you'd say. That seemed very exciting to me. It just seemed like new fields that women were able to move into and not have too much opposition. And then there was a tremendous amount of gallery shows, which you don't find anymore. The statistics really are that there are a lot fewer shows in relation to men now.

[00:29:57.39]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Really?

[00:29:58.00]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Really. It's very staggering. At the end of this catalog, it puts it out, how the proportion has changed again. There's a real backlash as far as the opportunities for women to show. And it seems like there are a lot fewer opportunities for younger women than I remember when I came on the scene. It felt like a lot of women I knew were getting shown at age 25 to 30. And I know very few now who are at that age getting a chance to show anything.

[00:30:30.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Actually, there are a lot of older women who are talking a lot about how difficult it is for older women to get shown—

[00:30:37.80]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right.

[00:30:38.28]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —because youth and novelty are so much sought.

[00:30:42.93]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, the mid-career artists have definitely got a problem these days. Because I do know lots of women who've been shown in good galleries, and then for some reason the gallery has folded, or whatever, and they have a terrible time finding a new setup.

[00:30:56.98]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Do you think that it's harder for women? And do you think that there's any reason for it, if it is?

[00:31:07.80]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, my personal experience, so far it hasn't been harder. I feel like I was on a really lucky time frame coming in just at the point when there was an interest in realism and interest in women being shown.

[00:31:23.94]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:31:26.07]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I feel lucky I have a gallery now, and I've had this long-term relationship with a gallery. I'm sure it's harder.

[00:31:36.42]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Do you feel the presence of—

[Recorder cuts in and out]

Okay. That last—

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:31:50.46]

We are playing with the idea of possibly talking about what's happening in the art world today, new currents. And neither one of us is sure what we want to say about it. [Laughs.] Why don't we just wing it and say what you're willing to say?

[00:32:04.90]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I'm just very confused about what really is happening. All I can think of is individual artists whose work seems to continue and have substance. And although I go to a lot of shows, I feel I don't even know how to evaluate what to go to anymore. So many younger people have come in. I don't know how to select the names. I'm now falling on recommendations of my son, because he goes out and looks at younger people.

And I found a lot of it doesn't really interest me at all. But here and there I'll find someone that seems to have a spark. But I don't feel a great wave of promise of any group of artists that makes me feel, "a-ha, something really here is worth waiting for, how long it takes to develop this, this should be encouraged." I just see individual artists struggling along as best they can, having a hard—younger women artists especially having a hard time finding a way to make a living.

[00:33:16.41]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I wonder why that is. Is it the absence of strong teaching? For instance, Yale used to be a very strong source of influence on people. What's happening? Why is it that it's so—

[00:33:31.43]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't think it's the fault of teaching, because I see some strong teachers out there, here and there. At Skowhegan, it's a very exciting experience. What happens every summer there in that some very strong artists come up there, and the students go wild for nine weeks, and then they try to make the rest of their life as exciting as that, finally get that work out.

[00:33:58.49]

But it doesn't seem like there's a territory that anybody can stay in that seems really to have a range so full as artists that I see that are now rather mature—someone the age of Elizabeth Murray. And maybe I wouldn't have been excited by her early work either, you know?

[00:34:23.85]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Do you think it's that? Well, there is such a speed with which they come and go.

[00:34:29.21]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:34:30.17]

BARBARA SHIKLER: There's no quiet time for them, certainly. And I'm not sure why that is, maybe the market.

[00:34:38.55]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think the market certainly is—I feel the market ten years ago was so expansive, and people felt such confidence in buying art. And I wonder if they feel that way anymore, unless it's real solid blue chip or very, very—the investment thing. I'm not sure a lot of people really buy for investment, but they don't want to take too many chances with unformed people. There must be some people that buy it, too, because the art market is continuing in some way.

[00:35:19.47]

BARBARA SHIKLER: But there isn't a cohesive current for some reason, and it's hard to know why.

[00:35:22.95]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't think there ever really was too much. It was forced upon us. In the '50s, Abstract Expressionist was the style, I mean, as far as—considered the importance, it was considered—although we all know that there were very interesting artists working in other styles.

[00:35:40.35]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Sure. The Tenth Street Galleries were a perfect example of that. But somehow because they were all contained, it seemed as though there was a consistency.

[00:35:51.14]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: You could get around to see most of it. And you knew where the edges of it were. I don't feel any ability to get around to see this work and still have the time to do my own work, because it's spread so far over town, and the quality is so uneven, or up and down, let's say. So you might hit two good shows in one territory one weekend and then miss something very good way up on 97th Street or so.

[00:36:19.00]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:36:19.69]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I just find it hard—I end up sometimes spending more time in museums even with contemporary shows, but feeling like that's a way to get something really—

[00:36:29.65]

BARBARA SHIKLER: To get it all together?

[00:36:30.64]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —get something really happening for me. But I always intend to go out every Saturday morning and see. And then sometimes after two hours I say, "That's enough. Now get in the studio."

[00:36:45.75]

BARBARA SHIKLER: First of all, it's physically very tiring to get across the city.

[00:36:49.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Very tiring. Oh, yeah.

[00:36:49.65]

BARBARA SHIKLER: This is truly the problem.

[00:36:51.01]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

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[00:00:02.88]

BARBARA SHIKLER: [In progress] —going, but it's—Okay. This is Tuesday, October 31, 1989. I'm with Yvonne Jacquette, interview number five, side one. Hi, Yvonne.

[00:00:16.96]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Hi, Barb. [They laugh.]

[00:00:19.03]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What were we talking about before this technical stuff got in the way? Oh, you asked me—

[00:00:25.03]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Artists such as Jane Freilicher, and Lois Dodd, and Janet Fish—I asked you whether you thought there were any connections between us, because you mentioned that you had interviewed all of them. And then you gave it back to me to say what I thought after you had some ideas about it. But my feeling is that all of us have a very deep pleasure in seeing, and the searching for an image, and then the fleshing it out as we find it and kind of all the feelings that all the parts bring up as we develop an image.

[00:01:08.55]

The sides of the things that make up the total painting don't come quickly to any of us, I think. I mean, none of us try to get an instant flash in the painting. There's always kind of a complicated structure and maybe a complicated narrative—not a literal narrative, but a formal narrative work. I think all of us have particular formal angles that we come in to painting on that are quite different, but they're sort of equivalent to each other. Lois has a kind of structure in certain paintings that comes from an early connection to Cubism, I think. That although it's now quite submerged, I see this is still active. But I think it's the seeing that ties us together.

[00:02:06.23]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And Jane, how do you—

[00:02:07.43]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Jane—Jane seems to have a luminosity in her paint that's really glorious that has to do an equivalent of the effect of seeing, and the glow of objects in nature. That's the thing I think of first, anyway. And a very interesting, straightforward, honest touch, but one that comes from having seen a lot of French painting, very rich sense of paint.

[00:02:45.54]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:02:46.77]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And Janet has an amazing eye for detail and an incredible ability to put together disparate things and to observe them with a lot of forthright energy, not soften them up or tone them down any way to make them fit a painting. The painting comes up to the life of her observation, very energetic observation.

[00:03:19.53]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:03:19.79]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So I don't know how I can characterize myself. But I think the seeing is where we tie together. Seeing, and then having an idea about translating into very vigorous paint, sort of all knowing that it's a fiction that we're creating, even though we're very tied to looking, and learning from looking. We know that it's what makes the painting that's what counts. But we go a long ways down the path of looking to find what to get to translate into the paint, compared to a lot of painters I know.

[00:04:01.85]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And in contrast to painters who are considerably further back in the source of their excitement and art, you never forget that your concerns with space tie you all together even while your work might look very different. You're all involved with maintaining the concepts of those philosophies which emerged certainly by the '50s, but before, as we know. But philosophically, we're given very loud voices by the '50s, even though you're all different ages.

[00:04:52.22]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:04:52.37]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I guess Jane most directly reflects that period in which she came to maturity. It seems to me that she does.

[00:05:02.39]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, like Abstract Expressionists and the Hofmann way of teaching. I don't think she's so much a part of the overall field idea of a painting of a canvas. But the energy of the paint and the sort of finding a—not exactly a sign, and not exactly a symbol—but a certain way of the object becoming some suggestion, very highly suggestive force on the canvas that isn't just from nature. It comes from art, too.

[00:05:50.05]

The way she plays with the subject on the canvas in relation to traditional French painting, like 19th century French painting, there's a dialogue there I feel that's very interesting. There's a fresh look for a modern late 20th century subject, but still making it look very—as if we'd been used to seeing it.

[00:06:21.39]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. That's a good way of saying that.

[00:06:23.94]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Her still lifes, which look very natural, which are not the still lifes anybody else has ever made. And just the way she places things, or the combinations of the inside and the outside, the weights of things, the weights of objects. That's sort of what strikes me about Jane very much is that with that way of putting paint on—I think she uses rags a lot—there's a way that it gets really lavished onto the canvas. Never too much, but it's always very—it's almost caressed, but there's a lot of variety, actually, in the way it's put on. But there's a way that some objects seem amazingly light, and other things seem to have a heaviness that's because the paint is really thick and saturated. But it's a painterly weight. It has nothing to do with—

[00:07:20.04]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. And yet it never seems to be one of those elements in a painting that dominates in such a way that you notice it first.

[00:07:28.08]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Yeah.

[00:07:28.41]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's only if you try and seek it out it seems that it says something like that to you.

[00:07:33.23]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. No, it's the harmony that sort of gets you at first. It's amazing that these colors work together, and they're all really acting on each other.

[00:07:41.91]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. As though—well, a really good artist, it always seems to me—a writer, a musician, painter—in a sense opens a door through which you walk, and you think it's always been there, but in fact it never was open before. And you just take it for granted as you walk into that next room. And there it all is saying, "Oh, well, of course I knew that all along."

[00:08:04.66]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:08:05.46]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. And yet the choices all of you have made, ultimately, those things which are your signatures, are so different. You know, the style, just simply a thing about style.

[00:08:20.74]

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

Apropos of what we were talking about the differences between you and yet the overall motivating force that seems to guide all of you. Just since the '50s, there have been continual revamping of the concepts and definitions of modernism. And I assume you all see yourselves as modernists. Maybe I'm wrong. I don't know how you see yourself. And I wondered whether you identified with any of those concepts and whether you feel them behind you or in your head.

[00:08:59.71]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The concepts—

[00:09:00.49]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Of modernism, and whether they concern you. They're always applied to you. Critical language is continually tying you to one or another concept, trying to relate you to the past, trying to relate you to the present. But do you identify with any of those concepts of modernism? And do they propel you? What does, if it doesn't? [Laughs.] Seventeen questions at once.

[00:09:31.18]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yes, the whole connection to 20th century art propels me intensely. I guess one of the things I think I want to do is to keep discovering images, whole pictures that haven't been painted before where the subject matter maybe is surprising, or the way the subject matter interacts with the viewer is surprising. Even though it might be a bit connected to tradition, I feel like I want to make a 20th century landscape, because that's what I've been involved with. And I want to find the way—I assume other people—because I sort of imagine if I see something like that, then maybe some other people might see it that way, too. Or if I put it out, maybe they'll understand that they have seen it that way.

[00:10:33.14]

The act of looking, how it is that we can see now? You know, how—it's not just what our eyeballs are doing. But that interests me as well. But because we've gone through a tremendous change in speed, and understanding of time, and, well, maybe an understanding

of how myth has played in, those are some of the things I think about that I think affect the way I make choices. I don't start off with myth. But I've been aware of how the Abstract Expressionists dealt with it. And since I'm not doing that exactly, I still try to have some kind of an equivalent for that.

[00:11:32.40]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Myth in terms of those basically motivating currents of human feeling? Is that what you're talking about? And effort?

[00:11:40.32]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah.

[00:11:40.65]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You're not talking about anything else but that?

[00:11:44.70]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think so. Yeah.

[00:11:45.03]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How does it concern you, then? And how does it manifest itself?

[00:11:52.66]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I keep trying to find a language to express my own emotional quandaries, or set of balances, or difficult moments, sometimes—difficult periods, really. I start off with a subject that I think at first level describes one thing, but I really intend it to teach me something else as I work with it. Or I want to find out things through it by the way my responses, my intuitive responses get brought in. And I often find that in hindsight, I can look back at a painting done six months ago and say, now I know that was about a very deep-seated anxiety, or that was about a connection to a certain person, or that was a number of little dialogues that are very basic kind of dialogues, I feel.

[00:13:12.02]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And it's something in the way that painting is constructed, or subject chosen, or the representation of space, et cetera, it tells you that?

[00:13:21.92]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Space, or the light, particularly. I think the light is a key thing. How exactly a particular kind of light, how that will play into the painting will tell me a lot later.

[Telephone ringing.]

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:13:38.08]

Well, the first steps into the night light came about during a very intense concern for a friend who I thought was dying at the time. And so it started off as an emotional solace and a reminder of something very upsetting. And as I continued with the night light thing, I found that I could extend it into all kinds of other emotional territories. I could start thinking about the night light as something very seductive in the city, and something almost dangerously seductive, I'd say.

[00:14:24.94]

Then I started thinking about light as intervals in space and a way to play with unexpected intervals. So as if I was thinking about music where some of the notes were left out. So by playing with darkness, bigger amounts of darkness than I thought seemed normal, let's say, I started stretching the darkness between the lights at times to see if I could make you hold your breath a bit. Have as few possible lights to hold the space, and the lights had to be

absolutely precisely right.

[00:15:10.46]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What I hear, just to briefly interrupt you, very briefly, is here an interesting fusion between an aesthetic concept and going for the viewer's emotional response, as it were. It's going for the spatial jugular, shall we say? [They laugh.] Well, go ahead. I—

[00:15:33.77]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, let me think what else.

[00:15:36.27]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So you were going for longer spaces. And by that, what did you envision as a viewer reaction, let's say? Or, what did you see when you looked at it again and you saw those spaces? What did they represent?

[00:16:00.75]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Kinds of tension, emotional tension. At some point, I felt some of what I was working with was a kind of distanced emotional quality, kind of alienation, as they used to call it. But just something where I felt a little separated, a little too distanced, and I was concerned about it. And I just wanted to start looking at it and working with it. And then I think I started to turn around and come in another direction—the opposite direction from that, after having played with that a bit. And I started wanting to make kind of cozy night paintings, or paintings where the night was really very pleasurable, not frightening, but fun. And to also play with certain mixed qualities in a night painting that would almost contradict each other, or else—well, contradict is not a bad word. Play against each other. Little ironies in the subject that would be only you could see at night.

[00:17:25.51]

I was doing a painting in Washington D.C. from the Washington Monument of the Jefferson Memorial, which looked like a funny little cupcake at night, or a cup on a saucer. So just by the way the night lighting accented certain rings of that, or Saturn with its rings. And then very close by, from that high up you could see a lit tennis bubble. It was illuminated from inside. And it was sort of pink and green, had these lights coming through it that emphasized it's—also it's not circular, but oval-shaped.

[00:18:04.66]

So it was there was a correspondence with this tennis bubble to this Jefferson Memorial. And there were kind of a link from one to the other with some highways, which had some dense traffic. And then a low flying airplane, which hinted at a totally different kind of quality, because there were four bridges right behind the Jefferson Memorial, and one of which had just been crashed into by a falling airplane in a winter storm.

[00:18:42.22]

So there was this hint of imminent disaster. And then there was this funny leisure day activity with the tennis bubble. And then there was this historical thing, which didn't look like it supposed to look at daytime because of the night light. All those things coexisting, I just liked that kind of little asides, little directions going one way, and then veering off another way, as if you were writing a poem that you just would stop and go into another framework. Or not a framework, but you just put very different kinds of things together.

[00:19:25.81]

BARBARA SHIKLER: If I were a critic and I were to read into that in addition to some of your concerns of space and design—but if I were to say to you, "Yvonne Jacquette is commenting on the contrasting qualities of American life today," would that be an appropriate interpretation?

[00:19:54.12]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah. As much as I can do from that vantage point, that aerial view. For instance, the triptychs often would give me a chance to play with very opposing things. I know when I did some work in Minneapolis at the Hubert Humphrey Metrodome, I put that as the center of a triptych. And its night activity, and so forth, played against office buildings that had office workers and cleaning up—you could see right through the windows, and there were these people with vacuum cleaners, and so forth.

[00:20:35.24]

And I could sort of imagine a mythic thing about this American city with the leisure activities kind of being the center of the city, rather than the old-time square, or the marketplace, or something, and the flanking high rise office buildings as being a bit ghostly reminders of our daytime compulsive work habits, but then sort of having to be serviced by another set of people, the night workers, just seemed like a lot of things have reversed in our life.

[00:21:25.69]

And the night sort of showed that up for me. And in that particular setup, sometimes I can't find things that represent as many things as that seemed to, and put them all together. I can just work with a smaller avenue of activities. But it's this trying to find an American subject that is very expansive, that has driven me as well. And the night work provides a lot of unexpected things. I mean, I didn't even know when I would start a painting that these things would come up, what they were about.

[00:22:08.93]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Because you were using your mind with your eye, as you said, not just your eyeballs. Philip Slater—I've forgotten the name the book, but it had the word "loneliness" in it—studied some of the reasons for what was then called, as you say, alienation. One of the things he made reference to were these tall buildings in which people were enclosed as in boxes or coffins, and cut away from each other.

[00:22:35.84]

And it occurs to me that a John Sloan where he has night people—not a John Sloan. A Hopper, an Edward Hopper, will have night people who are clearly lonely. But there is a sense of community, even so, the community of night people, as it were. And your people, your high-rise people, are each separate figures in their boxes, visible to you. I guess that's something in our time that you are responding to.

[00:23:08.22]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, for a period, my earlier night paintings I think were very involved in that separation between where you were looking out into something else that was possibly very lonely for you, imagining another viewer being there, looking. At the point when I started to go, I think, first to San Francisco and then to Japan, I started wanting to find the connections that kept people together, even if I were fairly high up.

[00:23:43.62]

And in some of the Japanese paintings, I looked down into alleyways, two or three alleyways that would sort of surround a building where there are a lot of little shops and eating places. And I got involved in figures there and figures carrying things maybe from one little shop to another, or something. I felt more comfortable with the way I thought of the figures in that. And what those streets were like at night, they were much less frightening than the office buildings.

[00:24:22.13]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Less impersonal, much more intimate.

[00:24:24.35]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Yeah.

[00:24:24.44]

BARBARA SHIKLER: As a matter of fact, you made reference to one of them in one of the interviews I'd read of you, in which your stepson was bringing takeout food home, and he was one of the figures you'd painted.

[00:24:38.42]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. Yeah.

[00:24:38.81]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, it is easier then, isn't it, to see real people?

[00:24:44.07]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I mean, I had to get closer down to the ground. I had to start coming down to the 15th floor rather than being on the 42nd, or the 68th, or whatever.

[00:24:53.02]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, the two cities, then, New York and Japan, there are similarities and there are differences, I would assume. Can they be seen from a distance, from a great, great distance, then? Once you get beyond the little alleys and the little stores that characterized your view from the 15th floor, what are—is there a different mood projected really high up, between the Eastern and the Western cities?

[00:25:27.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Um, I'm not sure about the mood.

[00:25:28.98]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, for you, is there something told to you?

[00:25:31.95]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: One thing that is very significantly different in Japan is that the night signs, the neon and the attractive different colored signs, go right up the sides of the buildings quite high up. So it's as if the Japanese have built those signs to relieve that tension of you being in a high rise looking down from a very high point. You can see those purple neons at 40 stories up because they're up there. They put them right up the side of the building in some sections of town.

[00:26:09.30]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So they're playing to a new audience?

[00:26:11.19]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. That's right. Some of them may have been because the railroad goes around Tokyo at about two and half stories or three stories high. So there are a lot of signs that sort of hover from maybe ten stories up, so that if you're sitting in the train looking out, you can see this ad which you might not even see from the street very well, because it's sitting on the top of a building that's already that high.

[00:26:42.76]

And some of these signs turn out to be quite funny. I had them translated to me. The symbols for them and the kind of logos represented are very cute, some of them. I mean, they had an idea for funny little animal imagery or to signify something. Like there's a snail, a big snail, in one of my paintings, and it really means an apartment that will fit around you very comfortably, a cozy little house for you to have.

[00:27:20.21]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Uh-huh [affirmative]. Snug. [Laughs.]

[00:27:20.93]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Right. So a snail is a good sign for that.

[00:27:23.87]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's funny. That is funny. Did you have a different feeling as a painter in Japan than you did here?

[00:27:34.95]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't think it was very different. I think I was used to New York City night light and Times Square. I was used to Chinatown here and in San Francisco. It was just that there was much more of the brilliant light. And there were only certain things that I could understand culturally. A lot, of course, has escaped me since I wasn't Japanese.

[00:28:01.76]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, as a painter, though, your concerns were always lively. Your concerns are the energy of a place. And that energy translated onto your canvas. So clearly, the westernization of that country is in a sense determining your painting. Had you been painting Japan some years back, you'd be in a different—

[00:28:26.96]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. That's right. And I think I took my Western way of looking—although I have been influenced by Japanese prints to some extent, I think that sort of came back up into the paintings when I was there. But I think my vision is much more Western, especially picking the city and the night thing to work with, than it would have been if I had gone much earlier, or if I had gone out into the country. Actually, I did a little sketching out in the country. And it just looked terribly much like ancient Japanese art. I couldn't get over their—I kept looking at their brush paintings. And now here I was doing it. And I rejected that work as significant work.

[00:29:17.28]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You rejected it in as much as it reflected another artist's sensibility too clearly.

[00:29:23.46]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Too clearly. Yeah.

[00:29:25.32]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How would Japanese prints have been evoked for you in looking at the city?

[00:29:32.13]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I think a lot of those actually were done from vantage points. There's a lot of slightly looking down on figures. It's the position of the figure to the activity in the street, or on the bridge, or whatever.

[00:29:49.15]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, of course, it makes perfect sense now, doesn't it?

[00:29:51.95]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The scale of things, I feel, was something very familiar to me.

[00:29:58.09]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Also the tilt sometimes of space. Yes.

[00:30:00.58]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The tilt. That's what I mean. The aerial view. Yeah. And I mean, compared to Chinese painting, the Japanese figure is much more active in the landscape.

You're closer up. And it's significant that you can see some of the real structures of industry, or bridges, or so forth. And since I'm very interested in the combinations of industrial, and commercial, and other man-made things mixed with nature—mixed with pure nature, let's say, the landscape—that's why I think that was more significant to me, the Japanese view. There's a bit of drama in Japanese art that I find very attractive compared—more drama than in Chinese art.

[00:30:55.82]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Something like that excitement of those movies, or reading books about the natural man that's thrust into a sophisticated society. In a sense, it's a similar kind of dynamic, that contrast which excites for some reason because of its extreme opposites.

[00:31:14.63]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But also, sometimes you can see why something looks the way it does because the nature—the geography, let's say, has started off a certain situation. Maybe there's a river coming through a place. And so they build on the riverbank. And they do certain things because of how wide that river is, or how accessible the boat travel is. Or whatever is going on because of the original place gets complicated by what man does to it. And the way buildings tilt toward the river, or away from the river, or in their alignments, how certain places are so evolved with a grid because they're not near any other important natural phenomenon like a mountain, or a river, or an odd kind of landscape.

[00:32:17.10]

BARBARA SHIKLER: An irregularity.

[00:32:18.12]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: An irregularity. Yeah.

[00:32:19.68]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So man imposes his own rather boring sense of order—necessary, but boring—and you pick up those contrasts.

[00:32:27.60]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's what I look at. Yeah.

[00:32:29.01]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's fascinating. Because in this book, *Making Their Mark—Women Artists Move into the Mainstream*, which is the catalog of that traveling show, there was some reference in one of the articles to the women as shapers—women who brought to the art movement today a kind of a re-psychologizing—it's a terrible word. I'm having trouble with it—re-psychologizing of abstract painting.

[00:32:57.97]

So in a sense, really what I take it to mean—and I wonder whether you are one of those who are—well, you are. You are one of those who insist upon maintaining the human psychology as a presence in paintings of abstract concepts, paintings that employ abstract concepts. And this is really what you're saying. Do you think of women as the shapers of the re-psychologizing of American, of abstract painting?

[00:33:36.46]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. That seems too grandiose a theme. I've been involved in the work of some male artists who I feel are equally interested along with me in looking at what's going on in the landscape, how things symbolize activity, things that are continuing, things that are kind of falling away. I guess if that's what you call psychologizing, really sort of meditating on how things are affecting us all.

[00:34:15.82]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I think the reason that this is such a funny point, a stopping point, is because for so long you had attitudes like Greenberg's in which the whole idea of a subject and subject matter was anathema. And the idea of maintaining the concepts of Abstract Expressionism while introducing human drama, which is really what you're doing, or just drama at all, or subject matter, is still a stumbling block for some people who see it as an invention. And maybe it's natural to see it as an invention, a reinvention of women. Because people are reading into everything that women do as meaning something that has larger significance, as well as smaller. Does that make any sense to you?

[00:35:13.23]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, if you took statistics of a lot of leading artists and said what are they involved in, maybe you could come out and say, "Look, a lot of women seem to be looking for very personal connections to their work. They're not just involved in formal values." But even someone who might appear to be involved in formal values really isn't. I mean, if you really look carefully enough at any artist, you see a lot of things emerging, although some of it may be subconscious to them—even so-called artists totally involved in pure abstraction.

[00:35:55.60]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Does someone come to mind?

[00:35:58.04]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, Alex Katz, who's a great friend and a mentor in a sense. I've learned so much from him and have admired his work. And the areas that he has trouble dealing with are very important. I mean, as if what he can't look at directly is coming in there indirectly, I just said he probably couldn't talk about it clearly. He may appear to be avoiding certain emotional responses in some of his work that I would want to see. But there are some works where they are there, and they're very powerful. So it's hard to categorize any group of people saying they have a bigger run on this kind of quality or something.

[00:37:08.96]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So what I hear you saying is to some extent some of the slogans and standards of the language of the women's movement is not—it ain't necessarily so. The women don't have a priority on dealing with areas of feeling, et cetera. Although I would assume that in women versus men there is a cultural difference. What we're really talking here is in the painting or in the art whether that's so, I guess.

[00:37:51.41]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:37:51.86]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I wonder if you agree with it. Always has seemed to me that there are differences in the way women and men work sometimes, and whether more is made of that than need be. In other words, if problems never had existed around that, would we talk about it at all? In other words, had there not been inequities in some way socially, would it matter? Does it matter to you as a painter?

[00:38:20.09]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, sometimes thinking of what I think some men have trouble getting to gives me an idea of—well, maybe I can get to that. I mean, it gives me a little avenue that I might find some energy. So I think you can think about it that way as something to use. And seeing the show of women making their mark, I thought it was a remarkable show that there are so many strong women with so many diverse attitudes. There's so many styles. There's so many attacks in there, and a huge range from very strong, very tough work, to very delicate and very ethereal work. You certainly couldn't categorize any one kind of work.

[00:39:09.74]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You certainly couldn't.

[00:39:10.98]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Just that the energy of this time period, 1970 to 1985, is astonishing. I think there were a lot of women who felt the permission to really go running with their activity and painting.

[00:39:31.13]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So that was a revitalizing.

[00:39:33.26]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: There was something really going on.

[00:39:35.84]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And it did affect the art world, then.

[00:39:38.39]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah. Oh, yeah. I mean, how you define what's important to each sex, I don't know. That's going to take a long time to sort out, I think. But whether there's an effect from talking about it, it's certainly there were. And there's a lot of effect from people dealing with where they had had doors closed and could now open some by thinking about it or doing something about it. I mean, the fact that galleries and museums were beginning to show women's work made terrific energy for women to work.

[00:40:18.30]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Although it was never—according to the tables in the back, it never got close to 50 percent.

[00:40:23.91]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh no. No way.

[00:40:24.48]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It always stayed not more than a third, if that.

[00:40:27.99]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah. And it's still odd because every art school has got a lot more women students than men. And that's still a very tantalizing fact.

[00:40:41.46]

BARBARA SHIKLER: If you look through the book, or talk to any one of a million women, they'll all tell you about somebody making the remark about no great women artists, et cetera, et cetera, except for a few exceptions. And that, of course, is extremely galling. But it seems to me that in those 15 years, there was a lot of variety. Do you feel that there was a lot of innovation?

[00:41:14.14]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm hmm [affirmative]. Definitely. Oh, yeah. Absolutely. Sculptural work—I mean, there's some groundbreaking artists in that show. Elizabeth Murray is one great example.

[00:41:29.81]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Certainly she is a groundbreaking artist without question about it. But is she—now, do you feel that she's groundbreaking in the largest sense conceptually?

[00:41:50.18]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:41:50.91]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You do.

[00:41:51.07]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah. But one thing that just occurred to me, my experience was that because there were a lot of women getting encouragement, permission, getting work out there, selling it, showing it, talking to each other about it, there became less of a feeling that to be a woman artist who was really active was not such an odd thing to be anymore. You weren't really so out there on a limb such as must have been for Louise Nevelson, for example, or Georgia O'Keeffe. You didn't have to be incredible. You didn't have to give up everything to do it. You could have a full life with a family and still be very serious. And it was just like a normal life, just like the normal life of any male artist that could have been around in 1920 in the United States.

[00:42:44.34]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Sure. They make reference to that in that book, how Lee Krasner put aside her painting even though initially she was considered to be a more interesting artist than he was, of course, depending upon the time period we're talking about. And there were others who did put aside their work. But Nevelson, and especially O'Keeffe, had men behind them who were concerned with aesthetic ideas. And that was what helped them, too, as well as them being powerhouses, I think. But now, women without big, big bulwarks behind them can in fact tackle the whole business of painting or being in the arts anyway. It's not always painting.

[00:43:33.90]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah. And there's a support system, especially in New York. I mean, I think it might be in other big cities, or in maybe little enclaves outside of the cities where there are enough artists with a dialogue and kind of sparking each other. That makes a big difference.

[00:43:56.04]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What are some of those organizations? And are you involved with—

[00:44:00.01]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I wasn't thinking so much of organizations. I was thinking of groups of artists that sort of have affinities, or maybe by even proximity of a couple of artists who live close to each other and see each other a lot, start to visit each other, and start having a big effect on each other.

[00:44:18.31]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. Do you do that? Do you have it?

[00:44:21.61]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I've had it in different times. When my son was first born, I got to know Sylvia Mangold.

[00:44:30.94]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Sylvia Mangold. Yes.

[00:44:31.93]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Because she had some baby clothes to give away. And then we started babysitting together, or alternating, or seeing each other in the park. And then Susan Shatter became part of that. That kind of little enclave provided a terrific energy and dialogue for a couple of years. And then as our kids got bigger, it kind of fanned out into bigger groups of people where we had more time to spend with other artists. And when we went to Maine in the summers, because of visiting Alex Katz to start with, there were a number of other artists there who visited each other a lot and gave each other criticism.

[00:45:17.75]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So what you're saying is that the sense of community now is available to all artists. We're not talking only about women. But of course, the idea that the marketplace in the old-fashioned sense, the agora, is open to them as well, is a good thing, even though the inequities still exist.

[00:45:40.05]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. I think it seems to be a little harder to have this kind of dialogue once you get to a certain age. Somehow the things change a great deal. You have to find new ones all the time. You can't expect the same one to continue all your life. People move away, or change their habits, or their need to see other people, or whatever. I find it's —

[00:46:07.88]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. That's true.

[00:46:09.81]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Maybe that's just an aging thing that would happen no matter what.

[00:46:12.47]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I would think that that is inevitable.

[00:46:15.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Long-term relationships suddenly are strained or estrangements, that sort of a surprise.

[END OF TRACK AAA_ jacque89_4618_m]

[00:00:06.20]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Side two of interview number five with Yvonne Jacquette, 31st of October, 1989, talking about estrangements of old alliances. It's sort of Orwellian, isn't it, the shifting sets of alliances that come and get—are operative for a while and then break up and other shifts take place. Do you have something in mind when you say that?

[00:00:36.24]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I was thinking that it seems to be younger artists that I spend a lot of time with these days. Maybe because their vision isn't so set as mine. [Laughs.] And it's easier for me to relate to them. Or it may be that older artists that I've known for a long time are very sensitive now about showing work to other artists.

[00:01:06.35]

I mean, I find it's a really very complicated act to show to someone, and to get responses that are, if you want to be very honest, if you want to say something about work that you don't care for it completely, it's tricky. Some people are really—will cut it out. You only can say something very positive, and that's it. And so therefore it's hard to maintain a relationship that seems really healthy.

[00:01:36.67]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's murderous. Especially if you have to step on your tongue all the time.

[00:01:40.40]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, right.

[00:01:44.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So that in your role as an older woman with younger artists, funny to

think of you that way because—[laughs], but in that role, of course, they would be eager to have an exchange of ideas.

[00:02:01.93]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: As I was for the older artists that I saw earlier.

[00:02:05.76]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. And so that's a good energy. Maybe that's as it should be, since peers find it difficult to consider themselves, the literal translation of that word, equals. [Laughs.] And there's ego that's been bolstered, I suppose.

[00:02:24.40]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I find that women artists that I've known have an easier time. Now, this may be cultural or maybe a feminist viewpoint. I've been able to maintain dialogues with women artists—my peers, easier—

[00:02:41.32]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, that's interesting.

[00:02:42.89]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —than with the male artists, some of the male artists, the older male artists I know, or the same age. And younger male artists I'm having interesting times talking to. And they seem interested in what the dialogue is.

[00:02:57.77]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Young/old is very different than—but it's interesting, and I wonder whether the aspect of competition is in there somehow, rears its head, those who don't want that kind of dialogue, or whether it's possible that— It's almost as though when you're trying to remember something or keep something of your own in your mind, and somebody talks while you're trying to get it together, you lose it. And I'm wondering whether that happens. It's almost as though you spend all this time trying to become what you want to be as an artist. If somebody imposes their view on it, I wonder if it doesn't just knock it out of your head a little.

[00:03:44.03]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, that's true. You have to be very strong to withstand it. You have to keep remembering why you're doing it and what it's about for you. And if you've just begun a new work or something and you might be a little frail on it, it can be very upsetting.

[00:03:58.98]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I suppose you don't bring that out for that kind of dialogue.

[00:04:03.84]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:04:04.59]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And what's to be gained by it, in fact, for you? Why would you bring out a—why do you want to hear from another artist about your own work? Are you concerned, then for the—

[00:04:22.08]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, well, there's lots of reasons. You can't really see it completely yourself. There's always a big gap, I find, between what I'm doing as I'm doing it and actually being able to see how the whole work looks altogether, because some parts of it are much more recently put in, let's say. Then there's the aspect of if you're trying a subject that's kind of new for you, or you're angling in on it in a way that you don't know how it's going to work

out, you want to see whether what you had in mind at all is reading. Or are you starting to suggest something lively by putting these things together in a way? Are you just hinting at the liveliness? Are you really getting it? Or are you—do you need to work a lot harder to get it? That kind of thing.

[00:05:26.26]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Presuming that that other person will be sensitive to your goals and your premise.

[00:05:35.27]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, right. And who knows? Right.

[00:05:39.20]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And who knows whether they're up to the job. How often do you go in for that? Gosh.

[00:05:48.80]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well—

[00:05:49.04]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Do you have a group of people with whom you do have that kind of relationship now?

[00:05:52.79]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes, I think. In Maine, there's three or four artists that I really do like to show the work to. And I'll listen to whatever they say. I ask questions about how is this coming off, even if it's not finished, or I feel it's the beginning of something.

[00:06:16.00]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Do you consider it prying for me to ask you who they are?

[00:06:22.30]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it's okay. Katherine Porter is one artist that I like who I've gotten very good viewpoints from. Alex Katz has been very good at some periods. Even if he doesn't want to say what he fully feels, I can get a lot of information from him. So it's very useful. If he doesn't—if he doesn't feel like he can put it all out there, I can get a glimmer. And then it'll give me something to work on myself.

[00:06:56.48]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It isn't damning with faint praise, is it, when that happens?

[00:07:00.37]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, it's just like he can tell me how it looks at the moment.

[00:07:08.70]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Who else's eye do you like?

[00:07:12.23]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I like the eye of Rackstraw Downes. And I think we've had a lot of influence on each other at periods, not so much recently. But I don't think we can talk about our work anymore because that happened a while back.

[00:07:35.98]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's too bad.

[00:07:36.97]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Well, things happen.

[00:07:40.02]

BARBARA SHIKLER: They do indeed. They do indeed. I always wonder what it is that pushes something out of place like that, that had its own very comfortable process.

[00:07:50.83]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it's usually other things that have other sides of life than just the art. If it's just the art, usually you can kind of work it through. But when complicated life situations get—

[00:08:01.96]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah, life situations, and I think the intrusion of all the other voices in the art world besides the painters. And I wondered whether you would comment—you know, you're concerned about the interaction then of your work on other people's sensibilities. A critical response to your work is, as we giggled about, it's very varied. But there's a lot of critical response to your work. And it's, from my vantage point, less constructive than perhaps painters. And I wondered what sort of interaction takes place there, the effect of the myriad chorus of voices that comes at you. And who's been helpful, if there has been someone?

[00:08:58.76]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, there have been some people. Carter Ratcliff wrote an article about the prints, primarily, in relation to paintings at a point where I was pretty fresh in on the night painting and just evolving new processes of getting both the painting and print going. He had a lot of—I don't know if there's so much questions in the article he wrote, but there were things that I had to think about for years.

[00:09:27.61]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Really?

[00:09:28.70]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Probably I could go back and read it now and say, now I have another idea about what he meant by that. There's some way that he didn't pin things down really tightly that has been wonderful, because there's room to ruminate now. If you start taking this line, maybe you can think about going in that direction or something. I just find his—he's a complicated writer. And sometimes it's not even—one isn't really sure what he means. But there's a terrific suggestiveness in his writing that I find very, very useful, very nice. Bill Berkson, who's a poet I respect a great deal, I thought has had a good take, and it's been encouraging.

[00:10:26.16]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I suspect that what you're saying to some extent is the not so much ambiguity but the flexibility of an approach to you is important.

[00:10:36.99]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, that's right.

[00:10:39.37]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So it's a conceptual understanding of you, rather than locking you into a particular school. How does it feel to be locked into a school that you certainly are not—

[00:10:48.41]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I'm not sure what I'm locked into.

[00:10:50.61]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, I can point to a bunch of reviews which liken you to everything from Pointillism to Surrealism to Hudson River.

[00:11:02.25]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Gee, I didn't know I hit that far afield. [They laugh.]

[00:11:04.74]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's really kind of funny.

[00:11:06.34]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I never thought I was a Surrealist. But I guess some of that's washed over me, or I haven't read it all. I'm not sure. You don't always see the reviews you get, unless it's the two or three obvious sources, like the *New York Times* or something.

[00:11:25.21]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You've gotten a lot of feedback from your shows in Maine. It's an interestingly active set of responses. At least to a New Yorker it's interesting.

[00:11:41.99]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:11:42.68]

Which also—there seem to be so many little circles of concern of artists, 400 different styles of art, if you put it that way. And it no way kind of gives a sense of great energy to any one of them. It just seems to be there are some individuals who are doing things that you're interested in. And so to go out and look, you go and look for the names of someone who you've recognized and decided that that's someone you want to follow.

[00:12:25.12]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, do you think that—what we just said off tape was that it seemed to me that the ideological energy generated by the Abstract Expressionists lasted in concentric and wider and wider circles until very recently. And the power of that, the energy of that against which people rebelled, or toward which they gravitated, or however it was expressed, it generated an energy and excitement. And with that having in a sense taken its place historically, it's not such—what's the word I want? It's not so lively. It's not an issue anymore that energizes young people. Is there perhaps that reason that it's such a fragmented world out there? That's what I hear.

[00:13:26.97]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It seems to be, in a way, that's some of the subject matter of what's going on. I see that artists are taking a bit of this, maybe with even a cross-cultural reference even to references outside of the United States, trying to put together very disparate things within one work of art. And it's sometimes very hard to judge how successful it is. But it also gives you the feeling that could be a very motivating force that could provide the next generation with a tremendous energy in the way that the Abstract Expressionists had. But it doesn't seem like it's got boundaries in the way that maybe there were an attempt to have a boundary in the '50s and '60s.

[00:14:27.13]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah, there seemed to be room for a variety of personal expression within a concept within the large concept. Now, I mean, it's sort of hard for a lot of people to go around imitating Anselm Kiefer or something like that. I mean, there are giants around, but there doesn't seem enough room for a whole movement to grow, although certainly there are lots of little ones, aren't there? Are your younger painters dealing with issues that

are valuable, do you think, the ones who are helping you? What do you—what do you think of their work? And who are some of those? We really didn't talk about some of the younger—

[00:15:11.53]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, for example, a painter named Eric Holtzman, who hasn't shown yet, has been doing giant still lifes which put together objects in a way that because of the scale make you float in them in a way—and he paints with a rather mixed style but a lot of glazing as well. So there's references to even Old Master painting plus a very modernist approach to space and— [Pause.]

[00:16:01.20]

But I see—I see it as a very difficult style. I don't know if he'll be able to break through into something really wonderful with it. He has a tremendous energy toward it, but it's just very hard. There's a lot of problems with it. So I find the discussion about what's working, what isn't working very useful. I share a lot of concern about making a painting that has a great variety of brushing or manipulation of paint, and consequently a variety of emotional qualities as being a way to get to emotional qualities—so I find it interesting to talk to him about that.

[00:16:50.01]

I see a number of artists in Maine who a lot of them live in Philadelphia because it's too hard to live in New York, too expensive. And I'm a bit disappointed that their ambitions aren't as grand as I'd like them to be at their age. I mean, they're in their 30s, let's say. And they seem to have to work very sporadically and slowly. And that's life problems coming in. But there's a bunch of Surrealists there. I mean, they're dealing with a lot of imagery—impossible situations, figures, dream figures, and a number of spaces jammed together into the same work. So there's not—as in my work, there's a coherent spatial continuum on each canvas. This kind of canvas is breaking apart. That's exciting, I think.

[00:17:59.46]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It sounds as though they're a good-sized group. They influence one another?

[00:18:05.91]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Three or four, I'd say. Yeah, somewhat.

[00:18:09.23]

BARBARA SHIKLER: They come out of a school?

[00:18:10.74]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: They're all out of school, yeah.

[00:18:12.78]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I mean a particular school?

[00:18:15.09]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh. Well, a couple went to University of Pennsylvania, and that's how I knew them because I taught there. There was a wonderful photographer who recently died at age 41, who I found terrific to talk to, who was interested in working with motion in photography. And I felt a connection to a kind of thing that I was trying to do sometimes in some painting.

[00:18:46.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What was his name?

[00:18:47.44]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Richard Norton. [Pause.]

[00:19:03.39]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Do they come up to Maine?

[00:19:05.49]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Quite a few people of that group live in Maine in the summer, as we have.

[00:19:11.46]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Did they come there through you?

[00:19:13.16]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Quite a few. Well, a couple of them have, yeah.

[00:19:19.18]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It must be a very exciting thing to find young people in your class whose work you—in whose work you see exciting things and have them develop as artists and as your friends and to form a community around you.

[00:19:39.30]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:19:41.64]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's quite a rich experience, isn't it?

[00:19:44.36]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:19:47.11]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Very exciting.

[00:19:49.40]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. And not too far away, so you can get together easily. I mean, it's a lot easier to just go visit than it seems to be in the city, where people are so protective of their time slot, as they have to be.

[00:20:02.32]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah.

[00:20:06.06]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I have a friend in New York named Medrie MacPhee who's a psychological kind of landscape painter. It's as if she took some of the similar things that I like to paint and accents their scariness. Maybe a bridge looks threateningly tall above you in the space, or a tunnel looks impossibly unpleasant to go into, let's say. She has a very great command of light and dark. And she has a very dramatic sense of light and dark. And so it's a very heightened kind of tonal response in her painting.

[00:20:57.53]

BARBARA SHIKLER: But same attention to scale as you? No, you're saying that she exaggerates some shapes.

[00:21:03.22]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I think there's some kind of exaggeration, plausible exaggeration

in her work, that makes the psychological quality the first thing you see. I think I have much less of that.

[00:21:15.41]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Was she influenced by your work, do you think?

[00:21:18.36]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't think so. I think she's seen it for a while, and I think we've had dialogues. But I think she's developed this herself. I'd have to ask her. I remember seeing it in the earliest work of hers. It already was there.

[00:21:33.32]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's very exciting to find someone else with a sense of the drama that you appreciate, but not being the same sense of drama that you have.

[00:21:44.55]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:21:44.85]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So it's fun. What we said earlier is that I think the artists, all artists, any artist, any kind of art, are the only people left in our society who are allowed to play, because this is a form of play, this work. It's serious play, but it's so rewarding at its best, and it's many other things as well. Do you ever experience that awful thing known as a block, where it's really so painful that you can't go near it?

[00:22:26.80]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I've been close to some periods where I do keep working, but it doesn't feel at all rewarding, and it's extremely anxiety-producing to do it. And yet I'm one of those people that sort of feels that it's better to keep trying every day, to even go through the unpleasantness, because maybe you're going to break through it by finding out something in the course of doing it.

[00:22:57.72]

I felt profoundly embarrassed by my own work about 15 years ago, before I started to do the night painting. I spent six months on one work that I hated, always hated all the way through. And my husband kept saying, "But I don't see what you're worrying about. I think this is very interesting work. It's very complicated, but you just have to keep working with it, and you'll come out on the other side." So I finally did finish it. It was sold almost immediately. My dealer brought someone in. It was never shown in New York. And I was relieved, because I wanted to get it out of the place.

[00:23:41.89]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And you were profoundly embarrassed?

[00:23:43.27]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I was embarrassed by it because I felt I wasn't getting to the soul of the image. I could never figure out what it was that I wasn't getting. And only now I have a glimmer of what it was that I wasn't getting. And that may have been that in order to get in this enormous spread of material and big—it's a giant space that I was painting—to get it all in, I had to soften it—not soften, I had to make a lot of things come closer together. Rather than accenting the differences, I tried to find some middle ground where everything could fit.

[00:24:31.31]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You're really speaking of logistics here, literally. How something fits on the canvas?

[00:24:39.41]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Not so much about getting all the drawing in, but how the color and the feeling added up to make something that would have a whole. I was trying to find a whole, a wholeness. And I kept feeling if I split things apart further, if I made more dramatic changes, if I put in deep shadows, if I did all kinds of things to make things separate from color values, let's say, the whole thing would never come together. And that would be profoundly frightening. So it was a drama, a life's kind of drama where I couldn't accept the differences. So I sort of got something to make it work, and I guess it's a quite pleasant painting.

[00:25:34.73]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Have you seen it since?

[00:25:35.57]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. No. Some collector has got it in Washington D.C. But I have a slide of it.

[00:25:42.23]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Would you identify it?

[00:25:44.63]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's a painting of New York City from the World Trade Center, looking out at the harbor, including Governor's Island, Brooklyn, some little bit of Bayonne and the Statue of Liberty, some boats, the glint of water on—the glint of sunlight on the water, and the whole of Battery Park.

[00:26:05.60]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, it sounds a bit as though you're being disdainful, that a little bit of that hatred is still present, I suspect. [They laugh.] It's sort of like hating one of your children.

[00:26:18.09]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Luckily, I don't have to hate my own children.

[00:26:21.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Do you have a favorite, a favorite painting or a watershed painting? I suppose those are sometimes two different things.

[00:26:29.24]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, the watershed painting was the "East River View at Night," the first night painting I did.

[00:26:35.58]

BARBARA SHIKLER: After Denby, I should say.

[00:26:36.87]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: After Edwin Denby was sick in the hospital. And one favorite I have is done quite close after that one called "Flatiron Intersection," because it isn't too high up. You look down on 23rd Street and Fifth Avenue intersecting with Broadway. So there's a whole batch of streets coming together, and there's this little bit of Madison Square Park, which is a favorite park, a little bit of the toe of the Flatiron Building, and quite a few figures, a number of cars and trucks. And it's the first time I got that orange vapor, those lights on the pavement in New York, that strange orange light without making the painting only orange.

[00:27:26.71]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:27:27.37]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And I even have a figure skateboarding, my son skateboarding in that. This painting is fun for me. This had a lot of the fun of my life at that time. It still has. So that's kind of what I think about. And that's why I often wanted to return to come closer down to the Earth, because that one had all this pleasure, identifying figures walking around those spaces. There was still a kind of imagining the human interaction. It wasn't the high-rise orientation.

[00:28:04.01]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, you have the advantage of the birds who fly very high and swoop down and walk a little bit.

[00:28:11.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, that's right. [They laugh.] That's right. And if only I can get some bird's nests in the city to work from, where I can get the viewpoints where there's stuff I can see happening.

[00:28:24.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I should think that if you were to speak to various people you know, there'd be offers.

[00:28:30.44]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I look around. People sometimes offer apartments. It's often complicated because I want to stay there more than they're really happy to have me.

[00:28:40.61]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Unless they have a spare room, which is rare in New York.

[00:28:43.55]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. So in a way, going in the airplane has been picking up the slack from where I find really good sites to work from because I can—I have to go higher, but there are certain things that when I look for, I can find.

[00:28:57.59]

BARBARA SHIKLER: There's a spot on the Long Island Expressway in Queens—there are a couple of motels as you pass them, and you get a view of those things where the site of the more recent World's Fair—I forgot—the Top of the Park, or Top of the Mark, or top of the something. And then there's the winding road, the expressway and various buildings and trees. There's a variegated landscape. And I invariably think of your work. I think of you in one of those motel rooms doing all of that and getting those contrasts.

[00:29:33.59]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it's a great pleasure to me that people tell me, oh, I saw this—

[00:29:37.01]

BARBARA SHIKLER: "I saw a Jacquette."

[00:29:37.88]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I just saw this thing, and you ought to go and work there.

[00:29:40.95]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Surely. That must be very exciting.

[00:29:43.52]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Because even I sometimes see a Jacquette, like the Jacquette I did ten years ago. I said, oh, if I were ten years back, I would have painted that. And I don't have to do it now, but I can see it.

[00:29:55.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It must color, in some sense, your feeling about people. If somebody buys your work, do you have a feeling about them? Do you ever get involved with those people who buy your work?

[00:30:07.62]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I've met some. I've met them time and time again, yes. There's one very pleasant collector who invites me over occasionally and will come and look at things. He can't really afford expensive paintings but will buy books or drawings or something.

[00:30:25.50]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's very nice. That's lovely.

[00:30:26.10]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And I feel a real support there.

[00:30:28.92]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Absolutely. Valuable.

[00:30:30.98]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, absolutely.

[00:30:33.30]

BARBARA SHIKLER: As a rule, you don't pursue corporations or clients and that sort of thing?

[00:30:39.89]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. No.

[00:30:40.42]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Leave it to your gallery?

[00:30:41.13]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, right.

[00:30:42.42]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You have been bought by many corporations, as far as I remember. Is that something that a gallery will go out of its way to do?

[00:30:55.49]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, that was the greatest potential buyer for my work for quite a while. But actually, my gallery has been able to buy—to have buyers from museums for some periods of the work. So that's even better. I mean, that's really more of a pleasure because then you think that other people are going to get to see the painting.

[00:31:21.96]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Oh, well, without question.

[00:31:23.46]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: They're going to move around. They're going to not get trapped in one

little spot.

[00:31:30.07]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, although you have many works that are the size of so-called easel art, easel paintings, you also have these giant things that fit well in the public space.

[00:31:42.13]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, most of the paintings are big. I mean, they need to be in big spaces. The triptychs are really too big for most people. I mean, that's the problem.

[00:31:53.11]

BARBARA SHIKLER: They just have to be bought by museums.

[00:31:55.42]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right. We're waiting.

[00:31:58.78]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Wanting, wishing, waiting, willing.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

[00:32:03.34]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: In life situations, I think I've been incredibly lucky. First of all, I think I got into some situations early in my life with men, say, that I might have married, who might have been overwhelming, who were very strong artists, who were very frightening individuals to me, when I thought about it later. I might have lost my energy if I had been with them. Somehow, I guess I was lucky that I sensed early enough, well, maybe this isn't going to work too well, and got away from them and found Rudy, who was just very gentle and very helpful, very supportive, very easy to be with, not overwhelming, very, very friendly person, really. Kind.

[00:32:52.97]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah, kindness is all.

[00:32:56.21]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think you're right. And not only Rudy, but his friend Edwin Denby, who was also kind of an extraordinary person, and very encouraging to me. He gave me a lot of sense that my ideas were valuable. He did try to give me a great sense of what the Abstract Expressionists were about. And I kind of said, "Yes, okay, I see what you're saying, but I'm going to go and do something else." He provided me with that dialogue to do something different.

[00:33:33.58]

BARBARA SHIKLER: He didn't say you must, he said here's what's—

[00:33:36.11]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: "Here's what I know about it. Here's what I know how de Kooning works." And I said, "Yeah, I'm glad to hear about that. Well, I couldn't do that." And I went on my own way. I was lucky to have a son who was kind of a reasonable kid. I mean, he enabled me to continue to work. He wasn't difficult. You can imagine I could have a child who was very needy in some way.

[00:34:01.58]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, I've seen women who couldn't paint because their children were. But then they—you don't really know how those interactive forces work. You don't know whether the climate is created that permits a child to relax in his mother's presence and let her paint.

[00:34:18.92]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

[00:34:19.10]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Who knows, these things? You were lucky in that you were wise enough, I think, to choose the kind of environment for yourself that would be productive. It's not entirely chance, although—

[00:34:31.34]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Some of it has a lot to do with it. Yeah.

[00:34:34.88]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Of course, lucky in that this kind person had been so involved with those people in that movement that Rudy was.

[00:34:44.98]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And I learned a lot about it. I mean, he was taking photographs of all that work. And I would actually retouch them in our early years. So I got to see all the early '50s work before it was shown in galleries. All of Castelli's artists I could tell you about before anybody could see them.

[00:35:03.01]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Fabulous.

[00:35:04.45]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: You know, so that was very exciting.

[00:35:07.00]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Sure. Oh, quite.

[00:35:09.04]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: We could talk about it. He had been in the studio, so he'd have to maybe amplify it because a lot of it was just black and white. But that was a lot of fun.

[00:35:18.47]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I bet it was. I bet it was. And what a sense of proprietorship or something.

[00:35:26.93]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:35:27.58]

BARBARA SHIKLER: But also stimulating, I should think, on your own work.

[00:35:31.66]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, yeah. And then the thing of Rudy's films and photographs had a big effect on my work. It was a two-way street there. We were both giving ideas to each other all the time.

[00:35:46.59]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. It's interesting. You see here again, somebody who was considerably older than you, but quite eager to accept and draw from your eye and your mind. And that interaction is without parallel anywhere. I mean, it's so invaluable. Did you—I don't want to put together the dates. It's too much of a waste of time. You met Rudy when

you were doing what kind of painting? That was '60s, early—'64?

[00:36:22.38]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think I met him '61 or '60. So I was painting a strange brand of large still life with symbolic energies coming out of the objects. The objects were abstracted to a certain extent so that you didn't really know whether it was a bottle or something else. It was just kind of blobs [they laugh]—strangely shaped blobs, kind of vague, a little pretentious, probably. I don't know. I mean, right now, I couldn't stand it.

[00:37:10.63]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Talk about profoundly embarrassed.

[00:37:12.44]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Yeah.

[00:37:14.36]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Something about Rudy being very down-to-earth about looking at things and not having to transform them into some "mystical other" I think was the key for me. I thought, well, you could start with the way it looks, and something might still happen then too.

[00:37:32.63]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Smart. That's a message that you got from him?

[00:37:35.12]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think so. I haven't really thought about that before, but that seems to be—yeah.

[00:37:42.45]

BARBARA SHIKLER: The thing takes care of itself, ultimately.

[00:37:45.16]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, right. Right. You don't have to put the mystery in. It's either there or it isn't.

[00:37:52.49]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. In a sense, you're still operating off that.

[00:37:56.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Oh, yeah. I don't know if there's any mystery yet. [Laughs.] But what I do is kind of pretty straightforward, I think. One thing Rudy and I discovered about each other, we both had a kind of literal mind, not to be disparaged.

[00:38:16.26]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's all right to be—

[00:38:17.13]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It's all right to have a literal mind, right. You can do things with it.

[00:38:21.51]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Indeed. Well, there is a certain amount of pretension, intellectual pretension that exists when you're a kid. And it might be that you would have grown out of it even without Rudy. But fortunately, he was there.

[00:38:37.23]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Probably not. [Laughs.]

[00:38:39.33]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Probably not? You'd still be reaching for the dark blobs, or whatever? [They laugh.]

[00:38:46.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Yeah.

[00:38:46.86]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, it sounds good to me. If we stop here, I think it's a nice place to go. So, thank you.

[00:38:53.82]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Thank you, Barbara.

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[00:00:07.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: This is Barbara Shikler, Wednesday, December 13, 1989. We believe that this is really the last interview with Yvonne Jacquette, interview number six. And the reason that we've come together again is because at the end of the last taping after we turned off the machine, Yvonne, you told me that you were going off to a Buddhist meeting and that it was something that was very much part of your life. So I thought, wouldn't it be silly to have an interview with you that didn't include something that was part of your life? So here we are. And some months have passed. I think we last saw each other on Halloween evening. It was October 31, or something like that. At any rate—

[00:00:59.43]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's right.

[00:01:00.21]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —you've since been off, have you been to Smith College, as well as—

[00:01:06.22]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I spent, I think, two weeks making prints—making the plates for a print to take to Smith in New York. And then I went up with my printer, Patricia Branstead. And we spent a week there making prints in front of students.

[00:01:25.09]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What kind of prints were you making?

[00:01:26.65]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Etchings. So I set out to make one print, basically, with five, six plates. And we got that about Wednesday. We got we got close to that. We didn't perfect it, but we got it close enough to see that we really pretty much had it in control. And then we spent the next two days throwing all kinds of colors out of the air onto the plates.

[00:01:54.88]

We dropped off, usually three plates, which didn't—were just for extra detail, and the original one, and so simplified it down to three plates, and did a lot of variations. So I ended up doing some night variations and some very silvery monochrome gray ones, and doing a couple that were using chine-collé, which is when you cut out a piece of paper and it gets glued down to the original background paper, and then gets printed on at the same time. You just put this glued paper in the press with the plate ready to ink on top of that right in, and it gets all pressed together.

[00:02:46.81]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Like an embossed effect, ultimately?

[00:02:49.60]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it doesn't stick up, because in fact, it gets quite flattened into the paper because you use kind of thin papers, at least we did, used rice papers. So it's kind of like coloring a part of the print, or coloring the whole area of the print with the means that it's very quick, because you have the paper there. And then you're still printing on top of it. And then we did one that was double chine-collé, which had the background chine-collé and at the same time, a cutout shape in the shape of an airplane wing, also chine-collé.

[00:03:28.06]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, that's interesting.

[00:03:28.63]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So we ended up getting, I think, about 12 or 13 fairly interesting variations in the next few days, brought them back to New York, and showed them to my dealer Brooke Alexander. And he suggested we edition the main one, and four of the variations as well. So it turned out to be a lot more work than I thought I was going to do, except that I picked this printer because I knew that she loved to have this fun at the end of trying new things with the same plates. And it turned out exactly what I hoped for.

[00:04:09.32]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's can often—the unexpected nature of it is sometimes so frightening to people. And in your case, it's clearly stimulating, the unknown, what's ahead.

[00:04:19.64]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Well, as long as I got the one I set out to do first—

[00:04:22.57]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. You do it in front of the students, but they don't participate?

[00:04:27.10]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: They do a little. A few of them helped by wiping—well, not wiping plates, but cleaning plates after they've been printed, and helping to roll the press and helping to—sticking around for a couple of hours at a time and getting involved in the process, and asking questions about it and kind of really just doing whatever menial jobs can be done.

[00:04:54.67]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Sure.

[00:04:55.18]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: There was no one who could stay long enough that could really get involved in more serious parts of it, except an ex-student who came around. And she spent a whole day, and she really was a very professional printer by now. I mean, she even has a job doing that. So she really did important jobs, too. And I learned to do them myself. I mean, I hadn't done some of these things, like inking.

[00:05:20.12]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's a great way for them to learn, certainly.

[00:05:22.02]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, right.

[00:05:23.74]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Clearly, you do, too.

[00:05:24.65]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And so people would—some students would come in and out a couple of times during the week and see the changes, see how something had progressed, or why we were stuck at a certain point, or whatever.

[00:05:38.20]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So it was truly a workshop.

[00:05:39.91]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It was.

[00:05:40.03]

BARBARA SHIKLER: There was no—was there any lecturing involved?

[00:05:43.03]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Occasionally a class would be brought in from another college, or from another part of Smith, and Patricia and I would explain as much as we could in half an hour or so, all about the whole nature of etching and how it related to what we were doing.

[00:06:01.64]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How many hundreds of years in a half hour? So funny.

[00:06:04.66]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, right.

[00:06:05.25]

BARBARA SHIKLER: But I'm sure it wasn't their first exposure. That's a nice program. That's really a lovely program for them.

[00:06:11.60]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It was very effective for them, yeah, yeah.

[00:06:12.80]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You stayed on the grounds, did you? Were you in a put up in a dorm or something?

[00:06:16.76]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No, I was put up in a motel very close. I could use their swimming pool, so I had everything I needed.

[00:06:23.03]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. So you were there for how long?

[00:06:26.99]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: About six days, actually.

[00:06:30.17]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, it worked out very well in terms of having an edition, then. That's exciting.

[00:06:35.75]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The best part for me was that I saw some of my ideas projected

further than I had been able to get to in painting. For instance, the night wings. I haven't—besides one pastel, I haven't really had the time to get in the plane and to work with it. So by just doing it by imagination, I could sort of see what the ground was like there. And I also saw ways to make the wings of the airplane images look silvery in a way that I hadn't gotten to in painting. So when I get them here—actually, they're not here yet—I'm going to kind of work on them in a way. You know, not exactly, but I think I'm going to try to take some of the understanding into the painting.

[00:07:20.53]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Of the way in which the tonalities work together?

[00:07:23.57]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, right, yeah.

[00:07:25.22]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's exciting, too. How do you—well, just to segue it, obviously, but in a period like that where you're under stress and you're in a strange place, so to speak, and you're working with an unknown, and with unknown people for the most part, how do you tie in your meditation, the Buddhist involvement? I suppose, you know, I'm halting because I'm not sure that we aren't working backwards here. Perhaps I should ask you what kind of a place this Buddhism plays in your life and how it came about and all of that. But we can get to it. We won't forget it, I'm sure. I just thought it'd be so interesting to see how you worked your day with this kind of framework.

[00:08:16.49]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I think one of the things I want to get from being a practicing Buddhist is an ability to be open as much as possible. And that's what you need when you go into a strange situation. You need it more than ever. And yet, you still have to have some feet on the ground to stay where you are, and deal with what you're actually doing, and what you hope to do. So, I think meditating—which is the first thing I do when I get up—helps me feel, well, whatever happens, that's what's going to be good. And if something happens in the print that doesn't seem to be what I was hoping for, I can postpone better my chagrin and say, well, maybe I can use this. Because one of the teachings I've been very interested in is how you use things that you perceive at first as difficulties or obstacles, or how you deal with what you call enemies or—

[00:09:38.78]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Your own internal or external.

[00:09:41.61]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, right, both ways. So to keep—for me internally, it's the question of keeping discouragement at bay so that I'll get through, and get to something interesting. I won't give up too soon. On the other hand, I want to have the kind of judgment that says, "Oh, that track over there, well, that doesn't look that promising," or, "I don't really want to go there, so just say so right now." Just cut right through it and say, "That's not for me right now," and to be focused on what seems more exciting, or what's more interesting.

[00:10:23.40]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Sounds to me like some of what you're doing in that process is rather than saying, "Well, I hate what I've done, so I'm really rotten and no good at this," and converting that to saying, "Well, that's not a productive course for me to take." Let me—so instead of doing a number on yourself, you seem to be saying, "Let's keep the possibilities open." Then how does that—let's then—okay, how does that work? How does your—what is the meditation process for you if you were to say what it is in your life and why. I guess I would just say go, just, if you can—how it began and how you recognized its potential for yourself?

[00:11:14.55]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I did start meditating at least, I would say, 15, maybe 20 years

ago. And the first amazing experience I noticed because of it was practically about the third day after I had first learned to do a particular kind of meditation, my son got very sick and was taken to the hospital. And there was a suspicion of appendicitis. And normally that would be the kind of thing that would just drive me into terrible panic. And I just kept—while I was waiting to find out—I just kept meditating. And it just sort of allowed this space to do nothing but wait and find out. Instead of freaking out and feeling terribly uncomfortable and worrying about him, I just said, "Well, there's nothing I can do until I know." So that was very useful.

[00:12:17.56]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Then, how did you find it? What made you come to it?

[00:12:21.91]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: A friend of mine was going to introductory lectures, this kind called transcendental meditation, which was very popular at that time. I guess the Beatles had been doing it, or something like that.

[00:12:37.17]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:12:39.79]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And I was kind of dubious about it. But I thought, well, I have been curious about meditation. And I didn't even have any idea of all the different kinds or what kind, how this kind related to other kinds. If I had, I think I would have started with a different kind. But it didn't matter. I got into it that way. So then after doing that for a while, one way that I noticed that was very, very helpful was that I started flying about a year after I'd started to do it, to draw. At the point where I decided I'm going to go up in airplanes, and that meant going up in little Cessnas at that point—single engine planes—which I'd hardly been in. And they are very frightening if you're not used to them.

[00:13:27.94]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:13:29.47]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: You feel very vulnerable.

[00:13:30.92]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Especially with that pilot you said that seemed to be doing everything—

[00:13:36.76]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. I did have a fairly good pilot at that early stage, but still, it was no reassurance that there's no parachute, or nothing, I think, that would help you. [Laughs.] But I just kept wondering if I was masochistic to do this. But I found if I meditated shortly before I went up in the plane, at least I had the ability to calm myself enough to try to draw and to stop those voices that said, "This is crazy. You can't do this. Don't waste your time. Stop right now and go home." So I mean, if I hadn't had that help then, maybe I wouldn't ever have done all this.

[00:14:20.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, what form does that meditation take for you—is it just a supportive kind of mantra that you repeat to yourself?

[00:14:31.15]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, that kind was that sort of thing. And I think all I was doing then was just calming myself and body down from whatever, making a space between whatever else had been happening, and just letting the thing simmer down to be relatively quiet before going into something relatively frantic, getting on a plane to draw.

[00:15:01.47]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:15:02.19]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And, I mean, sometimes I'd come back from that flight and just be totally wiped out and frantic again. And then sometimes I'd just go right back and meditate so I could get back into real life. [Laughs.] But it got me interested in meditation as a way of exploring things. And after maybe five or six years, I started learning a Zen meditation, and reading about Zen, I guess because I was always interested in Japan, and the arts and had read a lot of how the art and the meditation was supposed to relate, like brush painting. And then after my second trip to Japan, when I had been doing this Zen meditation, but never going to a teacher—maybe once I went to a teacher, but never having a relationship with a teacher—like being an American who's afraid of a guru.

[00:16:04.68]

So I sort of just was staying at a certain level, and I was reading a bit, but kind of not learning how to expand it much, although just doing the meditation, I think, is the important part. And that was fine. And when I went to Japan the second time, I was really curious about the temples and how Zen played a part in Japanese people's lives. And I had a very hard time finding it. Of course, I couldn't really speak Japanese enough to find out. I couldn't tell much, and I got rather discouraged about that. And I actually was kind of frightened by the austerity that I saw evidenced in some of the temples. And I began to—

[00:16:55.97]

BARBARA SHIKLER: What kinds of austerity do you mean?

[00:16:59.03]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, spatial and aesthetics. There's this incredible dramatic spatial austerity that just seemed really so dramatic and so different than what I was really comfortable with. And then there was the physical austerity. There was nothing in these rooms, these temple rooms. There was no way to heat them, so I could imagine—what's it like to meditate in the middle of the winter here? This must be horrible. [Laughs.] Worrying about the cold.

[00:17:33.03]

And it didn't—they didn't seem to be sort of welcoming, in some way. I didn't feel like they were interested in having—teaching, or something. I mean, I could have kept an eye out for maybe lectures in English about zen while I was there. I couldn't find anything, so I didn't take it so seriously. And I just kept meditating.

But then when I got back—shortly after I got back—I was talking about this to a friend who had been doing Tibetan meditation, and was involved with some teachers in New York. And she said, "Well, you know, I think you only can go so far without a teacher. It's much harder on your own, and you really should talk to a teacher from time to time because they can point you in a direction that you might need to be. Why don't you come and see these teachers that I find wonderful?" There are these two brothers. One translates for the others—the other one.

[00:18:36.43]

So I wasn't ready to go to talk to them as a pupil, but I went and listened to their lectures and to their meditation sessions for about six months before I decided that they really—there was something there for me. It was—it felt the right tone, I guess. And I got—started to get interested in the art, although it seems very crowded. And it's sort of like the Zen is too empty, and the Tibetan is too crowded. [Laughs.]

[00:19:11.77]

But I could see how—I mean, I started to understand how they use their art. They don't use it in the same way that we do. It's not to decorate a wall, or to—it's to spring forth an idea that you then meditate upon. So it's like a very—it's a tool, like a rosary is a tool for a Catholic.

It's something to use, and it's nice when the aesthetics are wonderful, but they don't even have to be that great to get you on to what you need to be doing.

[00:19:50.23]

And so examining what the art was for, and being very interested in the rooms, the way they decorated rooms for ceremonial purposes, very cheerful. Red, lots of red and yellow, and wonderful kind of fluted curtains hanging up near the ceilings, and giving a space to the room that was very jolly. I can imagine this in a cold hut in the winter or something. That would be a really nice thing.

[00:20:26.66]

So I've been learning to use different "thangkas," they call this—religious paintings, mostly reproductions of them—for particular meditations. Like a thangka might show a particular figure of a deity or a particular person. Like, there's a particular Buddha who came to Tibet a couple of hundred years after the first Buddha who was in India. And he's used as Buddha. I mean, you use him as a Buddha figure; you visualize him while you're meditating. That's one thing you can do.

But the thing about—that I like very much about this Tibetan teachings is that there's enormous variety of things you can do. There's not just one thing or twelve things, maybe. There's hundreds of possible little paths to take. You can select a particular kind of meditation on a day because you're thinking about a certain kind of thing.

[00:21:46.58]

For instance, when my parents were very sick, I would do some meditations where I would think of each of their sufferings and spend the whole half hour or an hour trying to imagine—literally imagine—what that suffering felt like, bodily and mentally, and then trying to imagine it dissolve as if I were doing it for them. But in a way, I was doing it in my body, so it had an effect on me, too. It dissolved some of that anxiety in my body as well, and gave a focus to that particular kind of meditation.

[00:22:33.06]

Then sometimes I would spend some time thinking about vanity, or emptiness is a great theme that they talk about. And the hundreds of words I've heard them use to describe emptiness, I still don't know what emptiness is. But it seems like there are many different kinds of emptiness. And you could imagine a particular kind and meditate about that and how that might relate to the way you live. After the end of it, you might come out and say, "Well, now I hope I feel a little emptier than I was before I started." And then you start right in on filling up again in your life. So that's why, in a way, daily meditation is important, and sometimes twice a day is a good idea.

[00:23:23.53]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Would you tie it now to what you were saying earlier, before we taped, about how it's a way of—

[00:23:32.80]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Reversing?

[00:23:33.43]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Reversing, yes.

[00:23:34.78]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, I guess I think about it as an opposite to this—what I think of as an American way of living, which is always going trying to go forward, and in some cases, fast forward. You just keep trying to move ahead, whatever that means to you. Do more work, or—

[00:23:57.13]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And what you said was, "add on to your life."

[00:23:59.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Add on to—yeah, add on to your life. I mean, even thinking of meeting new people so you add some more people to your life, or something. All this accumulation. And the meditation seems to me—at least I've interpreted it—as a way to go backwards and see what you can—how you can look at that addition business and see about the vanity of it and then even try to see if you can back up and take on less, or get rid of something in a way, some unnecessary kind of baggage of thought process that you're hurting yourself with, or other people with.

[00:24:51.03]

I mean, thinking about emptiness can really help you quiet down and see that you don't have to do half the things you think you have to do, especially in the time frame you want to do them—you think you want to do them in. So I think it makes a space for you to be open to what is happening rather than what you project on the world, and what you're trying to make happen.

[00:25:15.72]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's such a tricky business. And that so often when you think inwardly, you turn inwardly, you can use these things—the subjective vision of yourself. And if you're not guided by something, it can become very self-destructive. But this sounds as though it's taking that and adding another level to it so that it is like two threads intertwining that lead you in some way. Because you still are the person you are, and yet, you're able—at some point—to detach, it appears and say, well, let me take you here instead of there. And that's a very interesting thing. It's kind of fascinating that one can do that.

[00:26:02.90]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:26:03.48]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And it's sort of like that whole lifting yourself up in the air. Seems kind of magical.

[00:26:11.01]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, one teaching is that you should strive for maintaining some kind of equanimity, that getting too excited about anything may be a kind of delusion. And I mean, for an artist, that's a complicated thought. Because you're happy when you start getting into some material that opens up into something you hadn't expected, and it automatically creates an excitement and a desire to go forward and to explore more, and to do it fast. But I don't think it gets hurt by having this kind of other feeling about well, let's just see whether—how this is going to pan out if I just keep working at a kind of calm and steady pace, that's probably as good as anything.

[00:27:10.74]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's kind of extraordinary. Here you are in a rapidly moving machine.

[00:27:14.86]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: [They laugh.] Yeah, right, right, saying let's have some equanimity.

[00:27:17.19]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:27:17.73]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

[00:27:18.24]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Very interesting. Can we pause just for a moment here? Let me—

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

Okay, we're rolling.

[00:27:25.53]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Maybe one reason Buddhism seems to work for me is that I think Rudy's a natural Buddhist. I mean, somehow, a lot of the attitudes he had developed as his answer to the training he had in Switzerland, just seemed to be exactly in line with what they're teaching. But he just came to it on his own, and maybe even from a kind of Swiss pessimism which is supposed to be rampant in Basel, where he came from. [Laughs.]

[00:27:55.57]

But anyway, it just—a lot of things that they teach, I recognize because I've seen them in Rudy. And sometimes I'd be little nervous about them in him. But now that I see that they're saying, "Hey, this is great," it actually has helped our relationship. Because I don't have to get worried about some of this opposition to my—

[00:28:21.06]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Your natural—

[00:28:23.70]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: My natural inquisitiveness, or whatever.

[00:28:24.42]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, it's interesting, isn't it? Well, I'm a little familiar with some of the Steiner—Rudolf Steiner stuff, and trying to relate that to what I know of Rudy. And there does seem to be a certain kind of a recognition of the way things flow, which, if that's what you're saying, is a very desirable state to be in. But I can imagine that it can get to be a little frustrating if you're not feeling quite in that same flow yourself right at the moment.

[00:29:01.24]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Yeah, yeah. I mean, I think I've just learned over a lot of years to take a lot of things that I thought were unusual attitudes, now I take those attitudes in him as very wise attitudes. And I'd like to learn from them. So—and the fact that a lot of them seem similar to what the Buddhists are teaching, although he has some difficulty with the Buddhists sometimes, but a lot of it lines up.

[00:29:31.19]

BARBARA SHIKLER: So do you both go to the lectures together as a rule?

[00:29:34.03]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Often, yeah.

[00:29:36.86]

BARBARA SHIKLER: How often do you do it?

[00:29:38.39]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it depends, actually. Our teachers are getting very popular in this country and are being asked to go to a lot of other cities. And so now, sometimes two or three weeks will go by when they're away, and we have to wait for them to come back. So normally I would go twice a week. But then they have a weekend—you couldn't call them a retreat; you would just say they're long seminars on the weekends, sometimes—two days. So whenever they have that available, I usually go to those.

[00:30:12.07]

And someday I'll probably go to some retreat where you really spend two weeks or some time. But since we go to Maine in the summer when most of the time those kinds of retreats are being offered in New York, I try to do retreats myself in Maine at home. Like take a whole day or take two days and just meditate, and not do anything else except eat and sleep, maybe take a walk. And those are interesting. I enjoy it. But I sort of have to—I can't do it frequently. I have to do it maybe once a month or once every two months or so.

[00:30:51.44]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It certainly requires a different perception of time, doesn't it?

[00:30:55.02]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Oh, yes. That changes a great deal and takes a certain stamina of the body and the mind to stay there, to keep focused on it.

[00:31:08.14]

BARBARA SHIKLER: There was a picture of Rudy in the lotus position, and was it the Pettit book?

[00:31:13.19]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, I think it was.

[00:31:16.48]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Is that a part of what your routine is, or is meditation—doesn't meditation require that as well?

[00:31:24.32]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: It doesn't require it, but it's useful to be in the lotus position. I mean, he was—I don't know. He wasn't in the full lotus. But I can't sit in the lotus position completely because I have a sore knee. So I have to use a little stool to sit on, and kind of prop my knee up with a cushion so it's not too bent. But that's not—they don't think that's difficult. I mean, they don't get mad at you. [Laughs.]

[00:31:49.55]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's so hard to say to somebody, do you think that if you weren't—I mean, it's so silly to speculate on "what would you be if you weren't what you are?" That's a dumb question, but in a sense that the work is really—regardless of it being a very Western kind of thing, and bear with great attention to pace, and movement, and thrust, and stress, that is an extension out of you in the same way, perhaps that you were describing the reason for Buddhist art.

[00:32:25.67]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:32:26.06]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I ask you if you can possibly tie the work that you're doing—as an effect of the interest in meditation and Buddhism—can you see a relationship? Could you even begin to think what it might have been like without it?

[00:32:49.87]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, it's really hard to imagine it without it because there seems to be some alignment between the flying experiences and the detachment side of Buddhism. And since I started flying around the same time I started to meditate, they seem rather inseparable to me. But then to go further, well, what am I doing with the flying experiences and other aerial experiences I use, which is from high rises?

[00:33:37.32]

The pathway I've taken of doing it until recently has been to start from very high up and from very detached, and get closer and closer to the Earth, and closer and closer to evidence of figures in daily life, or figures in workaday life, or figures in industrial setups involved with nature, I mean, connected with nature. It seems to be what I do in Maine is to fly low over these places that have this double life, naturally, together. And I've been trying to get as close as I possibly can to practically see, as if I could see myself in there.

[00:34:31.82]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, what an interesting concept.

[00:34:33.54]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: But there are problems. There are aesthetic problems with getting too close up for me. I mean, I've had to back off. I've had to go closer and come back and so forth to solve those aesthetic problems. And then suddenly, I got into—this year, I started doing all these wings, which was going way back up very high. I hadn't really even been—well, I had done some work last year that high from jets.

[00:35:04.66]

And this new work seems to have a lot to do with imagining, being able to take my imagination of some aerial situations and put things into the landscape without being so tied exactly to what I see, as well as have a—because I have wings in all these pictures or some airplane engines, also kind of putting the viewer in the driver's seat in the picture.

[00:35:39.00]

I mean, I'm trying to bring them right close up to the frame of looking at this landscape. So it looks like you're sitting on the wing, maybe, or you're sitting at the window, right at the edge of the wing, or at the edge of the engine, getting that experience of something going by, maybe quickly, but being blocked by the wing. And it's an inevitable idea of this passage is going to happen. The wing—you know the wing isn't going to stay there, or you imagine it's not going to stay there. But, of course, in the painting it stays there.

[00:36:14.00]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. Yes. But it's interesting, Yvonne, that on one level, you are really experiencing a kind of a sublime detachment, a celestial position that you assume, and a detachment that even when you come close, you are maintaining an objective control over yourself, as it were. At the same time, you're imposing that view on your viewer, on the person who is looking at it. So while you're detaching yourself, you're engaging someone else. And it's a really kind of an electrifying tension that I think must be building, built into this whole pattern. Do you—does that make any sense to you?

[00:37:07.74]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, that's somewhat—I've experienced that kind of feeling of this dichotomy in a way, as I've been doing, as I've been drawing and trying to—I mean, detachment seems to come from trying to get it all there without a huge amount of comment on it, trying to be open to what's there, even though sometimes I have—bringing some thoughts from the last trip or so, about what I might like to see there, that might come up, and sort of coax it to come up.

[00:37:48.39]

But this detachment is because you're trying to see it all together, and you can't get too excited about any one part, or you lose control over seeing the next part. So maintaining this kind of distance and detachment, and still thinking of perhaps the person who sees this picture will have this sensation of oh, I've never quite seen that compilation just at that situation. I mean, this is congruous to that. This is right in front of that. There's something I've seen at one time in my life and something over there I've seen another time. And here they are in the relationship. And it's all spread out for me in a way that I can't easily go and get it. I mean, I might see it myself in an airplane occasionally, but it sort of presented it to me like on a carpet.

[00:38:55.44]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You, the viewer, if you were the viewer.

[00:38:57.24]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, if I'm the viewer, right. Here it is. It all brought together for me and in tones and textures of paint that engage me, and hopefully that's what—

[00:39:09.69]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes.

[00:39:10.17]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And as even as I'm detached to the artist trying to see it all in relationship, and trying to bring in the different parts, I'm also continually trying to get the texture of the picture as active as I feel I can without too great a distortion of what I see. In a way, I kind of reactivate what it is by enlivening the texture, trying to see the texture with as much intensity.

[00:39:48.21]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. It's sort of like putting your work in a microwave. Isn't that the principle of a microwave that it activates and makes all these little things jump?

[00:39:56.10]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Oh, well, if that's what it does. That's what I—I don't have a microwave, but that's what I wanted it to do. Yeah.

[00:40:01.44]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Somebody just explained that it isn't heat, but that it's making all those molecules jump and dance. [They laugh.]

[00:40:06.99]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, that's exactly what I like my pictures to do. I like the parts to separate enough so that you can see what they're made up of, which colors add together to make up a patch. And that—but then still go back together enough to make an object.

[00:40:23.52]

BARBARA SHIKLER: It's also that you are having the joy of the process. And so yours is a kind of—it's a trip in the airplane, it's a trip through the canvas with the paint. And then that viewer who you've got in a piece of your mind all along, set aside, gets it all in one fell swoop.

[00:40:44.94]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right.

[00:40:45.62]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And there it is, a fact established. And for you, it's movement. And for them, they have to simulate that movement in their minds or you hope that your painting will do that to them. So you have a double kind of life, your internal life, then, because the Buddhist focus requires a certain kind of mood. And the effect of your work is yet another thing. Even the action of painting it is yet another thing, and what you look at is yet another thing. You have a lot of different surfaces in the very thing that is your life. It's so faceted in that respect.

[00:41:37.96]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I know that there are all these different layers that are happening. The thing about the Buddhist, I don't think it's a particular mood. I think that's a misconception. I think it puts one in a readiness for any mood that comes up, and it also

puts one in a readiness to see that any mood that comes isn't solid. But it's not a mood in itself.

[00:42:01.21]

BARBARA SHIKLER: But does it not impose a certain—a sense of calm, as it were, or a recognition of—I'm rephrasing your words the way they've come to me, but I may be very wrong. The effect of what you said is as though whatever it is you're experiencing is being accepted internally—

[00:42:23.60]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yes.

[00:42:24.31]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —which in itself requires—

[00:42:26.08]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, patience, it requires.

[00:42:27.10]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —a certain kind of calm, in effect. No? Or not.

[00:42:30.01]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, see, I don't necessarily feel particularly calm in an airplane [they laugh], but I feel sometimes hopefully ready for what's coming.

[00:42:41.23]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I see.

[00:42:41.38]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I think that's a difference. But patience gives an outward effect of calm. But you may not actually be feeling calm.

[00:42:53.15]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah.

[00:42:54.59]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I mean, these are interesting questions, because I keep wondering, well, what is the emotion in my work once it's finished? Because I don't want to impose an emotion on anything in the work. But sometimes when I look at other people's work, I see—I get a very strong emotion. I say, gee, I'd love to have a strong emotion in my work. And I don't think I have strong emotions in my work. I think I just have kind of patient emotions in my work.

[00:43:22.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, that's interesting. Do you on one hand want to, and on the other hand, not want to, is what you're saying, yeah.

[00:43:27.89]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's probably true, too. Really true. Well, a few times, I've been aware that I had some very strong emotions in the work when I did a big black and white charcoal drawing of Three Mile Island at night, which I had to imagine. I couldn't fly at night, but I flew in the daytime, and then looked at it at night, and then put it together. And I wanted a really frightening emotion. I set out to get that.

[00:43:58.97]

But most of the time I don't. Most of the time I sort of don't believe in that. I feel like that's imposing, and most subjects don't have that single-minded of an attitude is that one did to me. So if they're more complex than that, then I have to accept that this complexity is going to mean that you have to have a stage ready to show a number of contradictory qualities. Now I did another plant—a nuclear plant in Maine—one called Maine Yankee, which I was even on a referendum committee to try to get closed. And so I have emotions about it. But when I went to look at it from above in an airplane, I was struck at the contradictory quality of how it looked, and also how it felt about what I knew about it. There was these—really oppositions.

[00:45:08.76]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Absolutely.

[00:45:09.60]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So I didn't want to have just—impose the thing, I feel this is a bad place. I didn't want to have that kind of—

[00:45:18.66]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, you put me in mind of that wonderful expression, the banality of evil. Evil doesn't always look evil. And sometimes it's quite banal.

[00:45:28.56]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:45:28.80]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I remember recently coming over the 59th Street Bridge and seeing a perfectly—that gorgeous panorama of the city ahead of—every kind of building at night lit up so wonderfully. And on the right were smokestacks which were belching, billowing fumes of plumes just swirling out over the night. And they were pink-tinted. And I realized, and I looked. They were coming from a garbage disposal plant. And that was gorgeous, and it was evil.

[00:46:03.00]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, yeah. Well, so there you have it; a very similar kind of thing that I experienced, exactly those kind of duplications of feelings.

[00:46:15.00]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Do you not like to get too much caught up with the things that make you feel that way, then?

[00:46:26.02]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, I think there's some kind of very strong philosophical feeling that it's actually not wise to get too caught up in anything, even if it's horrendous. I think I've had that all my life, in a way. And for a while in therapy, I explored whether that was escaping. And I sort of came to the point, yeah, sometimes there's emotions that I didn't want to face. But then later I thought, well, I have spent some time trying to face them, and I'm not so afraid about that anymore. If it's going to feel that way, I'm going to feel it. But I also now am quite interested in this next stage.

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[00:00:05.25]

BARBARA SHIKLER: This is side two of the sixth interview with Yvonne Jacquette. You were speaking of the next stage, Yvonne, and the way you are dealing with those strong emotions.

[00:00:18.93]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, the next stage I try to come to is through some kind of transformation, into something that can change into something else, hopefully something positive and useful, and allowing a lessening of conflict for myself and for other people. And so what's left is just a "thereness," just things existing, or souls existing without tremendous strife. But to get there, you can't pretend it's that way. It has to really work out that way. You have to feel that it's going in that way. So naturally, not everything can happen all at once like that.

[00:01:21.65]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, it's also such an ongoing argument in our society as to what's most appropriate, not just the role of the artist and art and subject matter, which gets you involved in stuff like Soviet art, which is its own proof of how unsuccessful it is. But more than that, it seems to me that—I think it's—we have the illusion that we are responsible for our society. And the artist, today especially, is carrying the burden of feeling that in some way, if he only did it right, he could change, she could change things in some measurable way. And that's something that can destroy a peace of mind, certainly. And yet at the same time, there's a fear of abdicating that sense of being a participant. So it's always a struggle.

[00:02:31.44]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, what do you think about my work? Do you think I've abdicated responsibility there?

[00:02:37.56]

BARBARA SHIKLER: You see, I don't think—I would say no, because just to—and I'm not avoiding this question. But I think an artist cannot help but reflect his role, his time, his place, his interest, her interest. You are who you are. And if you make us see, which I really feel that you do, very much, to see newly, if there is such a way to say it, then that's a tremendous thing, because how often do we see something as though for the very first time? How do we experience something for the very first time if not by being led? I don't know why this is brought to my mind, but did you see the Velázquez show yet?

[00:03:30.84]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Not yet, no. I almost went this morning. [Laughs.]

[00:03:33.57]

BARBARA SHIKLER: There's one thing of the dwarf. I don't know whether we read into that. It looks as though the artist, who's such an accomplished artist, such an extraordinary artist, has engaged us in some way. And yet there's nothing in there that's bathetic. Or it's not maudlin. And you may be reading in your feelings about a dwarf, for all I know. But you have the illusion of, in some way, experiencing something more. And I think that that's what—certainly when I look at these things, that you've done with the thrust of the wing, and it's an experience I haven't had before. Or it's an experience I might have had that you make me see as though it's the first time. Yeah, that's pretty good to do, isn't it?

[00:04:23.59]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. That's great. Really, I'm very happy that you feel—I mean, that's the way I felt when I started doing these, that this could be a new thing that people really haven't looked at.

[00:04:37.57]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Or not even known that—you can look at things all the time—

[00:04:41.30]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Right, right.

[00:04:41.38]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —but you don't know that you've looked at them until the poet writes the line, or the painter does that.

[00:04:49.45]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. Yeah. So looking for a new image to paint in this 20th century is definitely one of my tasks that I've set myself. And that's somewhat why I think I've stayed with the aerial situation, because there still are plenty of areas in that—I mean, so far, I've found new territory over these years. If it's not from the height, and the situation of looking down in a city situation, it has to do with the airplane situation.

[00:05:23.87]

And so far, I've stayed there, but meanwhile coming in and out, and zooming down to close to Earth, and going back up high, and meanwhile trying to get those things connected to the kinds of paint, kind of materials. I mean, it does seem really ridiculous that I'm doing these little frescoes of something seen in an airplane, where it's seen for such a quick moment. And here are these frescoes. It's thought of as a medium that's sort of age-old, inert material, in a way.

[00:06:05.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. Well, I think of it not so much as inert as the way it's done that it knits with nature. In some way, it becomes part of the structure. But that's wonderful, though. That's wonderful.

[00:06:16.69]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah. Well, I don't know if it'll turn out to be something I continue to do. But I mean, it is—I like the fact that it's a contradiction. And with all the things I do, there seems to be a tremendous enjoyment of the playground of materials. How can I get them to do something unusual? Or how can I finally get them to do what I've been thinking of the way they should look?

[00:06:43.09]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And the wonderful word that you just used—the playground of materials. And it is.

[00:06:48.31]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I keep finding new—

[00:06:48.76]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. As you said before—exactly—the artist is the only one in the world left who's encouraged to play, not just permitted. Stay inside and play, dear. [They laugh.]

[00:07:03.42]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, the playground thing I think comes from when you're plastering for a fresco, it's like you're back in your sandbox, making your little castle there, except you don't want it to crack.

[00:07:15.19]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Have you had any experience of that, or looking back at some of your earlier work and seeing some deterioration?

[00:07:22.49]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, actually, one of my frescoes fell in the gallery recently and broke—one of my new ones—I mean, last year's. And so I took it back here, and I repaired it with great difficulty. I mean, it took many days. And I mean, considering it took one day to make the original thing, it took many days, and I'm still not totally finished, I think. And it doesn't look perfect. I don't think you could get it perfect, because everything—the materials are slightly different. But I felt I wanted to repair it rather than paint a new one because I just felt there was something that happened that day when I painted that. And I didn't think I could get it again. So I guess, normally, you can repair things, pretty much.

[00:08:10.78]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah. The thing that I'm pushing out of my mind—and I don't even know if in the previous five tapes we skirted it. It's such a cliché to say that to stay at such a distance from people as you are in the plane might be construed as some sort of fear of close encounters. Is it a cliché? Does it have a—is it something that you've wondered about very literally?

[00:08:49.87]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, I've wondered about it. I haven't been frightened about it, because I feel I have a lot of strong relationships in the world that are very satisfying. And if I didn't, maybe I'd be worried.

[00:09:08.04]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:09:08.30]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: And I feel confident in my ability to go with those relationships where they need to go. So it just seems like being a landscape painter, you're set into this position of looking out with a wide glance.

[00:09:31.94]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's really true. That's a very good answer. Yeah. Don't really have to do a close-up of somebody's cheek.

[00:09:42.05]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

[00:09:42.45]

BARBARA SHIKLER: That's true.

[00:09:43.16]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: That's true, right. I mean, in a way, you're doing the same thing as if you were doing a close-up of somebody's cheek. When you're painting, you're—whatever you're engaged in, you're engaged in it.

[00:09:55.94]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Exactly.

[00:09:57.02]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: So if it's very close up, well, that might be significant of something. But it seems—I mean, I've been drawing a figure every week now for the last year or so. And it just seems like the same thing. [They laugh.] I still have the paint to deal with and the drawing, the line, and how the form feels.

[00:10:16.07]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. I guess that's what a real—well, I hate the word "artist" because it's so misused. But that's what a true artist does, in fact—see it all as part of the same problem. And it is.

[00:10:28.64]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Just some areas feel there's a lot of fertile territory to develop the composition. I don't feel my figure stuff is—it doesn't seem like something that I would want to spend time taking into a big scale, or presenting to the world, just because somehow maybe it's not that fresh compared to other artists, whereas the aerial thing does seem like the more untraveled.

[00:11:02.84]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Absolutely. And untrammeled.

[00:11:06.29]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:11:07.02]

BARBARA SHIKLER: [Laughs.] Actually, nobody says to Piero, "How come you do all those interiors?" [Laughs.]

[00:11:13.76]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, right.

[00:11:16.40]

BARBARA SHIKLER: "Why do you need all those lines?"

[00:11:18.44]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: On the other hand, I get very jealous of artists who can include a huge range of different sorts of things in the same picture or in the same body of work—to have close-up things, far-off things, to scramble their space so that there's no normal recession of space, so that they can jump around and include a lot of things.

[00:11:46.29]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Is there somebody in your mind's eye right this minute?

[00:11:48.72]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, actually, Rudy does it in his films. He has these jumps from a little scene that's very close up to something that's quite from a distance. And he sometimes goes with me on my travels and gets the aerial view, too, in his movies and then has a little drama, a little story maybe. I mean, he can just jump from one thing to another. No transition. Just right—move from one thing to another. Of course, he has a big selection process of saying what's going to work and what doesn't. A lot of things don't work. But I'm terrifically jealous that he can put all that in. And I don't know how to do it. I sometimes think about it. But I haven't figured out a way to do it.

[00:12:33.39]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, you have a harder job, though, because Rudy has given himself permission. That's step number one, which is, of course, basic.

[00:12:41.91]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, right.

[00:12:42.38]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And some people do, and some people don't. So there he goes. And he says, "I can do it because I want to." But then he's got the stuff there for him, in a sense. He has to compose it, and has to catch it, and has to identify it. But you really have to structure it right from the very bottom molecule, just about, which is much harder to establish. You have to distort that for yourself in the appropriate way, in which it seems to me is a much more difficult thing. Much more complex.

[00:13:16.20]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: I don't know. I mean, it is what I do. And I know what you're saying. I do have to structure it and—

[00:13:23.42]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Much harder than filmmaking.

[00:13:24.90]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —put it into a framework, aesthetic framework. And the form has to all fit. And the struggle I'm having right now with the painting is that the water has a totally different quality than the wing. [Laughs.] And I can't seem to get them to come together and close enough so that they feel like they're in the same painting. And so that's that search.

[00:13:48.11]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And yet you say that you want to permit all that disparity. Yes.

[00:13:52.85]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right.

[00:13:53.54]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Are you looking at anything in particular? Or are you just imagining?

[00:13:56.15]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: No. Well, while I'm talking, I'm trying to make just a neutral space so I can think. But yeah, I may come to the point where I can say, "The wing and the water are far apart, and they're going to stay that way." But maybe I can find a third element in the painting that makes it seem locked together so that they seem inevitably different. And maybe it's even there now. But I haven't seen it. I mean, I'm not convinced that it's right yet. So there's this search, or this constant struggle to find something that makes it all seem inevitable when I know it isn't.

[00:14:34.20]

BARBARA SHIKLER: When you have all these options before you, you have selected and identified a group of options. Someone else might not have seen them. But then you've given them to yourself as your conundrum of the day. [They laugh.] How will I confound myself? By gum, but you do have a many, many active textures working in your paintings. It seems to me you've come a lot closer to doing what it is you seem to be envying Rudy about. But then you realize.

[00:15:14.73]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Well, maybe, yeah, through the medium of activating the substances, or something.

[00:15:19.20]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yeah, your microwave technique.

[00:15:21.02]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right. [They laugh.] Well, actually, it's funny, because that's—I have this print that's right on the wall here of a night wing, where the wing is very uninflected. And I have to work on that one. That's the one that I want to make work, but it isn't quite finished, even though the landscape is—it's almost completely black, with just a little bit of whitish texture in what would be trees. I've been devising acetate overlays to put over the wing to put a little drawing into the wing to see if I can get a little bit of texture into the wing that doesn't kill the effect of the landscape.

[00:16:06.48]

BARBARA SHIKLER: And also the mystery.

[00:16:09.54]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:16:09.75]

BARBARA SHIKLER: I trust that that is almost—[laughs]. I don't know whether it's an insult or not—do you remember the image of Darth Vader in one of those movies that—was it *The Empire Strikes Back* or one of those things?

[00:16:27.60]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right, yeah.

[00:16:28.05]

BARBARA SHIKLER: There's the sense of undefined blackness with an undefined depth that was so menacing and evil. And in a sense, that undefined wing has some of that—

[00:16:41.08]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: The undefinedness, yeah. Yeah.

[00:16:43.02]

BARBARA SHIKLER: —menacing in there. Or the menace of the unknown.

[00:16:51.43]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Hopefully, I'll find a way to do it. I mean, it probably can't be done until I get to the press and put a color on it that will sit into the paper because all the imagining I do, and making overlays of acetate that still have—I can't make it physically integrate yet. I mean, I just can imagine.

[00:17:13.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: This was not one of those that you—

[00:17:14.49]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: This is one of the variations—

[00:17:15.50]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Oh, it is?

[00:17:16.32]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —that we might edition if I can get it solved. This was the only one that I didn't feel I took to the "nth" degree yet. I mean, for a while, I liked the fact that the wing stood up there in that space against the landscape. And I was afraid to put something on it while I was at Smith. But since I've come back, I've been convinced that it needs something. But whatever it is, it's going to be very precise. You can't just—there are not too many choices at this point, because of the landscape being kind of—the kind of texture that's in the land—

[00:17:55.47]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Determines?

[00:17:56.07]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: —determines what else it can be. And yet it has to be something quiet. Quieter than the landscape. I tried some light ones that are busier than the landscape. They don't work at all. I've tried a dark one. And that seems to be it. But the temperature of black has to be right. It can't be a cool black. It can't be too warm. It has to feel neutral.

[00:18:21.41]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. You can't dig a hole in it.

[00:18:24.23]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, right.

[00:18:27.08]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Exactly. No analogy at all, but sometimes in a Frans Hals, one of those people in black, you get a black you thought was a black, and it looks like a gray next to the black he's got next to it. And it's marvelous to see the different personality of the black depending upon its companions.

[00:18:49.80]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Uh-huh [affirmative]. Yeah, that's fun, really.

[00:18:52.31]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes. And this is, of course, what you're grappling with.

[00:18:54.84]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, yeah.

[00:18:55.89]

BARBARA SHIKLER: The problems remain the same.

[00:18:57.54]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah.

[00:18:59.55]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Indeed. Well, I wish these interviews could go on forever. They're so much fun for me. But I have a feeling that unless you can think of some—of a coda, a Buddhist coda for this, [laughs] we should let it go.

[00:19:21.33]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Yeah, I wish I could think of a wonderful little haiku or something, or a wonderful image.

[00:19:28.62]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Variations on the word "plane."

[00:19:34.08]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: "Playground" and "play" are kind of close. "Plane," "play," and "playground" are kind of close.

[00:19:41.25]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Yes, [laughs] they are.

[00:19:42.70]

YVONNE JACQUETTE: Right now, my wing—my airplane wing is my playground. [Laughs.] I'm going to leave it at that.

[00:19:48.88]

BARBARA SHIKLER: Well, it is. In fact, let us do that. Okay, thanks.

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]